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# The Coming of the Second Generation: Immigration and Ethnic Mobility in Southern California

By  
RUBÉN G. RUMBAUT

In a context of widening inequality and governmental persecution of undocumented immigrants, central questions concern the social mobility of new ethnic groups formed as a result of mass migration from Latin America and Asia—especially the growing number of children of immigrants now transitioning to adulthood. This article presents findings from merged samples of two research studies in Southern California, the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS-III) and Immigration and Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles (IIMMLA). The focus is on the educational mobility of foreign-parentage (1.5- and second-generation) young adults of Mexican, Salvadoran, Guatemalan, Filipino, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Laotian origin. The author examines factors that facilitate or derail mobility, including the role of parental human capital and legal/citizenship status, family and neighborhood contexts, early school achievement, acculturation, incarceration, and teenage and nonmarital childbearing, compared to patterns observed among native-parentage (third-generation and beyond) whites, blacks, and Mexican Americans. The article then considers the relationship between acculturation and mobility outcomes and the resulting new patterns of urban ethnic inequality.

*Keywords:* immigration; modes of incorporation; intergenerational mobility; segmented assimilation; language acculturation; education; incarceration; childbearing; urban inequality

**M**ore immigrants come to the United States than to any other country in the world; more come to California than to any other state; and more settle in Southern California than in

NOTE: An earlier version of this article was presented at the conference “No Margin for Error: Exceptional Achievement in Education and Employment among Immigrant Children,” Princeton University, May 11-12, 2007. I gratefully acknowledge the support of the Russell Sage Foundation for the two surveys upon which this research is based—IIMMLA (Immigration and Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles) and CILS-III (Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study), San Diego—which were carried out in Southern California from 2001 to 2004.

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any other metropolitan region. The United States is home to a fifth of the world's migrant population (United Nations 2006). California is home to more than a fourth of all immigrants in the United States, and more than a fourth of the state's population is foreign-born—a significantly greater proportion than any other state (Portes and Rumbaut 2006). Furthermore, Southern California is home to the largest concentrations of Mexicans, Salvadorans, Guatemalans, Filipinos, Koreans, Japanese, Taiwanese, Vietnamese, Cambodians, Iranians, and other nationalities outside of their respective countries of origin and to sizable contingents of Armenians, Arabs, mainland Chinese, Hondurans, Indians, Laotians, and Russian and Israeli Jews. Most of the largest immigrant nationalities that have settled in the United States over the past few decades have established their primary enclaves in Greater Los Angeles. What happens to these immigrants and their descendants is a question fraught with theoretical, practical, and public policy significance. This article presents findings from Southern California on the mobility trajectories of foreign-parentage young adults, focusing on key ethnic groups with distinct modes of incorporation, compared to native-parentage white, black, and Mexican American peers.

## The Problem in National Context

By 2006, about 38 million foreign-born persons were living in the United States, 56 percent of whom had immigrated since 1990, primarily from Latin America and Asia (U.S. Census Bureau 2007b). The U.S.-born second generation totaled more than 30 million in 2006, so that immigrants and their children today add up to some 70 million persons, constituting 23 percent of the national total—and half of all Californians. The new immigration has transformed the ethnic composition of the United States, sprouting ethnic “majority-minority” states (including California in 2000) and counties—nationally, nearly one in ten counties is now more than 50 percent minority (U.S. Census Bureau 2007a). The 2000 census found that for the first time, three Hispanic surnames—García, Rodríguez, and Martínez—were among the eleven most common in the United States, displacing Wilson, Anderson, and Taylor (Roberts 2007).

New American ethnic groups are forming faster than ever, a process that has been accompanied by the official construction of one-size-fits-all panethnic categories such as “Asians” and “Hispanics” into which newcomers from many

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different countries and cultures are included. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2004a, 2004b), in 2003 Hispanics surpassed African Americans to become the largest minority in the country—and notably, for the first time in decades, their growth is now due more to natural increase than to immigration (National Research Council 2006). Although Hispanics (45 million in 2007) compose 15 percent of the population, they account for half of U.S. population growth since 2000; given their higher fertility (2.9 children per woman in 2006) and youthful age structure (a median age of twenty-seven, compared to forty-one for non-Hispanic whites), they will account for the lion's share of U.S. population growth for the next several decades—regardless of what happens with immigration (Haub 2006; cf. Myers 2007). Overall, the immigrant-stock population, the largest ever, is young. As today's U.S.-born second generation reaches adulthood, its impact will be widely felt throughout the society. The second generation is coming of age in an aging society undergoing profound social and economic transformations—amid a hostile political backlash and an animus toward immigrants, which has risen since 1994 with the passage of Proposition 187 in California and has been exacerbated after September 11, 2001. Following a period of stepped-up deportations, workplace raids, and the passage of hundreds of state laws and local ordinances restricting access to driver's licenses, education, employment, housing, and even library cards, the 2007 National Survey of Latinos found that 53 percent of Hispanic adults (about a quarter of whom are undocumented immigrants) feared that they, a family member, or a close friend would be deported (Pew Hispanic Center 2007; cf. Johnson 2005; Kanstroom 2007).

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*The ethnic and national diversity of contemporary immigrants pales by comparison to the diversity of their class origins. The most educated and the least educated groups in the United States are immigrants.*

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The ethnic and national diversity of contemporary immigrants pales by comparison to the diversity of their class origins. The most educated *and* the least educated groups in the United States are immigrants. They come through regular channels, without legal authorization, or as state-sponsored refugees—legal statuses that interact with their human capital to shape distinct modes of incorporation. The undocumented disproportionately consist of manual laborers,

whose legal vulnerability makes them economically exploitable. Their children tend to grow up in poor neighborhoods and attend schools where they are exposed to youth gangs and intergroup violence. Professionals mainly enter under the occupational preferences of U.S. law, and some are also found among the first waves of refugee flows; they are more likely to become naturalized citizens and, within the first generation, home owners in suburbs. Group characteristics interact with external contexts of reception to shape the conditions within which immigrants and their children adapt to different segments of American society (Portes and Zhou 1993; Rumbaut and Portes 2001).

If immigrants are different, so is the society into which they are being absorbed. The incorporation of newcomers since the 1970s coincided with economic restructuring and rising inequality in income, wealth, and social well-being (Massey 2007), producing a "Great U-Turn" (Harrison and Bluestone 1988) that by the 1990s had led to levels of economic stratification not seen since the 1920s. As the returns to education and advanced educational credentials sharply increased, postsecondary schooling lengthened for young adults. As the earnings and job stability of young workers fell relative to the cost of supporting a family, women entered the labor market in large numbers and worked longer hours. Two-income families and delayed childbearing became the norm, accompanied by changes in family forms (Landale, Oropesa, and Bradatan 2006). Unmarried childbearing reached a record high in 2006, with the nonmarital birth rate reaching 50.6 births per 1,000 unmarried females. Unmarried mothers now account for nearly 40 percent of all U.S. births (Hamilton, Martin, and Ventura 2007). Normative transitions to adulthood have thus become less predictable and more prolonged (Danziger and Rouse 2007; Settersten, Furstenberg, and Rumbaut 2005). In addition, mass immigration has unfolded during an era of mass imprisonment (Pettit and Western 2004; Rumbaut 2005a). The number of adults incarcerated in federal or state prisons or local jails in the United States more than quadrupled between 1980 and 2006. Including those on probation or parole, more than 7 million adults were under correctional supervision in the United States in 2006 (U.S. Department of Justice 2007). The majority are young men from racial or ethnic minorities with less than a high school education.

As postsecondary education has become critical to social mobility, incarceration and early childbearing have emerged as key events disrupting educational and occupational opportunities (Rumbaut 2005a; cf. Elder 1998). Having children at an early age is more strongly and negatively associated with the educational attainments and occupational choices of women than men (Marini 1984; Feliciano and Rumbaut 2005). A prison record is linked to unemployment, lower wages, marital and family instability, and severe restrictions on social and voting rights (Manza and Uggen 2006; Western 2002; Western, Kling, and Weiman 2001), as well as to stigmatized identities and pathways to criminal recidivism. In a cycle of cumulative disadvantage, young men and women with low levels of education are more likely to become prisoners or parents than same-age and same-sex peers with higher levels of education.

What do we know about foreign-parentage young adults and their social mobility in this transformed national context (cf. Alba and Nee 2003; Portes and Fernández-Kelly 2006)? Unfortunately, decennial census data on parental nativity have not been available since 1980. Scholarship on adult outcomes among the new second generation therefore relies on the Current Population Survey (CPS) and specially designed regional surveys, such as the third wave of the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS-III) (Portes and Rumbaut 2005); the Immigrant Second Generation in Metropolitan New York (ISGMNY) study (Kasinitz et al. 2008); and the Immigration and Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles (IIMMLA) survey (Rumbaut et al. 2003). The merged IIMMLA and CILS San Diego samples will be the focus of this analysis. First, I turn to an examination of national-level CPS data.

## Young Adults in the United States, by Gender and Generation

Tables 1a and 1b provide a profile of demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of Hispanic and non-Hispanic black, white, and Asian young adults eighteen to thirty-four in the United States in 2006, broken down by gender (Table 1a) and generation (Table 1b). Those four ethno-racial groupings account for 65.5 million young adults in the United States, or nearly 98 percent of the total (the remainder consists of Native American and mixed-race populations). Among Hispanics (two-thirds of whom are of Mexican descent) is a much greater proportion of males than females (54 to 46 percent)—a reflection of disproportionate number of young male migrant workers in this population. By contrast, only 46 percent of black young adults are males—partly because these estimates are drawn from a household survey of the noninstitutionalized population and miss a large number of young black males who are incarcerated or in the military. Non-Hispanic whites and blacks are overwhelmingly long-term natives (nearly 90 percent), whereas 95 percent of Asians and 80 percent of Hispanics are of foreign birth or parentage. Newcomers are situated at the polar ends of the opportunity structure, so that both ethnic and class divides are apparent. Educational and related inequalities between whites and blacks seem narrow compared to the gulf that separates Asians from Hispanics. Asian men and women are at the top of the educational hierarchy: an extraordinary 62 percent had four-year college or advanced degrees (nearly twice the 33 percent rate of white men), while only 8 percent failed to complete high school (compared to 12 percent of white men). Latinos are at the bottom: 41 percent of young adult males had not finished high school, and fewer than one in ten had earned college or advanced degrees. Particularly striking is the range in the attainment of advanced degrees (professional, master's or doctorates), from 25 percent of Asian men to 8 percent of whites, 3 percent of blacks, and 2 percent of Hispanics. Young Latino men are

*(text continues on p. 205)*

TABLE 1A  
 SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF YOUNG ADULTS IN THE UNITED STATES, EIGHTEEN  
 TO THIRTY-FOUR, BY PANETHNICITY AND GENDER (IN PERCENTAGES)

Selected Characteristics	Non-Hispanic							
	Hispanic		Asian		Black		White	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Total young adults (18 to 34) (N)	6,737,822	5,752,740	1,622,549	1,687,121	3,973,738	4,642,216	20,579,352	20,518,648
Nativity/generation <sup>a</sup>								
Foreign-born (1st gen.)	58.8	51.9	69.6	75.5	10.3	9.3	4.8	4.8
U.S.-born, foreign-born parent (2nd gen.)	21.5	25.0	25.3	20.7	4.5	4.1	4.5	4.4
U.S.-born, U.S.-born parents (3rd+ gen.)	19.6	23.1	5.1	3.8	85.2	86.5	90.8	90.7
Educational attainment <sup>b</sup>								
Less than high school	40.8	35.3	8.1	7.4	18.5	16.6	12.2	9.4
High school graduate	31.5	29.7	16.6	15.5	39.7	33.4	31.2	25.7
Some college	20.8	26.0	29.7	29.3	30.7	35.4	34.3	37.3
Bachelor's degree (25 and older)	7.8	10.2	36.7	41.7	14.0	15.7	25.0	28.3
Advanced degree (25 and older)	2.0	2.6	25.1	20.5	3.1	5.2	7.9	10.2
Labor force status								
Working full-time	69.8	41.0	59.0	42.3	50.5	47.0	64.9	47.4
Working part-time	10.9	14.7	12.6	14.7	10.7	14.2	13.3	22.0
Not working	19.3	44.3	28.4	43.0	38.9	38.8	21.8	30.6
Occupational status index <sup>c</sup>								
Higher (SEI > 50)	14.9	27.9	53.5	49.0	21.4	30.6	33.6	42.6
Middle (SEI > 25)	21.7	38.2	20.3	31.8	27.6	39.8	27.5	35.5
Low-wage labor (SEI < 25)	63.4	33.9	26.1	19.2	51.1	29.6	38.9	21.9

(continued)

TABLE 1A (continued)

Selected Characteristics	Hispanic		Non-Hispanic					
	Male	Female	Asian		Black		White	
			Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
<b>Economic status</b>								
Poverty rate (below poverty line)	16.4	25.6	12.9	13.3	18.6	29.2	8.4	12.7
Family annual income (\$)	44,481	42,456	69,247	70,810	46,703	38,105	65,788	62,605
Earnings (of those working) (\$)	24,330	19,484	40,957	31,305	25,448	21,245	33,635	24,012
<b>Marital and parental status</b>								
Never married	53.9	38.8	64.4	44.3	69.0	65.6	54.8	42.5
Cohabiting	6.4	7.4	2.4	4.3	7.6	6.3	8.0	9.3
Currently married	36.2	47.4	31.8	48.8	19.6	20.7	33.7	42.5
Divorced, separated	3.5	6.4	1.3	2.6	3.7	7.4	3.5	5.7
Has one or more children	—	48.0	—	31.6	—	42.8	—	37.1
Incarcerated (males only)	3.26	—	0.72	—	11.15	—	1.68	—

SOURCE: Merged Current Population Surveys, 2003-2006. Incarceration data are estimated from the 2000 census.

a. 1st generation = foreign-born; 2nd = U.S.-born, one or both parents foreign-born; 3rd or higher = U.S.-born, both parents U.S.-born.

b. Educational attainment for bachelor's degree or higher is reported only for 25-34 year olds.

c. Socioeconomic Index (SEI): higher = professional, technical, white-collar occupations with SEI (Duncan) scores above 50; middle = services and skilled blue-collar jobs with SEI scores above 25; low = jobs with SEI scores below 25.

TABLE 1B  
**SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF YOUNG ADULTS IN THE UNITED STATES, EIGHTEEN  
 TO THIRTY-FOUR, BY PANETHNICITY AND GENERATION (IN PERCENTAGES)**

Selected Characteristics	Non-Hispanic															
	Hispanic				Asian				Black				White			
	1st Generation <sup>a</sup>	2nd	3rd+		1st	2nd	3rd+		1st	2nd	3rd+		1st	2nd	3rd+	
Total young adults (18 to 34) (N)	5,150,866	4,687,097	2,652,439	1,568,756	1,593,997	146,917	540,549	671,004	7,402,978	1,212,777	2,587,471	37,296,700				
Educational attainment <sup>b</sup>																
Less than high school	56.2	28.5	20.8	6.5	9.1	6.7	15.3	12.6	18.1	10.1	8.9	10.9				
High school graduate	27.8	31.0	35.8	15.0	17.0	16.6	31.2	25.7	37.6	26.0	22.4	28.9				
Some college	10.3	31.3	33.8	20.6	37.5	38.5	31.2	43.5	32.5	22.7	37.6	36.1				
Bachelor's degree (25 and older)	5.6	12.8	11.3	38.3	41.2	34.6	19.7	23.2	13.9	30.4	33.3	26.1				
Advanced degree (25 and older)	1.6	2.8	3.3	27.5	16.1	15.8	7.9	7.8	3.7	18.6	12.5	8.4				
Labor force status																
Working full-time	59.6	53.9	55.0	52.2	48.9	49.4	55.9	42.6	48.6	56.8	52.2	56.3				
Working part-time	10.1	14.1	15.3	11.0	15.7	19.9	14.4	15.3	12.2	12.4	17.7	17.9				
Not working	30.3	32.0	29.7	36.8	35.4	30.7	29.7	42.1	39.2	30.9	30.0	25.8				
Occupational status index <sup>c</sup>																
Higher (SEI > 50)	8.9	26.8	28.4	56.1	47.6	47.2	25.9	31.8	25.9	45.9	43.1	37.2				
Middle (SEI > 25)	16.8	34.8	37.1	20.7	30.1	25.3	27.7	39.2	34.2	23.9	32.1	31.4				
Low-wage labor (SEI < 25)	74.3	38.4	34.5	23.2	22.3	27.4	46.4	29.0	39.9	30.1	24.7	31.4				

(continued)

TABLE 1B (continued)

Selected Characteristics	Hispanic			Non-Hispanic									
	1st Generation <sup>a</sup>	2nd		Asian			Black			White			
		3rd+	2nd	3rd+	1st	2nd	3rd+	1st	2nd	3rd+	1st	2nd	3rd+
Economic status													
Poverty rate (below poverty line)	25.8	17.1	16.6	15.8	10.9	8.8	19.7	13.8	25.6	13.7	8.9	10.6	
Family annual income (\$)	35,206	48,642	50,256	63,345	75,561	81,352	44,838	57,138	40,204	61,893	74,756	63,521	
Earnings (of those working) (\$)	20,252	23,936	24,612	39,911	33,615	35,725	23,938	26,430	22,818	35,356	31,741	28,803	
Marital and parental status													
Never married	35.5	57.2	51.1	38.5	69.0	61.1	55.0	76.9	67.2	33.8	57.5	48.5	
Cohabiting	5.8	6.7	9.1	2.3	4.2	5.5	4.5	3.7	7.3	5.3	6.9	8.9	
Currently married	54.1	31.9	33.5	57.2	24.9	30.5	36.6	15.1	19.5	57.6	32.6	37.8	
Divorced, separated	4.6	4.3	6.3	2.0	1.9	3.0	3.9	4.2	5.9	3.3	3.1	4.8	
Has children (females only)	56.2	37.2	41.9	36.4	13.8	32.1	37.3	21.7	44.4	39.3	29.8	37.3	
Incarcerated (males only) <sup>d</sup>	0.99	6.72	0.29	1.86	2.47	11.61	0.57	1.71					

SOURCE: Merged Current Population Surveys, 2003-2006.

a. 1st generation = foreign-born; 2nd = U.S.-born, one or both parents foreign-born; 3rd or higher = U.S.-born, both parents U.S.-born.

b. Educational attainment for bachelor's degree or higher are reported only for 25-34 year olds.

c. Socioeconomic Index (SEI): higher = professional, technical, white-collar occupations with SEI (Duncan) scores above 50; middle = services and skilled blue-collar jobs with SEI scores above 25; low = jobs with SEI scores below 25.

d. Incarceration data are estimated from the 2000 census, for foreign-born and U.S.-born males 18-34. Among the U.S.-born, census data do not distinguish the 2nd from 3rd+ generations.

also mired in the lowest rungs of the U.S. labor market, with nearly two out of three employed in low-wage labor, while 54 percent of Asian young men were employed in high-status jobs. Non-Hispanic whites and blacks fall between those two poles. On the other hand, Hispanic men eighteen to thirty-four have the highest labor force participation rate (87 percent) and are the most likely to be working full-time (70 percent); in fact, they are half as likely as young black men to be jobless (19 to 39 percent) and much less likely to be incarcerated (as estimated from 2000 census data). Hispanic women are much more likely to have children (48 percent) than women in other groups. Asian women are the least likely to have children, but both Hispanic and Asian women are more likely to be married than blacks or whites. While Asians have higher family incomes and personal earnings, whites have the lowest poverty rates and blacks have the highest.

Table 1b breaks down these differences in socioeconomic status and family formation by generation within each of the panethnic groups, to examine the extent of intergenerational change from the foreign-born cohorts (first generation) to those of foreign parentage (second generation) and native parentage (third and higher generations). Key comparisons are to third-or-higher-generation whites and blacks—that is, to native-stock majority and minority groups. Among Hispanics, the data show rapid upward educational, occupational, and economic mobility from the first to the second generation. In part that reflects the very low starting points of the foreign-born. Thus, the proportion with less than a high school diploma is cut in half from the first to the second generation (56 to 28 percent). Among foreign-born Latin Americans, many (especially undocumented workers from Mexico and Central America) came in their teens and had not completed secondary schooling in their country of origin (it is not so much that they “dropped out” of high school but that they never “dropped in”). College graduation rates double from 7 percent among the foreign-born to 14 percent among the U.S.-born. Despite these positive indices, the rate of incarceration among Hispanic men sharply increases from less than 1 percent among the foreign-born to 6.7 percent among the U.S.-born—less than the 11.6 percent incarceration rate seen among native blacks, but much higher than the 1.7 percent rate among native whites. Because of the very high levels of education among immigrants from India, Taiwan, and other Asian countries, we do not see the same pattern of upward intergenerational mobility among Asians. Two out of three in that population hold a bachelor’s degree or more in the immigrant generation, and a remarkable 28 percent hold advanced degrees. Those rates drop to 57 percent (and 16 percent) in the second generation, and 50 percent in the third-plus generation. Despite the relative decline across generations, college graduation rates among Asians in every cohort are far higher than in any other group. A similar pattern exists with regard to occupational status, with 56 percent of the first generation (compared to 47 percent of the second and third-plus generations) holding high-status jobs. Still, poverty rates decrease over time and family incomes increase. These data only hint at the process of intergenerational change, but the formation of new patterns of urban and ethnic inequality is evident.

## Immigrant Nationalities and Modes of Incorporation

While useful, this cross-sectional profile of young adults provided by the CPS conceals more than it reveals. The panethnic categories of Asians and Hispanics are not homogeneous. Table 2 begins to unpack those categories. It provides a typology of three main modes of incorporation based on (1) legal status at entry (with or without authorization, or as state-sponsored refugees—or entry through the “front gate,” the “back door,” or the “side door” [cf. Zolberg 2006]) and (2) human capital (as indicated by their level of education, ranging from professionals and entrepreneurs to manual laborers) (cf. Feliciano 2006). Each type is represented by several nationalities, but each nationality may also include individuals representing different kinds of entry (Portes and Rumbaut 2006). Mode I is typified by groups composed of a majority of unauthorized laborers with less than a high school education (Mexicans, Salvadorans, and Guatemalans); Mode II encompasses primarily legal permanent residents with college degrees or more advanced credentials (Filipinos, Chinese, Koreans, and Indians); and Mode III comprises groups admitted with refugee status (and thereby access to public assistance on the same basis as U.S. citizens), albeit with mixed (often low) human capital (Vietnamese, Cambodians, and Laotians). Nine of these ten nationalities (the Indians excepted) make up the bulk of the IIMMLA and CILS-III samples that will be the focus of analysis below.

While the nearly 38 million foreign-born people in the United States in 2006 came from some 190 countries, 11.5 million (31 percent) came from only one: Mexico. Another 9 million (24 percent) came from China (including Taiwan), the Philippines, India, Vietnam, Korea, and El Salvador and Guatemala.<sup>1</sup> More than half (55 percent) of the foreign-born population has come from these eight nations—all with close historical ties to the United States, which included neo-colonial episodes and wars (India is the main exception). Of the 9.9 million foreign-born residents of California, Mexico alone accounts for 44 percent, and the other seven for 32 percent, as shown in Table 2. Moreover, while California is home to 10 percent of the native-born population of the United States, between a third and a half of these foreign-born groups are concentrated in California (except for the Indians, who are more dispersed).

In 2006, the Department of Homeland Security estimated the unauthorized population of the United States at 11.6 million (Hoefer, Rytina, and Campbell 2007; see also Passel 2006)—almost quadrupling since the early 1990s. Thus, nearly a third (31 percent) of the foreign-born are undocumented (the majority “entered without inspection,” while as many as 40 percent entered legally but overstayed their visas). Of the rest, about one-third consist of legal permanent residents, and another third are naturalized citizens. An immigrant’s legal status is a critical factor in shaping mobility—and an unauthorized status can affect virtually every facet of an immigrant’s life (cf. Menjívar 2006). As Table 2 documents, all of the principal sources of legal immigration to the United States are also among the top sources of unauthorized migration. More than half of all

TABLE 2  
**NATIONAL ORIGINS AND MODES OF INCORPORATION; MAIN TYPES (BY LEGAL STATUS AND EDUCATION)  
 AND LARGEST FOREIGN-BORN NATIONALITIES IN U.S. AND CALIFORNIA, 2006**

National Origin	Foreign-Born Population in the United States										Foreign-Born Population in California			
	Foreign-Born Total					Undocumented Proportion					Education (Ages 25-64)		Population in California	
	N (000s)	% (of U.S.)	N (000s)	% (of U.S.)	% of Group That Is Undocumented	% College Graduate	% Less Than High School	N (000s)	%	N (000s)	%	N (000s)	% of (U.S.) Group in California	
Modes of incorporation														
Mode I: Low education, unauthorized														
Mexican	11,535	30.8	6,570	57.0	56.9	5.8	60.0	4,396	44.4	42.6				
Salvadoran, Guatemalan	1,783	4.8	940	8.0	52.7	5.6	59.6	678	6.8	43.9				
Mode II: High education, legal entry														
Filipino	1,634	4.4	280	2.4	17.1	51.7	2.7	750	7.6	47.7				
Chinese, Taiwanese	1,933	5.2	190	1.6	9.8	54.8	15.8	659	6.7	37.5				
Korean	1,021	2.7	250	2.2	24.4	57.8	2.9	323	3.3	30.6				
Indian	1,505	4.0	270	2.3	17.9	80.6	3.6	303	3.1	19.5				
Mode III: Refugees, state-sponsored														
Vietnamese	1,116	3.0	160	1.4	14.3	31.7	21.3	446	4.5	42.4				
Cambodian, Laotian	329	0.9	NA	NA	NA	8.4	53.7	121	1.2	36.4				
Total	37,548	100	11,550	100	30.8	26.7	32.0	9,902	100	26.4				

SOURCE: American Community Survey 2006 (U.S. Census Bureau 2007b); Office of Immigration Statistics, DHS (Hoefler, Rytina, and Campbell 2007), for estimates of the undocumented population.

Mexican (57 percent) and Salvadoran and Guatemalan (53 percent) immigrants are unauthorized—together they account for nearly two-thirds of the unauthorized population—but so are substantial proportions of Koreans (24 percent), Indians (18 percent), Filipinos (17 percent), Vietnamese (14 percent), and Chinese (10 percent).

Below are the modal tendencies of each type described above:

*Mode I* (preponderantly unauthorized laborers with less than a high school education):

*Mexicans* represent the longest and largest labor migration in the world; their story includes prolonged presence in California and the Southwest, which was once part of Mexico (Massey, Durand, and Malone 2002). With 6 million persons of Mexican descent in Southern California (and about 28 million in the country), they constitute the largest source of both legal and unauthorized immigration to the United States and the adult population with the lowest levels of education in the nation. Of the estimated 11.5 million unauthorized immigrants in the United States in 2006, most (57 percent) were Mexican. Of the nearly 3 million legalized under the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, two-thirds were Mexican. An Immigration and Naturalization Service survey (U.S. Department of Justice 1992) of the national legalized population found that 25 percent resided in the Los Angeles area alone.

*Salvadorans and Guatemalans* form the largest flows from Central America. Like Mexicans, a large proportion are unauthorized; unlike other groups, many remain in perennially uncertain legal statuses. Like the Vietnamese in the 1980s, most Guatemalans and Salvadorans came as refugees, but unlike the Vietnamese, they were not recognized as such by the U.S. government (Coutin 2007; Menjivar 2006). Salvadorans, with scarcely a visible presence in the United States before 1980, have grown rapidly among all Latin American-origin groups, already surpassing Cubans. They are disproportionately located in Los Angeles County. Salvadorans and Guatemalans are the largest unauthorized groups after Mexicans, accounting for 8 percent of the U.S. total. They also rank after Mexicans in their low levels of education and are disproportionately located in Los Angeles County.

*Mode II* (preponderantly regular immigrants with college degrees or more advanced credentials):

*Filipinos* have the lowest poverty rate of any major ethnic group in the United States (a reflection of a large component of professionals, especially nurses, among those who migrate) and the highest proportion of immigrant enlistment in the U.S. military (principally the U.S. Navy). The Philippines—the largest sole-country source of immigration from Asia to California and the United States over the past four decades—is the only Asian country to have been colonized directly by the United States (and before then by Spain for three centuries), thus sharing a number of historical commonalities with Puerto Rico. The consequence is that Filipinos are the only Asians who bear Spanish surnames, are preponderantly Roman Catholic, and (as with Indians) generally speak English prearrival (cf. Espiritu 2003).

The *Chinese* population includes highly educated professionals and individuals with only elementary schooling, coming from multiple sources (mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong) and showing divergent class backgrounds. Most studies (e.g., Kasinitz et al. 2008; Zhou and Xiong 2005) show that their young adults are at the very top of educational achievement, despite modest social class origins in some cases. The Taiwanese rank with Indians as the most educated population in the United States.

*Koreans* have the highest rates of entrepreneurship of any ethnic group in the United States, native- or foreign-born (Min 2005; Light and Bonacich 1988) and thus represent another distinct tendency, especially in contrast to the Filipinos (who have one of the lowest rates of self-employment in the country). Unlike other Asian-origin groups, the

Koreans are primarily Protestant and have established thousands of immigrant churches (mostly Presbyterian) throughout the United States.

*Mode III* (preponderantly admitted with refugee status, mixed human capital profile):

*Vietnamese, Cambodians, and Laotians* stand in sharp contrast: they are state-sponsored groups who entered the United States as part of the largest refugee resettlement program in the country's history. Their incorporation was assisted by a wide range of cash and noncash public aid programs made available to them upon arrival. They came in the aftermath of the Indochina War—many of them, especially among the survivors of Cambodia's "killing fields," with chronic mental health problems. Poverty rates among Vietnamese arriving after 1975 remain higher than the national norm, and rates for Cambodians and Laotians (especially Hmong) are the highest in the United States (Hein 2006; Rumbaut 2005b).

Given the pronounced differences in migration histories, human capital, family backgrounds, and contexts of exit and reception among these groups, we may hypothesize varying mobility trajectories for their 1.5- and second-generation adult children. Since we cannot ascertain those mobility outcomes across generations on the basis of official statistics, we turn to two specialized surveys, IIMMLA and CILS.

## Data and Measures: The CILS-III and IIMMLA Surveys in Southern California

Data for the following analysis are drawn from two sources: the third wave of the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS) in San Diego, a decade-long panel study whose last phase of data collection ended in 2003; and the Immigration and Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles (IIMMLA) survey, a cross-sectional study whose data collection was carried out in 2004. Both surveys were conducted in Southern California, a region adjacent to the Mexican border and the nation's largest net receiver of immigrants. By 2000, one of every five immigrants in the United States resided in the region's six contiguous counties (San Diego, Orange, Los Angeles, Ventura, Riverside, and San Bernardino), including the largest concentrations of Mexicans, Salvadorans, Guatemalans, Filipinos, Taiwanese, Koreans, Vietnamese, and Cambodians outside their countries of origin.

The two data sets were merged (increasing sample size to  $N = 6,135$ ), since they are based on representative samples evenly divided by gender, of the same approximate age (28.6 years for IIMMLA and 24.2 years for CILS) and national origins—Mexicans, Salvadorans, Guatemalans, Filipinos, Chinese, Koreans, Vietnamese, Cambodians, and Laotians make up 76 percent of the merged sample, and other Latin American and Asian nationalities make up 10 percent. They were surveyed at about the same time (IIMMLA in 2004, CILS-III in 2001-2003) in the same region. Both surveys focused on the patterns of adaptation of adult children of contemporary immigrants—both those who were born abroad but arrived in the United States as children (the 1.5 generation), and those who were born in the United States of immigrant parents (the second generation)—and used identical measures of relevant variables.

Table 3 shows the number of IIMMLA and CILS respondents by gender, age group (20-24, 25 and older), and generational cohort (1.5, second, third and higher). Overall, the mean age was 27.5. Of the 6,135 respondents in the merged sample, 80 percent were 1.5 ( $n = 2,356$ ) or second generation ( $n = 2,566$ ), and 20 percent were third or higher generations ( $n = 1,213$ ). Among the 1.5 and second generations ( $n = 4,922$ ), Mode I groups (Mexicans, Salvadorans, and Guatemalans) accounted for 1,621; Mode II groups (Filipinos, Chinese [including Taiwanese], and Koreans) numbered 1,824, and Mode III groups (from Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia) totaled 790. The "Other Latin Americans" ( $n = 240$ ) came from Spanish-speaking countries of Central and South America and the Caribbean, while "all other nationalities" ( $n = 447$ ) included respondents from Canada, Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and the non-Spanish Caribbean. For all groups except Mexicans and non-Hispanic whites and blacks, immigration is so recent that sampling was not feasible beyond the second generation. Of the 2,566 born in the United States and classified as second generation, 76 percent had two foreign-born parents (the "2.0" cohort), while 24 percent had one U.S.-born parent (the "2.5" cohort). Of the 1,213 respondents classified as third or higher generations (U.S.-born persons with two U.S.-born parents), half of the Mexican Americans (47 percent) had four U.S.-born grandparents ("4th+" generations), as did two-thirds (69 percent) of non-Hispanic whites, and almost all (95 percent) of black respondents.

Tables 4, 5, and 6 focus first on antecedent variables hypothesized to have significant effects on educational attainment: parental human capital; parental citizenship status and acculturation (years in the United States; English fluency); and—during the respondents' childhood and adolescent years—family structure, parental homeownership, and neighborhood context. Tables 7, 8, and 9 present intervening and outcome variables—respondents' linguistic acculturation, incarceration and childbearing histories, and early educational achievement (high school)—and the highest level of education attained in early adulthood. Table 10 displays the extent of intergenerational educational mobility. Finally, multivariate analyses are presented regressing years of education on selected predictors, controlling for all of the preceding, to identify significant determinants.

## Unequal Origins

### *Parental Human Capital*

Table 4 presents data on parental human capital for the main ethnic groups, comparing father's and mother's levels of completed education. Data for the larger Mexican-origin sample permit a breakdown between the 1.5, second, and third-plus generations. Reflecting national data presented above, sharp differences appear between Mexican, Salvadoran, Guatemalan, Cambodian, and Laotian parents at one pole (between 55 and 82 percent had less than a high school education, while the proportion with college degrees were in the single digits) and the

TABLE 3  
 YOUNG ADULTS IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA: SAMPLE SIZE BY ETHNICITY, GENDER, GENERATION,  
 AND AGE (MERGED IIMMLA AND CILS-III SAN DIEGO SAMPLES, N = 6,135)

	Total N	Gender		Generational Cohort <sup>a</sup>					Age		Mean Age (Years)
		Female	Male	1.5	2nd	3rd+	20-24	25 and Older	Age		
									20-24	25 and Older	
Panethnicity											
Hispanic	2,262	1,181	1,081	695	1,166	401	912	1,350			27.5
Asian	2,743	1,382	1,361	1,569	1,174	0	1,441	1,302			26.2
Black	432	239	193	11	24	397	104	328			30.5
White	698	362	336	81	202	415	172	526			30.3
Ethnicity											
Mexican	1,642	855	787	423	818	401	680	962			27.5
Salvadoran, Guatemalan	380	193	187	181	199	0	155	225			26.8
Other Latin American <sup>b</sup>	240	133	107	91	149	0	77	163			28.6
Filipino	983	508	475	411	572	0	586	397			25.5
Chinese	433	188	245	235	198	0	184	249			27.6
Korean	408	207	201	257	151	0	164	244			27.6
Vietnamese	590	296	294	434	156	0	320	270			26.0
Cambodian, Laotian	200	112	88	191	9	0	119	81			24.5
All other nationalities <sup>c</sup>	447	247	200	133	314	0	166	281			28.8
Total	6,135	3,164	2,971	2,356	2,566	1,213	2,629	3,506			27.5

SOURCE: Immigration and Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles (IIMMLA) survey; Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS-III), San Diego.

- a. Generational cohorts defined as follows: 1.5 = foreign-born but arrived in United States in childhood; 2nd = U.S.-born, one or both parents foreign-born; 3rd or higher = U.S.-born, both parents U.S.-born. Among the 2,566 classified as 2nd generation, 659 had one U.S.-born parent ("2.5" generation). Among the 1,213 classified as 3rd or higher generation, half of the Mexican Americans (47 percent) had four U.S.-born grandparents ("4th+" generation), as did two-thirds (69 percent) of the non-Hispanic white respondents, and almost all (95 percent) of the black respondents.
- b. "Other Latin Americans" include respondents from all other Spanish-speaking countries of Central and South America and the Caribbean.
- c. "All other nationalities" include respondents from Canada (42) and dozens of European, Middle Eastern, Afro-Caribbean, and other Asian countries.

TABLE 4  
 PARENTAL HUMAN CAPITAL: EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF FATHER AND MOTHER, BY ETHNICITY  
 AND GENERATION (MERGED IIMMLA AND CILS-III SAN DIEGO SAMPLES) (IN PERCENTAGES)

	Parents' Educational Attainment					Father			Mother		
	Neither Finished High School	Only One Is High School Grad	Both Finished High School	Only One Is College Grad	Both Are College Grad	Less Than High School	College Grad	Less Than High School	College Grad	Less Than High School	College Grad
Panethnicity	40.0	26.9	21.8	7.3	3.9	53.3	10.7	53.6	8.4	35.4	25.9
Hispanic	16.8	14.7	22.9	19.7	26.0	21.8	41.7	26.5	35.4	25.9	33.5
Asian (3rd+ gen.)	10.8	22.2	37.5	17.9	11.6	28.9	21.1	14.4	25.9	33.5	
Black (3rd+ gen.)	4.3	12.0	35.4	22.7	25.5	15.2	40.5	11.2	33.5		
White (3rd+ gen.)	70.4	19.9	6.6	2.1	0.9	78.5	5.2	82.3	1.7		
Ethnicity	44.0	29.3	20.0	4.3	2.3	58.7	6.2	58.7	5.9		
(1.5 gen.) Mexican	16.0	24.2	43.4	11.2	5.2	27.9	12.7	28.2	10.5		
(2nd gen.) Mexican	38.7	34.5	16.8	8.2	1.8	56.6	11.1	55.3	7.9		
(3rd+ gen.) Mexican	15.0	23.8	26.7	18.8	15.8	27.9	31.3	25.8	26.7		
Salvadoran, Guatemalan	5.6	14.5	24.4	24.6	30.8	11.9	43.7	13.8	49.8		
Other Latin American	11.8	12.9	21.5	19.6	34.2	16.2	55.4	20.3	38.1		
Filipino	6.1	9.1	22.3	22.5	40.0	8.8	60.3	12.5	44.6		
Chinese	30.8	20.2	25.4	13.6	10.0	36.4	24.7	45.4	13.4		
Korean	67.5	15.5	10.0	3.5	3.5	69.5	9.5	81.0	5.5		
Vietnamese	8.5	17.2	28.2	25.3	20.8	19.5	39.8	14.8	32.2		
Cambodian, Laotian	23.7	19.7	24.6	15.5	16.5	33.2	28.7	33.9	24.6		
All other nationalities											
Total											

SOURCE: Immigration and Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles (IIMMLA) survey; Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS-III), San Diego.

Chinese and Koreans at the other end (more than half of the fathers and about 40 percent of the mothers had college degrees). Between these extremes were all other groups. Greater proportions of Vietnamese fathers and mothers had less than a high school education, while greater proportions of Filipino mothers and fathers had college degrees. Non-Hispanic whites were in the middle, with 40 percent of fathers and 33 percent of mothers having college degrees (11-15 percent were high school dropouts). Among non-Hispanic blacks, the mothers (26 percent college grads; 14 percent high school dropouts) were more educated than fathers (21 percent college grads; 29 percent high school dropouts).

The multigenerational Mexican sample reveals sharp within-group differences in educational attainment among *parents* of the 1.5, second, and third-plus generations. Over 70 percent of fathers and mothers of 1.5-generation adult respondents had less than a high school education, and scarcely 1 percent had completed a college degree. By contrast, 44 percent of both parents of second-generation respondents had less than a high school education and 2.3 percent had a college degree. Among the parents of the third-plus generations, only 16 percent of fathers and mothers were high school dropouts and 5.2 percent had college degrees. These data suggest that the parents of the U.S.-born second generation were more likely than the parents of the 1.5ers to have come to the United States as children (i.e., as 1.5ers themselves) and thus to be more acculturated and to have completed their educations in the United States. This is another reason for distinguishing between 1.5 and second generations rather than lumping both into a single category (Rumbaut 2004).

### *Parental Acculturation and Citizenship*

Table 5 makes clear the differences in immigrant parents' citizenship status, length of time in the United States, and English-language ability. The results are broken down by ethnicity only for immigrant parents. Immigrant parents in this Southern California sample were not recent arrivals: they had resided in the United States for an average of twenty-six years. Table 5 shows significant differences between the parents whose children were foreign-born (1.5ers) and those whose children were born in the United States (second generation). The parents of the latter had resided in the United States for more than thirty-one years, while the parents of the 1.5ers had been in the United States for nearly twenty-one years. Partly as a result, parents of the second generation were more than twice as likely as parents of the 1.5ers to speak English very well—40 to 20 percent. Coming from a country where English is one of the two official languages, Filipino parents are far more likely than other nationalities to speak the language very well. Similarly, Filipino parents (followed closely by the Vietnamese) are most likely to be naturalized U.S. citizens. With the notable exception of Cambodians and Laotians, more than 90 percent of the parents of all second-generation Asian-origin groups are U.S. citizens. That contrasts sharply with the proportions of Mexican, Salvadoran, and Guatemalan parents—nearly two-thirds of those with foreign-born (1.5-generation) offspring were *not* U.S. citizens, and neither were a quarter to a third of those with

TABLE 5  
 PARENTAL STATUS AND ACCULTURATION: CITIZENSHIP, YEARS IN THE UNITED STATES,  
 AND ENGLISH FLUENCY (MERGED HIMLA AND CILS-III SAN DIEGO SAMPLES)

Ethnicity	Generation	Father's Citizenship Status (%)				Mother's Citizenship Status (%)				Speaks English "Very Well" (%)	
		Born in U.S.		Not a U.S. Citizen		Born in U.S.		Not a U.S. Citizen		Father	Mother
		Naturalized Citizen	Naturalized Citizen	Naturalized Citizen	Naturalized Citizen	Years in U.S.	Years in U.S.				
Mexican	1.5 2nd	2.8 14.1	35.5 61.1	61.7 24.8	1.2 15.3	37.4 64.5	61.5 20.2	21.3 31.9	9.0 24.6	4.9 20.2	
Salvadoran, Guatemalan	1.5 2nd	2.2 5.5	30.9 61.8	66.9 32.7	0.0 3.0	43.6 72.9	56.4 24.1	22.5 29.4	13.4 34.2	8.9 21.1	
Other Latin American	1.5 2nd	2.2 17.4	50.5 61.7	47.3 20.8	0.0 20.1	54.9 71.8	45.1 8.1	22.8 34.6	25.3 58.5	17.7 52.6	
Filipino	1.5 2nd	2.2 16.4	76.9 80.2	20.9 3.3	0.0 5.6	82.7 90.7	17.3 3.7	20.2 28.6	56.5 64.6	56.5 66.6	
Chinese	1.5	0.9	66.4	32.8	0.4	76.6	23.0	18.8	11.5	8.4	
Korean	1.5	8.1	84.8	7.1	6.1	87.4	6.6	32.1	42.8	38.1	
	2nd	1.9	59.9	38.1	0.8	64.2	35.0	21.6	12.9	2.7	
Vietnamese	2nd	9.3	74.2	16.6	2.6	87.4	9.9	29.5	35.4	25.7	
	1.5	0.9	80.9	18.2	0.2	81.6	18.2	19.6	8.6	5.9	
	2nd	3.8	90.4	5.8	1.3	91.0	7.7	25.5	20.8	16.0	
Cambodian, Laotian	1.5	0.0	46.6	53.4	0.0	46.6	53.4	19.7	3.3	3.3	
	2nd	0.0	75.0	25.0	0.0	68.9	31.1	23.0	33.3	22.2	
All other nationalities	1.5	7.5	61.7	30.8	2.3	70.7	27.1	23.9	49.6	48.0	
	2nd	25.5	61.8	12.7	25.5	60.5	14.0	37.1	59.9	59.9	
Total	1.5	2.0	59.4	38.5	0.5	64.0	35.4	20.7	19.3	15.8	
	2nd	14.1	70.1	15.8	11.3	75.8	12.9	31.2	41.5	37.5	

SOURCE: Immigration and Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles (IIMMLA) survey; Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS-III), San Diego.

U.S.-born (second-generation) offspring, despite their extended length of residence in the country.

### *Family and Neighborhood Contexts*

In addition to parental human capital and mode of incorporation, other factors like family structure and marital status, financial and residential stability, and residential neighborhood contexts shape educational and socioeconomic trajectories in early adulthood (Attewell and Lavin 2007, 126-53; Kasinitz et al. 2008, 94-132; McLanahan and Sandefur 1994). Table 6 shows the percentage of respondents, by ethnicity and panethnicity, who grew up in families with both natural parents present; in homes that were owned by parents; and in neighborhoods that experienced major problems with crime, drugs, and gangs. Such indicators are correlated with poverty, racial segregation, and the quality of neighborhood schools, congealing into structures of cumulative advantage and disadvantage.

Asian-origin respondents were almost twice as likely as native blacks (82 to 45 percent) to grow up in families with both birth parents present. Hispanics (65 percent) and native whites (56 percent) fell in between. Among Asians, the proportions were above 80 percent for all groups except the poorest—Cambodians and Laotians—only two-thirds of whom (65 percent) were raised in two-parent families (the remainder often the result of the death of a father, as seen in the disproportionate number of Cambodian widows resettled as refugees in the 1980s). Among Mexican Americans, the 1.5 generation was most likely to be raised by both parents (72 percent), declining to 67 percent in the second generation (with more acculturated parents) and 57 percent among the third-plus generations. Those generational shifts in family structure have been repeatedly observed in U.S. census data and national-level surveys (see, e.g., Landale, Oropesa, and Bradatan 2006).

Parental home ownership (and the financial and residential stability it implies) was highest among native-parentage whites (86 percent), followed by Asians (70 percent), blacks (65 percent), and Hispanics (57 percent). Among Asian groups there were huge differences between Chinese, Filipinos, and Koreans (with home ownership rates ranging from 77 to 85 percent), Vietnamese (51 percent), and Cambodians and Laotians (at 17 percent, the lowest of any group, reflecting the dismal economic situation of refugee parents in the 1980s and 1990s). Among Mexican Americans, too, there were large within-group differences by generation: the 1.5 generation was least likely to be raised in owned homes (35 percent), compared to 62 percent in the second generation and 72 percent in the third-plus generations. Those home ownership trends are the opposite of patterns in family structure noted above: that is, over time, home ownership and financial stability increase while two-parent families and marital stability decrease.

As Table 6 shows, large differences were also observed in the risk of growing up in dangerous neighborhoods. More than a fourth of Hispanics (28 percent) and blacks (27 percent) reported that crime, drugs, and gangs were “big problems” in the areas where they grew up, while the equivalent proportion among Asians and whites was in the single digits. By contrast, more than a half of whites (56 percent) and Asians (55 percent) reported growing up in safe neighborhoods,

TABLE 6  
 GROWING UP: FAMILY STRUCTURE, PARENTAL HOME OWNERSHIP, AND NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXTS  
 (MERGED IIMMLA AND CILS-III SAN DIEGO SAMPLES) (IN PERCENTAGES)

	Family Structure: Intact Family <sup>a</sup> (Both Parents Present)	Family Home: Parents Owned Home	Neighborhood Problems with Crime, Drugs, Gangs (Based on Summed Index of Neighborhood Problems)			
			No Problems	Some Problems	Big Problems	
Panethnicity						
Hispanic	65.1	57.1	32.6	39.7	27.7	
Asian	81.9	69.9	55.2	36.6	8.3	
(3rd+ gen.) Black	44.6	65.5	30.2	42.8	27.0	
(3rd+ gen.) White	56.1	86.3	55.9	36.4	7.7	
Ethnicity						
(1.5 gen.) Mexican	71.9	35.2	30.1	34.4	35.5	
(2nd gen.) Mexican	66.9	62.3	34.0	38.7	27.3	
(3rd+ gen.) Mexican	57.4	71.8	36.2	43.1	20.7	
Salvadoran, Guatemalan	64.7	50.5	24.3	42.0	33.8	
Other Latin American	60.4	63.8	39.9	41.7	18.4	
Filipino	81.2	81.6	55.1	36.4	8.5	
Chinese	85.9	85.0	58.3	36.0	5.7	
Korean	87.0	77.2	58.3	36.0	5.8	
Vietnamese	82.2	50.7	50.1	40.0	9.9	
Cambodian, Laotian	65.0	17.5	54.3	34.0	11.7	
All other nationalities	71.6	79.0	54.8	34.8	10.4	
Total	70.8	66.5	44.9	38.2	16.9	

SOURCE: Immigration and Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles (IIMMLA) survey; Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS-III), San Diego.

a. "Intact family": grew up in two-parent family; "nonintact": parents divorced, separated, died, or remarried during childhood or adolescence.

compared to less than a third of Hispanics and blacks. Among Mexican Americans, neighborhood contexts became relatively safer over time with 36 percent of the 1.5 generation reporting “big problems” with crime, drugs, and gangs, dropping to 27 percent in the second and 21 percent in the third-plus generations. This parallels to some extent the residential mobility observed in parents’ growing rates of intergenerational home ownership.

## Unequal Outcomes

### *Linguistic Acculturation*

English proficiency has always been a key to the socioeconomic mobility of immigrants and their children in the United States. Immigrants and their children know that better than anyone else. Still, alarm is often raised in nativist political discourse and in popular and academic publications (e.g., Huntington 2004) about the multitude of foreign languages and the potential threat they pose to English dominance. Special concern surrounds Spanish—after all, the 2000 census counted more than 28 million people who spoke Spanish at home (Portes and Rumbaut 2006).

Table 7 summarizes evidence on linguistic acculturation, comparing the percentages that grew up speaking a language other than English at home versus current language preferences and level of proficiency in the non-English language. The data are broken down by ethnicity and more detailed generational cohorts: In addition to the 1.5 and third and beyond generations, the U.S.-born second generation is divided into those with two foreign-born parents (“2.0”) and those with one foreign-born and one U.S.-born parent (“2.5”). Overall, among foreign-parentage respondents, 94 percent of the 1.5ers and 87 percent of the 2.0 cohort grew up speaking a language other than English at home (somewhat less among Filipinos), but the proportion dropped to 58 percent among the 2.5ers, suggesting how rapidly English becomes the sole language in homes where one parent is U.S.-born. By the third-plus generations, only 14 percent reported speaking a language other than English at home while growing up. Those proportions are reversed when examining language preferences in adulthood: more than half of the foreign-born 1.5ers (52 percent) prefer to speak only English at home, as do more than two-thirds of the 2.0ers (70 percent), 89 percent of the 2.5ers, and 98 percent of the third-plus generations. That rapid language switch to English parallels the speedy atrophy of our respondents’ spoken and reading abilities in their non-English mother tongue. Among the 1.5ers, less than half (47 percent) could speak the non-English language well, and only a third could read it very well (34 percent). By the 2.0 generation, only a third (34 percent) could speak the non-English language very well, and only a quarter could read it very well (25 percent); among the 2.5ers, those proportions decreased sharply to 16 and 13 percent, respectively. The third-plus generations had become largely English monolinguals (less than 3 percent had either speaking or reading fluency in the non-English language).

These patterns hold without exception across all groups. However, as Table 7 documents, Asian-origin groups are much more likely than Spanish-speakers to

TABLE 7  
 ADULT CHILDREN'S LINGUISTIC ACCULTURATION: LANGUAGE USED AT HOME GROWING UP, AND CURRENT LANGUAGE PREFERENCE AND PROFICIENCY (MERGED IIMMLA AND CILS-III SAN DIEGO SAMPLES)

Ethnicity	Generation <sup>a</sup>	Growing Up, % Spoke Non-English Language at Home	Currently, % Prefers to Speak English at Home	Current Non-English Language Proficiency	
				% Can Speak It "Very Well"	% Can Read It "Very Well"
Mexican	1.5	96.7	33.6	59.3	64.3
	2.0	96.5	49.7	60.0	51.0
	2.5	81.3	76.3	34.6	27.9
	3rd+	26.4	96.0	7.5	5.5
Salvadoran, Guatemalan	1.5	96.7	44.2	64.6	62.4
	2.0	95.6	56.0	58.8	47.8
	2.5	58.8	76.5	29.4	23.5
Other Latin American	1.5	97.8	49.5	75.8	63.7
	2.0	91.4	71.0	48.4	39.8
	2.5	60.7	96.4	12.5	12.5
Filipino	1.5	88.6	80.8	27.3	23.1
	2.0	73.8	93.9	6.5	4.9
	2.5	61.1	96.8	0.8	1.6
Chinese	1.5	96.2	40.0	50.6	29.8
	2.0	93.5	71.8	22.4	4.7
	2.5	42.9	100.0	3.6	0.0
Korean	1.5	95.7	57.6	40.9	30.0
	2.0	85.0	71.4	16.5	8.3
	2.5	27.8	94.4	5.6	5.6
Vietnamese	1.5	97.5	47.0	40.3	19.4
	2.0	93.9	70.3	16.2	2.0
	2.5	75.0	87.5	0.0	0.0
Cambodian, Laotian	1.5	99.5	45.0	51.8	8.4
	2.0	99.5	55.6	44.4	11.1
	2.5	NA	NA	NA	NA
All other nationalities	1.5	72.2	78.2	38.3	16.5
	2.0	67.9	85.3	20.5	13.5
	2.5	25.6	98.1	3.2	3.2
Total by generation	1.5	94.1	52.4	46.6	34.3
	2.0	87.3	69.6	33.8	25.3
	2.5	58.4	88.9	15.9	13.3
	3rd+	13.7	98.4	2.8	2.6

SOURCE: Immigration and Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles (IIMMLA) survey; Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS-III), San Diego.

a. Generational cohorts defined as follows: 1.5 = foreign-born, but arrived in United States in childhood; 2.0 = U.S.-born, both parents foreign-born; 2.5 = U.S.-born, one parent foreign-born, one parent U.S.-born; 3rd or higher = U.S.-born, both parents U.S.-born.

lose bilingual skills by the second generation and for 2.5ers to become English monolinguals. Thus, among Mexicans, between half and two-thirds of the 1.5 and 2.0 cohorts can still speak and read Spanish very well, but those proportions fall to between a quarter and a third in the 2.5 cohort and to single digits in the third-plus generations. (For comparative data on Spanish language retention, see Telles and Ortiz [2008].) In a recent study of “linguistic life expectancies,” also using the merged CILS-III and IIMMLA data sets, we estimated the average number of generations a mother tongue can be expected to survive after the arrival of an immigrant in Southern California. Even among those of Mexican origin, Spanish “died” by the third generation; all other languages died between the second and third generations (Rumbaut, Massey, and Bean 2006).

### *Indicators of Downward Assimilation*

If English proficiency is a correlate of upward mobility, other life events disrupt or derail mobility trajectories. Table 8 presents results by ethnicity, generation, and gender of four indicators of downward assimilation—among men, whether they had ever been arrested or incarcerated, and among women, whether they had borne children out of wedlock or had a child between the ages of fourteen and twenty.

Among the nearly three thousand men in our Southern California sample (whose mean age was 27.5), the rates of arrest and incarceration were highest among blacks (almost all of whom were fourth-plus generation African Americans) and lowest for Asians, with whites and Hispanics in between. Among native-stock blacks, fully 40 percent had been arrested at some point and 27 percent had been incarcerated. Among both native-stock whites and Hispanics, 29 percent had been arrested at some point and 18 percent had been incarcerated. Among Asians, the equivalent figures were 10 and 6 percent. Intergenerational differences are significant. The U.S.-born (second and third-plus generations) are much more likely to become ensnared in the criminal justice system than the foreign-born (1.5 generation), reflecting the national patterns noted earlier among young men eighteen to thirty-four (Rumbaut and Ewing 2007). Patterns are linear, but outcomes worsen over time and generation. Among the 1.5ers, 13 percent had ever been arrested and 8 percent incarcerated, compared to 21 and 12 percent, respectively, in the second generation and 36 and 24 percent, respectively, in the third-plus generations. The rates for all immigrants and U.S.-born children of immigrants are lower than those for native-stock whites (see Kasinitz et al. [2008, 188] for parallel results in New York City). Intergenerational patterns for the Mexican-origin subsample are clear: among 1.5ers, 22 percent had ever been arrested and 12 percent incarcerated, compared to 30 and 20 percent, respectively, in the second generation and almost 40 and 27 percent, respectively, in the third-plus generations. The latter figures are identical to those for African American men. Given the large size of the Mexican-origin first and second generations, this is fraught with implications—not only for the downward mobility prospects of the men caught in a cycle of arrest and imprisonment (who typically have high rates of recidivism after release) but also for the short- and long-term effects on their ethnic communities.

TABLE 8  
 TURNING POINTS IN SOCIAL MOBILITY AMONG YOUNG ADULTS: ARREST  
 AND INCARCERATION (MEN) AND EARLY CHILDBEARING  
 (WOMEN) (MERGED IIMMLA AND CILS-III SAN DIEGO  
 SAMPLES: *N* = 2,971 MALES, 3,164 FEMALES)

Ethnicity	Generation	Criminal Justice (Males Only)		Childbearing (Females Only)	
		% Ever Arrested	% Ever Incarcerated	% Teenage Childbearing	% Teenage Childbearing
Panethnicity					
Hispanic	1.5-3rd+	29.0	18.1	28.1	18.0
Asian	1.5-2nd	10.4	5.7	7.7	5.6
Black	3rd+	40.4	27.3	28.0	32.2
White	3rd+	29.4	18.1	14.2	11.8
Ethnicity					
Mexican	1.5	22.3	11.9	31.2	19.9
	2nd	29.8	20.4	30.1	16.7
	3rd+	39.6	26.6	29.2	18.2
Salvadoran, Guatemalan	1.5	21.3	11.2	33.7	19.6
	2nd	36.7	17.3	27.7	24.8
Other Latin American	1.5	17.4	15.2	8.9	11.1
	2nd	21.3	11.5	12.5	13.6
Filipino	1.5	13.3	8.2	9.7	6.9
	2nd	9.6	5.7	11.6	9.9
Chinese	1.5	5.8	2.9	0.0	4.1
	2nd	7.4	1.9	0.0	3.3
Korean	1.5	11.6	3.9	0.8	0.6
	2nd	18.1	2.8	8.9	2.5
Vietnamese	1.5	8.1	5.8	3.3	3.3
	2nd	12.7	9.9	8.2	3.5
Cambodian, Laotian	1.5	8.4	8.4	21.3	10.2
	2nd	20.0	20.0	NA	NA
All other nationalities	1.5	12.3	7.0	6.6	5.3
	2nd	21.7	11.9	11.7	9.4
Total by generation	1.5	13.2	7.8	13.5	9.0
	2nd	20.7	12.1	17.6	12.1
	3rd+	36.3	23.8	23.8	20.8

SOURCE: Immigration and Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles (IIMMLA) survey; Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS-III), San Diego.

Of the 3,164 women in this sample (whose mean age was 27.4), 44 percent had borne one or more children; half were single (52 percent) and a third were married (33 percent), with the remainder cohabiting or divorced (7 percent each). Rates of nonmarital and teenage childbearing were highest for African Americans—32 percent and 28 percent, respectively. Among Hispanics, 18 percent reported births out of marriage and 28 percent had become teen parents. Rates for whites—12 and 14 percent—were about half those for Hispanics; while the rates for Asians—6 and 8 percent—were half those of whites and the lowest overall. Again, intergenerational

differences are significant: the U.S.-born (second and third-plus generations) were more likely to be unmarried or teen parents. Among 1.5ers, only 9 percent had a child out of wedlock and 13 percent by or before age twenty; in the second generation, those rates increased to 12 and 18 percent and in the third-plus generations to 21 percent and 24 percent. Mexicans, Salvadorans, and Guatemalans were much more likely to have children, and to have had children between the ages of fourteen and twenty; among them, those rates (especially of teen births) were very high irrespective of generational status. Chinese, Koreans, and Vietnamese were least likely to have children or to be unmarried or teen parents (not a single Chinese woman had a birth in her teens). Filipinas and non-Hispanic white women fell in between those indicators.

### *Educational Achievement*

Education, particularly obtaining a college degree, increasingly determines occupational and economic opportunities. Table 9 presents two measures of educational attainment—average grades in high school<sup>2</sup> and highest level of education in adulthood—broken down by ethnicity (and generational cohort for those of Mexican descent). The table specifies the proportion that dropped out of high school, graduated from high school but went no further, and had some college but did not complete a four-year degree. Also included are those twenty-five and older who earned a bachelor's or advanced degree. The results reflect patterns of transmission of educational (and socioeconomic) advantages and disadvantages from one generation to the next.

Intergroup differences in early achievement are discernible in high school grades. Forty percent of Asian students got mostly As in high school, followed by whites (31 percent), with Hispanics (15 percent) and blacks (13 percent) trailing well behind. Hispanics were more likely than other groups to get Ds and Fs (10 percent) and blacks to get mostly Cs (34 percent). A clearer picture emerges when these panethnic categories are disaggregated by nationality and generation. Mexicans in both the 1.5 and second generations, as well as Cambodians and Laotians, were most likely to get Ds and Fs (14 percent)—but not the Salvadorans and Guatemalans, most of whom (53 percent) were B students. At the other end of the scale, fully half of Chinese (51 percent) and Koreans (50 percent) were A students, followed closely by Vietnamese (45 percent). Only a third of Filipinos (32 percent) received mainly As, slightly above the proportion for whites.

What was their highest level of educational attainment a decade later? Overall, 10 percent were high school dropouts, 17 percent had only obtained a high school diploma, and 41 percent had some college experience (but no college degree). At the other end, among those twenty-five and older, 27 percent had earned a bachelor's degree and another 13 percent an advanced degree (or were enrolled in graduate or professional school). Virtually the same wide achievement gaps seen in high school are observable in adulthood. High school dropout rates were much higher among Hispanics (18 percent) and blacks (15 percent) than among whites (8 percent) and Asians (under 3 percent). Asians (41 percent) and whites (31 percent) were twice as likely as Hispanics (14 percent) and blacks (18 percent) to

TABLE 9

**EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT: EARLY ACHIEVEMENT (HIGH SCHOOL GRADES) AND HIGHEST EDUCATION ATTAINED, BY ETHNICITY AND GENERATION (MERGED IIMMLA AND CILS-III SAN DIEGO SAMPLES) (IN PERCENTAGES)**

	High School Grades				Highest Educational Attainment <sup>a</sup>				
	Mostly Ds, Fs	Mostly Cs	Mostly Bs	Mostly As	High School Dropout	High School Grad	Some College	Bachelor's Degree (25 and Older)	Advanced Degree (25 and Older)
Panethnicity	10.2	29.6	45.0	15.3	17.6	25.3	41.0	14.1	7.2
Hispanic	5.2	11.4	43.0	40.4	2.7	11.0	42.6	40.9	18.0
Asian	2.5	34.0	50.6	12.8	15.4	19.6	44.6	17.9	6.2
(3rd+ gen.) Black	3.1	20.0	46.0	30.8	9.4	14.9	32.8	31.3	17.5
(3rd+ gen.) White									
Ethnicity									
(1.5 gen.) Mexican	17.5	26.0	44.2	12.3	29.6	26.5	32.6	10.3	4.4
(2nd gen.) Mexican	13.6	31.9	41.3	13.2	15.0	28.9	42.2	11.7	7.7
(3rd+ gen.) Mexican	4.0	34.9	44.1	17.0	18.5	26.4	38.4	13.7	5.8
Salvadoran, Guatemalan	4.2	27.9	53.2	14.7	15.5	21.6	46.6	16.9	7.1
Other Latin American	5.4	21.7	47.1	25.8	7.1	15.0	47.1	23.3	12.9
Filipino	7.5	15.3	45.1	32.1	2.3	11.8	52.9	33.2	9.8
Chinese	1.8	7.4	39.5	51.3	0.7	5.3	30.9	49.0	33.3
Korean	1.7	8.1	40.2	50.0	2.2	6.6	31.6	50.8	26.6
Vietnamese	3.7	8.6	42.2	45.4	2.7	7.8	43.7	44.4	14.1
Cambodian, Laotian	13.5	16.0	50.5	20.0	6.5	40.0	39.0	12.3	3.7
All other nationalities	2.5	17.0	45.9	34.7	6.5	13.2	38.5	27.0	19.6
Total	6.6	20.6	44.7	28.2	9.6	17.3	41.3	26.6	13.0

SOURCE: Immigration and Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles (IIMMLA) survey; Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS-III), San Diego.

a. Educational attainment for bachelor's or advanced degrees is reported only for respondents twenty-five or older.

have earned a bachelor's degree. Asians (18 percent) and whites (17 percent) were more than twice as likely as Hispanics and blacks to have earned advanced degrees (or be in the process of earning them). These results are only slightly more positive than those reported earlier for national-level survey data; the interethnic ranking order matches precisely.

The most outstanding level of achievement is observed among the Chinese, with the lowest high school dropout rate (a miniscule 0.7 percent) and lowest high school-only attainment (5 percent). An extraordinarily high 33 percent had earned or were earning an advanced degree, and another 49 percent had already earned a bachelor's degree (see Kasinitz et al. [2008] for similar results among the Chinese in New York City). They were closely followed by the Koreans (27 percent had earned or were earning an advanced degree, another 51 percent had a bachelor's degree, and only 2 percent had failed to complete high school) and the Vietnamese (14 percent had earned or was earning an advanced degree, another 44 percent had a bachelor's degree, and only 3 percent had dropped out of high school). Filipinos most closely resembled majority-group whites and Salvadorans and Guatemalans minority-group blacks. Mexicans, Cambodians, and Laotians were at the bottom of the achievement hierarchy, with Mexicans having the highest dropout rates of any group. For Mexicans, for whom the data permit a more detailed analysis by generation, the patterns are not linear; they reflect significant improvement in high school dropout rates from the 1.5 to the second generation (from 30 to 15 percent), and a slight improvement in college graduation rates (from 14 to 18 percent). However, achievement peaks in the second generation; by the third-plus generations, high school dropout rates increase to 18 percent, while involvement in advanced-level education declines slightly.

## Intergenerational Educational Mobility: Immigrant Parents and Their Adult Children

How do patterns of educational attainment among young adults compare to those of their parents? Table 10 summarizes relevant data highlighting two extremes of educational attainment. The left panel shows percentages of college graduates; the right panel, percentages that did not finish high school. For each, a mobility index is calculated: a child-parent (C-P) measure shows the percentage by which adult children exceed their parents in earning a college degree or more; a parent-child (P-C) measure shows the differential between parents and children in failing to complete high school.

Note first that among our young adult respondents, females outperform males in educational achievement: daughters are slightly more likely than sons to have completed college degrees and less likely to have dropped out of high school. Among their parents the opposite is true: fathers were more likely than mothers to have a college degree, although both are about as likely to have not completed high school. The C-P differential is 13 (i.e., 13 percent more children are college graduates than are their parents); and at the other extreme, the P-C differential is 24 (i.e., 24 percent more parents than children failed to finish high school).

TABLE 10  
 INTERGENERATIONAL MOBILITY: EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF SONS AND DAUGHTERS VERSUS  
 FATHERS AND MOTHERS (MERGED IIMLA AND CILS-III SAN DIEGO SAMPLES)

	% College Graduate or More						% Less Than High School Graduate			P-C Mobility Differential <sup>c</sup>		
	Sons <sup>a</sup> (25 and Older)		Daughters <sup>a</sup> (25 and Older)		C-P Mobility Differential <sup>b</sup>			Fathers			Sons	Daughters
	Fathers	Mothers	Fathers	Mothers	Fathers	Mothers	Differential	Fathers	Mothers		Sons	Daughters
Panethnicity												
Hispanic	20.9	21.7	10.7	8.4	11.8	53.3	53.6	20.3	15.2			35.8
Asian	55.2	63.0	41.7	35.4	20.5	21.8	26.5	2.7	2.7			21.4
(3rd+ gen.) Black	24.8	23.4	21.1	25.9	0.6	28.9	14.4	15.8	15.0			6.2
(3rd+ gen.) White	46.6	50.9	40.5	33.5	11.7	15.2	11.2	12.3	6.6			3.7
Ethnicity												
(1.5 gen.) Mexican	17.2	12.5	5.2	1.7	11.4	78.5	82.3	31.7	27.6			50.7
(2nd gen.) Mexican	22.1	16.8	6.2	5.9	13.4	58.7	58.7	19.1	11.3			43.5
(3rd+ gen.) Mexican	18.4	20.7	12.7	10.5	7.9	27.9	28.2	21.4	15.8			9.5
Salvadoran, Guatemalan	17.0	31.0	11.1	7.9	14.5	56.6	55.3	16.0	15.0			40.4
Other Latin American	34.7	37.4	31.3	26.7	7.1	27.9	25.8	8.4	6.0			19.7
Filipino	37.4	49.2	43.7	49.8	-3.5	11.9	13.8	2.1	2.6			10.5
Chinese	83.3	81.1	55.4	38.1	35.4	16.2	20.3	0.4	1.1			17.5
Korean	74.8	80.0	60.3	44.6	24.9	8.8	12.5	2.0	2.4			8.5
Vietnamese	50.3	68.6	24.7	13.4	40.4	36.4	45.4	4.1	1.4			38.2
Cambodian, Laotian	12.8	19.0	9.5	5.5	8.4	69.5	81.0	6.8	6.3			68.7
All other nationalities	48.9	44.7	39.8	32.2	10.7	19.5	14.8	5.0	7.7			10.8
Total	38.7	40.4	28.7	24.6	12.9	33.2	33.9	10.6	8.7			23.9

SOURCE: Immigration and Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles (IIMMLA) survey; Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS-III), San Diego.

a. The attainment of four-year college degrees or more is reported only for sons and daughters twenty-five or older.

b. High-end Child-Parent (C-P) Mobility Differential = mean college graduation rate of sons and daughters minus the mean of their fathers and mothers.

c. Low-end Parent-Child (P-C) Mobility Differential = mean "dropout" rates (less than high school) of fathers and mothers minus the mean of their sons and daughters.

Wide differences in parent-child educational attainment are apparent between groups. First, as points of comparison for the mobility experience of immigrants, we provide data for native-stock whites and blacks. At the upper end, half of white daughters were college graduates (51 percent) compared to only a third of their mothers (33 percent). White sons (47 percent) were also more likely than their fathers (40 percent) to earn at least a bachelor's degree. The C-P index for whites was a moderate 12 percent. But fewer black daughters (23 percent) were college graduates compared to their mothers (26 percent). Black sons (25 percent) were somewhat more likely to have a college degree than their fathers (21 percent). As a result, the C-P index for blacks was essentially zero, indicating no intergenerational mobility in college-level educational attainment. At the lower end (dropping out of high school), the P-C differential for both whites and blacks was in the single digits, reflecting relatively little mobility—although the dropout rate for black fathers was twice that of black mothers (29 to 14 percent) while the dropout rates for their sons and daughters was 15 percent. Among Asians, daughters were far more likely than mothers to earn college degrees (63 to 35 percent), and sons were also more likely than their fathers (55 to 42 percent); their C-P differential was a significant 21 percent. At the other pole, Asian fathers and mothers were nearly ten times more likely than their sons and daughters to have less than a high school diploma; their P-C differential was also 21 percent. Hispanics as a whole reflected a different pattern, also indicative of considerable intergenerational educational mobility, especially at the lower end of achievement: their C-P differential was 12 percent, but the P-C differential was three times greater, 36 percent.

Differences are much sharper when examined by national origin and generation. More than 80 percent of Chinese sons and daughters, and 75 to 80 percent of Koreans, had college degrees or more; their immigrant fathers and mothers also represented the highest proportion of college graduates (40 to 60 percent) in any group, but the superior achievement of their children still produced a C-P index of 35 percent for the Chinese and 25 percent for Koreans. The C-P index for the Vietnamese, 40 percent, was the highest of all. At the other end of the Vietnamese mobility story, the P-C index was 38 percent—a reflection of tiny high school dropout rates among children but large rates among fathers and mothers (36 to 45 percent). The Vietnamese significantly surpassed Filipinos although Vietnamese parents were much more disadvantaged. Despite the superior educational profile of their immigrant parents (especially mothers, 50 percent of whom had college degrees), Filipinos registered the only negative C-P index score: -3.5 percent. A lower proportion of Filipino children (especially sons) had attained a college degree, although they still achieved at about the same level as native whites. On the other hand, their high school dropout rates were less than 3 percent (much lower than the rates for whites). The Filipino P-C score was thus 10 percent (suggesting upward educational mobility at the lower end). Cambodians and Laotians, the poorest and least educated of the Asian groups, had sharply different mobility scores: a C-P index of 8 percent (since very few are yet graduating from college) and a P-C index of 69 percent, by far the largest of any group.

Among Latin Americans, Salvadorans and Guatemalans exhibit moderate educational mobility at the high end, with a C-P index of 15 percent, most of it reflecting

the wide differential in college graduation rates between daughters (31 percent) and mothers (8 percent). At the low end, Salvadorans and Guatemalans show a large P-C mobility score (40 percent) because more than half of fathers and mothers had less than a high school education. Despite their greater proportion of high school dropouts than other groups, Mexicans still achieved much higher levels of education than their immigrant parents—moderately at the high end, strongly at the low end. In their case, it is possible to examine how intergenerational mobility patterns differed for both parents and children. For parents, the trend is linear. Among fathers and mothers, college graduation rates, although small, increase between the 1.5 and the second generation and are highest among third-plus-generation parents. Conversely, 80 percent of the parents of 1.5-generation children never completed a secondary education, but that proportion falls to 59 percent among the parents of the second generation and to 28 percent for the third-plus generations. For children, the patterns are not linear: college graduation rates increase modestly from the 1.5 to the second generation, and more for sons than for daughters; high school dropout rates are significantly reduced from the 1.5 to the second generation, though more for daughters than for sons. In the third-plus generations, however, dropout rates increase again, while college graduation rates also decline for third-plus-generation sons, increasing modestly for daughters. Educational achievement appears to peak in the second generation. Taken together, these results point to patterns of sharp and broadening ethnic segmentation in educational attainment and, by implication, occupational and economic improvement in the burgeoning second generation.

## Predicting Educational Attainment in Adulthood

Table 11 presents the results of multiple linear regression models examining the effects of hypothesized antecedent variables on total years of education. Controlling for age and gender, factors leading to educational success or failure were generational status, ethnicity (a proxy for modes of incorporation as roughly indexed by the contexts of exit and reception), parental status (education, home-ownership, and citizenship), family structure, and early achievement. Also examined is the association of incarceration, childbearing, and linguistic acculturation with educational attainment.

In the equations in Table 11, years of education completed are regressed on four sets of antecedent variables, entered sequentially into the analysis: (1) age, gender, and generation (the third-plus generation is the referent group); (2) ethnicity (non-Hispanic whites are the referent group); (3) parental status (parents' education, home ownership, citizenship) and family structure; and (4) early achievement (as measured by high school grades). Jointly, the predictor variables explain more than a third of the variance in years of education completed ( $R^2 = .387$ ). Finally, (5) added to the equation in the last panel of Table 11 are two life-changing events (becoming a teen parent and ever having been incarcerated) and two measures of language preference and bilingualism (preference for speaking English

TABLE II  
REGRESSION OF YEARS OF EDUCATION COMPLETED ON SELECTED PREDICTORS  
(MERGED IMMILA AND CILS-III SAN DIEGO SAMPLE, N = 6,135)

Predictor	I			II			III			IV			V			
	B	t <sup>a</sup>	Sig.	B	t	Sig.	B	t	Sig.	B	t	Sig.	B	t	Sig.	
Age, gender, generation																
Age (years)	0.061	12.07	***	0.059	12.71	***	0.055	12.42	***	0.053	12.81	***	0.061	13.20	***	
Gender (female)	0.206	3.75	***	0.249	4.97	***	0.294	6.19	***	0.041	0.93	NS	0.151	3.35	***	
1.5 generation	0.679	8.78	***	-0.193	-2.09	**	0.513	5.32	***	0.513	5.76	***	0.409	4.46	***	
2.0 generation	0.847	10.32	***	0.230	2.51	**	0.602	6.70	***	0.617	7.43	***	0.512	6.14	***	
2.5 generation	0.425	4.03	***	-0.006	-0.06	NS	0.312	3.09	**	0.367	3.94	***	0.347	3.82	***	
Ethnicity <sup>b</sup>																
Mexican				-1.401	-17.96	***	-0.766	-9.76	***	-0.506	-6.92	***	-0.345	-4.80	***	
Salvadoran, Guatemalan				-1.010	-8.22	***	-0.417	-3.51	***	-0.359	-3.28	***	-0.239	-2.24	**	
Filipino				0.281	3.00	***	-0.149	-1.65	NS	-0.024	-0.29	NS	0.005	0.06	NS	
Chinese				1.297	11.10	***	0.878	7.85	***	0.571	5.50	***	0.529	5.25	***	
Korean				1.094	9.08	***	0.624	5.40	***	0.365	3.40	***	0.357	3.43	***	
Vietnamese				0.766	6.97	***	0.841	7.90	***	0.507	5.12	***	0.475	4.94	***	
Cambodian, Laotian				-0.772	-4.76	***	0.014	0.09	NS	0.109	0.75	NS	0.069	0.49	NS	
Non-Hispanic black				-1.061	-8.48	***	-0.583	-4.85	***	-0.346	-3.11	***	-0.138	-1.28	NS	
Parental status																
Parents not U.S. citizens							-0.295	-7.60	***	-0.291	-8.10	***	-0.238	-6.79	***	
Parents' education							0.396	18.89	***	0.293	14.89	***	0.250	13.03	***	

(continued)

TABLE II (continued)

Predictor	I		II		III		IV		V	
	B	t <sup>a</sup>	B	Sig.	B	t	B	Sig.	B	t
Parents' home ownership			0.496	8.64	0.343	6.42	0.310	5.98	0.310	5.98
Two-parent family			0.297	5.38	0.184	3.60	0.111	2.22	0.111	2.22
Early achievement										
High school GPA					0.964	32.10	0.868	29.48	0.868	29.48
Turning points										
Been incarcerated									-0.626	-7.51
Had child ages 14-20									-1.267	-16.90
Had child ages 20-24									-0.822	-11.75
Had child at 25 or older									-0.126	-1.69
Acculturation										
Prefers English at home									0.225	3.99
Speaks non-English very well									0.195	3.53
Constant	12.11	73.05	12.99	78.48	12.21	75.42	9.44	54.59	9.57	53.92
R <sup>2</sup>		.035		.200		.285		.387		.428

SOURCE: Immigration and Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles (IIMMLA) survey; Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS-III), San Diego.

a. Measure of strength of association (unstandardized regression coefficient divided by its standard error).

b. 3rd+ generation (native-born/native-parentage) non-Hispanic whites are the reference group.

\*\*\*p < .05. \*\*p < .01. \*p < .001. NS = not significant.

at home and ability to speak a non-English language very well). The association of these variables with educational attainment is of primary interest, but the temporal order of their effects cannot be clearly established with cross-sectional data (an individual could have left school prior to or as a result of being imprisoned or having a child).

The first model in Table 11 enters dummy variables for three key generational cohorts (1.5, 2.0, 2.5), with the third-plus generations as the referent group, controlling for age and gender. All three generational cohorts are associated with the completion of more years of education than third-plus-generation natives. All ethnic group indicators added into the equation in the second model have significant effects: Mexicans, Salvadorans and Guatemalans, Cambodians and Laotians, and non-Hispanic blacks complete fewer years of education than third-plus non-Hispanic whites. Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, and Filipinos complete more years of education. Together, these predictors explain 20 percent of the variance in educational attainment ( $R^2 = .200$ ).

The measures of parental socioeconomic and legal status (parents' education, home ownership, and U.S. citizenship) and of family structure (growing up in a two-parent family) have stronger effects on the outcome variable, above all parental education ( $t = 18.9$ ). When these are entered into the model, the previously significant effects of Filipino, Cambodian, and Laotian ethnicity wash out (suggesting that their effects are accounted for by parental status variables). The single measure of early school achievement (grade point average [GPA] earned in high school) has the strongest net effect on highest education attained in adulthood ( $t = 32.1$ ), and once this is accounted for, gender fades into insignificance. Most other predictors are attenuated in the fourth model but retain significant effects, while the effects of all three generational cohorts are strengthened—and the  $R^2$  increases to .387.

Incarceration and having children (at ages fourteen to twenty, twenty-one to twenty-four, and twenty-five or older) have significant negative effects on years of education. The younger the age at which the respondent became a parent, the more negative the effect. When becoming a prisoner and prematurely becoming a parent are entered into the equation, the negative association of non-Hispanic blacks with educational achievement washes out, suggesting that it is explained by the two factors. By contrast, Mexican, Salvadoran, and Guatemalan ethnicities retain negative significant effects on educational attainment; while Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese retain positive effects, indicating that, compared to the native whites in this sample, characteristics in those groups not measured here additionally shape their divergent educational trajectories. Finally, although we cannot disentangle a causal sequence with cross-sectional data, *both* language measures entered in this last model (preference for English at home, spoken fluency in a non-English language) are significantly and positively associated with educational attainment, net of all other factors, suggesting that fluent bilingualism facilitates educational achievement (cf. Portes and Rumbaut 2006). The  $R^2$  in this final model increases to .428. A similar model predicting educational attainment among the ISGMNY sample in New York City, with an adjusted  $R^2$  of .335, is reported by Kasinitz et al. (2008, 144). In both the New York and Southern

California cases, having a child had the strongest negative effect on educational attainment, while parental education (and high school grades) had the strongest positive effect.

## Predicting the Odds of Incarceration and Teenage Childbearing

Table 12 presents the results of logistic regressions analyzing the likelihood of having been incarcerated (for men) and of having had children before age twenty (for women). In both regressions, third-plus-generation non-Hispanic whites are the reference group. In the equation on the left panel, predicting the odds of incarceration for males only, the strongest determinant is early achievement (as measured by high school grades). Being convicted and jailed for a crime, an overwhelmingly male phenomenon, is strongly associated with poor educational attainment in adolescence (the Wald statistic is 53.8). That is followed in predictive strength by the generational status variables: compared to the third-plus generation (of native-stock white parents), the least likely to be incarcerated are the foreign-born 1.5-generation children of immigrants (Wald = 26.4), followed by the U.S.-born 2.0 generation with two immigrant parents (Wald = 15.7), and more weakly by the 2.5 cohort with one immigrant parent (Wald = 2.8), confirming data reviewed and reported earlier (e.g., Rumbaut 1997; Rumbaut and Ewing 2007). Parents' education is negatively correlated with the likelihood of incarceration (Wald = 24.2)—that is, involvement with the criminal justice system is in part a function of social class. Having been raised in a two-parent family also reduces the odds of incarceration for men (Wald = 17.1), while growing up in dangerous neighborhoods increases the odds (Wald = 7.8). None of the ethnic group variables was significantly linked to incarceration—they all wash out once the other predictor variables are controlled—although non-Hispanic blacks and Mexicans had the highest rates of arrest and incarceration, suggesting that the variables remaining in the equation would explain those associations.

The equation on the right panel of Table 12 examines the effect of the same set of determinants on the odds of teenage childbearing among females. Like the equation predicting incarceration, lower GPA in high school was the strongest predictor of teen births (Wald = 50.8). Unlike the equation predicting incarceration, most of the ethnicity variables emerged as significant predictors, except for the Chinese, Koreans, and Vietnamese. With other factors controlled for, Mexican, Salvadoran, and Guatemalan women were much more likely than others to have children very early, followed by non-Hispanic blacks and Filipinas, and more weakly by Cambodians and Laotians.<sup>3</sup> Having been raised in a two-parent family significantly reduces the odds of teenage childbearing (Wald = 16.4), while growing up in dangerous neighborhoods increased the odds of teen births (Wald = 4.8). Lower parental education, above all low *maternal* education, significantly increased the odds of early childbearing, as did having parents who were not U.S.

TABLE 12  
 LOGISTIC REGRESSIONS: PREDICTORS OF INCARCERATION (FOR MEN)  
 AND EARLY CHILDBEARING (FOR WOMEN) (MERGED IIMMLA AND  
 CILS-III SAN DIEGO SAMPLE: N = 2,971 MALES, 3,164 FEMALES)

Predictor	Was Incarcerated (Males)				Had a Child before Age 20 (Females)			
	B	Wald <sup>a</sup>	Sig.	Odds	B	Wald <sup>a</sup>	Sig.	Odds
Age, Generation								
Age (years)	0.010	0.90	NS	1.010	0.000	0.00	NS	1.000
1.5 generation	-1.164	26.43	****	0.312	-0.936	21.56	****	0.392
2.0 generation	-0.777	15.65	****	0.460	-0.737	16.29	****	0.478
2.5 generation	-0.360	2.79	*	0.698	0.057	0.09	NS	1.059
Ethnicity <sup>b</sup>								
Mexican	0.184	1.16	NS	1.202	0.954	33.00	****	2.596
Salvadoran, Guatemalan	0.213	0.64	NS	1.238	1.228	29.32	****	3.413
Filipino	-0.125	0.27	NS	0.883	0.625	8.79	***	1.868
Korean	-0.316	0.56	NS	0.729	-0.197	0.25	NS	0.821
Vietnamese	0.006	0.00	NS	1.007	-0.202	0.39	NS	0.817
Cambodian, Laotian	-0.175	0.17	NS	0.840	0.623	4.19	**	1.865
Non-Hispanic black	0.266	1.28	NS	1.305	0.869	14.18	****	2.385
Parent/family contexts								
Parents not U.S. citizens	-0.007	0.01	NS	0.993	0.360	19.86	****	1.433
Parents' education	-0.272	24.16	****	0.762	-0.254	24.77	****	0.775
Two-parent family	-0.507	17.07	****	0.602	-0.430	16.38	****	0.651
Neighborhood drugs, gangs	0.377	7.82	***	1.458	0.281	4.81	**	1.325
Early achievement								
High school GPA	-0.588	53.81	****	0.555	-0.487	50.85	****	0.614
Constant	0.051	0.01	NS	1.053	-0.337	0.71	NS	0.714
Nagelkerke R <sup>2</sup>				.175				.221

SOURCE: Immigration and Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles (IIMMLA) survey; Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS-III), San Diego.

a. Measure of strength of association (square of the logistic regression coefficient divided by its standard error).

b. 3rd+ generation (native-born/native-parentage) non-Hispanic whites are the reference group.

\*p < .10. \*\*p < .05. \*\*\*p < .01. \*\*\*\*p < .001. NS = not significant.

citizens. As with incarceration, generational cohort was significantly associated with early childbearing among teenage girls: net of other factors, the 1.5 and 2.0 cohorts were significantly *less* likely to become teen parents, compared to third-generation native whites. The evidence points to a protective net effect of immigrant families (cf. Harris 1999), which appears to deteriorate with acculturation.

## Conclusions and Implications

The magnitude of the transformations brought by international migration is vividly seen today in California, the nation's largest state. Of the 36 million people estimated to live there in 2006, more than a fourth (27 percent) were foreign-born—as were a third (34 percent) of its workers. Half of all its children and teenagers ages zero to nineteen were U.S.-reared 1.5- and second-generation children of immigrants, as were nearly a third of all its young adults aged twenty to thirty-four. These generational differences are even more noticeable in the three contiguous coastal counties of Los Angeles, Orange, and San Diego, where a striking 58 percent of children and teenagers were 1.5 and second generation, as were 44 percent of all young adults. California's future will be tied to the fortunes of this coming second generation, whose incorporation will be decisively molded by their attainment of a postsecondary education. Immigrants and their children are expected to account for most of the growth of the U.S. labor force in the coming two decades, with the fastest-growing occupations requiring college degrees; in California, there are already not enough eligible college graduates to meet demand (Johnson and Reed 2007).

The prospects for socioeconomic mobility among children of immigrants hinge on their access to public colleges and universities. California's system of public higher education is based on a three-tier plan adopted by the legislature in 1960, which sought to balance the demands of excellence for few with educational access for many. Under the plan, the state's top graduating high school seniors would be eligible to enter one of the University of California (UC) campuses, the top third would be able to enter one of the California State University (CSU) campuses, and the community colleges would accept all applicants. Today, more than 2.5 million students are enrolled in the state's 109 community colleges; the 23 CSU campuses, which annually award about half of the state's bachelor's degrees and a third of its master's degrees, enroll more than 410,000 students; and more than 220,000 students are enrolled in 10 UC campuses, which award nearly all doctoral degrees. In the fall of 2007, 43 percent of the 168,000 undergraduates in the University of California system were of Asian origin (including 17 percent Chinese) and 16 percent were of Latin American ancestry (including 12 percent of Mexican background)—although the respective shares of the Asian and Hispanic populations in the state were 12 and 36 percent. The overwhelming majority of them were 1.5- and second-generation students. The 36 percent non-Hispanic whites and 3 percent blacks among University of California undergraduates were underrepresented relative to their proportions in the larger population, and even among them, between a fourth and a third were children of immigrants. On one hand, California's public universities are veritable factories of social mobility; on the other, they reproduce and widen social inequalities.

This article presented findings from Southern California on the trajectories of foreign-parentage young adults in key ethnic groups: Mexicans, Salvadorans and Guatemalans, Filipinos, Chinese, Koreans, Vietnamese, and Cambodians and Laotians. The outcomes examined are not reducible to a single unilinear trend:

they are complex; multidirectional; and sharply segmented by class, ethnicity, and gender. Compared to their parents, all children show educational progress but at very different rates. The Chinese and, to a lesser extent, Koreans display exceptional achievement. By comparison, the achievements of Filipinos are moderate, but they surpass those of native whites. Salvadorans, Guatemalans, Cambodians, and Laotians include slightly more college graduates than high school dropouts, close to the ratios observed among native black young adults. Among Mexicans, by far the largest immigrant group, the 1.5 generation is twice as likely to drop out of high school than to graduate from college, but the second generation reverses the pattern, with college graduates slightly exceeding high school dropouts. Yet again, among third-plus-generation males, the ratio falls with dropouts exceeding college graduates.

For all groups, proficiency in and preference for English is well established by the second generation and effectively completed by the third among Mexicans. With increasing acculturation and from generation to generation, some indices of downward assimilation also increase—notably arrest and incarceration among males and nonmarital and teenage childbearing among females. Incarceration rates are lowest among immigrant young men, even the least educated among them, but they increase sharply by the second and higher generations, especially among the less educated. The likelihood of growing up in a nonintact family also increases from the first to the second to the third-plus generations, despite increasing intergenerational residential mobility.

Context of reception also matters. An undocumented status blocks access to opportunity. That trend has been exacerbated since the passage of new federal laws in 1996. The failure of Congress to pass comprehensive immigration reform, including the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act, has worsened the situation for many immigrant youth. Of the approximately 12 million unauthorized immigrants in the United States (and nearly 3 million in California), an estimated 15 percent are children (Passel 2006). About sixty-five thousand who have lived in the United States for more than five years graduate from high school each year, but only between 5 and 10 percent go to college (Gonzales 2007). Without means to adjust their status, they are ineligible for most forms of financial aid and are excluded from the legal workforce. They constitute a growing pool of acculturated young adults who are forced further underground. The predictable result is the perpetuation of enduring ethnic inequalities. As the native labor force continues to shrink in California and the United States—a process that will accelerate as the baby boom generation reaches retirement age—that is an outcome that a dynamic society can ill afford.

## Notes

1. Cuba and Canada ranked eighth and ninth in the size of their foreign-born populations in 2006, each with less than 1 million; and the Dominican Republic was essentially tied with Guatemala for tenth—but the Cubans and Dominicans are concentrated in Florida and New York.

2. High school grades were measured for Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS) San Diego respondents by official academic grade point averages (GPAs) calculated by the school district at

the end of high school, on a 4-point scale (where A = 4). Immigration and Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles (IIMMLA) respondents provided self-reports of high school GPAs. The measures were recoded so that “mostly As” = GPAs above 3.5, “mostly Bs” = 2.5 to 3.5, “mostly Cs” = 1.5 to 2.5, and “mostly Ds, Fs” = GPAs below 1.5.

3. Because the Mexicans, Salvadorans, and Guatemalans, as well as the Filipinas, were mostly Catholics and reported more frequent attendance at religious services, a separate analysis (not shown) inserted Catholic religion and frequency of religious participation as potential predictors but found they had no effect on childbearing outcomes. It was not religious belief or behavior that was linked to the outcome, but ethnicity, which remained significant regardless.

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