NATIONAL ACADEMY of EDUCATION

Workshop to Examine Current and Potential Uses of
NCES Longitudinal Surveys
by the Education Research Community

Using NCES Surveys to Understand the Experiences of Immigrant-Origin Students

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This paper was prepared for the National Academy of Education's *Workshop to Examine Current and Potential Uses of NCES Longitudinal Surveys by the Education Research Community*, held on November 5-6, 2013, in Washington, DC. The workshop was organized to provide input to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) on how its longitudinal survey program could be enhanced to serve the changing needs of the education research community in light of (1) changing technological opportunities, (2) changing data availability (with an increasing focus on the classroom and learning outcomes), and (3) a changing U.S. population. The collection of commissioned papers reflects the views of the authors and not necessarily those of the National Academy of Education or the U.S. Department of Education. This paper was supported with funding from the Institute of Education Sciences.

The Workshop to Examine Current and Potential Uses of NCES Longitudinal Surveys by the Education Research Community was held on November 5–6, 2013, in Washington, DC. The aim was to provide NCES with input on the changing needs of the education research community and to offer ideas on ways NCES longitudinal surveys could be organized to plan into the future—particularly in light of a changing U.S. student population due to growing and diverse flows of immigrants. The following provides an overview of the transformation of the United States into a new nation of immigrants over the past several decades, and of a rapidly growing second generation of children of immigrants; discusses immigration and generational contexts most relevant to situating the educational experience of a changing student population; takes note of a similar previous effort to incorporate immigration-relevant data into federal surveys and official statistics; and proposes a "common core" of questions in NCES longitudinal surveys (only some of which are already being used in some surveys, but not consistently).

This paper examines the historic transformation of the United States into a new nation of immigrants along two narrative axes—diversity and inequality. In a sharply changing context, where arguably the value (and cost) of education is at a premium, official statistics are crucial to our ability to grasp the nature of the transformations under way. For a number of reasons, NCES longitudinal surveys are better positioned than most other sources of official data to provide critical information not otherwise collected by the major national datasets, such as the American Community Survey (ACS). I begin, however, with a sketch of the new immigration to provide a context for what will follow.

A NEW NATION OF IMMIGRANTS

Contemporary immigrants comprise a hugely diverse population—in the unprecedented diversity of their national and class origins, their migration histories and cultural backgrounds, their legal statuses and contexts of reception, and the complex developmental transitions of their children. The most highly educated groups in American society today are immigrants, as are the least educated groups; the highest and the lowest poverty rates in the United States today are found among the foreign born. The previous era of mass migration to the United States, extending from the 1880s through the 1920s, overwhelmingly brought immigrants of European origin. Today only about one in ten come from Europe, while most come from Latin America and the Caribbean and Asia, with significant additional flows from the Middle East and Africa. Partly as a result, the United States is becoming a "majority-minority" country. It is possible that the majority of the children of the immigrants may remain visible minorities and at risk of being treated as perpetual foreigners in the United States (Suárez-Orozco et al., in press). The manner of the incorporation of this "new second generation" will shape the destinies of the ethnic communities that are being formed in areas of principal settlement and will represent the most consequential legacy of this era of mass immigration to the United States (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001, 2014). In all of this, the role of education and of U.S. schools is and will continue to be a central one (Rumbaut, 2005a, 2005b, 2008).

Figure 1 graphs both the size and the proportion of the foreign-born population of

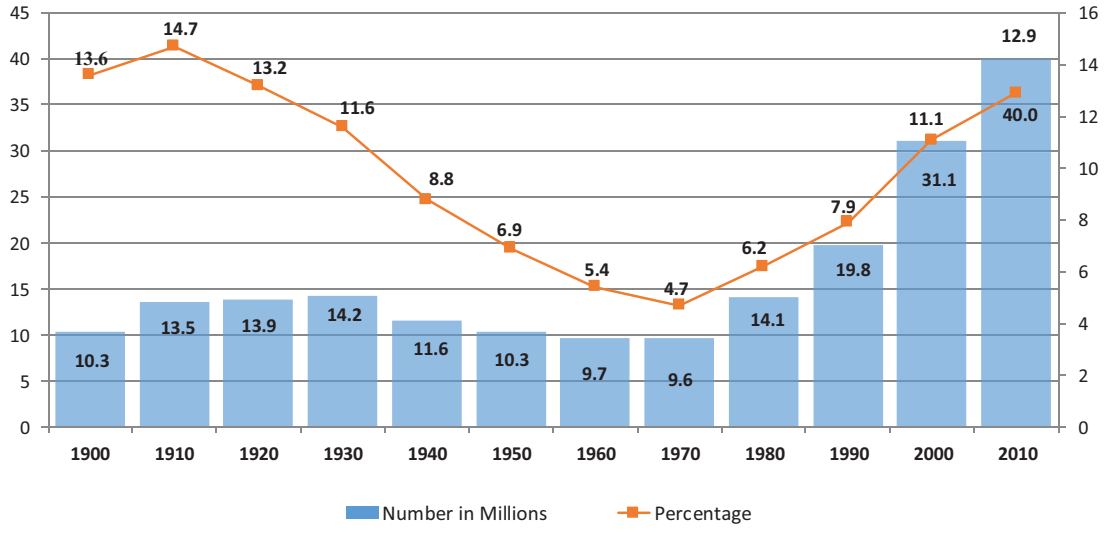

FIGURE 1 The evolution of the foreign-born population of the United States, 1900–2010.
SOURCE: Decennial Census for 1900 to 2000; American Community Survey for 2010.

the United States from 1900 to 2010, based on decennial censuses until 2000 and the ACS in 2010. The Great European Migration of 1880–1930 peaked in 1910, when 14.7 percent of the population was foreign born (or 13.5 million immigrants), then slowed with the onset of World War I and the Russian Revolution. That era was followed by a period of retrenchment—with immigration declining further after the passage of the restrictive national origin quota laws of the 1920s (the quotas set aside 98 percent of visas for Europeans, mainly from northwestern Europe, and barred Asian and African immigration, although Western Hemisphere immigrants were not restricted). Immigration plummeted with the onset of the Great Depression (arguably the greatest immigrant control measure of all time, since no matter what the quota was, foreigners had no incentive to come and join the masses of unemployed Americans), followed by World War II. It reached a historic nadir in 1970—both absolutely and relatively—when only 4.7 percent of the U.S. population was foreign born.

Immigration then began a sharp increase, accelerating over a period that now extends into its fifth decade. By 2010, the ACS counted a foreign-born population of 40 million, a historic high, quadrupling since 1970 (when it stood at 9.6 million) and growing by about a million a year. In 2010, the foreign born comprised 12.9 percent of the total population, a share not yet at the levels reached from 1860 to 1920, but growing gradually nonetheless.

Concomitantly, the number and share of children of immigrants has also grown. Both first- and second-generation children of immigrants already are (or will soon become) the majority of children in many school districts and cities, and even in some states. By 2014, over 25 percent of all children under age 18, a total of 18.7 million, had an immigrant parent (Child Trends, 2014). This growth has been extremely rapid;

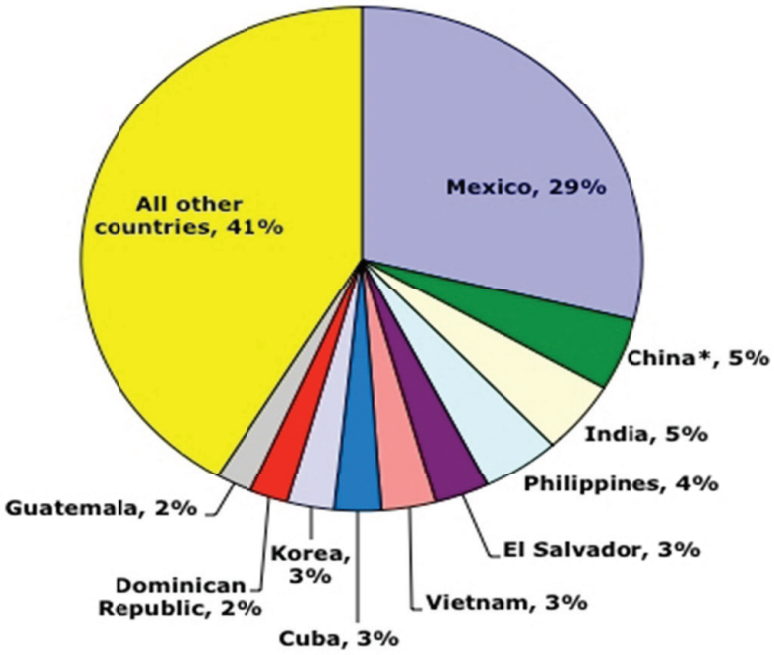

FIGURE 2 The ten largest immigrant groups in the United States, 2010.
SOURCE: American Community Survey, 2010.

in 1970, the child population of immigrant origin accounted for only 6 percent of all children. The majority are children born in the United States, who have birthright citizenship. Thus, the bulk of the expansion of this population has occurred in the second generation—children born in the United States of immigrant parents.

In 2010, about two hundred foreign countries and possessions sent immigrants to the United States. Aside from basic statistical data supplied by the Department of Homeland Security and the Census Bureau, relatively little is yet known about most of these groups. More is known about the broader contours of the new immigration. Figure 2 charts the ten countries that accounted for 60 percent of the immigrant population of 40 million in 2010. Five are Latin American countries, and five are Asian countries. Mexico alone accounts for 29 percent of total immigration (legal and undocumented). China (including Taiwan) and India comprise 5 percent each of the foreign-born population, followed by the Philippines (4 percent); El Salvador, Vietnam, Cuba, and Korea (3 percent each); and the Dominican Republic and Guatemala (2 percent each). Table 1 lists those ten largest foreign nationalities in rank order by size, and by the size of each group in the top three states of settlement of each nationality.

Clearly, immigrants are not randomly distributed across the United States but exhibit specific patterns of ethnic settlement—of concentration as well as diversification in states and metropolitan areas. These patterns are in turn reflected in the chang-

TABLE 1 Ten Largest Foreign-Born Groups, 2010: States of Principal Settlement

Country of Birth	N	% of Total Foreign Born	States of Principal Settlement					
			1st	%	2nd	%	3rd	%
Mexico	11,711,103	29.3	CA	36.8	TX	21.2	IL	6.1
India	1,780,322	4.5	CA	18.3	NJ	11.6	TX	9.2
Philippines	1,777,588	4.5	CA	45.6	HI	6.1	NY	4.8
Mainland China	1,601,147	4.5	CA	30.3	NY	21.3	TX	4.5
Vietnam	1,240,542	3.1	CA	39.3	TX	12.7	WA	3.9
El Salvador	1,214,049	3.0	CA	34.8	TX	13.9	NY	8.7
Cuba	1,104,679	2.8	FL	76.5	NJ	4.5	CA	3.4
Korea	1,100,422	2.8	CA	31.4	NY	9.2	NJ	7.1
Dominican Republic	879,187	2.2	NY	50.1	NJ	14.5	FL	11.0
Guatemala	830,824	2.1	CA	31.7	FL	8.4	TX	6.8
Total Foreign Born	39,955,854	100	CA	25.4	NY	10.8	TX	10.4
Total Native Born	269,393,835	100	CA	10.1	TX	7.8	NY	5.6

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 American Community Survey.

ing composition of the student population in affected school districts. As the bottom rows of Table 1 make clear, of the 40 million immigrants in the United States in 2010, 25.4 percent were concentrated in California (in contrast with only 10 percent of the native born), followed by 10.8 percent in New York and 10.4 percent in Texas (both larger shares than the native born who reside in those two states). Those three states combined absorb nearly half of all immigrants in the country. Another 18 percent of the foreign born were in Florida, Illinois, and New Jersey. Of the 11.7 million Mexican immigrants, about 37 percent were concentrated in California and 21 percent in Texas. In fact, California was the principal state of settlement for eight of the ten groups—the exceptions being Cubans (three-fourths of whom are in Florida) and Dominicans (half are in New York). These patterns, however, have been evolving over time and continue to change in response to a variety of economic and social factors.

CHANGING CONTEMPORARY PATTERNS OF IMMIGRANT SETTLEMENT

In 1910, at the peak of the era of mass European migration, the census counted a foreign-born population of 10.6 million, or 14.7 percent of the national total (as seen in Figure 1). At that time, the bulk of the immigrant population (62 percent) was concentrated in seven northern states, though only 39 percent of the U.S. population lived there: New York (21 percent), Pennsylvania (10 percent), Illinois (9 percent), Massachusetts (8 percent), New Jersey (5 percent), and Ohio and Michigan (4 percent each).

In 2010, a century later, *67 percent of the foreign-born population of 40 million was settled in just six states*, though again only 39 percent of the U.S. population lived in those states: California (25 percent), New York (11 percent), Texas (10 percent), Florida (9 percent), New Jersey (5 percent), and Illinois (4 percent). Of those, three states remained from a century earlier as main areas of immigrant concentration, but their combined share of immigrants had decreased from 35 percent to 20 percent: New York, New Jersey, and

Illinois. The rapid growth of southern and western states as new immigrant destinations, notably California (which by 1990 accounted by itself for one-third of the foreign-born total, but only for 10 percent of the native-born population), Texas, and Florida, reflect the postwar economic and demographic shifts to the country's Sun Belt.

The twin processes of continuing concentration as well as diversification in immigrant settlement patterns in recent decades are detailed in Table 2. It documents the growing size of the immigrant population in the top six states from 1990 to 2000 to 2010, but also the top ten states ranked by the *rate of growth* in their foreign-born populations from 1990 to 2010. Despite continuing immigrant population growth in the former, it is the extraordinarily rapid growth of the latter that has called attention to the emergence of "new destinations" in immigrant settlement. During these 20 years, the U.S. immigrant population doubled from 19.8 million in 1990 to 40 million in 2010. In the top six states the foreign-born population increased from 14.4 million to 25.9 million—in California alone it grew from 6.5 million in 1990 to 10.2 million in 2010—but only Texas and Florida exceeded the national growth rate of 102 percent.

By contrast, as shown in Figure 3, ten states—all located in the south or in the moun-

TABLE 2 Top States of Immigration and Growth of the Foreign-Born Population, 1990–2010

	Foreign-Born Population				
	1990 N	1990 Rank	2010 N	2010 Rank	% Growth
U.S. TOTAL	19,767,316		39,955,854		102.1
Top States of Immigration					
CA	6,458,825	1	10,150,429	1	57.2
NY	2,851,861	2	4,297,612	2	50.7
FL	1,662,601	3	3,658,043	4	120.0
TX	1,524,436	4	4,142,031	3	171.7
NJ	966,610	5	1,844,581	5	90.8
IL	952,272	6	1,759,859	6	84.8
Top Immigrant Growth States					
NC	115,077	21	719,137	14	524.9
GA	173,126	16	942,959	8	444.7
AR	24,867	42	131,667	37	429.5
TN	59,114	31	288,993	23	388.9
NV	104,828	23	508,458	16	385.0
SC	49,964	34	218,494	28	337.3
KY	34,119	39	140,583	34	312.0
NE	28,198	41	112,178	38	297.8
AL	43,533	35	168,596	33	287.3
UT	58,600	33	222,638	27	279.9

SOURCES: U.S. Census, 1990; American Community Survey, 2010.

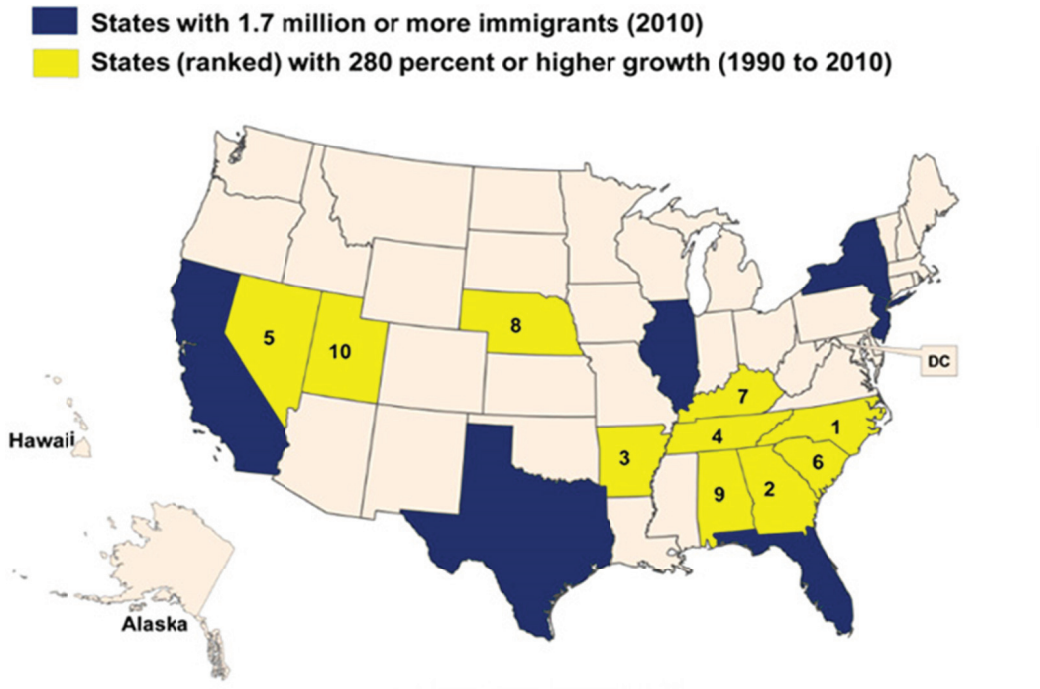

FIGURE 3 Patterns of immigrant settlement: Concentration and diversification.
SOURCES: U.S. Census, 1990; American Community Survey, 2010.

tain west—grew by 280 percent to 525 percent, led by North Carolina and Georgia and followed by Arkansas, Tennessee, Nevada, South Carolina, Kentucky, Nebraska, Alabama, and Utah. The areas experiencing the fastest growth rates were places that had relatively small immigrant populations prior to the 1990s. Although the net increase in the number of immigrants in California alone during this period (nearly 4 million) was larger than the total foreign-born population in those ten fast-growth states combined, the impact of foreigners in regions unused to the incorporation of immigrants (and the schooling of their children) produced political reactions by natives at the state and local levels that have shaped the national policy debate.

CHANGING PATTERNS OF LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY

Table 3 presents a summary of the growth of linguistic diversity in the United States since 1980, which has accompanied the acceleration of international migration. In 1970 the census had reported the lowest proportion of foreign born in the country's history: only 4.7 percent of the population consisted of immigrants. But by 1980, as Table 3 shows, when the census began asking people aged five years or older if they spoke a language other than English at home, it found that 23 million people or 11 percent of the 210 million aged five years or older answered in the affirmative; and of them, 11 million, or 5 percent, spoke one language: Spanish. In 1990, 32 million people or 14 percent of the 230 million aged five years or older said they spoke a language other than

TABLE 3 Language Diversity in the United States, 1980–2010

	U.S. Population 5 Years or Older	Spoke English Only		Spoke non-English Language at Home		Spoke Spanish at Home	
Year	N (millions)	N (millions)	%	N (millions)	%	N (millions)	%
1980	210.2	187.2	89.1	23.1	11.0	11.1	5.3
1990	230.4	198.6	86.2	31.8	13.8	17.3	7.5
2000	262.4	215.5	82.1	47.0	17.9	28.1	10.7
2010	289.2	229.7	79.7	59.5	20.3	37.0	12.6

SOURCES: U.S. Census, 1980, 1990, and 2000; American Community Survey, 2010.

English at home. Those figures went up sharply still again in 2000 to 47 million and 18 percent, and most recently in 2010 to 60 million and over 20 percent of the population five and older. What is more, of those 60 million who reported speaking a non-English language at home, 37 million (nearly 13 percent) spoke Spanish.

Because the question was never asked whether this was the "usual" language spoken at home, or how frequently it was used relative to English, or how proficiently it was spoken, it probably elicited a considerable overestimate. With these data it is impossible to measure or determine the extent and meaning of "bilingualism," let alone determine its value if any in educational attainment, labor markets, and the economy. Still, the data do point to the presence of a very substantial and growing minority of people who are not English monolinguals. Most of those 60 million non-English speakers are immigrants: 57 percent are foreign born, as are half (49 percent) of the Spanish speakers. But a sizable proportion are native born. Among the 230 million who spoke only English at home in 2010, just 2.6 percent were born outside the United States (mostly immigrants from countries where English is a first or native language).

Table 4 ranks the top 25 states and the top 25 metropolitan areas with at least 500,000 inhabitants according to the percentage of non-English speakers as of 2010. Clearly, speaking a foreign language remains concentrated in cities and states along the coasts, the Great Lakes, and the U.S.–Mexico border. California tops the list of states with 43 percent of its 37 million residents speaking a non-English language at home, followed by 36 percent in New Mexico, 34 percent in Texas, and over 29 percent in both New York and New Jersey. The states listed in Table 4 include both the six most important immigrant-receiving states (California, New York, New Jersey, Texas, Florida, and Illinois) as well as a number of emerging immigrant destinations (Arizona, North Carolina, Virginia, Georgia, Utah, and Nevada). In a country where by 2010 one in five persons (20.3 percent) spoke a foreign language at home, states like West Virginia, Kentucky, Montana, North Dakota, Mississippi, and Alabama stood in sharp contrast, with 95 percent to 98 percent of their populations speaking English only.

Linguistic diversity, like immigration, is chiefly a metropolitan phenomenon. Over 91 percent of the population of nonmetropolitan areas in the United States speak English only. The 25 metropolitan areas with the highest percentages of residents who speak a non-English language at home are confined entirely to the six gateway states; the sole

TABLE 4 Percent of Population Who Speak a Non-English Language at Home, by States and Metropolitan Areas, in Rank Order, ca. 2010[a] (U.S. mean = 20.3%)

Top 25 States	%	Top 25 Metropolitan Areas	%
California	43.4	McAllen, TX	85.4
New Mexico	36.1	El Paso, TX	74.7
Texas	34.5	Miami, FL	73.0
New York	29.6	Jersey City, NJ	59.0
New Jersey	29.1	Los Angeles, CA	56.8
Nevada	28.8	San Jose, CA	50.8
Arizona	27.0	New York, NY	46.3
Florida	27.0	Orange County, CA	44.8
Hawaii	26.0	Fresno, CA	43.1
Illinois	21.9	San Francisco, CA	42.2
Massachusetts	21.5	Bakersfield, CA	41.0
Rhode Island	21.0	Riverside, CA	40.5
Connecticut	20.8	Bergen-Passaic, NJ	40.5
Washington	17.8	San Antonio, TX	40.2
Colorado	16.9	Houston, TX	38.8
Maryland	16.4	Oakland, CA	38.8
Alaska	16.0	Ventura, CA	37.4
Oregon	14.5	Fort Lauderdale, FL	37.1
Virginia	14.4	San Diego, CA	36.9
Utah	14.1	Middlesex-Somerset, NJ	34.4
District of Columbia	13.9	Las Vegas, NV	32.8
Georgia	12.9	Dallas, TX	32.1
Delaware	12.1	Albuquerque, NM	31.3
Kansas	10.6	Vallejo-Fairfield-Napa, CA	30.9
North Carolina	10.6	Chicago-Gary, IL	30.2

[a] Persons five years or older; metropolitan areas with populations above 500,000.

SOURCE: American Community Survey, 2008–2010 merged files.

exceptions are Las Vegas and Albuquerque. Ten of the top 20 metropolitan areas are in California alone. Not surprisingly, the largest shares of people living in homes where a language other than English is spoken are found in the large border metropolises of McAllen and El Paso, Texas, where 85 percent and 75 percent of their populations, respectively, speak a non-English language at home (overwhelmingly Spanish). Miami (73 percent), Jersey City (59 percent), Los Angeles (57 percent), and San Jose (51 percent) are also home to dominant shares of non-English speakers.

Even at the bottom of the list, 30 percent of the Chicago metropolitan area's population speaks a non-English language at home. Among metropolitan areas of newer

immigrant settlement which do not appear in Table 4, by 2010 only Tucson, Phoenix, Seattle, and Denver exceeded the national non-English-usage norm of 20 percent; but Portland, Atlanta, Salt Lake City, and Raleigh-Durham were not far behind.

What non-English languages are spoken in the United States today? The Census Bureau records 382 discrete languages, coded into 39 main languages and language groups. As noted, Spanish dominates among non-English languages: 12.6 percent of U.S. residents aged five or older said they spoke Spanish at home. No other language reached 1 percent of the U.S. population. The next closest language was Chinese, accounting for just 0.9 percent of the population (2.4 million speakers), followed by Hindi, Urdu, and related languages at 0.7 percent (1.7 million), Tagalog and related Filipino languages at 0.6 percent (1.5 million), and Vietnamese at 0.5 percent (over 1 million). No other language category exceeded 0.5 percent. Moreover, the two largest non-English categories after Spanish hide considerable diversity, given the many mutually unintelligible varieties of Chinese and the diversity of tongues spoken by people from the Indian subcontinent.

ECONOMIC CONTEXT OF THE NEW IMMIGRATION

The big increase in immigration since 1970 has coincided with an era of widening economic inequality, so the incorporation and prospects of social mobility of immigrants and their children have hinged on their levels of education, probably more than ever in history. Beginning in the 1970s and accelerating thereafter, the structure of the American labor market started to change under the twin influences of technological innovation and foreign competition in industrial goods. Industrial restructuring and corporate downsizing brought about the gradual disappearance of the jobs that had provided the basis for the economic ascent of the European second generation. For instance, between 1950 and 1996, American manufacturing employment plummeted, from over one-third of the labor force to less than 15 percent. The slack was taken by service employment that skyrocketed from 12 percent to close to one-third of all workers. Service employment is, however, bifurcated between menial and low-wage jobs and the rapid growth of occupations requiring advanced technical and professional skills. These highly paid service jobs are generated by knowledge-based industries linked to new information technologies. The growth of employment in these two polar service sectors is one of the factors that stalled the gradual trend toward economic equality in the United States, especially from the end of World War II to the 1960s, and then reversed it during the following decades.

In this changed market, high demand exists, at the low end, for unskilled and menial service workers and, at the high end, for professionals and technicians—with diminishing opportunities for well-paid employment in between. In effect, immigrant labor has been attracted to fill jobs in both these polar service sectors of the U.S. economy. Contemporary immigration has responded to this new "hourglass" economy by bifurcating, in turn, into major occupational categories (cf. Portes & Rumbaut, 2014).

The Great Recession of 2007–2009 exacerbated the widening inequalities in income and wealth. By 2009, the net worth of black and Hispanic households (which among homeowners is largely based on their home equity) was largely wiped out in the wake of the collapse of housing prices and a deep recession. Net worth among Hispanics

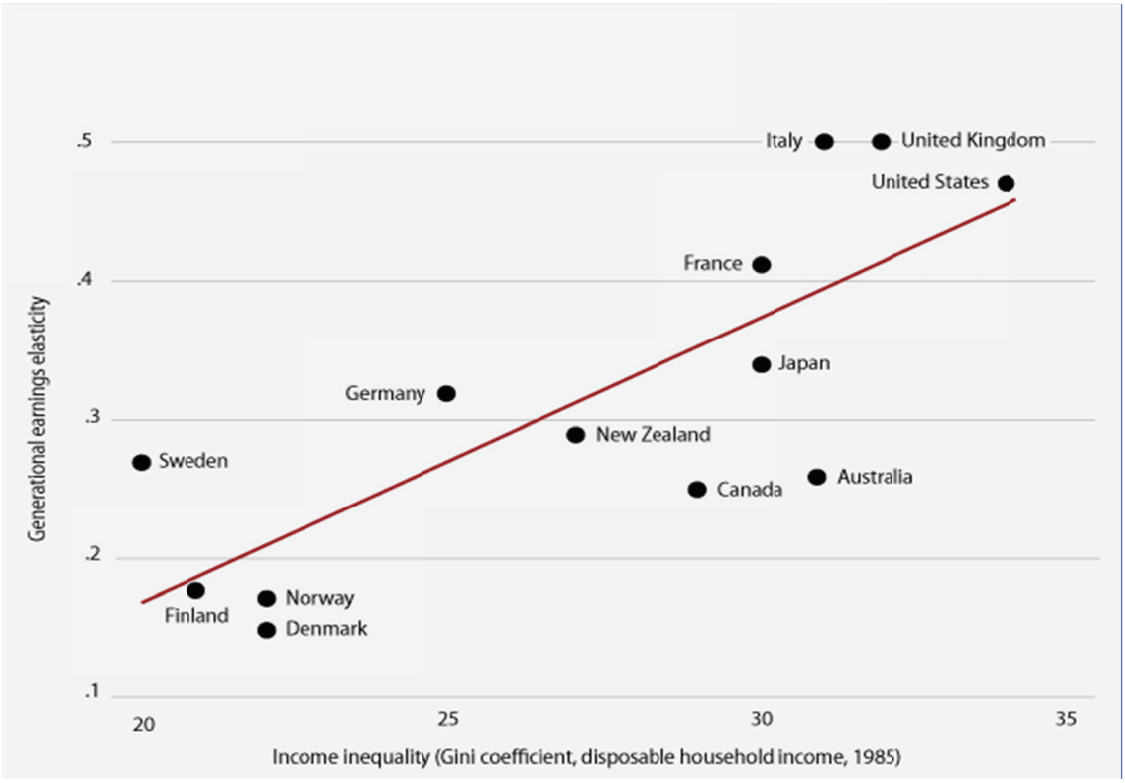

FIGURE 4 The Great Gatsby curve: More inequality is associated with less mobility across the generations. SOURCE: Miles Corak, "Inequality from Generation to Generation: The United States in Comparison." In Robert Rycroft, ed. The Economics of Inequality, Poverty, and Discrimination in the 21st Century (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, 2013).

dropped to a miniscule $6,300, and the wealth gap between whites and Hispanics rose to 20-to-1—the widest in 25 years. Economic inequality—as measured by the Gini index and related indicators—reached Third World levels by 2010.

This process in turn has been accompanied by sharply constrained social mobility: the higher the income inequality, the lower the mobility. As Figure 4 shows (what Alan Kruger dubbed "the Great Gatsby Curve"), in comparison to other industrial nations, the United States is among the most unequal and least mobile societies. It is into this changing economic context that the new immigration has been inserted.

There are two main dimensions along which contemporary immigrants to the United States differ: the first is their personal resources, in terms of material and human capital, and the second is their classification by the government. The first dimension ranges from foreigners who arrive with investment capital or are endowed with high educational credentials versus those who have only their labor to sell. The second dimension ranges from migrants who arrive legally and receive governmental resettlement assistance to those who are categorized as illegals and are persecuted accordingly.

DIVERSITY IN CLASS ORIGINS: EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF PRINCIPAL IMMIGRANT GROUPS

In this regard, consider first the huge spread in educational attainments among contemporary immigrants. Variation in educational background, shown in Table 5, highlights again the theme of great heterogeneity among the foreign born. For example, the Nigerians appear as the most educated immigrants because close to 100 percent are high school graduates; however, if the indicator is college rather than high school graduation, then Asian Indians take first place.

The largest foreign group—Mexicans—has the lowest level of schooling, according to both indicators. This result is not due to Mexico having a singularly bad educational system, but to its having a 2000-plus-mile border with the United States, allowing peasants and workers of modest origins to come in search of work. Mexico is a middle-income country with indicators of development generally superior to that of India. However, there is an ocean in the middle barring the potential migration of tens of millions of impoverished Indian peasants. The Mexican immigrant population of the United States is composed of the peasants and workers who are on this side of the border at any given time, plus their families. The generalization that low-educated immigrants come exclusively from Latin America and the Caribbean is contradicted, however, by the presence of European nationalities in the bottom educational category. Immigrants from Italy and Portugal, in particular, are noteworthy for their low average educational attainment. They represent, for the most part, the remnants of earlier migrant flows. Brazilians, Colombians, and Peruvians slightly exceed the proportion of college graduates among the native born, while immigrants from the English-speaking Caribbean (Cuba and Jamaica) fall somewhat behind.

The view that the educational level of immigration has been declining over time does not find support in these data. The last column of Table 5 presents the proportion of immigrants coming during 2000–2010 as a rough indicator of their recency of arrival. More than one-third of most of the best-educated groups arrived in recent years. Notable in that respect is the continuation of highly educated flows from India, Pakistan, and Nigeria, close to 40 percent of whom arrived in the past decade. By contrast, high proportions of those groups with lower levels of education were already in the country before 2000.

A full interpretation of educational differences among the foreign born thus requires consideration of multiple factors. There are actually two different levels of explanation: that of differences between nationalities and that of differences among individuals. Immigration policies and labor demand are the most important explanatory variables. Prior to 1965, U.S. immigration policy made it difficult for Asians and Africans to emigrate to the United States. After that date, a new immigration policy opened the doors on the basis of two criteria: family reunification and occupational qualifications. Unlike European and certain Latin American nationalities, most Africans and Asians had few families to reunite with in the United States; hence, the only path open to them was that of formal credentials. This situation, plus the physical barriers to low-skilled migration created by oceans and long distances, explains the high education levels of most Asian and African immigrants.

Apart from regular immigration, the U.S. government has also chosen to admit certain groups at particular times for political considerations. Most of these refugee groups

TABLE 5 Educational Attainment of Principal Immigrant Nationalities in 2010

Country of Birth	Total Persons	% College Graduates[a]	% High School Graduates[a]	% Immigrated 2000–2010
Total Native Born	267,410,918	28.2	88.7	
Total Foreign Born	39,327,516	27.3	68.1	32.4
Above U.S. Average				
India	1,783,907	74.8	92.0	46.8
Taiwan	365,243	70.0	95.0	22.7
Nigeria	207,106	61.1	95.7	42.9
Former USSR (15 Republics)	1,012,621	52.9	91.2	34.6
Iran	344,557	52.8	89.4	25.3
Korea	1,088,870	51.1	91.3	30.1
Philippines	1,785,404	50.0	91.6	28.7
China	1,511,111	44.5	74.1	39.6
Near U.S. Average				
Canada	808,749	41.5	89.5	24.9
United Kingdom	667,138	41.4	92.8	21.9
Germany	622,612	32.2	88.4	16.0
Colombia	636,329	28.9	83.2	34.5
Peru	413,562	28.7	88.2	38.9
Vietnam	1,215,136	23.2	67.7	20.2
Jamaica	649,925	21.7	81.2	22.3
Cuba	1,039,550	21.0	72.0	27.6
Below U.S. Average				
Italy	367,744	17.8	62.4	8.7
Haiti	563,850	16.7	73.4	31.2
Dominican Republic	828,776	13.6	60.8	28.5
Cambodia, Laos	352,279	12.9	58.9	12.5
Honduras	493,614	8.4	48.7	45.6
Guatemala	798,430	7.3	43.1	46.1
El Salvador	1,166,579	6.7	44.4	32.8
Mexico	11,658,428	5.3	39.2	33.2

[a] Persons age 25 or older.
SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2008–2010.

came in the past from Communist-dominated countries. At present, they come from countries hostile to the United States, such as Iran, and from those marked by extensive political turmoil, such as Bosnia and Somalia. The educational profile of each such nationality depends on the evolution over time of the inflow. Initial waves of refugees tend to come from the higher socioeconomic strata; but, as the movement continues, they are increasingly drawn from the popular classes. The decline in schooling tends to

be faster when refugees originate in poor countries where the well educated represent but a small proportion of the total population.

In combination, these factors explain the low average levels of education of some Southeast Asian refugee groups, the middling average levels of Vietnamese and Cubans, and the high educational profile of Russians and Iranians. During the 1990s, the momentous process leading to the demise of communism in Eastern Europe was aided by an American policy that greatly facilitated the arrival of Soviet citizens as refugees. These were positively selected by U.S. consulates in Russia and other former Soviet republics, explaining the high educational level of this new immigrant cohort. As Asians and Africans before them, Russians had few relatives to reunite with in the United States, which accounts for their continuing positive educational selectivity.

Finally, demand for low-wage labor in agriculture and other labor-intensive industries has given rise to a sustained underground flow. In the past, unauthorized migration of low-skilled workers tended to be cyclical. The progressive enforcement of the southern border by the U.S. government did not stop the unauthorized flow but deterred its return to Mexico and other sending countries, as migrants who succeeded in crossing opted for staying on the U.S. side rather than repeating their harrowing experience. This population, which in the mid-2000s reached an estimated 12 million, plus migrants from the same origins that managed to legalize their status by one means or another, explains the low average education of immigrants from Mexico, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and most of Central America—countries that have been the primary sources of unauthorized migration in the past.

DIVERSITY IN LEGAL STATUS

A second key dimension along which contemporary immigrants to the United States differ involves their legal status. In 2011, data from the Department of Homeland Security estimated the unauthorized population of the United States at 10.8 million—down from 11.8 million estimated in 2007, but tripling since the early 1990s (Hoefer et al., 2011). That total has stabilized since the 2007–2009 Great Recession, with its growth estimated at net zero since 2008 (Passel et al., 2014). At the same time that the number of both undocumented adults and children has declined significantly, the remaining undocumented population has become more settled and more likely to have citizen children born in the United States.

By 2012, according to estimates by the Pew Research Center, some 775,000 children younger than 18 were undocumented, less than half of the more than 1.6 million at its peak in 2005. By contrast, in 2012 there were 4.5 million *U.S.-born* children younger than 18 living with at least one undocumented parent, more than twice as many as the 2.2 million estimated in 2000. Overall, unauthorized immigrant parents of U.S.-born children had lived in the United States for an average of 15 years (Passel et al., 2014). President Obama's late 2014 executive actions, which remain to be implemented, would establish a Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents program, and expand the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program for youth who came to the United States as children. These programs may cover up to 4.4 million parents and youth, according to the Department of Homeland Security, who could be granted temporary permission to stay in the United States.

Still, just over one-fourth (27 percent) of the foreign born residing in the United States are undocumented. An immigrant's legal status is a critical factor in shaping mobility trajectories—and an unauthorized status can affect virtually every facet of an immigrant's life. As Table 6 documents, all of the principal source countries of legal immigration to the United States (except Cuba, which is exempted under a law passed in the 1960s) are also among the top sources of unauthorized migration (Rumbaut, 2008).

It was noted earlier that 60 percent of all immigrants in the United States today are accounted for by only ten countries—five from Latin America, five from Asia (Rumbaut, 2008). However, as Table 6 shows, over half of all immigrants from Mexico, El Salvador, and Guatemala (as well as Honduras) are undocumented (cf. Hoefer et al., 2011; Passel et al., 2014; Yoshikawa, 2011), and over half of the adults from those countries have not completed high school; they share a common Spanish language and are chiefly labor migrants with limited social mobility, including educational opportunities. They are the most isolated linguistically, economically, socially, legally, and otherwise. They have been under systematic state persecution for years, living under a constant threat of detention and deportation and family disruption, although their children are constitutionally entitled to a public education in the United States until 12th grade (Olivas, 2012). Growing up under those circumstances and learning in the midst of instability is extraordinarily difficult (Gonzales, 2011). Multiple factors are arrayed against them.

In diametric contrast are immigrants entering from the largest Asian countries (India, China and Taiwan, the Philippines, and South Korea). They tend to form a "brain drain" of professional immigrants: more than half of adult immigrants from those countries have college degrees (including 80 percent of those from India), and about one-third have advanced degrees. Although Asian groups also have a notable share

TABLE 6 U.S. Immigrants by Legal Status and Education, 2010

	Foreign-Born Total		Undocumented		Education (Ages 25-64)	
Mode of Incorporation	N (000s)	%	N (000s)	%	% College Graduate	% Less Than High School
All immigrants	39,956	100	10,790	27	27.3	31.9
Low education, irregular entry						
Mexico	11,711	29.3	6,640	56.7	5.5	59.2
El Salvador	1,214	3.0	620	51.1	6.7	54.7
Guatemala	831	2.1	520	62.6	7.3	56.6
High education, regular entry						
China, Taiwan	2,167	5.4	130	8.1	54.3	16.9
India	1,780	4.5	200	11.2	77.8	5.9
Philippines	1,778	4.4	280	15.7	51.9	5.2
Korea	1,100	2.8	170	15.5	54.4	5.3
Refugees, state-sponsored						
Vietnam	1,241	3.1	160	12.9	24.9	29.0
Cuba	1,105	2.8	NA	NA	23.4	19.0

SOURCES: American Community Survey 2010 (Census Bureau, 2011); Office of Immigration Statistics (DHS, 2011).

of the undocumented (about 10 percent to 15 percent, primarily visa "over-stayers"), they generally enter through regular legal channels. They are significantly more educated than the native majority in the United States and also have lower fertility rates (Rumbaut, 2008).

State-sponsored refugees form a third type: Vietnamese and Cubans are the largest, but also Cambodians, Laotians, Somalis, and those from Bhutan, Iraq, and elsewhere. As noted, refugees tend to have a mixed socioeconomic profile, with more educated immigrants arriving as part of a first wave and then becoming more representative of other social classes over time.

THE COMING OF THE SECOND GENERATION: IMMIGRANT CHILDREN VERSUS CHILDREN OF IMMIGRANTS

Consider the Common Core State Standards, which are intended to guide the education of all children enrolled in U.S. schools for an unspecified period beginning in 2014. In considering the challenges to be faced by schools in implementing these standards and educating all children as required by the No Child Left Behind Act mandates that remain in place, it is important to address the evolving composition of the school population and projected changes in that population over time, that is, to take 21st-century demographic realities into account.

This is particularly the case with regard to immigrant-origin children entering U.S. schools. Children and youth living in immigrant families continue to be (as they have been since the 1990s) the fastest growing segment of the U.S. population under 18. As of 2014, Mexico was the country of origin for the largest share of that segment: 40 percent of children in immigrant families had at least one Mexican-born parent.

In analyzing this newcomer population, it is important to distinguish between their foreign-born and U.S.-born generational components. While the number of *foreign-born* students who arrive in the United States as young children (the "1.5" generation) is a relatively low proportion of all children under 18 in the country (under 5 percent), children who are *born in the United States to immigrant parents* form a rapidly growing *second generation*. Together, this population of children being raised in immigrant families of diverse ethnic, class, and cultural backgrounds, largely speaking a language other than English at home, have transformed the composition of American public schools, especially in areas of immigrant concentration (see Hao & Woo, 2012; Passel, 2011; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001, 2014; Rumbaut, 2005a, 2005b, 2008).

As Figure 5 shows (based on an analysis of 1994–2014 Current Population Survey (CPS) data analyzed by Child Trends), by 2014 *more than one-fourth* (25.4 percent) of all U.S. children younger than 18 were either the foreign-born 1.5 generation (3.8 percent) or members of the new second generation (21.5 percent). In 1994, among the under-18 population, there were 12.2 million children of immigrants: 2.7 million were 1.5 generation, and 9.5 million were second generation. By 2014, the population had grown to 18.7 million, including 2.8 million 1.5-generation immigrants and 15.9 million second-generation immigrants. Although the overall share of children of immigrants has grown, all of the increase has been in the proportion of the U.S.-born second generation, which increased from 14 percent to 22 percent between 1994 and 2014. Foreign-born immigrant children (the 1.5 generation), in contrast, have remained at between

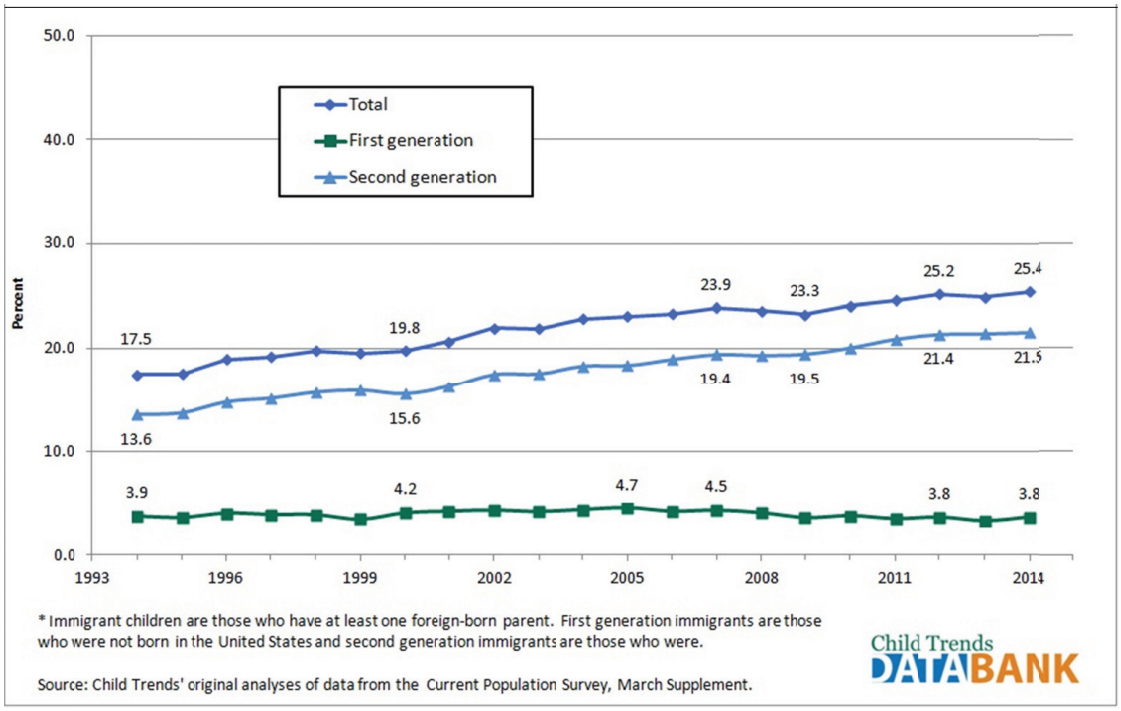

FIGURE 5 Percentage of U.S. children younger than 18 who are immigrants, by generation: 1994–2014.

3 percent and 5 percent of all children, although the proportion peaked at 4.7 percent in 2005 and has been decreasing slightly since (cf. Child Trends, 2014). The proportion of the total child population in the United States being raised in immigrant families is projected to continue to increase *regardless of future immigration*.

As noted previously, about half of the 40 million immigrants in the United States in 2010 came from Spanish-speaking Latin America (29 percent from Mexico alone), who in turn accounted for a plurality of the more than 50 million U.S. "Hispanics" in 2010. *Most* of the growth of the total U.S. population over the next half-century, to 2060, will be accounted for solely by Hispanic population growth. (Between 1950 and 2000 most Hispanic population growth had been due to immigration, but since 2000 it is mainly due to births in the United States.) This is a result of the *demographic momentum* generated by the youthful age structure and higher-than-replacement fertility of immigrant and Hispanic women in the United States, most notably (though not solely) Mexican American women (Tienda & Mitchell, 2006).

Meanwhile, the rapidly aging baby-boom cohort (consisting mostly of non-Hispanic white natives) is exiting out of the labor force at unprecedented numbers; every *day* since 2011 about 18,000 have been reaching age 65, a pace that will continue alongside higher death rates until 2030. They are being replaced by young folks who disproportionately tend to be other than non-Hispanic whites. For this reason the United States

within a generation, by around 2043, will become a "majority-minority" country—as California already did by 2000, and Texas more recently, and as are growing numbers of school districts in major metropolitan areas today. Children three years and under now in the United States are already "majority-minority"—non-Hispanic whites make up less than half the population and no single group forms a majority—as will all children under 18 by 2020. They will increasingly form the American student body.

In terms of the challenges of educating the children of immigrants in the foreseeable future, the west and the south will be the areas of the country that will be proportionately most affected by the presence of immigrant-origin schoolchildren. New destinations show very rapid growth (e.g., Georgia, the Carolinas, Nevada, and Utah), but in absolute numbers their immigrant-origin populations remain much smaller than in the traditional receiving states (and metropolitan areas) of California, New York–New Jersey, Texas, Florida, and Illinois. More important, the level of school segregation is higher than it was 50 years ago (notably in Southern California and New York). Under conditions of hyper-segregation, there are fewer opportunities for immigrant-origin individuals to interact regularly with fluent monolingual speakers of English, a condition that is essential for both the acquisition of English and the development and maintenance of fluent bilingualism (see Callahan & Gándara, 2014; Mouw & Xie, 1999; Suárez-Orozco et al., in press; Tienda & Mitchell, 2006; Wiley et al., 2009).

OFFICIAL STATISTICS: IMMIGRATION, GENERATION, AND INTERGENERATIONAL MOBILITY

The U.S. census—the nation's principal source of official statistics—has asked three questions on every census since the first in 1790: age, sex, and race. Age and sex have been measured in the same way in every census, but "race" has never been measured in the same way from one census to the next. That has been the case for the past 220 years, and it will be again when the 2020 census introduces still new changes in the measurement of "race," this time in an effort to essentially "racialize" the "Hispanic" question that had been introduced in the 1980 short form of the census. These may be seen as results of changing contexts of immigration (which in turn beget changing forms, and frames, of "ethnicity" and "panethnicity").

Historically, such changing contexts have led to questions being added to national datasets in order to grasp key phenomena. Mass migrations in the 1840s (especially of Irish, but also of Germans) led to the census question on birthplace being asked for the first time in 1850, allowing a measure of the number of immigrants (the foreign-born population) and their national origin. Two decades later, in 1870, a question about *parents'* birthplace was added, allowing a crucial measure of the second generation—a measure that was retained through the 1970 census, after which (wrongly assuming that immigration to the United States would no longer continue as a significant phenomenon) it was deleted.

The study of the second generation and of the intergenerational mobility of immigrant-origin groups in the United States was severely undercut after 1970 when the U.S. Census Bureau dropped the question on parental nativity from the long-form questionnaire of its decennial census, the erstwhile largest and most reliable nationally representative data source for the analysis of the myriad of immigrant groups. As

a result, ironically, just at the very moment when a new era of mass migration made the collection of such data indispensable in the United States, the last three censuses (1980, 1990, and 2000) and subsequently the ACS have permitted only an examination of the foreign-born population by country of birth and date of arrival, but *not* of their U.S.-born children. Fortunately, in 1994 the questions on paternal and maternal nativity were incorporated in the annual (March) supplement of the CPS conducted by the Census Bureau for the Bureau of Labor Statistics.[1]

The CPS has since become the main national-level dataset in the United States permitting more refined intergenerational analyses (from the first to the second and third-and-beyond generations)—but the sample size for a given year, while substantial, is not large enough to provide reliable information on smaller immigrant populations, or for comparative analyses by national origin and by generational cohorts defined by age at arrival and parental nativity. This limitation can be addressed to some extent by merging annual demographic data files for several consecutive years to generate sufficient sample sizes for analytical purposes.

Differences in nativity (of self and parents) and in age and life stage at arrival, which are criteria used to distinguish between generational cohorts, are known to affect significantly the modes of acculturation of adults and children in immigrant families, especially with regard to language and accent, educational attainment and patterns of social mobility, outlooks and frames of reference, ethnic identity, and even their propensity to sustain transnational attachments over time (cf. Rumbaut, 2004). To carry out such analyses—and setting aside for the time being the problem of the determination of "ethnicity"—the measurement of "first" and "second" generations requires at a minimum data sources that contain information on the country of birth of the respondent and, if foreign born, the age and date of arrival, and, if native born, the country of birth of the mother and father.

Among urgent data needs, perhaps none is more important for the study of intergenerational mobility than the restoration of the parental nativity question on large nationally representative surveys—especially the ACS, though that has not happened to date, making the inclusion of those questions in NCES surveys all the more critical. The data on parental nativity in the annual CPS yield much valuable information for the study of the "new second generation," but the CPS is hampered by small sample sizes when the available data are broken down by national origin and generational cohort—let alone by other basic demographic variables, such as age and sex—reducing cell sizes to the point where it becomes impossible to carry out reliable analyses, even when merging multiple years of the CPS. In addition, data on English language use and ability (which are included in the ACS) are not collected by the CPS—even though the CPS remains at present the principal source of national-level information

[1] The insertion of the questions on parental nativity into the CPS was a direct result of a related prior effort—a 1992 workshop, "Statistics on U.S. Immigration: An Assessment of Data Needs for Future Research," similar to the "Workshop to Examine Current and Potential Uses of NCES Longitudinal Surveys by the Education Research Community" held in November 2013. A volume reporting on the proceedings of that 1992 workshop, which had been sponsored by the Committee on National Statistics and the Committee on Population, National Research Council, was subsequently edited by Barry Edmonston and published in 1996 by the National Academies Press; a pdf of the published report, which remains relevant today, is available at http://www.nap.edu/catalog/4942/statistics-on-us-immigration-an-assessment-of-data-needs-for

on second-generation populations. Neither the CPS nor the ACS, therefore, provide satisfactory solutions to such research data needs.

To be sure, there are methodological and definitional problems with such measures as age at arrival (e.g., there may not be a single date of arrival in the United States but multiple entries), nativity (e.g., definitions of "foreign born" and "native born" in U.S. official statistics have varied historically and are based on assignments of citizenship status, whereas immigrant status is not asked in the CPS or the ACS [or in the census long form before the ACS]; international migration statistics differ in the meanings of common terms and measures). In addition, there are problems with the determination and allocation of ethnicity for children of mixed marriages, where the ethnic and national origin of the mother and father differs. The continued reliance on one-size-fits-all racial categories in the United States (an "ethnoracial pentagon" of white, black, Asian, Hispanic/Latino, and American Indian/Alaska Native categories), in lieu of more refined classifications by national origin and ethnicity, is particularly pernicious to an understanding of the diversity and complexity of the new immigration, and to the study of processes of acculturation, integration, and social mobility—indeed, to theory building and policy making. All of these considerations, in turn, underscore the need for better data and better measures that can help address those specific problems in comparative research.

Indeed, it is precisely the problems outlined above with national-level datasets such as the ACS and CPS that has required the development of specialized surveys, of which best known is the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS). For more than a decade CILS followed large samples (N > 5,200) of 1.5- and second-generation respondents representing 77 different nationalities in South Florida and Southern California, from mid-adolescence in eighth and ninth grades to their mid-twenties. Three waves of surveys were carried out, in addition to separate parental interviews, which addressed multiple dimensions of the social and educational adaptation process of these diverse groups—including ethnic identities, experiences of discrimination, and educational aspirations and expectations. Nonetheless, CILS data are limited to samples in only two regions of the country and lack the national scope of NCES surveys.

A "COMMON CORE" OF QUESTIONS FOR NCES LONGITUDINAL SURVEYS

What happens to these immigrants and their descendants, to the schools and communities where they settle, to the families they will form, their developmental trajectories, intergenerational patterns of achievement and mobility, health and well-being (and what has been called an "immigrant paradox"), to the maintenance or erosion of fluency in two languages, and of an ethnic identity, and many more, are complex questions fraught with theoretical as well as public policy significance that need to be addressed through interdisciplinary lenses and with mixed methods. Depending on the research questions, different survey items or methods may be required—perhaps in the form of special thematic modules added to a "core" survey instrument, much as is done with the General Social Survey (GSS). Such modules can draw from studies such as CILS, incorporating already tested items from the various CILS instruments developed for use at different ages and school levels. The CILS instruments, codebooks and datasets are publicly available through the Inter-university Consortium for Political

and Social Research at http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/studies/20520. The advantage of developing such targeted modules for use in NCES surveys is the nationally representative scope of the latter, and its wider accessibility to the educational research community.

The following proposes instead the identification and incorporation of a minimum set of survey questions—a "common core" of key variables that to the extent possible should be asked consistently in NCES longitudinal surveys. Some of these are already asked in some NCES surveys but not others. To date a comprehensive inventory of all relevant questions asked in each of the NCES surveys has not been done. The purpose here is rather to list the most important items needed to measure key variables and constructs for immigration and generation-related research, and to produce reports which do not lump them into aggregated categories (e.g., combining specific ethnicities or national origins into pan-ethnic aggregates like "Hispanic" or "Asian"). The references list specific analyses that have been done using survey data measuring these variables, as well as studies relying on mixed methods that yield findings supporting the inclusion of these variables in NCES surveys.

The following are important items needed to measure key variables and constructs for immigration and generation-related research:

- **Generation:** The measurement of *generational cohort* requires data on *age at arrival* and *country of birth* (if foreign born), and the *country of birth of father and mother* (if U.S. born). See the definitions of generational cohorts in Figure 6.[2]
- **Year of permanent arrival in United States** (if foreign born).
- **Age (including year of birth) and gender.**
- **Age at arrival in United States,** measured as year of birth minus year of arrival.
- **Country of birth** of self, father, and mother.
- **Citizenship** of self, father, and mother. Immigration status is more problematic to ascertain, especially from children who often do not know (see Gonzales, 2011). While there have been recent attempts to develop imputation methods (see Van Hook et al., 2015), given the significant shift in the size and composition of the undocumented population reviewed above, the current flux in the immigration status, and multiple other methodological as well as legal considerations, I would not recommend inserting items in NCES surveys, especially to respondents under 18, beyond questions about citizenship and length of residence in the United States.
- **Ethnicity:** This is a separate question of (subjective) self-identification, but it can be constructed (objectively) via country of birth and (if needed, as in the case of ethnic minorities such as the Hmong from Laos, or the ethnic Chinese from Vietnam) language. Ethnicity is a key variable that needs to be measured as precisely as possible, not lumped together into racial/panethnic aggregates that obliterate critical differences. At a minimum, to the extent allowed by sample sizes and cost considerations, the largest immigrant nationalities should be coded

[2] Note: The new third generation (as defined above) is only in its infancy, but it may be well to begin anticipating the possible inclusion of questions on grandparents' country of birth (as is done in the GSS), especially after 2020, to be able to distinguish the third from the second and fourth+ generational cohorts.

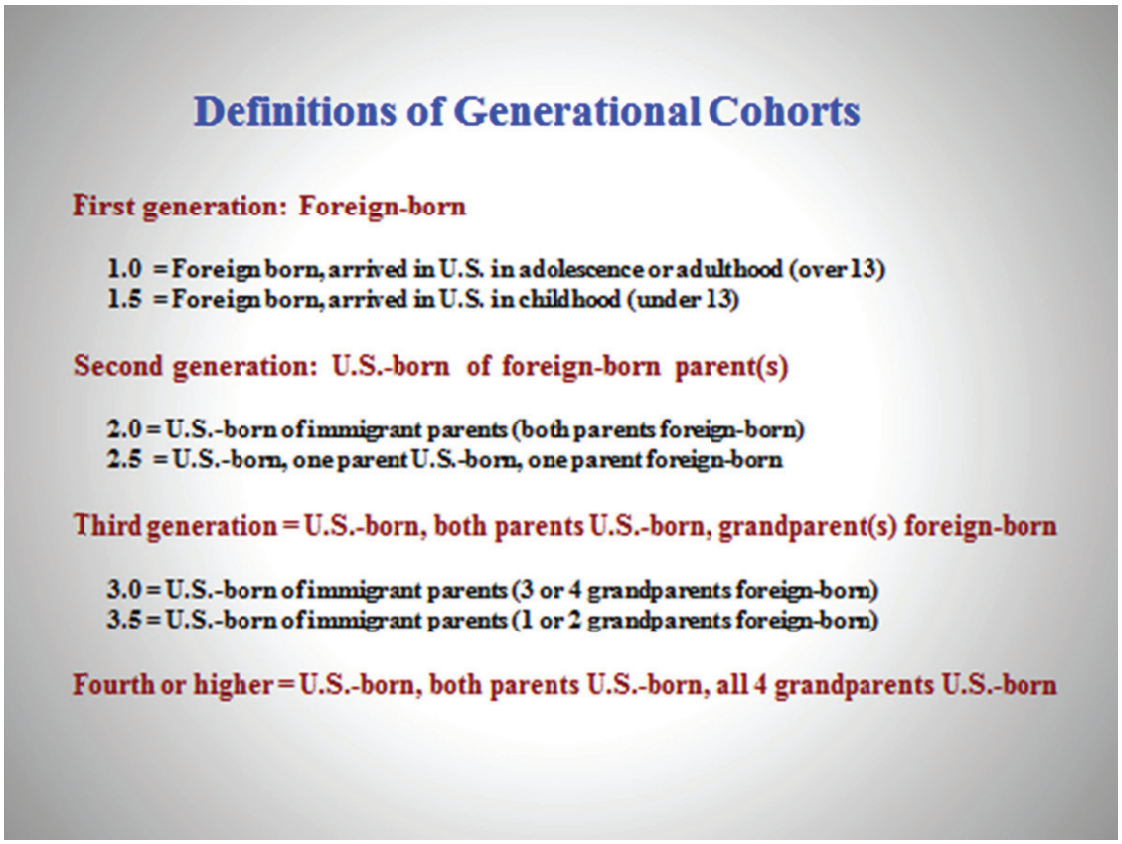

FIGURE 6 Definitions of generational cohorts.

separately (e.g., Mexican), and any panethnic aggregation should be approached judiciously taking contextual similarities into account.

- **Language** (both English and other languages): Preference, use, and proficiency (spoken ability and literacy). Proficiency should be measured by asking how well the respondent understands, speaks, reads, and writes (English *and* a non-English language if applicable), on a scale of "very well," "well," "not well," and "poorly/not at all." No measures of fluent or balanced bilingualism are possible without measuring proficiencies in both languages. Among NCES surveys, the National Education Longitudinal Study has been a fruitful source for creative bilingualism analysis (cf. Agirdag, 2014).
- **Education**: Highest year attained and degree, if any, of self (if adult), father, and mother.
- **Family socioeconomic status:** In addition to parental education attained in country of origin, ask whether the parents own or rent their home, and their current level of occupational/professional attainment (and if possible, before migration, for those parents who were adults at migration). Another variable worth asking (of adults, not children) is household income.

- **Family structure and size:** Number and relationships of family members in household.
- **Panethnicity and "race"** but do not over-rely on such one-size-fits-all categories as if they were causal rather than contextual variables.
- **Location:** City, metropolitan area, and state.

CONCLUSION

Immigration to the United States over the past half century has produced a foreign-born population that at present numbers well over 40 million, and which has been unprecedented in its diversity of national origins, social class and cultural backgrounds, migration histories, and legal statuses. Indeed, the most educated and the least educated adults in the United States today are immigrants. The children of this new immigration—both the U.S.-born second generation and the foreign born who immigrated at a young age—already are (or will soon become) the majority of children in many school districts and cities, and even in some states, and have been commensurately changing the ethnic, racial, cultural, and class diversity of the American student body. By 2014, an estimated 18.7 million children under age 18 (over 25 percent of all children in the country) had an immigrant parent (Child Trends, 2014). This growth has been extremely rapid; in 1970 the child population of immigrant origin accounted for only 6 percent of all children. However, the bulk of the expansion of this population has occurred in the second generation—children born in the United States of immigrant parents, who have birthright citizenship. It is the reality of this rapidly growing and diversifying second generation—which has been occurring in a context of widening and deepening economic inequalities—that NCES surveys should be especially focused on, as the United States itself moves inexorably toward becoming a "majority-minority" society.

Targeted studies need, above all, to be able to measure precisely the generational cohorts and ethnicities involved in this sociodemographic shift. However, for reasons reviewed in this paper, the principal national-level datasets have been seriously deficient in this regard, especially since the elimination of the parental nativity questions since the 1980 decennial census. This key deficiency has not been rectified in the ACS and precludes the ability to measure and distinguish the second generation of new Americans of foreign parentage, from the foreign-born first generation and from the generations of those of native parentage. Since 1994 the CPS restored these variables, but it is itself lacking in other ways to be able to study effectively the educational adaptation process of children of immigrants (e.g., the CPS does not ask any questions on language use or proficiency).

NCES longitudinal surveys are positioned to provide essential knowledge about this diverse population, but are themselves inconsistent in their use of key variables in assessments of K-12 and postsecondary school populations. This paper has sought to examine extant needs, identify particular problems, and suggest some feasible ways of addressing them—from the development of thematic modules to address specific research questions, to a "common core" of key variables that, to the extent possible, should be asked consistently in all NCES longitudinal surveys.

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