



MERAGE FOUNDATION
FOR THE
AMERICAN DREAM

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Dear Colleague:

Mexicans are the fastest growing population group in the U.S. By mid-century, the Mexican-origin population is projected to reach approximately 60 million, or approximately 14% of all Americans. Indeed, Mexicans will account for a large percentage of total population growth over the next few decades. Whether the United States will provide the Mexican-origin population with the opportunities it has provided other immigrant groups and whether Mexicans themselves will use the opportunities that are provided them are key questions. Answers to these questions will go a long way toward determining the future economic health and social well being of the nation.

The Merage Foundation for the American Dream is pleased to send the attached paper by Dr. Frank Bean, Dr. Susan Brown of the University of California, Irvine. The paper, "Becoming U.S. Stakeholders: Legalization and Integration among Mexican Immigrants and Their Descendants," was commissioned by the Foundation because of its interest in developing strategies to help facilitate the successful integration of Mexican immigrants into American life.

The paper is important and hopefully will add to the ongoing dialogue concerning national, state and local immigration policies. Succinctly, it indicates that America's Mexican-origin population is becoming integrated into American society, but at a slower pace than early waves of European migrants. The authors note that legal and naturalized status are key variables in the economic progress of Mexican immigrant households. It explores the reasons why economic integration is slower between second- and third- generation Mexican immigrants than between first- and second-generation immigrants. The role of the father and mother in influencing sons' and daughters' progress toward integration is described often in a counterintuitive manner. Generally, the authors suggest that social and cultural integration appears to be moving faster than economic integration and spatial mobility.

We hope that you will read the paper and its policy suggestions concerning primarily higher education. While you may or may not agree, they are worthy of debate and discussion.

The Merage Foundation has published and will continue to publish occasional papers to help foster dialogue concerning immigration policy. Previous papers can be downloaded from the Foundation's web site, www.meragefoundations.com/mfad.html. The series includes papers on [the](#) economics of immigration; public opinion; immigration and the Social Security system; and crime and immigration.

We welcome your comments on this paper or indeed on any of the Foundation's papers. Please e-mail me at MKaplan@MerageFoundations.com.

Sincerely,

Marshall Kaplan
Executive Director



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**BECOMING U.S. STAKEHOLDERS: LEGALIZATION AND INTEGRATION
AMONG MEXICAN IMMIGRANTS AND THEIR DESCENDANTS**

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The findings of this report were the focus of commentary and discussion at the Colloquium on Immigrant Integration organized by the Merage Foundation for the American Dream and the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars held on June 5, 2007, at the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington, DC. Data for some of the analyses come from a survey called Immigration and Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles (IIMMLA), which was designed by Frank D. Bean, Susan K. Brown, Leo R. Chávez, Louis DeSipio, Jennifer Lee, and Rubén G. Rumbaut, all from the University of California, Irvine, and Min Zhou, from UCLA (listed in alphabetical order). The IIMMLA project was funded by a grant from the Russell Sage Foundation. The data on the Mexican immigrant generation come from a study called Mexican Immigrant Migration and Mobility Status (MIMMS), funded by a separate grant from the Hewlett Foundation. An earlier version of the present paper was written in association with the five IIMMLA collaborators named above. Thanks are expressed to the Merage Foundation for the American Dream and the Pew Hispanic Center for financial support of the analyses of the data.

Executive Summary

This report uses new data from two studies called Mexican Immigrant Migration and Mobility Status (MIMMS) and Immigration and Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles (IIMMLA) to assess various aspects of the integration of the Mexican-origin population across multiple generations in the United States. These data sets, collected with the support of grants from the Hewlett and Russell Sage Foundations respectively, were obtained from telephone interviews conducted in 2004 with 1,461 respondents from the five-county Los Angeles metropolitan area who identified themselves as having been born in Mexico or having Mexican ancestry.

The report introduces two major innovations. First, by relying on the MIMMS and IIMMLA data, the report isolates the Mexican-origin third generation (i.e., it does not conflate it with earlier or later generations), something rarely possible in previous research. Second, the report focuses on multiple aspects of integration. After examining 52 separate indicators of integration, we find three separate major dimensions, which we term economic, socio-cultural, and spatial. Political measures tend not to vary independently of the economic dimension, so we treat them here as part of that category.

Three major findings emerge:

1. The adult offspring of immigrants who came and remained unauthorized fare worse economically than those whose parents achieved legal status or became naturalized U.S. citizens;
2. Partly as a result, the economic and residential mobility of the descendants of Mexican immigrants is progressing more slowly than sociocultural integration;
3. Across the first three generations, the Mexican-origin population is following a path of significant overall integration, although one that may be taking longer economically than the trajectory traversed by many of the European immigrant groups of the early 20th century.

The slow economic integration observed from the second to the third generation results from weak educational attainment. While gains appear in college completion after the second generation, these are not large enough to raise appreciably the overall average number of years of schooling. While this relative leveling off between the two generations may stem from many factors, such as disproportionate enrollment in two- rather than four-year colleges, or a greater tendency to have attended large, poor high schools, an especially important contributing factor involves many third-generation families not earning enough money to help send their children (or all of their children) to college. Given the rapid rise in college tuition and fees in recent years, increases that have substantially outstripped inflation, a major policy implication is that further integration of the Mexican origin population depends on boosting educational levels, particularly college completion. This underscores the importance of devising and implementing policies that reduce substantially (not merely amortize) the cost of higher education for low- and middle-income Americans, including Mexican-origin families.

BECOMING U.S. STAKEHOLDERS: LEGALIZATION AND INTEGRATION AMONG MEXICAN IMMIGRANTS AND THEIR DESCENDANTS

Introduction

Although immigration reform in the United States has been an important policy issue for nearly half a century, in recent years it has commanded especially widespread attention and generated unusually intense divisiveness. Both because of worries about increasing numbers of Mexican migrants and concerns about proposals to legalize unauthorized entrants (most of whom are Mexicans) (Bean and Lowell 2004), the question of Mexican migration has dominated much of the policy debate. Mexicans, whether legal or unauthorized, are by far the largest of the recent immigrant groups. In 2005 alone, 161,445 persons from Mexico became "legal permanent residents" (14.4 percent of the total) (Office of Immigration Statistics 2005). That same year, 300,000 unauthorized Mexicans also established *de facto* residency, bringing the total number of unauthorized Mexicans to 6.2 million (or 56 percent of all unauthorized persons) (Passel 2006). These numbers dwarf those from any other country. The second largest number of legal entrants in 2005 came from India (84,681 persons, or 7.5 percent of all legal permanent residents), while the second largest number of unauthorized persons living in the country were from Latin American countries other than Mexico (2.5 million, or 22 percent of the total unauthorized).

Of the main issues driving the current debate, none is more important than the level of integration among Mexican immigrants (Bean and Stevens 2003). Because most new arrivals from Mexico are unskilled labor migrants (persons with very low education who come to work), some observers think the prospects that Mexican immigrants and their descendants will join the American economic mainstream are dim at best (Hanson 2003; Camarota 2001). Such conclusions often seem to rest on the assumption that Mexicans who have been in the country

many years, and even the descendants of Mexican immigrants, share the characteristics of those who have recently arrived (see Bean, Brown, and Rumbaut 2006). But the characteristics of new immigrants are not static. Rather, immigrants change, both across time and across generations. Hence, reaching adequate conclusions about Mexican integration requires comparisons across generations. To assess Mexican integration, this report introduces data from two new telephone surveys on more than four generations of persons of Mexican ancestry in Los Angeles, the U.S. city where the Mexican immigrant group is most concentrated.¹

We define the Mexican first generation as those who came to the United States after age 15, at which point they are unlikely to enroll in secondary schools in the United States. The “1.5 generation” consists of those who were born abroad to foreign-born parents but arrived in the United States before age 15. They are likely to have at least some U.S. education. Members of the second generation are those born in the United States who have at least one immigrant parent. The third generation are persons with U.S.-born parents but at least one Mexican grandparent, and the fourth-plus generation are those with both U.S.-born parents and grandparents but at least one ancestor from Mexico. This latter group could thus include fifth, sixth, or even higher generation persons. In this report, we examine 1,461 respondents whom we identify as having reported Mexican birth or ancestry.

A major innovation of the report is that access to data across more than four immigrant generations provides a much stronger basis for gauging Mexican integration than has been available before because we can precisely separate the third generation from the fourth and later generations. A second innovative feature is that this research focuses on multiple aspects of integration. Usually, research on integration examines only one or two facets of the phenomenon at a time. While such limited inquiries may yield vital information on key factors -- like

education or language -- they do not provide an overall picture of integration.² This report thus examines more social and economic aspects of integration across more sharply defined generations than ever before. Three major findings emerge:

1. The adult offspring of immigrants whose parents were unauthorized fare less well economically than the offspring of those whose parents achieved legal status or became naturalized U.S. citizens
2. As a result, the descendants of Mexican immigrants on the whole are less quickly integrated economically and spatially than socio-culturally
3. Overall, the Mexican-origin population appears to be following a path of significant integration, although one that appears to take longer economically than the integration of many of the European immigrant groups of the early 20th century.

The report also assesses how the legal status and naturalization of Mexican immigrants relate to their children's educational attainment and English language acquisition and thus the integration of the group as a whole. Public policy issues of legalization and citizenship have been major stumbling blocks in Congressional efforts to pass immigration legislation. However, little is known about how immigrant legalization and naturalization relate to the integration of children. How much does having an unauthorized father handicap the children of immigrants? Does having the opportunity to become a legal permanent resident increase the chances that one's children will become part of the mainstream? What difference does becoming a citizen make? How do these various transitions in migration status relate to the likelihood that Mexican immigrants and their children become better educated and increase their incomes? We argue here that largely because so many Mexican immigrants are unauthorized, economic integration of the group as a whole is slowed down. Children whose parents remain unauthorized get less

education and are more likely to have to help support their parents, thus delaying their own economic advancement.

Theoretical Models and the Process of Assimilation

Assimilation, sometimes known as integration or incorporation, is the process by which the characteristics of members of immigrant groups and host societies come to resemble one another (Gordon 1964; Alba and Nee 2003). That process, which has multiple dimensions, begins with the immigrant generation and continues through the second generation and beyond. Although the experiences of the European groups coming to the United States in the early 20th century suggest that full assimilation generally occurs within three to four generations, no fixed timetable governs the process (Bean and Stevens 2003; Brown and Bean 2006). For example, recent research on European immigrants to the United States has shown that, in 1920, the educational attainment of even third-generation Irish and Germans lagged well behind that of earlier-arriving groups (Sassler 2006). Assessing assimilation in the case of the Mexican immigrant group requires considering three major theories of immigrant and ethnic group integration. The theories are the *classic and new assimilation* models, the *racial/ethnic disadvantage* model, and the *segmented assimilation* model.

Classic and New Assimilation Models

The notion of the United States as a melting pot has constituted an integral part of public consciousness for a century or more. In 1908, Israel Zangwill's play of that name captivated Broadway (Hirschman 1983). The sociological paradigm that has yielded the most prominent perspective on immigrant group mobility is *classic assimilation* theory, which dates to the 1920s. More recently it is represented in the work of sociologists like Milton Gordon (1964), and

Richard Alba and Victor Nee (2003). In general, classic assimilation theory envisions immigrant/ethnic and majority groups as following “straight line” convergence, becoming more similar over time in norms, values, behaviors, and characteristics. This theory expects those immigrants residing the longest in the host society, as well as the members of later generations, to show greater similarities with the majority group than immigrants who have spent less time in the host society. Early versions of the theory have been criticized as “Anglo-conformist” because they often depicted immigrant groups as conforming to unchanging, middle-class, white Protestant values.

Gordon (1964) outlined several stages that follow the acquisition of culture and language. First comes structural assimilation (close social relations with the host society), followed by large-scale intermarriage; ethnic identification with the host society; and the ending of prejudice, discrimination, and value conflict. In what they call “new assimilation theory,” Alba and Nee (2003) refined Gordon’s account by arguing that certain institutions, including those bolstered by civil rights law, play important roles in achieving assimilation. They give the example of Jewish organizations that persuaded the New York City Council in 1946 to threaten the tax-exempt status of colleges or universities that discriminated on the basis of race or religion. More so than in earlier versions of this theory, Alba and Nee stress that the incorporation of immigrant groups also involves change and acceptance by the mainstream population. Classic assimilation theory as a whole works best, however, when the mainstream can be easily defined. While Alba and Nee acknowledge that assimilation takes place within racially and economically heterogeneous contexts, this has led to the criticism that they define assimilation so broadly that the concept loses meaning.

The Racial/ethnic Disadvantage Model

Other scholars argue that the assimilation of many immigrant groups often remains blocked. This stream of thought, called the *racial/ethnic disadvantage* point of view, is reflected in the writings of Nathan Glazer and Patrick Moynihan (1963), and Alejandro Portes and his colleagues (Portes and Zhou 1993). These writers often emphasize racial and ethnic pluralism as much or more than they do ethnic disadvantage. For example, Glazer and Moynihan's *Beyond the Melting Pot*, published in 1963 before the latest wave of immigration, argues that ethnicity can constitute a resource as well as a burden for achieving economic mobility. But in general, this stream of thought, especially its more recent versions, argues that language and cultural familiarity may often not be sufficient for complete assimilation. Lingering discrimination and institutional barriers to employment and to access to other opportunities may block full integration.

Because immigrants may favorably compare socioeconomic opportunities in the host country to those in the country of origin, they initially may not perceive such barriers. However, by the second or third generation, they may realize that the goal of full assimilation may be more difficult and take longer than originally presumed. Such realizations can have social and cultural consequences, including sometimes the re-emergence (or simply emergence) of racial/ethnic consciousness. Critiques of this model have suggested that it overstates racial/ethnic barriers and fails adequately to explain evidence of socioeconomic mobility.

The Segmented Assimilation Model

Yet assimilation does appear to elude some immigrants' descendants, even as late as the third generation. However, uneven patterns of convergence do not necessarily indicate lack of assimilation, but rather may reflect a "bumpy" rather than "straight-line" course, as Herbert J.

Gans (1992) described the process. Others have noted that just as some members of immigrant groups become cut off from economic mobility, others find multiple pathways to assimilation depending on their national origins, socioeconomic status, contexts of reception in the United States, and family resources, both social and financial (Hirschman, DeWind and Kasinitz 1999). As a result, the assimilation experiences of recent immigrants show more variegated and diverse scenarios than those provided by the classic assimilation and the ethnic disadvantage perspectives.

Portes and Zhou (1993) combined elements of both the straight-line assimilation and the ethnic disadvantage perspectives into a framework they call *segmented assimilation*. They theorize that structural barriers, such as poor urban schools, cut off access to employment and other opportunities — obstacles that often are particularly severe in the case of the most disadvantaged members of immigrant groups. Such impediments can lead to stagnant or downward mobility, even as the children of other immigrants follow divergent paths toward classic straight-line assimilation. Heavily disadvantaged children of immigrants may even reject assimilation altogether and embrace attitudes, orientations, and behaviors considered "oppositional" in nature, such as joining a street gang. Other more advantaged groups may sometimes embrace traditional home-country attitudes and use them to inspire their children to achieve, a process Portes and Zhou call selective acculturation. Consequently, segmented assimilation focuses on identifying the contextual, structural, and cultural factors that separate successful from unsuccessful, or even "negative," assimilation.

Portes, Zhou and their colleagues argue it is particularly important to identify such factors in the case of the second generation, because obstacles facing the children of immigrants can thwart assimilation at perhaps its most critical juncture. Thus, while many children of

immigrants will find ways to move toward mainstream status, others will find such pathways blocked, particularly as a consequence of racialization. Thus, Portes, Fernández-Kelly, and Haller (2005) argue:

Children of Asian, black, mulatto, and mestizo immigrants cannot escape their ethnicity and race, as defined by the mainstream. Their enduring physical differences from whites and the equally persistent strong effects of discrimination based on those differences ... throw a barrier in the path of occupational mobility and social acceptance. Immigrant children's identities, their aspirations, and their academic performance are affected accordingly.

Critics of this model argue that the perspective often ignores substantial heterogeneity in skin color and physical features among new immigrants, thus risking the erroneous attribution of poor economic outcomes to homogeneous racialization when they may actually stem from other constraints like family financial obligations or factors such as lackluster job growth that slow the rate of mobility. They also point out that since the model has not been substantially empirically tested beyond the current second generation (the members of which may still be adolescents), segmented assimilation may misinterpret oppositional attitudes historically found among the young and misconstrue the pace of assimilation (Bean, Stevens and Wierzbicki 2003).

The Implications of Legal Status and Naturalization for Incorporation

Mexicans comprise an overwhelming proportion of unauthorized migration flows. The large numbers encourage many observers to argue that policies to curtail or “regularize” unauthorized migration must precede any changes in legal immigration policy (U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform 1994). But another issue also shares top billing on the immigration policy reform agenda, one that stems from doubts that the Mexican immigrant group will succeed economically. Almost all Mexican migrants arrive with very little money or education

and frequently as unauthorized entrants (Bean and Stevens 2003). They are thus often relegated to the bottom tier of the workforce. Analysts often misinterpret the consequences of this, concluding that Mexicans will become a disadvantaged underclass (Huntington 2004). However, unauthorized migrants not only often change their migration status, their children and their grandchildren and great-grandchildren often do not remain similarly disadvantaged (see Bean, Brown, and Rumbaut 2006). Thus, both immigrants and their descendants evolve, both across time, as the former stay longer in the country, and across generations, as the newcomers give way to their children and their children's children.

Given these dynamics, what would we expect integration processes to look like among Mexican immigrants and their descendants? In general, while unauthorized entry may handicap Mexican entrants, the important changes that occur across subsequent generations may nonetheless eventually make up for the fact that Mexican immigrants often have to begin their socioeconomic climb "from the basement not the first floor," as Bean, Stevens, and Wierzbicki (2003) note. This stands in sharp contrast to what has often been the starting point for other immigrant groups. Thus, the theoretical expectation here is that evidence of assimilation processes will emerge for the Mexican-origin group, although perhaps not strongly until the third generation because it is not until then that the especially disadvantaged position of the Mexican first generation can be overcome. Thus, to assess this possibility here, we introduce new data in this report to examine how changes in the unauthorized and citizenship status of Mexican immigrant parents affect their children's socioeconomic status (their acquisition of human capital, occupation, and earnings) and subsequently the course of Mexican economic incorporation. After that, we then examine how (and how much) various aspects of integration

improve when we focus on measures of these across generations, especially going from the second to the third generation.

The Benefits of Legalization

Becoming a legal permanent resident offers obvious tangible benefits to immigrants. Legalization entitles immigrants to a “green card,” which not only enables them to work legally, it also brings access to a wide range of jobs, legal protections, financial services and travel opportunities unavailable to the unauthorized. Legalization also works indirectly to provide the sorts of stable working conditions and job experience that enhance wages and reduce the necessity for workers to rely only on social contacts for jobs (Aguilera and Massey 2003; Massey 1987). Legal immigrants are thus less likely to be subjected to exploitation in the labor market. Moreover, they are eligible to naturalize and thereby gain even greater access to certain kinds of employment and public assistance (Bean and Stevens 2003), which also may generate even wider social networks. Such wider social contacts in turn not only foster greater familiarity with employment opportunities (Granovetter 1973), they also strengthen social integration more generally. Legal status thus constitutes an extremely important milestone in the process of immigrant incorporation. By extension, it should also matter for the well-being of the children of immigrants.

The Benefits of Naturalization

In the United States, the requirements for naturalization generally require that a migrant be an adult, a legal permanent resident, and a resident of the United States for at least five years. Immigrants must also demonstrate the ability to speak, read, and write English; pass a test on U.S. government and history; and show good moral character (for example, not have a felony conviction), all characteristics valuable in the labor market. Those who naturalize also tend to

show more evidence of investment in the United States economy (e.g., through home ownership or self-employment) and less likelihood of emigration once here, because their countries of origin are often distant and less economically developed (Barken and Khokhlov 1980; Beijbom 1971; Bernard 1936; Jasso and Rosenzweig 1986; Yang 1994). Family status is important, in that those with children are more likely to naturalize (Liang 1994b; Yang 1994). Naturalization also varies with age at immigration (Yang [1994] finds a convex curvilinear relationship) and gender (women are more likely to naturalize: Jasso and Rosenzweig [1986]; Yang [1994]).

The benefits of naturalization are multi-faceted and illustrated by two complementary views about the foundations of citizenship. These reveal that citizenship brings not only labor market and political benefits but also social benefits. The first perspective sees citizenship as involving distinctly political-economic rights (Ong 1999), such as voting and access to certain employment and labor market opportunities (Aleinikoff 2001). Those who become citizens can expect to be able to vote and to pursue new job possibilities; in turn, they are assumed to embrace largely uniform national identifications (Aleinikoff 2003; Schuck 1998). This framework on citizenship envisions immigrants individually and quite explicitly naturalizing for political and economic reasons. In this view, the major benefits of naturalization include not only access to those jobs in government and defense that require citizenship, and to public assistance, but also the right to vote and the ability to sponsor relatives for immigration.

A second perspective emphasizes less tangible aspects of citizenship (Bloemraad 2006; Feldblum 2000), such as self-identity and possibly even symbolism, a diminishing relevance of national citizenship altogether (e.g., Bauböck 1994; Carens 1987; Jacobson 1996; Soysal 1994). This perspective also notes the existence of multiple kinds of citizenship and the prevalence of transnational, including dual, citizenship (Basch, Glick Schiller, and Szanton Blanc 1994;

Gilbertson and Singer 2003; Ong 1999; Portes, Guarnizo, and Landolt 1999). In this view, institutional support provided to immigrants, the warmth of their welcome, and help with language and job placement all help to shape how immigrants perceive their destination countries and affect the likelihood of naturalization (Bloemraad 2004; 2006; Reitz 2003; Van Hook, Brown and Bean 2006).

Differences in the Effects of Mother's and Father's Status

The above provides theoretical basis for expecting that the children of immigrants who have attained legal permanent residency and naturalization will be better off economically than the children of immigrants who have not done so. Such an expectation is consistent with the status-attainment literature showing the importance of family background on educational and occupational outcomes (e.g. Blau and Duncan 1967; Featherman and Hauser 1978; Teachman 1987). But mother's versus father's status could have different implications for children's outcomes. Because the migration process is gendered in important ways (Harzig 2006; Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994, Suárez-Orozco and Qin 2006), particularly in the case of Mexican labor migration, mothers and fathers may have different reasons for migrating and differential opportunities for legalizing their status. Solo male migrants who legalize may petition for spouses to come from Mexico, with the result that some wives may enter the United States legally even though their husbands were initially unauthorized. Also, wives who enter without authorization may have more trouble gathering the paperwork necessary for legalization through programs like IRCA; for instance, records on employment or utility or rental receipts that show continuous residence may be harder to obtain, especially if the women work in domestic labor or move into households where the records are kept only in the man's name (González Baker

1997). Such considerations suggest father's legal status and citizenship may have a greater effect than the mother's status on the acquisition of human capital by the children of immigrants.

Alternatively, mother's status may be more important to children's outcomes because mothers tend to be more involved in the socialization of children (Matthews 1987); this tendency may be even more pronounced among Mexican immigrant mothers because their traditional attitudes toward sex roles assign them primary responsibility for child-rearing (Ortiz and Cooney 1985, González-López 2003). Also, such socialization effects may be gendered, in that traditionally oriented mothers may influence daughters more than sons. However, since Mexican-origin girls report higher academic motivation and aspirations than boys (Gowan and Treviño 1998; Plunkett and Bámaca-Gómez 2003; Williams, Alvarez, and Hauck 2002), any greater influence of mothers upon daughters would not appear to dampen educational aspirations. Thus, we have no theoretical basis for clearly predicting which of these influences might predominate and treat as an empirical question whether mothers and fathers have differential effects on children's status and whether daughters may be more affected than sons.

Research Findings on the Effects of Parents' Status on Children

Entry and legalization. The IIMMLA survey obtained information on parents' migration status, both at the time of entry to the United States and at the time of the interview. We also collected data in the IIMMLA survey on whether the respondents' parents had naturalized. How do these statuses relate to integration? Because we define second-generation respondents as those having at least one immigrant parent, this means that sometimes the generational statuses of the parents will differ. In a few cases, mothers were foreign-born but fathers native-born or vice versa, meaning that one parent did *not* have had either a legalization or naturalization experience. Respondents with one native-born parent constitute an especially meaningful

comparison group, because that parent may give them a substantial “jump-start” in integration compared with those having two foreign-born parents. We thus include them in a separate category to provide a useful benchmark for children’s economic attainment. As a consequence, we examine six nativity/migration status/naturalization trajectories for the mothers and fathers of the IIMMLA 1.5 and second-generation respondents of Mexican origin: 1) Native-Born: father (mother) is native-born; 2) Authorized/Citizen: father (mother) is authorized at entry, later naturalized; 3) Authorized/Green Card: father (mother) authorized at entry, not naturalized by time of interview; 4) Unauthorized/Citizen: father (mother) unauthorized at entry, naturalized by interview; 5) Unauthorized/Green Card: father (mother) unauthorized at entry, obtained legal permanent residency, but not naturalized at interview; and 6) Unauthorized/Unauthorized: father (mother) unauthorized at both entry and interview.

As a first matter, we note that calculating the proportion of our respondents whose parents were ever unauthorized depends on knowing the number of parents who in fact were immigrants. Roughly 10 percent of the fathers and mothers were born in the United States and thus could not be immigrants, although their children qualify as 1.5 or second-generation respondents because of the immigrant status of their other parent. In addition, 12.7 percent of the fathers and 8.7 percent of the mothers in the sample never migrated to the United States (see Table 1). We omit both these groups in calculating proportions of 1.5 and second-generation persons with unauthorized fathers and mothers. Because the migration status of 69 parents is unknown, we calculate three sets of percentages. One assumes that these parents were unauthorized, and the second assumes they were not. The third percentage excludes this group of parents altogether. The first set of percentages will yield a maximum estimate of the percentage unauthorized, the second a minimum estimate, and the third an in-between estimate.

Table 1. Entry Status and Legal and Naturalization Trajectory, Fathers and Mothers of 1.5 and 2nd Generation Mexican-Origin Respondents

Status at Entry / Status at Interview	Distribution by Father's Status									
	All		Those with Foreign-born Fathers		Those with Foreign-born Fathers and Known Migration Status		Those with Foreign-born Fathers Who Could Have Migrated or Did to U.S.		Those with Foreign-born Fathers and Known to Have Migrated to U.S.	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Status Unknown ^a	60	6.4	60	7.1	--	--	60	8.3	--	--
Never Lived in U.S.	119	12.7	119	14.1	119	15.2	--	--	--	--
Not Foreign-Born	93	9.9	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Authorized / Naturalized	239	25.6	239	28.4	239	30.6	239	33.1	239	36.0
Authorized / Green Card	118	12.6	118	14.0	118	15.1	118	16.3	118	17.8
Unauthorized / Naturalized	152	16.3	152	18.1	152	19.4	152	21.0	152	22.9
Unauthorized / Green Card	114	12.2	114	13.5	114	14.6	114	15.8	114	17.2
Unauthorized / Unauthorized	40	4.3	40	4.8	40	5.1	40	5.5	40	6.0
Total for Fathers	935	100.0	842	100.0	782	100.0	723	100.0	663	100.0

Status at Entry / Status at Interview	Distribution by Mother's Status									
	All		Those with Foreign-born Mothers		Those with Foreign-born Mothers and Known Migration Status		Those with Foreign-born Mothers Who Could Have Migrated or Did to U.S.		Those with Foreign-born Mothers and Known to Have Migrated to U.S.	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Status Unknown ^a	9	1.0	9	1.1	--	--	9	1.2	--	--
Never Lived in U.S.	81	8.7	81	9.7	81	9.8	--	--	--	--
Not Foreign-Born	98	10.5	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Authorized / Naturalized	300	32.1	300	35.8	300	36.2	300	39.7	300	40.2
Authorized / Green Card	128	13.7	128	15.3	128	15.5	128	16.9	128	17.1
Unauthorized / Naturalized	138	14.8	138	16.5	138	16.7	138	18.3	138	18.5
Unauthorized / Green Card	142	15.2	142	17.0	142	17.1	142	18.8	142	19.0
Unauthorized / Unauthorized	39	4.2	39	4.7	39	4.7	39	5.2	39	5.2
Total for Mothers	935	100.0	837	100.0	828	100.0	756	100.0	747	100.0

a Did not know parent or parent's status

The resulting sets of three percentages are shown in the first six rows of Table 2 and reveal that almost half of the fathers of the 1.5 and second-generation respondents came to the United States as unauthorized migrants (about 46 percent in the case of the middle estimate); complementarily, slightly more than half came as legal entrants. Among the mothers, over two of every five came as unauthorized migrants, not quite as high a ratio as for the fathers. These estimates are reasonably close to previous ones for the proportions of unauthorized entrants from Mexico eventually settling in California during the '50s, '60s and '70s (Bean, Passel, and Edmonston 1990).

Table 2. Percentages of Respondents' Fathers and Mothers Entering the Country with Various Legal and Naturalization Statuses

	Fathers	Mothers
	%	%
Percent Entering Unauthorized	46.2 ^a	42.7 ^a
	42.3 ^b	42.2 ^b
	50.6 ^c	43.4 ^c
Percent Unauthorized at Interview	13.8 ^a	6.3 ^a
	5.5 ^b	5.2 ^b
	6.0 ^c	5.2 ^c
Percent Legalizing of Entrants with Known Status	94.0	94.8
Percent Naturalizing of Known Legal Entrants	66.9	70.1
Percent Naturalizing of Known Unauthorized Entrants	49.7	43.3
Percent Naturalizing of All Known Eligible	62.8	61.9

^a Assumes those parents with unknown status were all unauthorized.

^b Assumes those parents with unknown status were all authorized.

^c Only for parents with known entry status.

By the time their children participated in the IIMMLA interview, most of the unauthorized fathers had become legalized permanent residents (LPRs). Specifically, only about

5 to 14 percent of the fathers remained unauthorized. Among mothers, about 5 to 6 percent remained unauthorized. If we work with the middle estimate for the percentage that legalized, this would mean that nearly 9 of every 10 parents who were unauthorized entrants had attained legal status by 2004. Overall, it would mean that about 19 of every 20 of the parents who were known to be entrants were either legal or had attained legal permanent resident status by the time of the IIMMLA interview. This very high percentage of legal fathers and mothers among the children of Mexican immigrants in Los Angeles provides strong testimony to the successful implementation of the legalization provisions (González Baker 1990) provided by the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA), and to the overall effectiveness of the legislation's legalization provisions (Bean, Vernez, and Keely 1989). While we do not have an exact date for parents' legalization, most legalizations took place in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Children's attainments. How does legal status, including the IRCA legalization that would have been utilized by many of these fathers and mothers, relate to the human capital attained by their young adult children? In Table 3, we see that those respondents whose fathers became legal permanent residents (LPRs) were about 25 percent less likely to drop out of high school (16.9 percent versus 22.5 percent) and about 70 percent more likely to graduate from college than were those whose fathers did not become LPRs. Similarly, they are nearly 13 percent more likely to prefer speaking English at home, more likely to work in jobs with higher occupational prestige (about 7 percent higher on average), and more likely to work in jobs with higher earnings (about 30 percent higher than those whose fathers did not legalize). Thus, in general, having a father who became a legal permanent resident (either through IRCA or regular channels) is related to appreciable economic benefits on the part of the 1.5 and second-

generation children of the Mexican immigrants who entered the country initially in an unauthorized status.

The results for mothers are generally similar. Becoming a legal permanent resident for mothers is also related to greater children's educational and economic attainment. Notably, when the mother remains unauthorized, children acquire less human capital than if the father remains unauthorized. Over twice as many of those with mothers who remained unauthorized never received a high school diploma (nearly 36 percent vs. 15 percent), and none received a college degree. The occupational prestige of respondents' jobs is about one-eighth lower when their mothers remained unauthorized than when their fathers did, and their income is more than \$2,500 lower. Only 28.2 percent of respondents whose mothers remained unauthorized prefer to speak English at home, compared with 45.0 percent of those whose fathers remained unauthorized. Such findings tend to support the traditional gender role socialization perspective, that the offspring of mothers who do not become legal permanent residents are more likely to inherit the disadvantages of their mothers' status and that the mothers' status may have even stronger effects than fathers' status, probably because many of the mothers who remained unauthorized may have been single mothers when the respondents were growing up.

Are still further advantages related to naturalizing, both among those whose fathers and mothers entered legally and among those whose fathers and mothers were unauthorized entrants and then became LPRs and perhaps went on to become naturalized citizens? Of the former group, more than two-thirds (66.9 percent of fathers and 70.1 percent of mothers) had naturalized by the time of the interview (Table 2). Of the parents known to be unauthorized entrants, about half of the fathers (49.7 percent) and slightly less than half of the mothers (43.3 percent) had naturalized. Thus, within two or three decades after most of the respondents' fathers and

Table 3. Respondents' Average Human Capital and Economic Attainment by Father's and Mother's Legal Statuses at Entry and at Time of Interview

	<u>Fathers</u>	<u>Mothers</u>
Respondent Education		
% Less than High School Diploma		
Not Foreign-Born	11.8	15.3
Authorized at Entry	13.2	14.0
Unauthorized / Authorized	16.9	15.0
Unauthorized / Unauthorized	22.5	35.9
Status Unknown	26.7	11.1
Never Lived in U.S.	37.0	49.4
% Bachelor's Degree or Higher		
Not Foreign-Born	19.4	8.2
Authorized at Entry	16.2	19.2
Unauthorized / Authorized	17.3	15.7
Unauthorized / Unauthorized	10.0	0.0
Status Unknown	8.3	0.0
Never Lived in U.S.	8.4	8.6
Average Years of Education		
Not Foreign-Born	13.5	12.7
Authorized at Entry	13.2	13.4
Unauthorized / Authorized	13.2	13.2
Unauthorized / Unauthorized	13.0	11.4
Status Unknown	12.4	13.0
Never Lived in U.S.	11.8	10.9
% Prefer to Speak English at Home		
Not Foreign-Born	71.0	80.6
Authorized at Entry	65.5	62.9
Unauthorized / Authorized	50.8	46.1
Unauthorized / Unauthorized	45.0	28.2
Status Unknown	41.7	66.7
Never Lived in U.S.	32.8	28.4

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Table 3 (continued). Respondents' Average Levels of Human Capital and Economic Attainment by Father's and Mother's Legal Statuses at Entry and at Time of Interview

	<u>Fathers</u>	<u>Mothers</u>
Average Occupational Socioeconomic Prestige		
Not Foreign-Born	40.4	42.4
Authorized at Entry	42.3	41.9
Unauthorized / Authorized	41.3	41.4
Unauthorized / Unauthorized	38.5	34.0
Status Unknown	39.6	42.6
Never Lived in U.S.	38.8	36.9
Average Personal Income		
Not Foreign-Born	23,194	25,847
Authorized at Entry	23,847	23,466
Unauthorized / Authorized	22,105	20,014
Unauthorized / Unauthorized	16,988	14,218
Status Unknown	19,567	16,056
Never Lived in U.S.	17,395	19,685

mothers had come to the country, about three-fifths of them had become citizens, including many who started out as unauthorized entrants. Again, it is worth noting that most of these would have qualified for LPR status and citizenship by virtue of the legalization programs of IRCA, which created pathways to legalization for unauthorized migrants in the country at that time (Bean, Vernez, and Keely 1989). Most of the parents of our respondents migrated to the United States during an era when almost all of them would have been eligible under some provision. Although we did not obtain data on whether our respondents' parents in fact became LPRs through IRCA's programs, about three-fourths of the unauthorized Mexican immigrants estimated to be in the country during the 1980s legalized as a result of IRCA (Bean, Passel and Edmonston 1990; Massey, Durand, and Malone 2002), and this group would have included many of the IIMMLA parents.

The substantial degree of naturalization among the IIMMLA respondents' parents, also provides an instructive example about the degree to which the availability of pathways to legal

status and citizenship matter for the economic well-being of the children of unauthorized Mexican immigrants. The results in Table 4 imply that the legalization and citizenship trajectories of those IIMMLA parents who started out as unauthorized migrants affect their children's economic outcomes. For example, when parents who were initially unauthorized changed their legal status, and particularly when they also became naturalized citizens, there was a substantially greater likelihood of educational completion among their children. For example, about 56 percent fewer such children (those whose fathers initially resided as unauthorized immigrants but went on to LPR status and then eventually naturalized) failed to finish high school compared to children whose fathers stayed unauthorized (13.7 percent versus 31.5 percent for those whose fathers remained unauthorized; see Table 4). In the case of finishing college, the children of unauthorized fathers who eventually naturalized graduated from college at over twice the rate of children whose fathers remained unauthorized (19.5 percent for the former versus 9.8 percent for the latter).

We emphasize the fathers' trajectories here because they make more of a difference for sons than for daughters. This is what we would expect for an immigrant group coming from a country with more traditional gender roles and for a group with a very strong history of and orientation toward male labor migration (i.e., migration occurring overwhelmingly for the purpose of working, often so that remittances can be sent back to family members in the sending country). In short, fathers who initially start as unauthorized migrants and then go on to naturalize appear to impart educational advantages to their sons more than they do to their daughters. For the mother's part, remaining unauthorized seems injurious to the educational opportunities of both sons and daughters. These results thus support the idea that parents' life trajectories of various kinds influence children's life changes (Wagmiller et al. 2006). In

Table 4. Human Capital and Economic Attainment by Father's and Mother's Entry Status and Legal Status and Naturalization Trajectory, 1.5 and 2nd Generation Mexican-Origin Respondents

	Fathers			Mothers		
	All	Sons	Daughters	All	Sons	Daughters
Respondent Education						
% Less than High School Diploma						
Not Foreign-Born	11.8	17.0	5.0	15.3	12.5	17.2
Authorized / Naturalized	10.9	15.0	5.7	11.3	14.1	7.7
Authorized / Green Card	17.8	20.4	15.6	20.3	22.6	18.2
Unauthorized / Naturalized	14.5	11.8	17.1	11.6	12.5	10.8
Unauthorized / Green Card	20.2	18.2	21.4	18.3	17.2	19.0
Unauthorized / Unauthorized	22.5	20.0	25.0	35.9	39.1	31.3
Status Unknown	26.7	26.9	26.5	11.1	16.7	0.0
Never Lived in U.S.	37.0	40.7	33.3	49.4	50.0	48.7
% Bachelor's Degree or Higher						
Not Foreign-Born	19.4	22.6	15.0	8.2	7.5	8.6
Authorized / Naturalized	16.7	16.5	17.0	22.3	23.5	20.8
Authorized / Green Card	15.3	20.4	10.9	11.7	11.3	12.1
Unauthorized / Naturalized	19.1	22.4	15.8	20.3	21.9	18.9
Unauthorized / Green Card	14.9	11.4	17.1	11.3	10.3	11.9
Unauthorized / Unauthorized	10.0	5.0	15.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Status Unknown	8.3	3.8	11.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
Never Lived in U.S.	8.4	10.2	6.7	8.6	11.9	5.1
Average Years of Education						
Not Foreign-Born	13.5	13.5	13.5	12.7	12.9	12.6
Authorized / Naturalized	13.3	13.2	13.5	13.7	13.5	13.9
Authorized / Green Card	13.0	13.0	13.0	12.9	12.9	12.9
Unauthorized / Naturalized	13.3	13.6	13.1	13.5	13.4	13.6
Unauthorized / Green Card	13.0	13.0	13.0	12.9	12.9	12.9
Unauthorized / Unauthorized	13.0	12.3	13.6	11.4	11.4	11.4
Status Unknown	12.4	12.3	12.4	13.0	12.7	13.7
Never Lived in U.S.	11.8	11.7	11.8	10.9	11.4	10.4

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Table 4 (continued). Human Capital and Economic Attainment by Father's and Mother's Entry Status and Legal Status and Naturalization Trajectory, 1.5 and 2nd Generation Mexican-Origin Respondents

	Fathers			Mothers		
	All	Sons	Daughters	All	Sons	Daughters
% Prefer to Speak English at Home						
Not Foreign-Born	71.0	73.6	67.5	80.6	87.5	75.9
Authorized / Naturalized	69.5	69.9	68.9	67.0	70.0	63.1
Authorized / Green Card	57.6	55.6	59.4	53.1	48.4	57.6
Unauthorized / Naturalized	61.8	65.8	57.9	55.1	64.1	47.3
Unauthorized / Green Card	36.0	38.6	34.3	37.3	34.5	39.3
Unauthorized / Unauthorized	45.0	40.0	50.0	28.2	65.2	25.0
Status Unknown	41.7	53.8	32.4	66.7	66.7	66.7
Never Lived in U.S.	32.8	32.2	33.3	28.4	33.3	23.1
Average Occupational Socioeconomic Prestige						
Not Foreign-Born	40.4	39.2	42.1	42.4	41.4	43.1
Authorized / Naturalized	42.1	40.8	43.8	42.5	40.8	44.8
Authorized / Green Card	42.9	41.5	44.1	40.3	39.5	41.1
Unauthorized / Naturalized	41.6	40.6	42.7	41.7	40.7	42.5
Unauthorized / Green Card	40.8	39.5	41.7	41.2	38.5	43.2
Unauthorized / Unauthorized	38.5	36.8	40.4	34.0	33.7	34.4
Status Unknown	39.6	37.4	41.4	42.6	39.3	49.2
Never Lived in U.S.	38.8	35.8	42.3	36.9	35.6	38.7
Average Personal Income						
Not Foreign-Born	23,194	26,962	18,200	25,847	24,363	26,871
Authorized / Naturalized	26,151	30,853	20,250	25,000	29,085	19,658
Authorized / Green Card	19,182	21,426	17,289	19,871	23,734	16,242
Unauthorized / Naturalized	23,638	28,480	18,796	21,960	25,445	18,946
Unauthorized / Green Card	20,061	24,000	17,586	18,123	22,948	14,792
Unauthorized / Unauthorized	16,988	18,850	15,125	14,218	17,587	9,375
Status Unknown	19,567	20,538	18,824	16,056	18,750	10,667
Never Lived in U.S.	17,395	19,169	15,650	19,685	25,833	13,064

particular, when unauthorized Mexican immigrants are not able to change their legal status and naturalize, their children show worse economic outcomes than the children of immigrants whose parents legalized. Such outcomes demonstrate that Mexican origin incorporation, especially Mexican economic incorporation, is held back because so many Mexican immigrants initially come to the United States as unauthorized entrants.

The Structure and Measurement of Immigrant Incorporation

Determining dimensions. The vast and deep empirical literature on immigrant assimilation contains literally hundreds (and perhaps thousands) of studies, almost all of which assess assimilation by focusing on one or two aspects of the process. The theoretical literature has rarely addressed the questions of how many dimensions of assimilation there might be, what these are, and how they may relate to one another. One exception is Gordon's (1964) formulation that, as noted above, lays out seven aspects of assimilation and develops some tentative hypotheses about the sequence in which they occur and about how the development of close social ties among groups (what he calls structural assimilation), seem inevitably to converge with other kinds of assimilation. Here we seek to ascertain the dimensions of assimilation by analyzing the MIMMS and IIMMLA data, which come from asking respondents about many aspects of their lives. Our questions reflect our impression that the immigration literature highlights four major kinds of assimilation: economic, socio-cultural, spatial, and political. We define these further below. Altogether, we assess information on 52 separate indicators of assimilation.³

Measuring the pace of integration. Generally, various indicators of socio-cultural and economic integration have received the largest amount of attention in the research literature

(Waters 1999; Bean and Stevens 2003). By economic integration, we mean convergence with respect to education, occupational prestige, earnings, living in higher income neighborhoods, and political behaviors between immigrant groups and the “mainstream” (traditionally defined as non-Hispanic whites and hereafter referred to as “whites”). By socio-cultural assimilation, we mean convergence with respect to such factors as speaking English, watching and listening to Spanish-language television and radio or English media, downgrading the importance of ethnic sub-group identity, having fewer children and being less likely to live in extended family arrangements.

In gauging either economic or socio-cultural integration in the case of the Mexican immigrant group, it is important to note that differences between the first and 1.5 generations do not necessarily demonstrate the operation of assimilation processes. Education provides a good example of why this is the case. Mexico and the United States have vastly different primary and secondary educational school systems. In Mexico, students often stop schooling at the 8th grade, because attendance after that requires the payment of fees that are often unaffordable. In the United States, school attendance is mandatory until age 16, and secondary education is provided free through the 12th grade. A school-age person coming to the United States from Mexico can (and will) obtain more schooling simply by virtue of having changed educational systems, not necessarily by virtue of having undergone assimilation processes (i.e., by dint of having changed attitudes or individual behaviors in regard to acquiring more schooling). Thus, the roughly three-year increase in average education levels between the 1.0 and the 1.5 generations reflects large differences between Mexico and the United States in educational incentives and policies more than they do the influence of integration.⁴

Hence, we concentrate on differences between the second and the third generations because these provide a superior basis for gauging the degree of change due to integration. We also do this because our measures of who falls into these two generational categories is relatively good, particularly in comparison to studies that have had to rely on data for a third- or higher generation group. By being able to separate here the fourth and higher generations from the third, we are able to work with a much cleaner delineation of the third generation alone. Thus, our measures of differences between the second and third generations are not contaminated by the presence of higher generational persons.⁵

The Substance of Incorporation

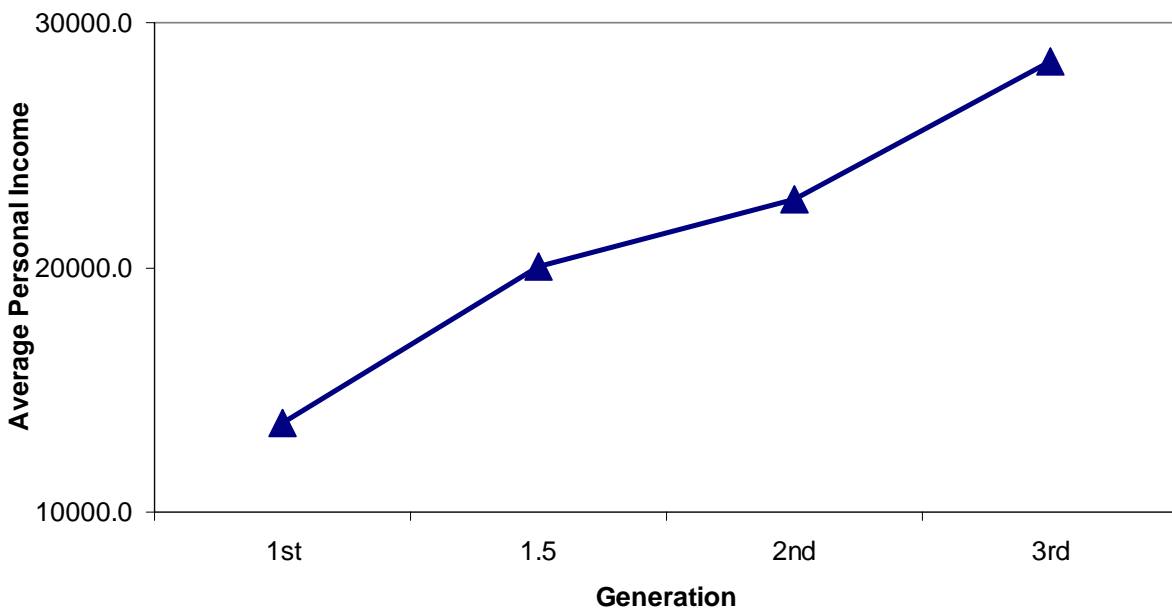
Before assessing overall differences in economic, socio-cultural change, and spatial incorporation in the Mexican-origin population, it is instructive first to examine a few key aspects of each dimension.

Education and income. Income increases rapidly across generations (Figure 1). Those who are the grandchildren of Mexican immigrants (the third generation) show an average income nearly 25 percent higher than those who are the children of Mexican immigrants (the second generation) and more than double that of the first generation. The mean personal income of the third generation is \$28,415, which is 93 percent of the level of comparable non-Hispanic whites. But while the members of the third generation come close to attaining the income levels of whites, they do not necessarily do so by donning white collars. Third-generation persons of Mexican origin are only 80 percent as likely as whites to hold white-collar jobs and somewhat more likely to work as low-skilled laborers. Thus, the narrowing of the income gap has partly to do with the quality of the jobs held. On a standard occupational status index, the members of the

third generation hold jobs that are on average 95 percent as prestigious as those of whites. Also, compared with whites, the third generation is 13 percent more likely to hold jobs in which they receive health insurance.

The education gap between the third generation and non-Hispanic whites mirrors the income gap (average years of schooling are 92 percent of the level for whites). Still, more than twice as many whites versus members of the third generation hold bachelor's degrees. A large increase in years of schooling occurs between the first and second generation, when average years of education jumps to 13.3 from 9.1. The average education level of the third generation, however, rises only slightly, to 13.5 years (Figure 2), as others have noted elsewhere (Grogger

Figure1: Personal Income

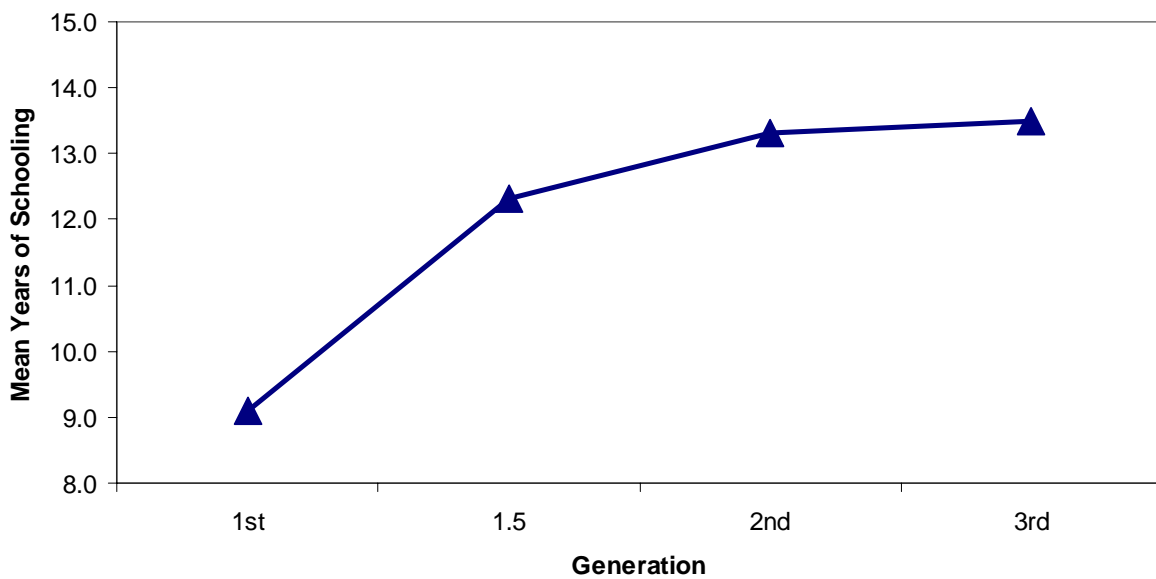


and Trejo 2002; National Research Council 2006; Duncan, Holtz, and Trejo 2006). To be sure, when the third generation's educational level is compared with that of their own biological parents – an even better measure of intergenerational attainment – the gap is bigger. For

example, 20.1 percent of the third generation has a bachelor's degree or higher, while only 18.5 percent have at least one parent with a bachelor's degree. More tellingly, while 19 percent of the fathers and nearly 24 percent of the mothers of the third generation never graduated from high school, the proportion of third generation respondents who never completed the equivalent of a high school degree is only 10.6 percent.

Economically, improvement in income occurs fairly steadily across generations, lagging behind education in the second generation but then catching up in the third, at which point third-generation persons of Mexican origin have incomes 93 percent as high as non-Hispanic whites.

Figure 2: Years of Schooling

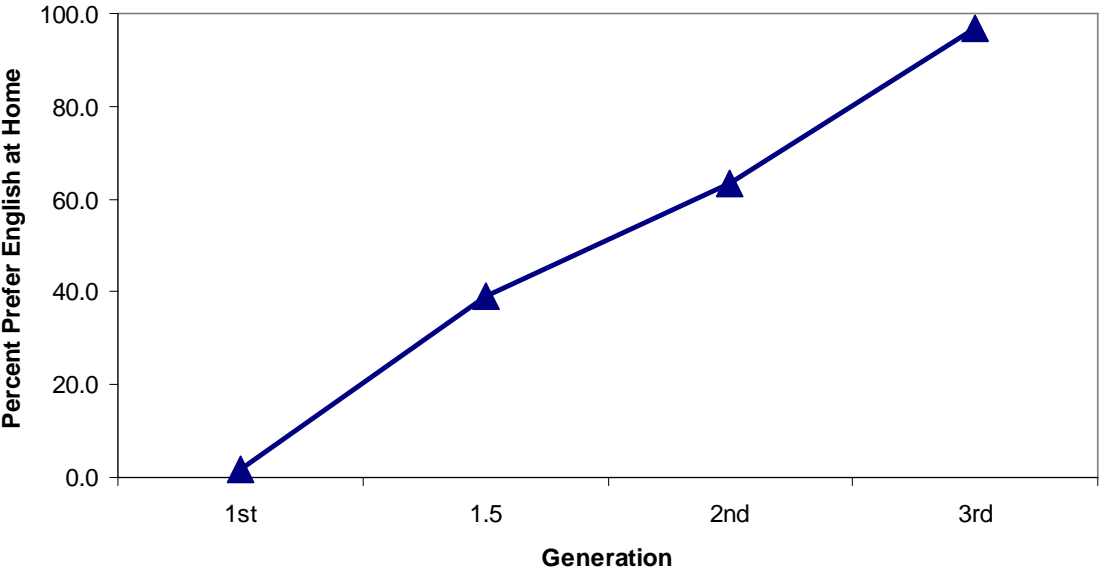


While such current cross-generational comparisons may not fully indicate how much change has occurred from parents to biological children and grandchildren (Smith 2003), they nonetheless reflect how far at this point the various generational groups still have to go to reach parity with whites. They are thus of considerable value and constitute important measures of integration. Here we find that those who are grandchildren of immigrants (the third generation) show an

average income nearly 25 percent higher than the children of immigrants (the second generation), even though their educational level is only slightly greater, as noted above. This implies that income returns to education are less in the second than the third generation, as has also been found when comparisons are made with Current Population Survey data between the second and the third-plus generations (Duncan, Holtz, and Trejo 2006).

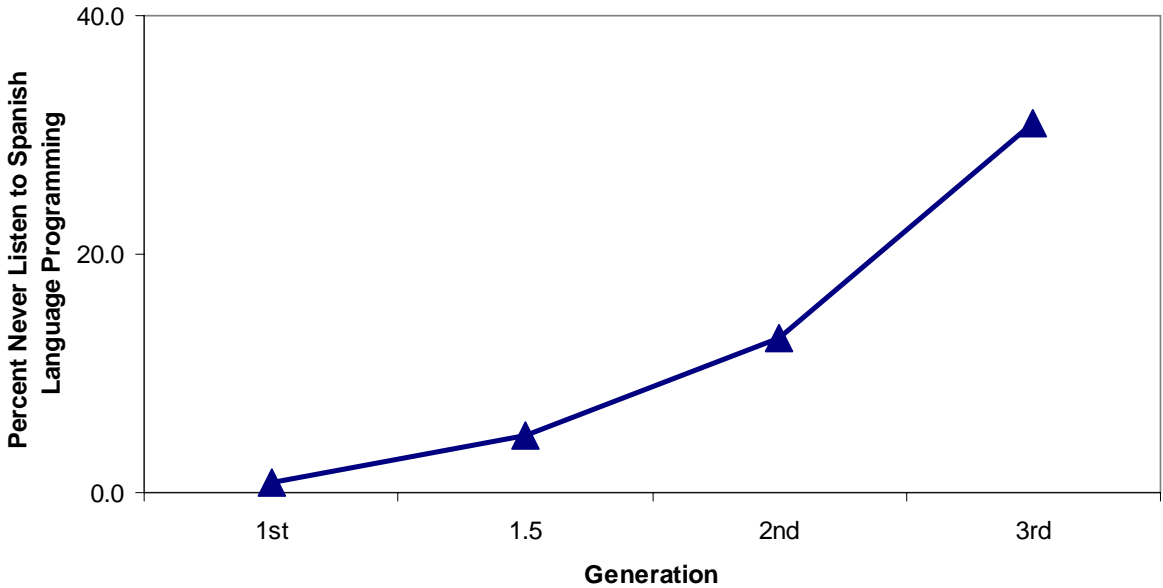
Language and ethnic identity. How do economic changes (like those for education and income) compare with socio-cultural shifts? First, note that socio-cultural factors vary in what causes them to change. Some move primarily as a matter of exposure to a new country. English language acquisition is an example. Other socio-cultural factors less likely to change solely as a result of exposure because they require changes in attitudes or behaviors. Ethnic identification is an example. English acquisition may thus follow a steeper trajectory than ethnic identification in early generations. In fact, the tendency to use English in the home displays an early steep upward trajectory that continues through the third generation (Figure 3). Virtually no one in the first generation prefers to speak English at home, but 39.0 percent of the 1.5 generation does, 63.3 percent of the second generation, and virtually all of the third generation.

Figure 3: Prefer English at Home



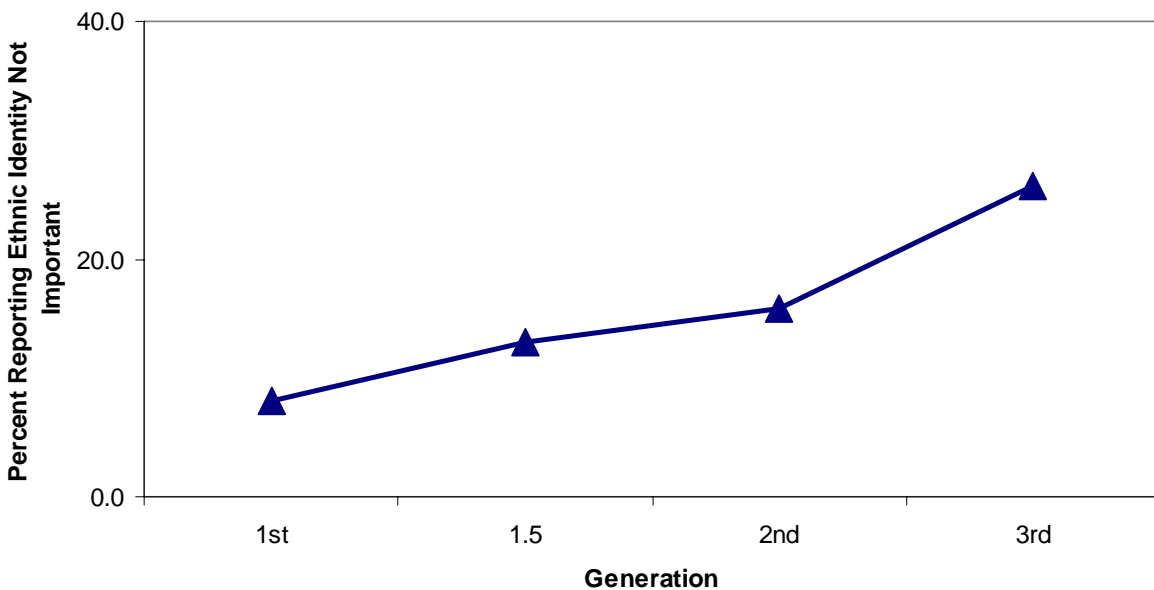
In contrast to English usage at home, movement away from listening to Spanish-language television or radio starts out slowly but climbs between the second and third generations (Figure 4). Nevertheless, Spanish-language programming remains popular across the generations. Even

Figure 4: Movement Away from Spanish Language Media



among the members of the third generation, more than one in three watch or listen at least once a week, whereas more than one in two do so among the members of the second generation. Also, based on a question that asks respondents to rate the importance of their ethnic identity, we find that ethnic identity wanes noticeably between the second and third generations (Figure 5). By the third generation, the percentage reporting that their ethnic identity was “very important” drops to 43.2 percent from 55.2 in the second generation. The percentage considering ethnic identity “not too important” rises to more than one-fourth. At the same time, more than half of the third generation has a spouse or partner of a different race or ethnicity.

Figure 5: Ethnic Identity Not Important



Spatial. Regarding residential integration, we show trajectories on the socio-cultural and economic aspects of this dimension in Figures 6 and 7, respectively. The different generations show steady movement into neighborhoods with higher median incomes, with the rise from second to third generation just slightly steeper than the rise in previous immigrant generations.

For example, by the third generation, persons of Mexican origin are living in neighborhoods with a median income of more than \$46,000, or about \$5,000 higher than the second generation.

Living in areas with higher percentages of whites shows a flatter trajectory through the second generation, then a sharp increase between the second and third generations, as the proportion white in their neighborhoods rises to one-third. Thus, integration into middle-class neighborhoods with larger white populations is slowly but steadily occurring.

Figure 6: Percent Mexican and Anglo of Census Tract

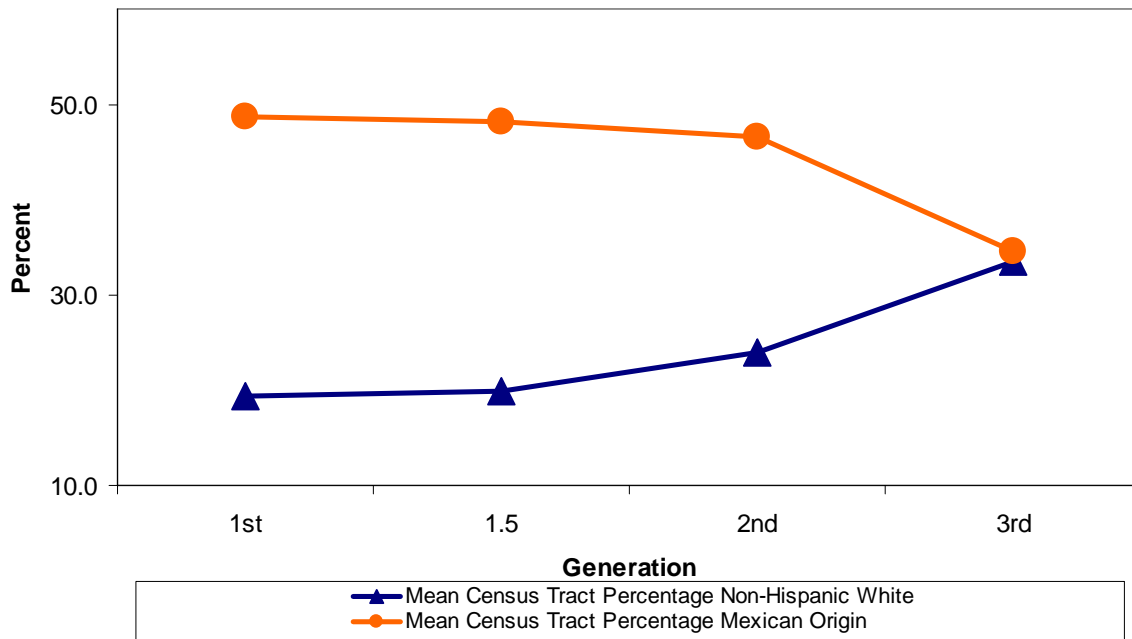
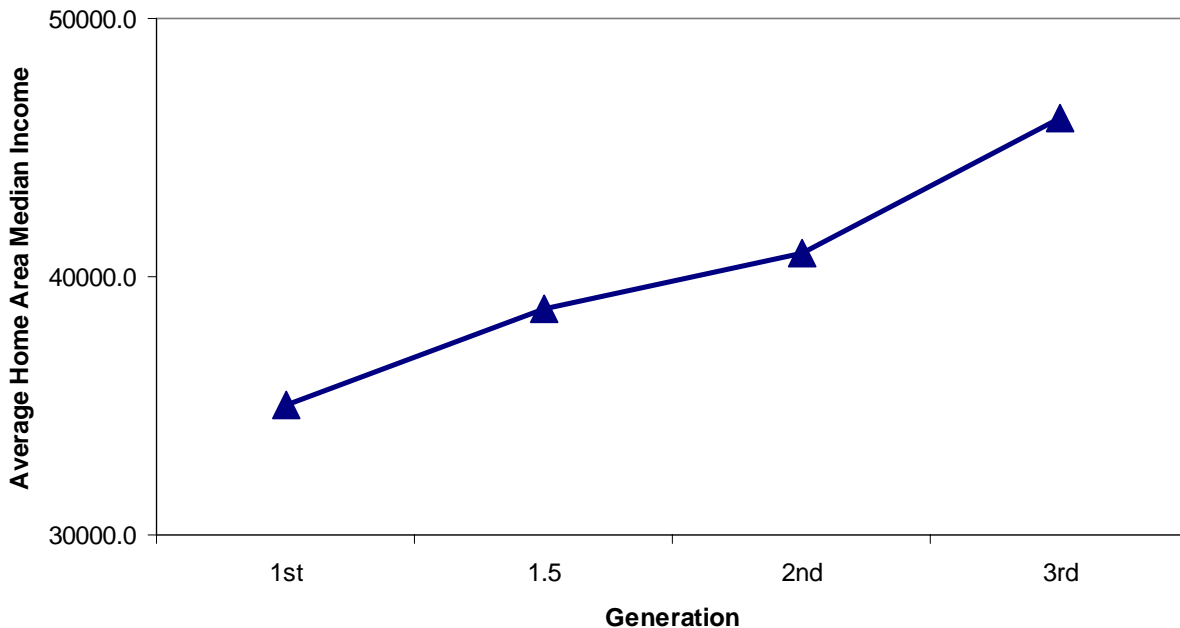


Figure 7: Median Income of Census Tract

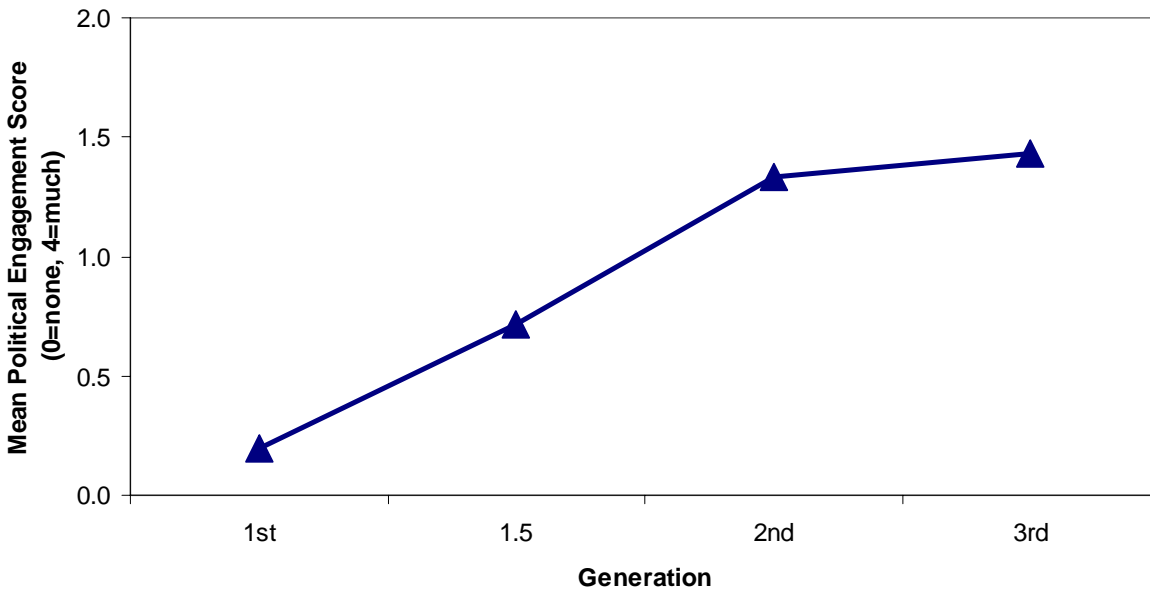


The reader may wonder why a delay in moving to whiter neighborhoods happens, given that personal income rises steadily, and that some later-generation persons of Mexican origin are living in richer neighborhoods. Research on the family financial obligations of 1.0, 1.5 and 2.0 Mexicans using MIMMS and IIMMLA data provides a partial explanation (Brown 2007). Helping their parents and other relatives, some of whom live in Mexico and some with them (Agius 2005), the members of these generations devote considerable amounts of income either to remittances (sending money to relatives in Mexico) or to the support of co-resident parents. This tends to prevent Mexicans from living in the richest neighborhoods, which are also those with more whites. Brown (2007) finds that potential obligations, as measured by sending remittances, living with at least two other adults, and having an immigrant father who did not naturalize, explain nearly half the difference in the percentage of whites in the neighborhoods of the second and third generations – even after accounting for the respondents’ own socioeconomic characteristics as well as the education of their parents, a pattern she terms "delayed spatial

assimilation." Because the unauthorized status of so many members of the first generation leaves them with low earnings and without pensions or Social Security benefits, they thus are more in need of financial support from their children than native persons who are similarly poor. It is thus not until the third generation that many households are sufficiently freed of these obligations to parents to manage living in neighborhoods with more whites. And in fact, when we examine the third generation, we see an upward trajectory of nearly 10 percentage points from the second generation to the third with respect to the percentages of whites in the neighborhoods in which third generation lives.

Political. Turning to political integration, we note that our measure of political engagement rises in the recent generation groups, while spatial integration occurs more slowly. Political engagement (defined as several kinds of behaviors, including registration, party membership, and voting) shows an upward trajectory from the first to the 1.5, and from the 1.5 to the 2.0 generations, after which the upswing tapers off (Figure 8). On a four-point scale, the third generation shows a level of political engagement almost identical to the white population. Nevertheless, the third generation was about 20 percent less likely than whites to vote in a recent election.

Figure 8: Political Engagement

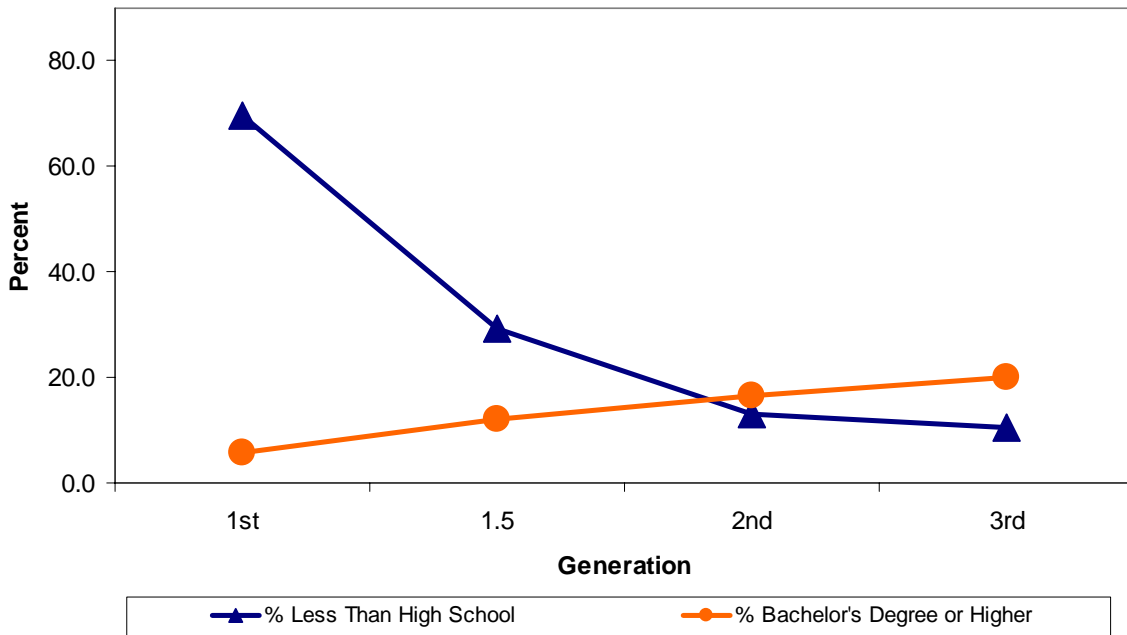


Integration slowdowns. From this brief excursion into examining only a few indicators of Mexican integration, two major slowdowns are evident in the data. One would seem definitely to derive from constraints on discretionary income, and the other may derive from this as well, at least in part. The first involves Mexican spatial assimilation and occurs from the first to the second generation. It consists of Mexican-origin persons not moving very fast into both richer and more Anglo neighborhoods, apparently because of family financial obligations. This resulting pattern of delayed spatial assimilation may be more exaggerated among Mexicans, because when Mexicans are compared with other immigrant groups in Los Angeles on several measures of such obligations (paying remittances, having high numbers of adults living with them, having a father who entered the country unauthorized, and having a father who did not naturalize), we found that Mexicans showed higher levels on all of these than did Vietnamese, Koreans, Filipinos, Chinese, or other immigrants. For example, the members of the Mexican 1.5 and 2.0 generations were at least three times as likely to have had an unauthorized parent as the

members of any of the other groups (47.0 percent had unauthorized parents compared to 6.7 percent for the Vietnamese and 18.7 percent for the Filipinos, whose values bracketed those of the other groups).

The second reflection of a slowdown occurs from the second through the fourth-plus generation and involves education. Substantial improvements in years of schooling occur between the first and second generation, probably, as elaborated above, as a result of factors other than integration processes. Additional corroboration of this is shown in Figure 9 (which shows the percentages of Mexicans by generation not completing high school and completing college). The improvement in education from the first to the second generation derives from much higher percentages of Mexicans completing high school, with very little of it resulting from gains in college completion. Gains in completing college occur, but after the second generation, these are not large enough to raise the overall average number of years of schooling very much. This illustrates another structural plateau, although one less stark, that occurs after the second generation. While this relative leveling off may stem from many factors, such as greater enrollment in two-year colleges or a greater tendency to have attended large, poor high schools (Fry 2005a; 2005b), an especially important contributing factor may involve many Mexican-Americans not earning enough money to help send their children (or all of their children) to college. This is certainly consistent with the results of a recent study that found Mexican-Americans valued higher education no less than whites but were much less able to afford college because they make less money and have more children (Bean et al. 2001).

Figure 9: Educational Attainment



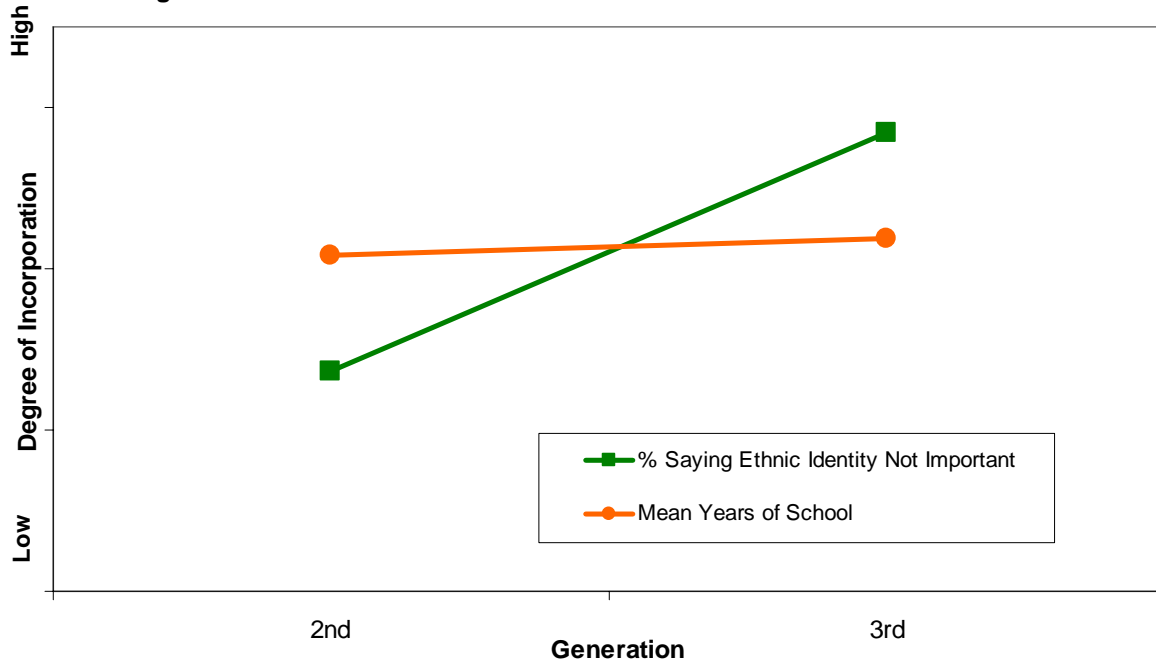
The Pace of Economic and Socio-cultural Integration

At this juncture, we note that the results up to now show an overall picture of steady increases in integration across generational groups. However, they also suggest points of slowdown with respect to economic integration, with resulting plateaus apparently owing to family financial obligations in the first two generations and perhaps a relative inability to afford college thereafter, along with the influence of other factors. However, the findings show sharp increases in socio-cultural integration across generations. To shed more light on possible differences among Mexican-Americans in the extent of the two major kinds of integration -- economic and socio-cultural -- we next examine larger sets of indicators, grouped into these two categories. We focus on 22 of these indicators grouped into the two major categories. We also further sub-divide these into four sub-sets we term Socio-cultural I (which includes eight

indicators on language, identity, media, marriage, religion and political attitude), Sociocultural II (which includes the two spatial indicators about tract ethnic composition), Economic I (which includes three human capital indicators), and Economic II (which includes six economic and two political behavior indicators).⁶

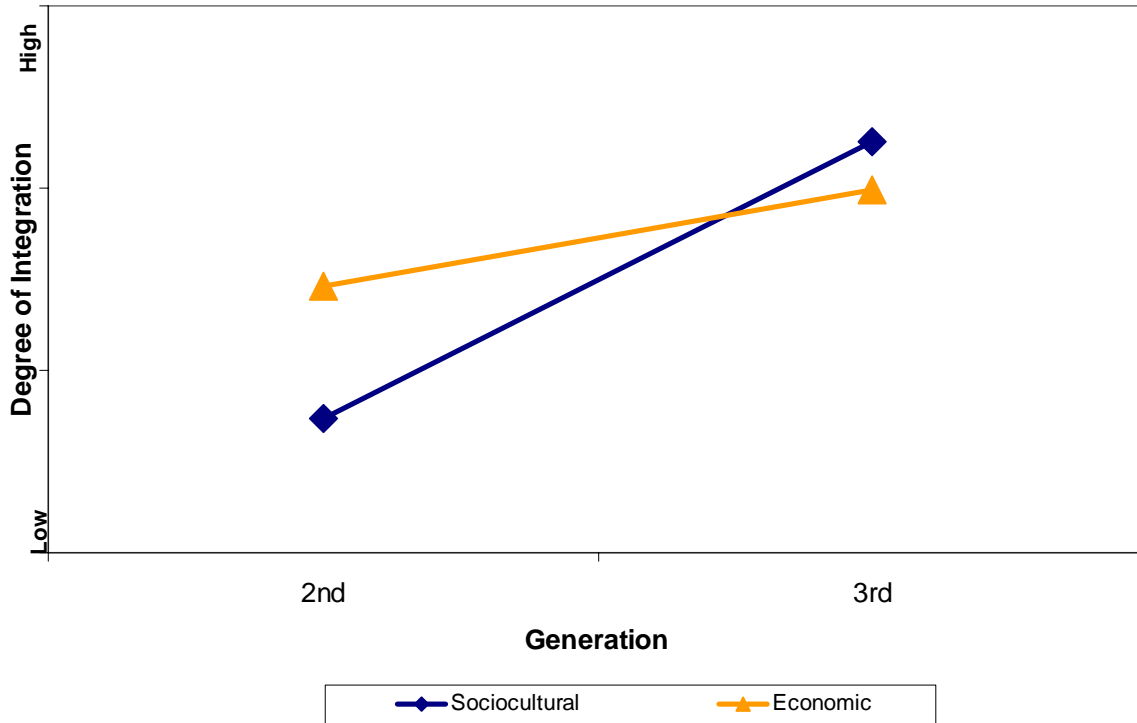
Having as many as four or five socio-cultural or economic indicators in a set makes graphs of the sets of such indicators cumbersome to interpret. To facilitate interpretation, we illustrate our findings first with one indicator from the economic and one from the sociocultural group. The results are displayed in Figure 10 for each of the selected indicators – the number of years of schooling completed and the percentage saying that retaining their ethnic identity is not very important. From these it is evident that the trajectory for the socio-cultural measure increases more steeply than does that for the economic measure. The trajectory for years of schooling is much less steep, reproducing the tendency toward an educational plateau discussed above. By contrast, a steep rise occurs in the measure for ethnic identity no longer being important. (Incidentally, when these differences are subjected to a test for statistical significance, the difference is found not likely to have occurred by chance).⁷

Figure 10: Percent Saying Ethnic Identity Not Very Important and Average Years of Schooling



In summary, from the second to the third generation, the members of the Mexican immigrant group are increasingly converging with whites as far as speaking English, reducing the importance of ethnic identity, cohabiting prior to marriage, having smaller families, and attending religious services infrequently is concerned. The average percentage increase in these five indicators from the second to the third generation is large, 36.9 percent. However, when it comes to educational levels, occupational statuses, incomes, and the economic statuses of their neighborhoods, the situations of these Mexican-Americans, while improving, are not shifting as much as their sociocultural orientations and behaviors. The average percentage change in the economic indicators is much smaller, 11.2 percent. Economic integration thus appears to be occurring at a more sluggish pace than socioeconomic integration.

Figure 11. Average Degree of Integration by Type



To be sure, part of the reason economic integration seems to be proceeding more slowly is that human capital resources like education take years, even decades, to acquire. But part of it may also derive from the fact that the United States over the past 35 years has increasingly become more unequal, as the incomes of working and middle-class Americans have tended to stagnate relative to those of families that are better off (Bean and Lowell 2003). This may make it even more difficult for the Mexican immigrant group to advance economically, and to increase the number of generations it takes Mexican-Americans to reach parity with whites. Similarly, the importance of attaining a college degree has increased, but steep tuition increases and cuts in the Pell grants available to lower-income students have made college ever harder to afford, particularly for the poor (Fry 2005a). Such trends may slow economic mobility more than they do sociocultural integration and stretch out by one or two the number of generations required to reach full economic parity with whites.

Conclusions

Studies of the education and earnings of Mexican immigrants and their descendants conclude that this group is showing steady although incomplete advancement in the United States (National Research Council 2006). Mexicans start out far behind – much further back than European immigrants a century ago. The average Mexican immigrant of today has roughly four years less education than the average native-born American. Moreover, many Mexicans enter the country as unauthorized immigrants and have no choice but to work for low pay without no benefits, retirement, or health insurance. If one thinks of immigrants traditionally as starting at the bottom rung of the mobility ladder, many Mexicans actually begin in a hole from which they must climb just to get to the ladder (Bean and Stevens 2003).

Here we find that Mexican-Americans in Los Angeles show evidence of substantial shifts on economic, socio-cultural, and spatial dimensions. While dramatic differences occur between the immigrant generation and those who are the children of immigrants, these often occur in large part because of the enormous differences that exist in educational and economic opportunities between Mexico and the United States. As a result, differences between the first and second generations do not necessarily represent integration per se, at least if by integration differences we mean intergenerational variation in tendencies to take advantage of existing opportunities. Rather, the differences between the first and second generations may indicate mainly a shift in context.

A better gauge of integration in this sense inheres in differences between the second and third generations, where we find that socio-cultural incorporation is occurring more rapidly than economic integration among Mexican-Americans. For example, the decrease in those who watch or listen to Spanish-language television or radio at least once a week is greatest between

the second and third generations. Moreover, by the third generation, scarcely any respondents prefer to speak Spanish at home. However, the increase in years of schooling completed between these generations is very small. Thus, education provides the prime example of slower progress. A recent report by the National Research Council (2006) shows that Mexican-Americans in this country at least three generations average 12.5 years of schooling, still a year behind the level of non-Hispanic whites, but more than a year's gain on the education level of their second-generation parents. The fact that economic integration occurs more slowly, and indeed that average educational levels tend to level off somewhat past the second generation, suggest it may take one or two generations beyond the standard three for Mexican-Americans to attain the same economic status as whites.

This level of economic disadvantage is often coupled with parents who were unauthorized migrants and whose jobs provided neither high pay nor pensions. As a result, more so than for other groups, many Mexican-Americans often have to provide family members with money and other kinds of assistance. As noted above, Brown's (2007) research has shown that such sharing of resources delays spatial assimilation but does not permanently forestall it. Part of the reason, then, that economic integration occurs less rapidly than sociocultural appears to derive from the children of immigrants (the 1.5 and second generations) assuming the obligation of assisting parents or other relatives who need financial help. Such outcomes show that unauthorized entry and persistent unauthorized status in the parental and grandparental generations may retard not only the immigrant generation but also the fulfillment of the aspirations and economic attainments of the children and grandchildren of immigrants as well. By contrast, the availability of pathways to legalization and citizenship (such as those provided as a part of IRCA in 1986 and taken advantage of during the late 1980s and all of the 1990s)

appear in the data examined here to have substantially enhanced the human capital, labor market outcomes, and economic integration of those who are the children of immigrants.

Classic assimilation theory, formulated with European groups in mind, expects those immigrants residing the longest in the host society, as well as the members of later generations, to show greater economic progress than immigrants who have spent less time in their new society. This was the predominant perspective on immigrant integration throughout most of the 20th century. But this perspective proved unsatisfactory because it left the disadvantaged situation of African Americans unexplained. Partly as a result, the 1960s civil rights movement ignited an intellectual backlash that stressed racial disadvantage and the persistence of racial and ethnic discrimination as factors affecting the labor market outcomes of minorities. Immigration scholars argued that groups that are also racial and ethnic minorities face sufficient discrimination and institutional barriers to employment and other opportunities that their assimilation remains blocked.

Neither of these two competing perspectives seems fully to depict the experiences of new Latino immigrants. This shortcoming is particularly evident for Mexican immigrants, who come mostly from a mixed racial/ethnic background encompassing centuries of melding (*mestizaje*) of white and indigenous groups. Models reflecting a bipolar black/white racial context and emphasizing the kinds of racial discrimination experienced by blacks may be less relevant to the historical and contemporary experiences of Mexicans. Moreover, neither assimilation nor racial/ethnic disadvantage models account for the effects of continuing migration that bolsters Mexican neighborhoods and institutions. New immigrants also increase the number of potential co-ethnic spouses and thus decrease the likelihood of ethnically mixed marriages – an important factor in traditional assimilation.

Yet even as poor Mexican neighborhoods are gaining population from new arrivals, the third and later generations generally are moving out into suburbs with a much larger white presence. In the Los Angeles area, for instance, middle-class people of Mexican origin are not maintaining insular neighborhoods, they are integrating, especially with whites. But this slow integration seldom makes headlines and may easily be overlooked. The process of reconciling the relative importance of race/ethnicity with other factors that may delay economic mobility seems likely to continue to dominate debates about the extent of assimilation. Research by the Tomás Rivera Policy Institute (Bean et al. 2001) suggests that it is the high and rising cost of college more than lack of interest or the presence of discrimination that slows the educational advancement of Mexican Americans.

A key question then becomes whether better governmental policies on providing language training and defraying the expenses of higher education are needed to speed the economic mobility of the Mexican immigrant group and shorten a four or five generation process to only two or three. While policies that help to improve the quality of primary education (grades 1-8) are important for reducing drop-out rates and fostering high school completion, they will not by themselves raise educational levels enough. Many already adequately prepared Mexican-origin high school graduates cannot afford to attend college. Thus, policies that reduce the cost of college for low- and middle-income groups are necessary further to close education gaps. Increased access to loans, or even to low-cost loans, may not be sufficient, simply because loans have to be repaid, thus substantially neutralizing through the process of long-term debt amortization much of the earnings premium accompanying the completion of a college degree. Direct grants-in-aid are required.

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ENDNOTES

¹The telephone surveys from which we garner information on four-plus generations of Mexican origin persons were supported by grants from the Russell Sage and Hewlett Foundations. The larger survey, known as Immigration and Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles (IIMMLA), was carried out in 2004 and covered 4,780 adults ages 20 to 40 who had at least one immigrant parent. The study targeted the children of immigrants from large Los Angeles immigrant groups, including Chinese, Filipinos, Koreans, Vietnamese, Salvadorans and Guatemalans. Because of its centrality to the recent immigrant experience in Los Angeles, the Mexican group was sampled to include third and fourth-and-higher generations in addition to the children of immigrants. The other survey, called the Mexican Immigrant Migration and Mobility Status (MIMMS) study, collected data on 106 Mexican first generation persons in metropolitan Los Angeles of the same age range.

²Here we are able to go beyond previous research because the MIMMS and IIMMLA surveys asked about aspects of multiple major aspects of integration, including economic (implying such indicators as education and income), socio-cultural (indicators such as language, marriage, identity, and religion), neighborhood of residence (measures such as neighborhood percent Anglo and co-ethnic), and political (items like voter registration and attitudes toward government). Altogether, we look at 52 separate indicators of integration, systematic statistical analyses of which reveal an overall structure involving three major separate dimensions, which we term economic, socio-cultural, and spatial. Because it is not clear that political measures vary independently of the economic measures, we treat political aspects here as fitting into the economic category. We thus are able to compare integration across economic, socio-cultural, and spatial dimensions, something few studies have ever been able to do before. This provides a way to assess whether integration seems to be occurring within the Mexican immigrant group more slowly on some dimensions than others

³We subjected the responses on these indicators to principal components analysis, a statistical technique that determines the major dimensions around which individual items in the analysis cluster, subject to the condition that these dimensions be independent of one another. In short, we ask: How many underlying linear dimensions are there for these 52 measures that strongly relate to sub-sets of indicators but that do not relate to each other? An important piece of information that comes out of such analyses is whether the dimensions extracted make sense. That is, do items that seem to reflect the same kind of assimilation group together, or in our case do the economic items hang together, the socio-cultural indicators, and so forth? It could be the case that the various kinds of indicators would not group together separately, but rather would all group around only one major dimension, suggesting that just one overall general assimilation pattern is reflected in the data. However, this was not what the analyses revealed. Instead, we found three important dimensions. Moreover, the indicators correlating with these dimensions clearly suggested separate economic, socio-cultural, and spatial dimensions. An independent political dimension did not consistently emerge, but rather the political indicators tended to correlate with the economic indicators. For reasons of space constraints, we do not present the statistical results of these principal components analyses here, but in what follows below, we show findings about these major aspects of assimilation knowing that the principal components

analysis generated three factors that were not only separate from one another but that also made sense in terms of the major kinds of assimilation most often discussed in the literature.

⁴Two important points follow from these observations. One is that changes from the first to the 1.5 generation tell us little about the extent of integration among persons of Mexican origin beyond the fact that the institutional context of education has changed sharply as a result of moving from Mexico to the United States (the first generation receives most of its schooling in Mexico and the 1.5 generation most of its schooling in the United States). A similar point may be made about changes from the 1.5 to the 2.0 generation. The second generation, like the 1.5, is also made up of immigrants' children, whose educational attainment may similarly often reflect little other than living in a country with a very different school system. Thus, examining educational differences across the 1.5 and second generations will not much reflect the influence of integration processes on educational attainment. Similarly, differences in many other variables from the first to the 1.5, and from the 1.5 to the second generation may reflect simply the influence of changing national contexts as much as integration processes. Since our objective here is to discern and compare integration processes along its major dimensions, the lesson is that drastic improvements in education up through the second generation (or the significant changes we might observe in other integration indicators across particular early generational groups) may often not owe appreciably to integration.

⁵Between the third and fourth-plus generations, a drop-off often occurs in economic indicators like education. Four explanations might account for this. First, it could simply reflect decreases in motivation to achieve among Mexican origin persons whose great-grandparents migrated from Mexico. Second, it could indicate that assimilation proceeds fairly rapidly and effectively among Mexican-origin persons so that the most successful have intermarried and stopped identifying as members of the ethnic group. This would mean that persons with lower levels of education tend to respond to surveys like MIMMS and IIMMLA, thus causing what appear to be drop-offs in education compared to the third generation. Third, fourth-generation decline could reflect the fact that most of the members of this generation had great-grandparents who migrated to the United States during the first and second decades of the 20th century. This generation endured the Great Depression and experienced such severe hardship and limited economic mobility that the legacy of this deprivation may continue to manifest itself in diminished economic attainment among their great-grandchildren. And fourth, these same immigrants could have faced so much discrimination four generations ago that a negative legacy effect might also derive from this source of disadvantage.

It is not easy to choose among these. However, for several reasons, we think the third possibility is the most likely, perhaps operating to some extent in combination with lingering manifestations of historical discrimination. We do not think the first explanation makes sense because no reason exists to think fourth-plus generation Mexican origin persons are less likely to seek educational attainment than the members of more recent generational groups. And we do not think the answer lies in the second explanation, because studies of identity selection effects have generally found that not large enough numbers of people cease to identify with the Mexican ethnic group to explain changes of the magnitude observed here (Bean and Swicegood 2001; Duncan and Trejo 2005). Nor does the fourth explanation fully bear scrutiny. When we

examine non-Hispanic whites across these same generational groups, we find a virtually identical pattern of fourth-plus generation decline as we do among Mexican origin fourth-plus persons. Because there is no reason to think non-Hispanic whites as a whole experienced substantial racial/ethnic discrimination four generations ago, it seems necessary to seek an explanation that accounts for the drop-off in the case of both groups. A legacy effect from the Great Depression would seem to provide the best answer because such an effect would have operated among both Mexicans and non-Hispanic whites.

Thus, information on the fourth-plus generation does not provide a good foundation for drawing inferences about incorporation, not only because the fourth-plus generation confounds the fourth with later generations, but also because fourth-plus measures undoubtedly may often reflect the operation of legacy effects associated with great-grandparents living through the Great Depression. Hence, data on the fourth-plus generation thus appear not solely to indicate the operation of incorporation processes. As a result, we are left with two generational groups – the second and the third – that provide the best basis for assessing immigrant group incorporation. It is differences between these two groups on which we concentrate attention when comparing the pace of economic and socio-cultural incorporation. This unique set of historical circumstances affecting the grandparents of today's third generation persons also suggests a caution in interpreting current generational analyses of socio-cultural and economic incorporation of immigrants and their children. Because the grandparents of today's third-generation immigrants had richer opportunities after World War II, when their children were born, they may not manifest similarly lower levels of incorporation indicators compared to their parents as today's fourth-plus generation does.

⁶Because our goal is to compare economic and socio-cultural assimilation systematically to discern which is occurring to a greater degree, we adopt a research strategy that overcomes the fact that the indicators are measured on different metrics. Because some of our indicators increase with greater integration (e.g., income) while others decrease (e.g., speaking Spanish at home), we re-code the indicators so that they all run in the same direction. Then we convert them to scores that better reflect relative differences or change among score values (i.e., z-scores). In order to show the steepness of trajectories of difference between generations, we graph the scores, focusing on change between the second and third generations. As noted above, there are important measurement and substantive reasons why the passage from the children to the grandchildren of immigrants may provide the best indication of the extent to which incorporation is occurring with respect to these two major dimensions.

⁷We also examine the four larger sets of sociocultural and economic indicators. To visualize more easily multiple numbers of lines, we further summarize the sets by averaging the standard scores within sets and graphing each of the four resulting scores. Shown in Figure 11, these closely duplicate the pattern shown by the single indicators, demonstrating that socio-cultural incorporation is proceeding more rapidly in the Mexican immigrant group than economic incorporation. Again, when tests for statistical significance were conducted on these trajectories, the differences were highly statistically significant.