Alternative Ambitions: Low Educational Ambition as a Form of Strategic Adaptation among Chinese Youths in Spain

By Jessica Yiu

The educational attainment of second-generation immigrants is considered a pivotal juncture in the inter-generational mobility of an immigrant group. Much scholarship has focused on the educational attainment of immigrant offspring. For newly arrived immigrant groups, their offspring are still relatively young, with the majority not yet reaching late adolescence; in the absence of information on the actual level of educational attainment, researchers have opted to examine their *aspired* and *expected* level of educational attainment – which, in combination, constitute their educational *ambition* – because there is ample evidence that achievement is predicated upon ambition (see the Wisconsin model of status attainment by Sewell, Haller and Portes, 1969).

In understanding why some groups are more ambitious than others, scholars such as Fordham and Ogbu (1986) have argued that youths with low educational ambitions have adopted an 'oppositional culture,' eschewing mainstream norms and values of upward mobility as a form of resistance to racial and ethnic discrimination. Other scholars dissent to the notion of an 'oppositional culture,' arguing that low-achieving groups tend to value education and aspire to do well in school too, but are faced with myriad barriers that prevent them from doing so (e.g. Harris 2006, 2010). By and large, the discussion about ambition is framed in strictly educational terms; youths with low educational ambitions are presumed to lack ambition altogether. Scant attention is paid to instances whereby youths develop *alternatives* ambitions that forgo advanced education, pursuing less conventional pathways of social mobility. Moreover, alternative ambitions might not mean to be subversive, in defense of being marginalized, as the theory of oppositional culture

predicts; instead, alternative ambitions are calibrated to the particular constraints of the opportunity structures within which one is embedded.

The U.S. opportunity structure is – or, at least, perceived to be – relatively open, compared to many other countries. In a society which prizes individual effort and fortitude, education is prized as the great equalizer in the pursuit for the American Dream. This sentiment rings especially true for immigrants; first-generation parents toil in a foreign land with the hope that their children will succeed in school and encounter a different fate than themselves. Historically, education has proven to be an important vehicle of upward mobility for immigrant groups in the United States. One of the best exemplars are Chinese-Americans. Deemed as 'model minorities,' second-generation Chinese – and, more generally, Asian – Americans have, on average, high levels of educational attainment and, as a result, they have experienced more upward mobility than most other groups (e.g. Louie 2004; Xie and Goyette 2003). Conventional wisdom has attributed such high educational ambitions among Chinese-Americans to the disciplinarian style of childrearing among Asian parents, and their unshakable expectations for their children in striving for academic excellence.

Yet, on the other side of the Atlantic, a strikingly different story about Chinese immigrants and their offspring emerges. Based on the findings of this study and anecdotal evidence from previous research, Chinese youths in Spain have substantially *lower* educational ambitions than youths from other national origin groups. Despite their low educational ambitions, by no means should they be considered shiftless; instead, I find that they have formulated clear goals for their future which involve entrepreneurial pursuits that forgo the need for higher education. The substitution of educational ambitions with entrepreneurial ambitions is, in large part, a consequence of the perception of blocked mobility in a more restricted Spanish opportunity structure.

The broader purpose of this study is to develop a theoretical framework for understanding the linkages between the formation of ambitions and the broader structural circumstances which

shape them. Borrowing Xie and Goyette's (2003) concept of 'strategic adaptations,' which argues that individuals from marginalized groups make conscious decisions related to their social mobility to effectively cope with discrimination and other societal disadvantages, I argue that Chinese youths in Spain have carefully calibrated their ambitions to adapt to blocked pathways of mobility. Met with discrimination at school and in the labor market, yet finding financial success in niche markets as small business owners, the Chinese in Spain have, at least temporarily, forged an alternative pathway of mobility based on entrepreneurial endeavors rather than educational accomplishments – a formula passed on from immigrant parents to their offspring. In examining entrepreneurship as an alternative ambition to academics, this study also attempts to synthesize two bodies of research in the immigration literature: education and entrepreneurship. In the U.S. literature, entrepreneurship is depicted as a mostly first-generation phenomenon. Less is known about the entrepreneurial ambitions and activities of immigrant offspring, particularly in relation to the formation of educational ambitions and the level of educational attainment. The offspring of Chinese immigrants in Spain present a pertinent empirical case for studying the linkages between educational and entrepreneurial ambitions.

This study asks three specific research questions. First, do Chinese youths in Spain have significantly lower educational ambitions than youths from other national origin groups, even accounting for compositional differences by demographic and socioeconomic characteristics? Second, if so, do their strong entrepreneurial versus weak academic orientations explain why they have, on average, lower educational ambitions? Third, are their strong entrepreneurial and weak academic orientations developed in reaction to their perceptions of blocked mobility in Spanish society? My hypotheses for all three questions are affirmative. The paper is organized in the following way. To begin, I provide an overview of preliminary research on Chinese immigrants and their offspring in Spain, who are a vastly understudied population. Then I lay out the theoretical

framework of this paper, linking entrepreneurial dispositions and perceptions of blocked mobility to the formation of educational ambition. I briefly review the literature on educational ambition and attainment, largely based on studies about Chinese-American youths, as well as research on entrepreneurship among the second-generation, albeit limited. I proceed to present results from the analysis of data based on an unprecedented survey – in its scale and substance – on the children of immigrants in Spain. Discussion of the results and concluding remarks follow.

The Empirical Case: Chinese Youths in Spain

An Overview of Chinese Immigration to Spain

Until recently, Spain had been a country of out-migration, sending millions of workers to Latin America and, after World War II, to Northern Europe. Since joining the European Union and experiencing a large economic boom in the 1980s, Spain has experienced a quick reversal of migration trends, transitioning from a country of net emigration to immigration. In addition to the return of millions of former emigrants, the booming Spanish economy attracted migrant workers from countries abroad – first, from nearby countries, such as Morocco, and then diversifying to countries in Latin America, Eastern Europe and even Asia (Calavita 2005; Cachon 2009; Carvajal Gomez 2003). As recent as the early 2000s, only 2 per cent of the Spanish population comprised of the foreign-born; by 2010, over 12 per cent are foreign-born and, in major cities such Madrid and Barcelona, the magnet destinations for immigrants, this figure hovers at approximately 16 per cent (Instituto Nacional de Estadística 2010). These figures render the proportion of the foreign-born in Spain among the highest in the world, comparable to countries with much longer histories of immigration including the United States.

At present, the Chinese form the ninth-largest non-European Union foreign community in Spain and represents the most populous Asian nationality group. In 2009, official statistics recorded

approximately 146,000 Chinese citizens or nationals residing in Spain, although the number is probably substantially higher if people of Chinese ethnicity without Chinese citizenship (e.g. overseas Chinese or Chinese with Spanish citizenship) are included (Instituto Nacional de Estadística 2009). Moreover, there is a sizeable undocumented migrant population living and working in Spain, the size of which is difficult to ascertain; by the few accounts that exist, however, it is known that a substantial proportion of Chinese immigrants in Spain do not have legal status, many of whom are employed in the informal economy (Migration News, UC Davis 2000).

The Chinese in Spain have been described as a "closed and somewhat mysterious community" in the eyes of the native population (Nieto 2003: 215). In spite of their growing presence in the cities and suburbs of Spain, the Chinese are perceived as a tightly-bounded and self-isolating group. Anxieties about the assimilability of this group by the public, while widespread, are not atypical, given that most immigrant groups elsewhere in Spain and other destination countries have been subjected to similar processes of stereotyping and marginalization. Compared to other groups, the Chinese are generally not perceived in threatening or dangerous terms, in the same way as say, Algerians and Moroccans have been targeted as scapegoats for rising crime rates (Alonso-Borrego et al. 2008). Nevertheless, they occupy the peripheries of Spanish society, in stark contrast to how the Chinese have been perceived as 'honorary whites' in American society. Thus, to borrow Alba's concept of bright versus blurred ethnic boundaries (2005), the boundary between the Chinese and Spanish are quite 'bright' along multiple dimensions of integration.

Chinese immigration to Spain can be traced back to as early as the mid-nineteenth century; however, the first large wave of Chinese immigrants came to Spain in the post-World War I period working as roaming street peddlers. By the 1950s, they gradually diversified their economic activities into the restaurant industry and later on, into textiles and trade (Nieto 2003; Thunø 1999). For most of the twentieth century, Chinese migration to Spain remained sporadic and its levels were

low. Starting in the 1980s, however, the drastic socioeconomic transformations undergone by both countries – the economic boom in Spain and the liberalization of the economy in the People's Republic of China (PRC) – attracted sizeable numbers of Chinese immigrants to Spain (Nieto 2003). The geographic origins of Chinese migrants to Spain are highly concentrated, with over 80 percent coming from the rural areas of the Qiantian County in the PRC province of Zhejiang (ibid.).

The modes of entry and migratory intentions of the Chinese in Spain differ from those of other groups in several ways. Unlike their Chinese counterparts who migrate to other E.U. countries (e.g. United Kingdom, Germany, France or the Netherlands) to pursue advanced studies or to seek political asylum, the Chinese predominantly immigrate to Spain for economic reasons. Furthermore, the Chinese also differ from other Asian groups in Spain which largely comprise of lone migrants whose families remain in the origin countries and which are also highly gendered in their composition.[1] By comparison, the Chinese immigrate to Spain as a family unit, or even when they arrive in Spain as individual migrants, they quickly sponsor their family members through reunification policies as well as other chain migration processes (Beltrán 2002; Nieto 2002). Finally, unlike many other migrant groups which temporarily reside in Spain and intend to return to their origin countries, the Chinese tend to permanently settle in Spain and so, they bring or sponsor their children from the PRC as well as bear their children on Spanish soil (Nieto 2003).

Generally, the Chinese who immigrate to Spain are not the highly-educated, professional migrants who the United States tends to attract. That said, they are also not drawn from the least educated or least skilled segments of the origin population either (Beltrán 2005). In short, while the skills distribution among Chinese-American immigrants are highly bifurcated – with roughly equal proportions who hold advanced degrees versus having less than a secondary education – the skills

[1] For instance, Filipino migrants tend to be female because they are recruited for domestic and service work, whereas the Pakistanis and Bangladesh tend to be male because they concentrate in the agricultural and construction industries.

distribution of the Chinese in Spain is relatively less extreme (Beltrán 2005; Kasinitz et al. 2008). In terms of their economic activities, the Chinese in Spain are disproportionately concentrated in small co-ethnic businesses, either as employees or owners. The Chinese have the highest rates of self-employment, at approximately 40-45 per cent of all Chinese workers, which is far higher than self-employment rates for Chinese-Americans at approximately 10-15 per cent (Beltrán 2005). However, the self-employment rates among the Chinese in Spain may be inflated for two reasons. First, many Chinese employees are not registered in the foreign worker statistics because of their undocumented legal status. Second, some who are reported as self-employed are in fact, employees in co-ethnic businesses but are recorded as self-employed because they have to pay their own social security fees. In any case, many employees working for co-ethnic businesses strive to earn enough money to set up their own business and become self-employed within several years after arriving in Spain. Overall, self-employment rates among the Chinese are still relatively high compared to other immigrant groups as well as native Spaniards. Initially, the Chinese were concentrated in the catering and restaurant trades, which were expanding largely due to the growing middle Spanish class and booming tourist industry starting in the 1980s (ibid.). However, by the early 2000s, this sector reached a saturation point, and newly arrived Chinese entrepreneurs started to seek new opportunities in less competitive economic niches such as garment workshops, wholesale and retail stores, grocery stores, and imported goods shops catering to Spanish and Chinese clientele (Nieto 2001).

Chinese-owned businesses are most aptly characterized as family enterprises. Owners employ mostly household members and relatives; even when they hire fellow co-ethnics, the employment arrangements are fairly informal and flexible. It is also typical for relatives and fellow kinsmen from the same village to pool their capital to open a small business; if the business is successful, the profit is invested into another business, which is also funded by credits received

from other relatives, and managed by either one of the business associates of the original business or someone else in the family. The owners of the new business, in turn, sponsor relatives to immigrate from China in order to work in the family business. This cycle repeats itself over the course of migrant inflows from China to Spain (Nieto 2003). The high propensity of self-employment among Chinese immigrants in Spain, as well as the family-centered organization of their enterprises, influence not only the migratory decisions of first-generation immigrants, but also the ambitions and adaptive strategies of their offspring, as examined below.

Preliminary Research on the Offspring of Chinese Immigrants in Spain

At present, there is a dearth of research on the specific case of Chinese immigrant offspring in Spain. Preliminary evidence for how they are faring is largely drawn from a few existing studies which describe the general experiences and outcome of immigrant offspring across national origin groups (e.g. Gibson and Carrasco 2009; Portes et al. 2010; Zufiaurre 2006). Given the paradox of declining fertility rates (which are lower than the EU average) and rising levels of immigration, the children of immigrants represent one of the fastest growing segments of the Spanish population, among those aged 18 and younger (Aparicio 2006). In Barcelona, one out of five births are to a foreign-born mother (Gibson and Carrasco 2009). In spite of the growing second-generation, however, the vast majority of the children of immigrants were born abroad, arriving in Spain at all ages of childhood. More telling is their sizeable presence in the Spanish educational system, particularly in local school districts where high proportions of immigrant families reside. Between 2000 and 2008, the children of immigrant went from being less than 1 per cent of students enrolled in compulsory education in Spain to almost 10 per cent (Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia 2008). In Barcelona and Madrid, the children of immigrants constitute nearly 15 per cent of all students enrolled in compulsory education (ibid.). By academic and media accounts, policymakers, school

administrators and teachers are ill-prepared to handle their rapid influx into the classrooms, particularly in meeting the challenges of accommodating an ethnically- and linguistically-diverse student body (e.g. Gibson and Carrasco 2009; Zufiaurre 2006).[2]

The few existing studies which examine the experiences and performance of immigrant children in the Spanish school system have repeatedly identified several 'vulnerable' ethno-immigrant groups including North Africans (e.g. Moroccans and Algerians), Eastern Europeans (e.g. Romanians), and certain Latin America groups, particularly the Ecuadorians and Dominicans (Gibson and Carrasco 2009; Teese et al. 2005; Portes et al. 2010). Aside from obvious language barriers experienced by children who come from non-Spanish speaking families, other barriers in school – perceptions and experiences of discrimination and prejudice as well as the lack of preparedness on the part of teachers and administrators to deal with diversity in the classroom – are also matters of concern (Carrasco 2005; Zufiaurre 2006). African and Muslim immigrants, in particular, have become the foci of researchers as the targets of discrimination given their widely reported experiences of marginality in other European countries such as France, the Netherlands, and Scandinavian countries (e.g. Peach and Glebe 1995). Such barriers are compounded by the fact that immigrants tend to come from disproportionately low SES backgrounds which means that their children lack the family resources which facilitate achievement in school (Gibson and Carrasco 2009). Generally, children born in relatively more developed or wealthier countries tend to have higher academic ambitions (Portes et al. 2010).

[2] A number of policy initiatives have been launched to meet the challenges of integrating immigrant children including the provision of additional teaching resources for specialist language training and support services, as well as the introduction of special integration classrooms in regions with high proportions of immigrants (e.g. Catalonia and Madrid). These welcome classes have been established to, in theory, help students – particularly those whose home language is not one of the official languages – to effectively transition into regular schooling; however, the downside of these welcome classes is that they keep the immigrant students segregated from the rest of the student body (Gibson and Carrasco 2009; Teese et al. 2005).

Compared to the exclusive attention that the aforementioned groups have received in extant research, little attention is paid to the offspring of Chinese immigrants in Spain. Yet, given the marginalized status of Chinese immigrants in Spanish society, it is likely that their children are also met with similar challenges to integration into the educational system and host society at large, as other 'at-risk' groups. Moreover, the Chinese-in-Spain's unique experiences of migration and settlement – particularly their high tendency of self-employment – should be strong influences in the formation of their offspring's ambitions.

Theoretical Framework: the Formation of Alternative Ambitions

Academic versus Entrepreneurial Orientations

Existing research – at least, based on a largely U.S.-based literature – tend to portray the Chinese as a highly academically-oriented group: regardless of actual educational performance, there is generally value consensus between parents and children over the importance of education as a vehicle for social mobility (Kao and Tienda 1995; Louie 2004; Zhou and Bankston 1994). In other words, Chinese-American youths tend to adopt strong *academic orientations*. Even among 'low-achieving' Chinese-American youths, higher education remains the idealized goal: those who do not end up at prestigious, four-year universities – the gold standard for the children of Chinese families, as well as those from other Asian nationalities – express feelings of failure and inadequacy by not fulfilling the aspirations and expectation of their families and ethnic communities writ large which they too have internalized (Kibria 2002; Louie 2004).

In explaining the high educational ambitions among Chinese Americans, scholars have alluded to distinct cultural traits, such as the "traditional mindedness" of Chinese parents and the inextricable linkages between family, honor and education in their expectations for their children (Zhou and Bankston 1994). The socioeconomic composition of Chinese immigrants in the United

States also matter: the 'new' waves of Chinese immigration since the 1960s have disproportionately been drawn from the highly-educated and skilled classes. The selectivity of Chinese immigration on these positive characteristics clearly contribute to their children's educational achievement (e.g. Barringer et al. 1990; Glenn and Yap 1994). Equally, if not more, important are the particular structural factors which have contributed to the success of Chinese Americans, many of whom arrived at an opportune time. After the Civil Rights Movement, explicit racial and ethnic barriers in the educational system were removed, offering immigrant offspring including those from Chinese families to benefit from a relatively open and accessible K-12 school system (Alba and Nee 2003). Immigrant parents are particularly optimistic about their children's chances of upward mobility, confident that their children are offered ample opportunities in the host society if they work and study hard; second-generation children thus, inherit their parents' positive attitudes and determinism, translating shared aspirations for higher education into actual attainment (Kao and Tienda 1995; Landale et al. 1998).

Aside from the progressive changes occurring at the host societal level, scholars have also focused on the role of the growing ethnic economy in launching immigrant offspring into the mainstream economy. The ethnic economy, largely formed due to the lack of primary sector labor-market opportunities for Chinese immigrants, allows the first-generation to gain substantial financial footholds in the host society and to create economic opportunities for the next generation through investments in their education (Lieberman 1980; Hirschmann and Wong 1986; Sanchirico 1991). Segmented assimilation theory, in particular, has highlighted the role of strong co-ethnic communities in buttressing against the downward mobility of immigrant offspring; immigrant families living in tight-knit ethnic communities gain access to vital resources, whether in terms of economic or social capital, which help parents navigate the school system and their children climb the educational ladder (e.g. Portes and Rumbaut 2001; Portes and Zhou 1993).

There is ample documentation of Chinese-Americans' exceptional academic performance and generally high educational ambitions. By comparison, instances of Chinese youths with low educational ambitions, seeking alternative paths to social mobility, are rarely documented in the existing literature. Chinese youths in Spain present a striking case of contrast to their counterparts in the United States: as the findings below show, their stated educational ambitions are significantly lower than those from other national origin groups. What then do Chinese youths in Spain aspire and expect to do when they grow up if it is not attending university and getting into a prestigious career? Other than through higher education, what alternative pathways to mobility do they envision for themselves? I hypothesize that, in lieu of developing strong academic orientations, Chinese youths in Spain have calibrated their ambitions according to external circumstances by developing distinct *entrepreneurial orientations.*

Research on the entrepreneurial activities among the children of immigrants is quite limited. The few U.S.-based studies which have focused on this topic show that there is a steep decline in rates of self-employment between immigrant parents and their children, particularly for groups with relatively high levels of educational achievement such as the Chinese (Butler and Herring 1991; Gold et al. 2006). Different forms of entrepreneurship among the second-generation have also been identified, with distinctions made between those who inherit the family business and those who strive to fulfill their creativity and personal satisfaction in the arts and cultural industry – that is, 'linear' versus 'expressive' entrepreneurship (Fernandez-Kelly and Konczal 2005). Although business ownership is universally regarded as a source of economic mobility among immigrants facing barriers in the host labor market, its role in pathways of intergenerational mobility seems to differ across ethnic groups. For the most part, immigrant entrepreneurship provides a stepladder for the second-generation to pursue higher education and to escape the ethnic enclave. In Portes and Shafers' (2007) study on the Cuban enclave in Miami, they find that the wealth and resources

accrued by first-generation entrepreneurs are invested into the education of the second-generation, who in turn, attend college and then enter into white-collar occupations in the mainstream labor market. Studies on Chinese-American immigrant entrepreneurship have generally found that it is a first-generation phenomenon (Sanchirico 1991; Zhou 1992). Chinese-American immigrants – like their counterparts from other Asian countries such as the Koreans (see: Raijman and Tienda 2000) – perceive business ownership as a way of overcoming labor market disadvantages and to accumulate the requisite resources to provide their children with opportunities to enter the open labor market. By contrast, for other groups (e.g. Hispanics working in the Little Village neighborhood of Chicago, as documented in Raijman and Tienda 2000), self-employment is not merely a transitional pathway to economic mobility but a sustained strategy for creating and transmitting economic resources to their offspring, who are expected to assume ownership of the family business someday.

Based on the preliminary experiences of the Chinese in Spain, it appears that the role of business ownership in their pathways of intergenerational mobility is more akin to the experiences of the Hispanics in Chicago, than those of the Chinese or other Asian groups. One reason for the divergent experiences of entrepreneurship between the Chinese in Spain versus those in the United States is their insertion into different labor market structures. Compared to the United States, in which the skills profile of immigrants are bifurcated with high- and low-skilled jobs likely occupied by immigrants, the Spanish labor market is more clearly segmented with immigrants mostly occupying low-skilled jobs (Portes et al. 2010). Moreover, given that the Chinese who migrate to Spain are less likely to be the high-skilled professionals or post-secondary students who move to the United States, the financial returns to entrepreneurship relative to their pre-migration human capital are comparatively high. Therefore, business ownership as a pathway of economic mobility for not just themselves but also their offspring is particularly appealing. Low educational ambitions among Chinese youths in Spain hint at the possibility that academic orientations have been displaced by

other intentions for the future. Given the distinctly family-centered model of entrepreneurship among Chinese immigrants in Spain, parents are likely to convey their entrepreneurial ambitions to their children. Whether they are conveyed explicitly or implicitly, I hypothesize that Chinese offspring are likely to internalize them and, consequently, entrepreneurial orientations overshadow academic orientations in formulating their ambitions.

Entrepreneurial Orientation as Strategic Adaptation to an Unfavorable Context of Reception

I hypothesize that the strong entrepreneurial disposition among Chinese youths in Spain explains why they have low entrepreneurial ambitions. Yet, there is the deeper question of what motivates their entrepreneurial ambitions in the first place: what are the broader structural circumstances which influence their decision to forgo their academic ambitions in favor of 'making it in the real world'? From U.S.-based research on the segmented assimilative trajectories of the second-generation, we know that the children of immigrants who are brought up in less hospitable environments, whereby public attitudes towards immigrants are generally negative and prejudice and discrimination towards minorities are perceptible, tend to feel discouraged from pursuing conventional pathways of mobility and to suppress their educational ambitions (Portes and Rumbaut 1996, 2001; Portes and Zhou 1993). This is particularly the case when co-ethnic ties are weak and ethnic communities are underdeveloped. In the same vein, Chinese youths face – or, at least, they perceive that there exists – substantial barriers in the Spanish labor market structure which preclude the need for high educational credentials. Indeed, as Portes et al. (2010) have found in their study about the educational and occupational ambitions of the children of immigrants in Madrid, immigrant youths are generally discouraged from setting high-level career goals because there seems to be a common understanding about their restricted access to elite positions – most notably, professional and executive occupations – which are reserved for native Spaniards. Blocked from

conventional pathways of mobility through higher education, Chinese youths strategically adapt to these structural constraints by lowering educational ambitions and pursuing occupational trajectories which assure high financial returns relative to low levels of risk – in this case, becoming small-business owners like many of their co-ethnic elders.

The same logic of *'strategic adaptation'* applies to understanding why Chinese and other Asian groups in the United States are disproportionately represented in science and engineering related occupations. As Xie and Goyette (2003) have argued, Asian Americans consciously choose occupations on which they can effectively cope with potential discrimination and other disadvantages by achieving marketable credentials. In the United States, where the educational system and labor market are both relatively open and higher education is the prerequisite for upward mobility, it makes rational sense for Asian American youths to aspire for a university education and to major in fields that have high financial payoffs. By contrast, Chinese youths in Spain are embedded within a more rigid and closed opportunity structure, in which they perceive and experience a greater sense of marginalization from conventional pathways of mobility; therefore, they deliberately seek alternative means to making relatively high financial payoffs which do not require higher educational credentials. Given the prevalence of entrepreneurial activities among their parents and co-ethnics, their 'safest bet' is to pursue a similar route.

Analytical Plan

Data

The analysis of the study uses the first-wave of data collected for the Longitudinal Study of the Second Generation (ILSEG in its Spanish acronym). This project replicates the research design of

the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS).[3] For ILSEG, a stratified random sample of 6,884 second generation youths, between the ages of 12 and 17, were contacted and interviewed in 176 public and private schools in Madrid and Barcelona in 2008. The stratified sample design maintained the same sampling fraction by school type (i.e. public and private-dependent) and by region within each metropolitan area, thus making the sample self-weighting (Portes et al. 2010). Within each school, all eligible students were included. The analysis of this study uses both the Barcelona and Madrid Metropolitan Area samples. With listwise deletion of missing data, the total sample size is 6,354 respondents.[4]

Key Variables

Youth's National Origin (Key predictor): The main predictor of interest in this study is the self-reported national origin of the youth respondent. Most national origin groups are aggregated into categories based on regions of origins, with the following exceptions which are coded as separate national categories: China, Morocco, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, and Romania. The latter four countries, in addition to representing the largest nationalities among the foreign-born population in Spain, have distinct migration histories so they are categorized independently in the analysis.[5] Given that the primary comparison of interest in this study is between Chinese and non-Chinese youths in the multivariate analyses, the Chinese is always the reference category for the national origin variable. The degree to which the addition of other covariates changes the coefficients of the

[3] CILS continues to be the largest longitudinal project on the subject of second generation adaptation in the United States. The study was directed by Alejandro Portes of Princeton University and Rubén G. Rumbaut of University of California – Irvine. The survey consists of three waves. The first wave of the study, conducted in 1992, consists of samples of second-generation children attending the 8th and 9th grades in public and private schools in the metropolitan areas of Miami/Ft. Lauderdale in Florida and San Diego, California. The second and third waves of the study were conducted in 1995-6 and 2002-3, respectively.

[4] Listwise deletion is preferable methodologically because it usually yields unbiased regression coefficients and conservative standard errors. Imputation routines tend to inflate the Ns and, hence, overestimate levels of statistical significance (Firebaugh, 2008; Singleton and Straits, 2005:Ch. 14).

[5] Romania surpassed Morocco as the largest national origin group among the foreign-born in Spain in 2007.

origin groups in a series of nested models (e.g. reducing the magnitude of the coefficient and the level of significance) represents the degree to which they account for Chinese-versus-non-Chinese group differences across the key outcomes.

Educational Aspirations, Expectations and Performance (Key outcomes): The main outcome of interest is the educational ambitions of Chinese versus non-Chinese immigrant youths in Spain. The reasons for why educational ambition is the main outcome of interest is twofold. Theoretically, there is ample research that affirms their predictive power for actual educational and occupational attainments, which are the 'hard' outcomes that are of greater interest to social scientists and policymakers in understanding the socioeconomic mobility of disadvantaged groups. Practically, since only the first wave of the ILSEG data is available for analysis, expectations and aspirations are the most reliable outcomes in tracking the assimilative trajectories of the second-generation who are still a relatively young cohort – that is, in their early adolescence – both in the sample and, given the recency of immigration in Spain, in the general population.

Educational ambition is operationalized in two ways: *aspirations*, which represent the ideal level of education attained, and *expectations*, which represent the realistic level of education attained. Although aspirations and expectations are highly correlated measures, they are conceptually distinct in some important respects. Aspirations capture preferences while expectations take into account the structural barriers which constrain the realization of aspirations. If aspirations align with expectations, this suggests that one's future ambitions are crystallized and well-formed such that one has a clear idea of what one's goals are (e.g. type of occupation) and the means to reach those goals (e.g. requisite level of education to enter desired occupation).[6] The survey

[6] Conversely, if aspirations for the pursuit of higher education substantially exceed expectations, this discrepancy suggests that youths have internalized the societal norms and values of prestige and status attainment although they cannot realistically acquire the means to pursue those goals (see: Robert Merton's theory of strain and delinquency). High aspirations, in spite of low expectations, represent a fundamental belief that the mobility structure of the society in which one lives is meritocratic based on educational achievement, even though access to higher education is curtailed.

instrument measures educational aspirations and expectations in closed ordinal categories.[7] I recode the variables with few responses to reconstitute the following categories: complete basic secondary education (ESO) or less; complete secondary education, vocational training and/or some college; and attain post-secondary degree (undergraduate and graduate degrees).

Academic performance is also one of the outcomes in the following analysis, although it is not a focal outcome for several reasons. As the preliminary results below show, although educational ambition and actual performance are correlated, the latter does not necessarily predict the former. One can do relatively well in school but neither aspire or expect to pursue higher education. Furthermore, the measure for academic performance – based on a survey item which asks the respondent's grade point average in the previous academic year – is uni-dimensional; there is no information on how the youths do on standardized tests which are more reliable measures on how they would fare on university entrance exams.

Entrepreneurial and Academic Orientation (Key proximate mechanism): I argue that the level of aspired and expected educational attainment is partly determined by the type of orientation – entrepreneurial versus academic – that take hold in the youths' mindsets. The type of orientation is considered a *proximate* mechanism, in explaining the different levels of educational ambitions between the Chinese and other groups, because it is a psycho-social, individual-level variable. In turn, orientations are shaped by structural circumstances which are considered the 'distal' mechanisms or underlying causes in determining one's level of educational ambitions.

[7] The Spanish educational system sorts students into academic, general and vocational tracks during secondary levels of education. Compulsory education, for all those between the ages of 6 and 16, is divided into two phases: 6 years of primary education and 4 years of junior secondary education or ESO (*educación secundario obligatoria*), which is divided into two 2-year cycles. Because preschool education is fully subsidized by the state, nearly all children of preschool-age participates. Students who successfully graduate from the ESO are entitled to continue the academic track by entering upper secondary educational levels to attain their baccalaureate (*Bachillerato)* which offer preparatory courses for those who intend to enter higher educational institutions, or they can undertake vocational training (*Grado Medio)* to attain a technical certificate. Access to higher education (i.e. tertiary education) is controlled by the national university entrance examination.

Those who possess an *entrepreneurial orientation* are inclined to pursue 'real world' opportunities which preclude the need for high educational credentials. Entrepreneurial orientation is measured based on a question in the ILSEG survey which asks the respondent to agree with either one of two opposing viewpoints in a hypothetical debate between two friends on whether it is more valuable to stay in school or to take a job that will let them earn money and learn the business.[8] The development of an entrepreneurial orientation is one of several factors related to one's disposition for entrepreneurship or self-employment as a future occupation. Another measure of entrepreneurial disposition is whether the respondents' fathers or mothers are self-employed, entrepreneurs or vendors, which would influence their decision to follow in their parents' footsteps and assume ownership of the family business. The final measure of entrepreneurial disposition is whether the respondents have stated aspirations to be a shop assistant when they grow up. While aspirations to be a shop assistant is not equivalent to being an entrepreneur or self-employed, because the only survey item on occupational aspirations consists of closed ordinal categories[9], it is the best proxy for entrepreneurial ambitions, particularly in the context of the Chinese's family-centered business model whereby employment in a small business can easily transition into ownership. Those who have entrepreneurial dispositions are less inclined to develop strong *academic orientations,* which privilege the pursuit of higher education in lieu of the pursuit of 'real life' opportunities outside of school. Academic orientation is measured using a survey item which asks how important it is for the respondent to get good grades at school.

[8] The exact wording of the item is as follows: "Luis and Pedro are students. An older friend who just opened a store offers them both jobs as salesmen. He argues that they will be better off going to work for him because they will earn money and learn the business. Luis says: 'I agree. It is better than going to school and I'll learn about the real world.' Pedro says: 'I disagree. I will stay in school because in the long run, it is better for me.' Who do you think is right? Luis, Pedro or neither one."

[9] Aside from shop assistant, the other categories include: manual worker, clerical worker, computer technician, social worker, executive manager, engineer, professor, lawyer, physician or surgeon, and other.

Perceptions of Blocked Mobility (Key distal mechanism): The psychosocial orientation of immigrant youths which guide their educational ambitions is a product of their interactions with the Spanish host society and their perception of blocked mobility therein. Therefore, the perception of blocked mobility is considered a *distal* mechanism in the formation of varying levels of educational ambition among youths across national origin groups, mediated by the type of orientation – entrepreneurial versus academic – which is considered a proximate mechanism. Perceptions of discrimination and blocked mobility are measured based on the degree to which respondents agree with the first two statements and disagree with the latter two statements: first, 'no matter how much education I get, I will always be rejected by others'; second, 'I often feel rejected or not being treated the same as others'; third, 'in Spain, everyone has the same economic opportunities'; and, lastly, 'people of color have as many opportunities as Whites to advance in Spain'. Figure 1 is a hypothesized representation of the linkages between the key variables of interest in this study.

Figure 1 about here

Socio-demographic and Economic Variables ("Control" Variables): To account for the compositional variations between different national origin groups, the following variables are included in the analysis as 'controls': the youths' nativity status (i.e. birthplace and, for those not born in Spain, their age at arrival); sex; age; their course level (i.e. first, second, or third year of compulsory education); whether or not they reside with both parents; their mothers' highest level of schooling attained (i.e. less than secondary, completed secondary or some post-secondary, and completed post-secondary); city of residence (i.e. Madrid or Barcelona); and, whether their home language is Spanish or another language.

Findings

I. Do Chinese immigrant youths have significantly lower educational ambitions than non-Chinese immigrant youths?

Tables 2, 3 and 4 present the results of the multivariate regressions of the youth's educational aspirations, expectations and performance in the previous academic year, respectively. Model 1 is the baseline model, with national origin groups as the only predictor. Model 2 includes other covariates, that is, various demographic and socio-economic characteristics, as 'controls'. As Tables 2 and 3 show, the Chinese (i.e. reference group) have significantly lower educational aspirations and expectations than all of the other national origin groups, even when the various 'control' variables are accounted for. Nearly all of the demographic and socioeconomic factors added to the analysis are statistically significant, except for speaking Spanish at home. However, despite the distinct demographic and socioeconomic composition of the various national origin groups, there remains some unobserved heterogeneity between the Chinese and other groups which contribute to significant differences in their levels of educational aspirations and expectations.

Tables 2a and 3a convert the multivariate regression results into the *adjusted* proportions of the youths' educational aspirations and expectations across origin groups. Given the heterogeneous backgrounds of immigrants from different nationalities, the adjusted proportions partially account for the observed inter-group selectivity. The adjusted proportions are calculated from the multivariate regression results based on the conditional probability of the youths' aspired and expected levels of educational attainment by their national origin, where the 'control' variables are set at their mean values. The most conspicuous difference between Chinese and non-Chinese youths is the large proportion of Chinese youths whose ambition is to complete *only* their basic secondary education without advancing to higher levels of study. About forty percent of Chinese youths expect to complete their ESO, which is disproportionately higher than all of the other groups; however,

what is even more striking is the thirty percent of Chinese youths who have similarly low educational aspirations, even after accounting for various 'control' variables. The high percentage of Chinese youths who aspire and expect to complete only the ESO exceeds the percentage of other group by at least, ten percentile points (i.e. following the Chinese, Dominican youths have the highest percentage of youths who have ambitions to complete only the ESO).

By comparison, there appears to be minimal difference in the academic performance of the Chinese versus other groups, particularly once the 'control' variables are accounted for, as shown in the results of Table 4. Since there are no significant differences between the Chinese and other groups in their GPA for the previous year, the adjusted proportions are not calculated and presented. When the GPA for the previous year is included into additional multivariate regression analyses where aspirations and expectations are the outcomes, the coefficients for the different national origin groups do not change in their direction, magnitude or statistical significance. (Results not shown.) This suggests that the Chinese have lower educational ambitions than their counterparts, regardless of their actual performance at school.

Tables 2, 3, 2a, 3a, and 4 about here

In light of these results, two interesting puzzles emerge. First, given that various demographic and socioeconomic background characteristics do not account for the significant differences in aspirations and expectations between the Chinese and other groups, what then can explain the significantly lower educational ambitions of Chinese youths, particularly among those who strive to only attain their ESO? Second, why do Chinese youths have low educational ambitions despite their comparable levels of academic performance vis-à-vis other groups? I hypothesize that the answers to both questions are related to the distinct entrepreneurial orientations

among Chinese youths which are developed in reaction to their perceptions of blocked mobility within the Spanish host society.

II. Do Chinese immigrant youths have lower educational ambitions because of their strong entrepreneurial and weak academic dispositions?

Table 5 provides the frequency distributions of those who agree with the various statements related to the propensity for entrepreneurial activities by national origin groups.[10] Based on these descriptive statistics, it is clear that, compared to other groups, a much larger percentage of Chinese respondents appear to have a propensity for entrepreneurial activities with one-quarter who have at least one parent who is a vendor or business owner, sixteen percent who have stated ambitions to be a store clerk, and one-third who would prefer to drop out of school if given the chance to engage in the business world. Conversely, when asked how important it is to get good grades as a measure of their academic disposition, roughly forty percent of the Chinese thinks that this is very important whereas generally much higher percentages among the other groups agree with this statement.

Table 5 about here

For the multivariate results, I present solely the results for educational aspirations (see Table 6) given the similarity of results between educational aspirations and expectations across the various covariates. I recode the level of educational aspiration into a binary variable – complete ESO or less versus post-compulsory secondary or higher – because the results in the previous section show that Chinese youths tend to disproportionately have ambitions to complete only their basic secondary education (ESO), while those with ambitions for post-compulsory secondary schooling or higher are generally comparable to other groups. Standard logistic regression is performed. In Table 6, the

[10] The cross-tabulated frequencies are not adjusted by population weights.

results in the baseline and 'controlled' models (i.e. Models 1 and 2) show that Chinese youths are significantly more likely than youths in all other national groups to aspire to complete only the ESO. However, the inclusion of the variables related to entrepreneurial and academic dispositions renders most of the differences in educational ambitions between the Chinese and other groups statistically insignificant (Model 3); in the full model, which includes all of the covariates (Model 4), none of the groups are significantly less likely than the Chinese to aspire to complete only their basic secondary education. Almost all of the indicators for entrepreneurial and academic dispositions are statistically significant, except having a parent who is a vendor or business owner, in mediating the relationship between the Chinese and their relatively lower educational ambitions. Chinese youths' stronger entrepreneurial disposition – as measured by their greater likelihood of possessing an entrepreneurial orientation and aspiration to be a store clerk or owner – appear to explain why they have, on average, lower educational aspirations. The Chinese youths' weaker academic orientations, on average, also accounts for their lower educational ambitions given that they are less likely than other groups to think that getting good grades is very important.

Tables 6 about here

In sum, there is empirical support for the hypothesis that Chinese youths have, on average, lower educational ambitions because of their stronger entrepreneurial and weaker academic dispositions. However, these dispositions are merely *proximate* mechanisms which partly explain why Chinese youths have lower educational ambitions. In the analysis below, I probe into the underlying factors – or, *distal* mechanisms – which may explain why the Chinese have a higher tendency of forming strong entrepreneurial and weak academic orientations. I argue that the formation of such orientations is in reaction to their stronger perception of discrimination and blocked mobility in Spanish society towards immigrant minorities.

III. Do Chinese youths have strong entrepreneurial and weak academic dispositions because of their perception of blocked mobility against immigrant minorities in Spain?

Table 7 presents descriptive statistics on the perception of blocked mobility by national origin groups.[11] Chinese youths, on average, are most likely to perceive blocked mobility against immigrant minorities in Spanish society. Over forty per cent of Chinese youths agree that no matter how much education one gets, one will still be rejected by others – as this statement captures the attitude that education has minimal value as a vehicle for upward mobility, it is therefore a good proxy for their tendency to have lower educational ambitions. Likewise, over sixty percent of Chinese youths feel rejected or not treated the same as others. Conversely, only thirty percent believes that people of color have as many opportunities than Whites, while only five percent believes that everyone in Spain has the same economic opportunities.

Table 7 about here

Turning to the multivariate analysis, Table 8 presents the logistic regression results in a series of nested models where the possession of an entrepreneurial orientation is the outcome. Across Models 1 through 3, the coefficients for all non-Chinese groups remain statistically significant. In Model 2, which includes the various indicators of perceived blocked mobility into the analysis, two out of the four indicators are statistically significant: 'no matter how much education I get, I will still be rejected by others' and 'everyone has the same economic opportunities in Spain'. The former item implies that those who see minimal value in education in equalizing opportunities are more likely to possess an entrepreneurial orientation. The latter item implies that those who perceive equal opportunities in Spain are, contrary to my hypothesis, more likely to possess an entrepreneurial orientation. Perceptions of discrimination appear to diminish the magnitude of

[11] The cross-tabulated frequencies are not adjusted by population weights.

several national origin coefficients, although most of them remain significant. In Model 3, with the addition of the 'control' variables (i.e. basic socioeconomic and demographic characteristics) into analysis, other groups are still significantly less likely than the Chinese to possess an entrepreneurial orientation and in nearly all cases, their odds of possessing an entrepreneurial orientation compared to the Chinese decreases, which suggests a 'suppression effect' on the part of the 'control' variables. If the demographic and socioeconomic compositions of the Chinese and other national groups are the same, the 'effect' of perceived blocked mobility on the formation of entrepreneurial orientations would be further amplified. In Model 4, which adds the interaction terms for the two statistically significant items related to blocked mobility and the national groups, all of the 'main effect' coefficients for national origin and the perception of blocked mobility are rendered statistically not significant. Curiously though, the interaction terms themselves are not statistically significant. Further post-estimation tests show that although the interaction terms are not statistically significant as independent predictors, the 'joint effect' of the two significant indicators of perceived blocked mobility and the interaction terms *is* statistically significant. In other words, non-Chinese groups who agree that there are equal opportunities for natives and immigrants are *more* likely to develop entrepreneurial orientations than the Chinese. Conversely, most non-Chinese groups who agree that discrimination happens in spite of educational attainment are *less* likely to develop entrepreneurial orientations than the Chinese. Given that the sample sizes of the separate national groups in the analysis are quite small to begin with, the small cell sizes suppress the statistical significance of the interaction terms.[12]

[12] Moreover, because the Chinese is the reference category, the interaction effect between being Chinese and their perception of blocked mobility is not directly captured in the individual interaction terms; only by performing post-estimation tests for the entire model is the strong correlation between perceived blocked mobility and being Chinese (as the descriptive statistics in Table 7 show) accounted for.

Tables 8 and 9 about here

As Table 9 shows, where academic orientation is the outcome, the perception of blocked mobility appears to fully explain why Chinese youths are less inclined to think it is important to get good grades than the Ecuadorans, Romanians and youths from other Latin American countries (comparing Models 1 and 2). Among the indicators of perceptions of blocked mobility, only two of them – "everyone in Spain has the same economic opportunities" and "people of color have as many opportunities as Whites to advance" – are significant; those who agree with both statements are more likely to possess an academic orientation. Once the 'control' variables are added, differences between Chinese youths and those from other national groups are rendered not significant, except for Moroccans and other Asians who remain to have stronger academic orientations than the Chinese (see Model 3).[13] The addition of the interaction terms between the two statistically significant items related to perceptions of discrimination and the national origin groups in Model 4 renders differences between the Chinese, Moroccans and other Asians not significant. As is the case with predicting entrepreneurial orientations, post-estimation tests reveal that although the interaction terms are themselves not statistically significant, the 'joint effects' of perceiving unequal economic opportunities and the interaction terms for the various national origin groups are statistically significant. This suggests that among those who perceive equal opportunities, Moroccans and other Asians are more likely to possess academic orientations than Chinese youths.[14]

[13] Although existing studies have largely identified these groups as 'at-risk' students in the Spanish context, it appears that they highly value academic pursuits. That said, the value which they assign to getting grades is not necessarily a perfect predictor of actual levels of educational and occupational attainment later on.

[14] The author would like to thank Chang Y. Chung for providing assistance with the post-estimation tests.

Discussion/Conclusion

To recapitulate, the purpose of the analysis above is twofold. The first purpose is descriptive, ascertaining whether Chinese youths in Spain, in fact, have lower educational ambitions than their non-Chinese peers. The findings clearly confirm that they do. Even net of demographic and socioeconomic characteristics, the Chinese have significantly lower levels of aspired and expected educational attainment. Particularly striking is the relatively high proportion of Chinese youths who only have ambitions to complete their basic secondary schooling without pursuing any sort of advanced degree. The second purpose is explanatory, addressing the question of *why* Chinese youths in Spain have lower educational ambitions. I hypothesize that *proximate* and *distal* mechanisms play important roles in determining the varying levels of educational ambitions among youths from different national origin groups. The analysis largely confirms the hypothesis that the perception of blocked mobility in Spanish society against immigrant minorities – particularly the futility of education for getting ahead, the unequal opportunities for immigrants and feelings of rejection among visible minorities – leads to the formation of strong entrepreneurial and weak academic orientations, which in turn contribute to the lower educational ambitions among Chinese youths, on average. The strong entrepreneurial/weak academic orientations of Chinese youths are considered as proximate mechanisms, whereas perceptions of blocked mobility are considered as distal mechanisms. Although they have averted their ambitions from academics to pursuing 'real life' opportunities – a phenomenon that is affirmed by the strikingly large proportion of Chinese youths who aspire and expect to only complete their basic secondary schooling – the underlying and ultimate reason for their low educational ambitions is their sense of a relatively closed Spanish opportunity structure against foreigners, particularly people of color. To borrow Xie and Goyette's concept (2003), the educational and occupational ambitions among immigrant minority youths are formed as 'strategic adaptations' in response to prevailing structural constraints.

The concept of 'strategic adaptation' is particularly useful in understanding the divergent ambitions between the Chinese in traditional immigrant-receiving countries, such as the United States, and those in newer ones, such as Spain. In the case of Chinese youths in Spain, they react to a relatively closed opportunity structure – whereby immigrant youths presume that high-ranking white collar jobs in the mainstream economy are reserved for native Spaniards regardless of human capital attainments – by rejecting higher education as an instrument for socioeconomic advancement. Instead, they pursue alternative pathways of mobility by learning the ropes of how to do business and making it in the 'real world' on their own terms. Chinese youths in Spain can still be described as 'ambitious' given that their plans to become self-employed or to assume ownership of their family business seem to have already crystallized. By comparison, in the United States, in which the Chinese and other Asians have already set a precedence with breaking into professional and white collar occupations, forgoing higher education to become small business owners makes less 'rational' economic sense. The takeaway message then, is educational and occupational ambitions do not necessarily represent the idealized goals of naïve youths; even aspirations, which supposedly capture the unfettered dreams of what one can become, is largely shaped by the internalization of perceived structural constraints and limitations, as illustrated by the high proportion of Chinese youths who *aspire* – and not just expect – to become shop owners, vendors and store clerks. In effect, ambitions are curtailed by realities.

In addition to adapting to the broader opportunity structures of the host society, the ambitions of immigrant youths are also formulated in reference to their peers' ambitions. One explanation for why the Chinese in the United States have such high educational ambitions and achievements is the strong consensus within the Chinese-American community over the value of education. In the well-developed Chinese enclaves scattered across the United States, immigrant families come from diverse class origins and yet, there is a great sense of group cohesion marked by

the high degree of social connections between middle- and working-class compatriots (Kasinitz et al. 2008; Zhou 1992). Even if middle-class Chinese families have moved into the suburbs, their social lives still revolve around the Chinese enclaves in many ways. For the children of working-class families, their frame of reference is their co-ethnics, whether they come from equally humble origins or have parents with professional or white-collar backgrounds. Working-class parents also instill the value of education in their children, particularly after witnessing the many success stories of Chinese youths entering top-ranking high schools and universities (Louie 2004). A shared culture which prizes, and perhaps even inflates, the singular role of education in achieving social mobility becomes entrenched into Chinese-American communities. A complex web of institutional structures and information networks – including language schools, cram schools, and the ethnic media – embedded within Chinese enclaves create the requisite linkages for sharing knowledge and advice between parents and youths on best scholastic practices (Zhou 1992, 2009).

By comparison, although the Chinese immigrant community in Spain is certainly growing, it has yet to develop enclaves in the proper sense of the term given that areas in which the Chinese concentrate for work and residency are not 'institutionally complete'[15] in the same sense as Chinatowns in the United States – whether historical ones in the downtown core or contemporary ones developed in the suburbs – are (Beltran 2005). Moreover, there is not a sizeable presence of Chinese immigrants in Spain with professional or white-collar backgrounds; instead, they are mostly low-skilled migrants in search of small-scale entrepreneurial opportunities. Without the presence of immigrants from the professional classes to act as reference points nor the requisite institutional structures to actualize educational ambitions, the Chinese community in Spain has not developed a shared culture which prizes education, which the Chinese-American community does.

[15] This is based on Raymond Bretons's concept of "institutional completeness" (1964). The concept refers to the degree by which the ethnic community provides formal organizations and services catering to its co-ethnic clientele.

While this study emphasizes the counter-intuitiveness of the low educational ambitions among Chinese youths in Spain, given their 'model minority' status across the Atlantic, astute readers would heed caution in interpreting the experiences of the Chinese in Spain as entirely distinct or new. Chinese-Americans have not always experienced an intergenerational trajectory of upward mobility, particularly during the period between the implementation of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act (Takaki 1989). These earlier waves of Chinese immigrants and their offspring were met with open hostility and discrimination. Forced to adapt to these restrictions, Chinese immigrants and their descendants formed ethnic niches in the labor market – namely, in the catering and laundry services (Fong and Luk 2007). The historical parallels in the propensity for entrepreneurial activities as a form of strategic adaptation between earlier cohorts of Chinese-Americans and contemporary ones in Spain are quite evident. It is therefore, reasonable to predict that subsequent generation of the Chinese in Spain will eventually depart from the ethnic economy and be incorporated into conventional pathways of mobility.

That said, there is also reason to predict that the Chinese in Spain would not follow in the same upward trajectory as their historical U.S. counterparts given underlying differences in the opportunity structures of the two receiving contexts. In the aftermath of the repeal of formal segregationist laws and policies, second-generation Chinese-Americans, rapidly ascended into the higher ranks of the educational system as well as the occupational ladder, forgoing employment in the ethnic economy. When Ivan Light wrote about the Chinese ethnic economy in the early 1970s, he already noted "the extraordinary success of children of Oriental descent in the public schools" (p. 188) which he attributed to the second-generation's desire to "bring credit to their families and to their ethnic group" (ibid.). In short, even in a context whereby discrimination and prejudice remained rampant against the Chinese shortly after formal exclusionary laws and policies were abolished, their descendants rapidly achieved high levels of educational ambitions and attainment.

By comparison, contemporary Spain, where there are no formal laws or policies which enforce segregation and discrimination in the likes of the Chinese Exclusion Act, appears to foster a context which prohibits Chinese youths from developing high educational ambitions. One can argue that these differences can be attributed to different perceptions of the relative degree of openness in the opportunity structures in the United States versus Spain and the particular value assigned to education as an equalizer of opportunity. In spite of former exclusionary laws and policies, the Chinese perceived the U.S. opportunity structure to be quite open; conversely, the Spanish opportunity structure is perceived to be quite closed by Chinese youths who assign minimal value to the role of education in equalizing opportunities. The latter statement is corroborated by the findings above which show the disproportionate proportion of Chinese youths who agreed with the statement, "no matter how much education I get, I am still always rejected by others". Given their perception of education as an ineffective instrument of socioeconomic advancement and their commitment to forging alternative pathways to mobility through self-employment and entrepreneurial activities, it is reasonable to predict that subsequent generations of Chinese youths may deviate from their U.S. counterparts' assimilative trajectories.

Also important are the broad drastic changes occurring in the Spanish labor market, affecting native Spaniards and immigrant offspring alike. Ravaged by the recent global recession (which hit shortly after the respondents for the ILSEG survey were interviewed), unemployment rates among young adults in Spain are among the highest in the EU (Daley, NY Times, 7 June 2011). Hardest hit are the less educated youths who left school early to find work in a booming construction industry as well as the most highly education who, in spite of having one or more university degrees, cannot find work or get hired on temporary contracts for low-skilled and low-wage jobs. Given the increasing disenfranchisement of young Spaniards about the viability of the Spanish economy and their skepticism about the role of higher education in securing a good job, it

is likely that if they were asked similar questions from the survey, they too might display low academic ambitions and pursue alternative pathways to mobility, such as forgoing higher education for entrepreneurship. In this case, the low educational ambitions of Chinese youths in Spain would represent the norm rather than the outlier. A follow-up survey which examines the educational ambitions of native Spanish youths would address this possibility.

Further research is necessary to address the outstanding issues and additional questions which emerge from this study. Certainly, qualitative data would enrich our understanding of how the ambitions of Chinese youths in Spain are formed, particularly how they strategically adapt to prevailing circumstances. Moreover, research on this topic would benefit from cross-national research – not just comparisons between Chinese youths in Spain and those in more established destination countries (e.g. United States, Canada and Australia), but also comparisons with their counterparts in more recent destination countries (e.g. Italy, France, Germany). Finally, given that the broad purpose of this study is to develop a general understanding of how educational and occupational ambitions among immigrant minority youths are formed as 'strategic adaptations' to structural constraints, the theoretical framework needs to be applied to the study of other groups. It would be particularly interesting to identify second-generation groups in the U.S. with relatively low educational ambitions (e.g. Hmongs, Laotians, Cambodians, Mexicans, as identified in the CILS studies – see: Portes and Rumbaut 2001) and test whether their low educational ambitions have been replaced with alternative outlooks, such as entrepreneurial aspirations, like the Chinese youths in Spain have.

For tables and figures [See accompanying .doc file]

Cited References

Alba, Richard. 2005. "Bright vs. blurred boundaries: Second-generation assimilation and exclusion in France, Germany and the United States." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28 (1): 20-49.

Alba, Richard and Victor Nee. 2003. *Remaking the American Mainstream: Assimilation and Contemporary Immigration.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Alonso-Borrego, César, Nuno Garoupa, Marcelo Perera, and Pablo Vázquez. 2008. "Immigration and Crime in Spain, 1999-2006," Working Paper in Immigration Series, Universidad Carlos III de Madrid.

Aparicio, Rosa. 2006. *Hijos de Inmigrantes se Hacen Adultos.* Madrid: Observatorio Permanente de la Inmigración, Ministerio de Trabajo e Inmigración.

Barringer, Herbert R., David T. Takeuchi, and Peter Xenos.1990. "Education, Occupational Prestige, and Income of Asian Americans." *Sociology of Education* 63(1): 27-43.

Beltrán Antolín, Joaquín. 2002. "The family business. Work, social and family networks in the Chinese community." *Ofrim / Supplements* 6: 129-153.

Beltrán Antolín, Joaquín. 2005. "Chinese entrepreneurship in Spain: the Seeds of Chinatown." Asian Migrants and European Labor Markets: Patterns and Processes of Labour Market Insertion in Europe eds. Ernst Spaan, Felicitas Hillmann, and Ton van Naerssen. London and New York: Routledge.

Breton, Raymond. 1964. "Institutional Completeness of Ethnic Communities and the Personal Relations of Immigrants." *American Journal of Sociology* 70(2): 193-205.

Butler, John Sibley and Cedric Herring. 1991. "Ethnicity and entrepreneurship in America: Toward an explanation of racial and ethnic group variations in self-employment." *Sociological Perspectives* 34(1): 79-94.

Cachon, Lorenzo. 2009. *La España Inmigrante*. Barcelona: Anthropos.

Calavita, Kitty. 2005. *Immigrants at the Margins: Law, Race, and Exclusion in Southern Europe.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Carrasco, Silvia. 2005. “Interculturalidad e inclusión: principios para evaluar la acogida del alumnado extranjero.” *Aula de Innovación Educativa* 147: 64-68.

Carvajal Gomez, Maria I. 2006. Evolución de las Cifras de Extranjeros con Tarjeta de Autorización en Vigor.” In *Veinte Años de Inmigración en España: Perspectivas Juridicas* eds. Elisio Aja, and Joaquin Arango. Barcelona: Fundación CIDOB, 85-112.

Daley, Suzanne. 2011. “An Awakening That Keeps Them Up All Night.” *New York Times* (7 June 2011).

Fernández-Kelly, Patricia and Lisa Konczal. 2005. “Murdering the alphabet: Identity and entrepreneurship among second-generation Cubans, West Indians, and Central Americans.” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28(6): 1153-1181.

Firebaugh, Glenn. 2008. *Seven Rules for Social Research*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University.

Fong, Eric and Chiu Luk. 2007. "Introduction: Chinese Ethnic Business and Globalization." *Chinese Ethnic Business: Global and Local Perspectives* eds. Eric Fong and Chiu Luk. London, UK: Routledge.

Fordham, Signithia and John U. Ogbu. 1986. “Black students' school success: Coping with the "burden of 'acting White." *The Urban Review* 18(3): 176-206.

Gibson, Margaret A. and Silvia Carrasco. 2009. “The education of immigrant youth: Some lesson from the U.S. and Spain.” *Theory into Practice* 48(4): 249-257.

Glenn, Evelyn Nakano with Stacey H. Yap. 1994. “Chinese American Families” in *Minority Families in the United States: A Multicultural Perspective* ed. Ronald L. Taylor. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Gold, Steven, Ivan Light and M. Francis Johnston. 2006. "The second-generation and self-employment." *Migration Information Source* (October).

Harris, Angel L. 2006. "I (Don't) Hate School: Revisiting Oppositional Culture Theory of Blacks' Resistance to Schooling." *Social Forces* 85(2): 797-833.

Harris, Angel L. 2010. *Kids Don't Want to Fail: Oppositional Culture and the Black-White Achievement Gap.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University.

Hirschmann, Charles and Morrison G. Wong. 1986. "The Extraordinary Educational Attainment of Asian Americans: A Search for Historical Evidence and Explanations." *Social Forces* 65(1): 1-27.

Instituto Nacional de Estadística. 2010. *Evolution of the foreign population in Spain since 1998.* Madrid: Instituto Nacional de Estadística.

Instituto Nacional de Estadística. (National Statistics Institute). 2009. *Statistical Yearbook on Foreigners 2009.* Madrid: Instituto Nacional de Estadística.

Kibria, Nazli. 2002. *Becoming Asian American: Second Chinese and Korean American Identities.* Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.

Kasinitz, Phillip, Mary Waters, John H. Mollenkopf, and Jennifer Holdaway. 2008. *Inheriting the City: The Children of Immigrants Come of Age.* New York: Russell Sage.

Kao, Grace and Marta Tienda. 1995. "Optimism and Achievement: The Educational Performance of Immigrant Youth." *Social Science Quarterly* 76: 1-19.

Lieberson, Stanley. 1980. *A Piece of the Pie: Black and White Immigrants Since 1880.* Berkeley: University of California.

Light, Ivan. 1972. *Ethnic Enterprise in America.* Berkeley: University of California.

Louie, Vivian. 2004. *Compelled to Excel: Education and Opportunity among Chinese Americans.* Palo Alto: Stanford.

Migration News. 2000. “Spain: Immigration Laws.” (September). UC Davis.

Ministerio de Educació y Ciencia, *Gobierno de España.* 2008. *Estadísticas de la Educación [Statistics of education]*. Madrid: *Ministerio de Educació* y Ciencia.

Nieto, Gladys. 2001. *Las asociaciones chino-españolas en la construcción de una comunidad imaginada.* Ph.D. Dissertation, Social Anthropology, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid.

Nieto, Gladys. 2002. “Characteristic elements of Chinese immigration in Spain.” *In Dinamiche Europee della diaspora cinese: Prospettive per Prato, Emiliano and Baldi ed.* Renzo Rastrelli, *pp. 161-181. Prato:* Assessorato Alle Politiche Comunitarie.

Nieto, Gladys. 2003. “The Chinese in Spain.” *International Migration* 43(1): 215-237.

Peach, Ceri and Günther Glebe. 1995. “Muslim minorities in Western Europe.” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 18(1): 26-45.

Portes, Alejandro, Rosa Aparicio, William Haller and Erik Vickstrom. 2010. “Moving ahead in Madrid: Aspirations and Expectations in the Spanish Second Generation.” *International Migration Review* 44(4): 767-801.

Portes, Alejandro and Ruben Rumbaut. 2001. *Legacies: The Story of the Immigrant Second Generation. Berkeley: University of California Press and Russell Sage Foundation.*

Portes, Alejandro and Steven Shafer. 2006. “Revisiting the Enclave Hypothesis: Miami Twenty-five Years Later.” *Sociology of Entrepreneurship* 25: 157-190.

Portes, Alejandro and Min Zhou. 1993. “The New Second Generation: Segmented Assimilation and its Variants.” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 530(1): 74-96

Raijman, Rebeca and Marta Tienda. 2000. “Pathways to Business Ownership Among Immigrants to Chicago: A Comparative Ethnic Perspective.” *International Migration Review* 34 (3): 681-705.

Sanchirico, Andres. 1991. "The importance of small-business ownership in Chinese American Educational Achievement." *Sociology of Education* 64(4): 293-304.

Sewell, William H., Archibald Haller and Alejandro Portes. 1969. "The educational and early occupational attainment process." *American Sociological Review* 34(1): 82-92.

Singleton, Royce A. and Bruce C. Straits. 2005. Approaches to Social Research, 4th edition. New York: Oxford University Press.

Takaki, Ronald. 1989. *Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans.* Boston: Little, Brown and Company.

Teese, Ricahrd, Petter Aasen, Simon Field, and Beatriz Pont. 2006. *Equity in Spanish education: An OECD thematic review.* Paris: OECD.

Thunø, Mette .1999. "Moving Stones from China to Europe: The Dynamics of Emigration from Zhejiang to Europe." In *Internal and International Migration: Chinese Perspectives* eds. Frank N. Pieke and Hein Mallee, 159-180. Richmond: Curzon Press.

Xie, Yu and Kimberly Goyette. 2003. "Social Mobility and the Educational Choices of Asian Americans."*Social Science Research* 32:467-98.

Zhou, Min. 1992. *Chinatown: The Socioeconomic Potential of an Urban Enclave*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Zhou, Min. 2009. *Contemporary Chinese America: Immigration, Ethnicity, and Community Transformation*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Zhou, Min and Carl L. Bankston III. 1994. "Social Capital and the Adaptation of the Second Generation: The Case of Vietnamese Youth in New Orleans East." *International Migration Review* 28 (4): 775-799.

Zufiaurre, Benjamin. 2006. "Social inclusion and multicultural perspectives in Spain: Three case studies in northern Spain." *Race, Ethnicity and Education* 9(4): 409–424.