



# Compelled to Excel: Immigration, Education, and Opportunity among Chinese Americans

*Vivian S. Louie*

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In the contemporary American imagination, Asian Americans are considered the quintessential immigrant success story, a powerful example of how the culture of immigrant families—rather than their race or class—matters in education and upward mobility. Drawing on extensive interviews with second-generation Chinese Americans attending Hunter College, a public commuter institution, and Columbia University, an elite Ivy League school, Vivian Louie challenges the idea that race and class do not matter. Though most Chinese immigrant families see higher education as a necessary safeguard against potential racial discrimination, Louie finds that class differences do indeed shape the students' different paths to college.

How do second-generation Chinese Americans view their college plans? And how do they see their incorporation into American life? In addressing these questions, Louie finds that the views and experiences of Chinese Americans have much to do with the opportunities, challenges, and contradictions that all immigrants and their children confront in the United States.

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