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### Title

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### Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/1w67m43r>

### Journal

Ethnic and Racial Studies, 43(1)

### ISSN

0141-9870

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### Publication Date

2020-01-02

### DOI

10.1080/01419870.2019.1667507

Peer reviewed

# **Coming of Age Before the Great Expulsion: The Story of the CILS-San Diego Sample 25 Years Later**

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*Presented to the conference on Children of Immigrants in the Age of Deportation, Princeton, October 2018*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The study of "the new second generation," framed as the most consequential legacy of contemporary immigration to the United States, is now more than a quarter century old, and has generated a vibrant field of study. The incorporation trajectories of the adult children of the new immigration have been the subject of vigorous debate: are they not only "assimilating" into the American "mainstream" but exhibiting a "second-generation advantage" relative to native-born peers, or experiencing "downward assimilation" or "second-generation decline"? (e.g., Alba and Nee 2003; Gans 1992; Kasinitz et al. 2008; Portes and Zhou 1993). Because decennial census data on parental nativity have not been available since 1980, scholarship on adult outcomes among the new second generation has had to rely on the Current Population Survey (CPS) and on specially designed regional surveys, such as the third wave of the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (Portes and Rumbaut 2005); the Immigrant Second Generation in Metropolitan New York study (Kasinitz et al. 2008); and the Immigration and Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles survey (Rumbaut 2008).

Those previous studies have provided insight into the socioeconomic trajectories and cultural adaptations of the growing second generation population in adolescence and *early* adulthood (Feliciano and Rumbaut 2005; Haller, Portes and Lynch 2011; Kasinitz, Mollenkopf and Waters 2004; Kasinitz et al. 2008; Portes and Fernández-Kelly 2008; Portes, Fernández-Kelly and Haller 2005; Portes and Rumbaut 2001; Rumbaut 2005, 2008), but existing research is limited

because studies have focused mainly on children of immigrants in their teens (in the 1990s) or mid-twenties (in the early 2000s), even as it is taking longer than in the past to complete higher education and other adult transitions (Settersten, Furstenberg and Rumbaut 2005). Those studies, most of which have been cross-sectional, were conducted before the post-2007 period of economic crisis dubbed the Great Recession, which severely impacted housing and labor markets, further exacerbated income and wealth inequality, and roiled adult transitions. And they were largely carried out prior to the punitive “age of deportation” that has come to mark the present period.

In this study, we draw from our latest follow-up to the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS) in San Diego, which provides a unique longitudinal view spanning nearly 25 years of the life course of our respondents (1991-2016), from their early teens to their late thirties. It enables us to ascertain more completely answers to questions regarding processes of socioeconomic attainment and cultural incorporation among children of immigrants born in the late 1970s, who grew up during a notably inclusionary period for immigrants and refugees in San Diego and in the U.S. (which contrasts sharply with the context under which many children of immigrants throughout the country are coming of age today); in a state (California) that had invested in a well-planned system of accessible and affordable public colleges and universities; in an era of widening income inequalities in which the prospects of social mobility of immigrants’ children have hinged on their levels of education more than ever before; and who navigated the Great Recession just as they were turning 30. We focus on their educational attainment, arguably the most important indicator of long-term socioeconomic success (Tamborini et al. 2015), as well as indicators of cultural incorporation, including the degree to which these respondents identify as American and consider themselves part of the American mainstream. Finally, we consider whether and to what degree the current era of immigrant exclusion and expulsion has impacted their lives.

## California and the New Second Generation

Waves of international migrants since the 1960s have transformed and will continue to transform the United States, and especially California. Indeed, recent estimates based on immigration trends and birth rates indicate that almost all of the growth of the U.S. working-age population between now and 2060 will consist of immigrants and their children (Passel and Cohn 2008; Vespa *et al.* 2018). In Southern California, the importance of children of immigrants for the overall workforce cannot be overstated. Even with recent immigration shifts to “new destinations,” since the 1970s more immigrants have settled in Southern California than in any other metropolitan region of the world. Nearly 30% of young adults 18-34 in the U.S. have an immigrant parent, as do nearly 60% of all young adults in Southern California (Rumbaut and Komaie 2010). Southern California is home to the largest concentrations of Mexicans, Salvadorans, Guatemalans, Filipinos, Koreans, Japanese, Taiwanese, Vietnamese, Cambodians, and Iranians outside of their respective countries of origin, and to sizable contingents of others, including Armenians, Canadians, mainland Chinese, Hondurans, Indians, Laotians, Israeli and Russian Jews, and various Arab nationalities (Rumbaut 2004, 2008). More than half of the nearly 40 million people living in California today are immigrants or their US-born children.

The demographic transformation of California has proceeded so rapidly that it is hard to imagine that Southern California itself had only relatively recently become a “new destination.” From 1920 to 1960, according to historian Jon Wiener (2008), “Los Angeles was the whitest and most Protestant city in the United States, and the American city with the smallest proportion of immigrants.” By the end of the 1980s, however, fully *a third* of all the 19.8 million immigrants in the U.S. had settled in California—and immigrants from eight of the top 10 countries of origin had established their primary settlements in California, a pattern that remains to date—with Los Angeles

the principal destination. Indeed, by 2000 California (the largest of the 50 states by far) had already become a “majority-minority” state. And by 2003 the Census Bureau reported that of the 10 million people in Los Angeles County (the nation’s largest), 71% were ethnic and racial minorities. Moreover, in California, where a third of the workforce is foreign-born, 1 in 10 workers is undocumented (approximately 3 million): they pay an estimated \$3 billion in state and local taxes, and contribute \$180 billion annually to its GDP (*cf.* Pastor 2018).

This newcomer population is enormously diverse in terms of both national and social class origins. By far the most *and* the least educated groups in California and the United States today are immigrants, and the highest *and* the lowest poverty rates are similarly found among immigrants and refugees. Group characteristics interact with external contexts of reception to form the conditions within which immigrants’ children adapt to American society (*cf.* Portes and Rumbaut 2001). But thus far studies have not been able to fully explore the adaptation of children of immigrants as it unfolds over the life course from adolescence to middle adulthood, even as the size of the adult second generation has grown, in sharply different and changing contexts of incorporation. This generational succession will continue to expand in the coming decade—during a quasi-revanchist period which, unlike the inclusionary quarter century that extended from circa 1965 to 1990, has been constituted by roughly another quarter century marked by nativist backlash and growing xenophobia, accelerating since the mid 1990s.

### **From the Great Inclusion to the Great Expulsion**

The period spanning approximately the quarter century from 1965 to 1990 has been arguably the most inclusive era in American immigration history, certainly when focused on the governmental *context of reception* at the federal level. Immigrants and refugees during this “Great Inclusion” (Rumbaut 2017)—which saw a sharp shift in their national origins to Asia and Latin

America—benefited from the *1965 Immigration Act* (whose chief strength was its appeal to egalitarianism in the spirit of the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, and its repeal of the blatantly racist immigration policy that had been in place for decades); the resettlement of hundreds of thousands of Cold War refugees from Cuba after the 1959 Revolution (especially with the passage of the uniquely preferential *1966 Cuban Adjustment Act*), and even more from Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia after the end of the Indochina War in 1975, for whom the U.S. assumed a historic responsibility; the passage of the *Refugee Act of 1980* (which finally conformed US law with the UN's definition of “refugee”)—1980 was the peak year of US refugee resettlement in US history, and more refugees were resettled in the US during the decade of the 1980s than in any other; the amnesty provisions of the *Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986* (which legalized the status of 2.7 million undocumented immigrants); and the tripling of immigrant visas to the highly skilled by the *1990 Immigration Act*.

Two Supreme Court decisions during this period strongly affirmed an inclusionary context of reception: *Lau v. Nichols* (1974) and *Plyler v. Doe* (1982). In *Lau*, the Court unanimously ruled that the lack of supplemental language instruction in public school for students with limited English proficiency violated the Civil Rights Act of 1964; the school district was required to provide LEP students with "appropriate relief." The Bilingual Education Act of 1968 had aimed to address the needs of LEP students, but the funding was limited. *Lau* remains an important decision in bilingual education history: it prohibited the "sink and swim" policy of English-language learning, increased funding to the Bilingual Education Act and effectively extended the *Lau* ruling to all public schools, and was soon followed by the passing of Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974, which required school districts to take "appropriate action" to overcome barriers to equal participation of all students. In another landmark case in 1982, the Court ruled in *Plyler v. Doe* that public schools were prohibited by the Fourteenth Amendment from denying the children of undocumented

Mexican immigrants access to a public education. Those children had the same right to a public education as U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents. *Plyler* specifically forbade public schools from adopting policies that would deny students the right to a public education based on their immigration status or that of their parents (Olivas 2012). It was during this era that our respondents' parents immigrated to the United States.

To be sure, the “Great Inclusion” was not uniformly so throughout our respondents' formative years, and “contexts of reception” are not one-size-fits-all in any event; they vary by national origin and immigration status, by states and localities, by accessible opportunity structures and the “warmth of the welcome,” by historical contexts. Many of these newcomers, for example, had no co-ethnic communities formed by previous migrations to the U.S. or California (such as the refugees from Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos), but received significant public assistance as refugees. The Mexican case has always been unique, and the experiences of this group are shaped by its long and deep history in the United States—from the annexation of nearly half the territory of Mexico (including California) in a war of aggression by the U.S. in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and their racial segregation for a century afterwards, to the forced “repatriation” of a million or more Mexican Americans in the 1930s (Balderrama and Rodríguez 2006), Operation Wetback in 1954, and the 22-year Bracero Program that ended just as the “Great Inclusion” was getting under way. This history has shaped “generations of exclusion” among Mexican-Americans (Telles and Ortiz 2008) as well as the “Latino threat” narrative, fueled by fears about Mexican immigrants, that has long been a staple of U.S. public discourse (Chavez 2008). The “Latino threat” narrative contributed to the landslide passage, in November 1994, of California's anti-Mexican-immigrant *Proposition 187*. Republicans also took control of the U.S. Congress then for the first time in decades. This was followed in 1998 by *Proposition 227*, a California initiative (dubbed “English for the children”) which eliminated bilingual education in the public schools, despite the Supreme Court's decision in

*Lau v. Nichols*. Yet Proposition 187 was never implemented (it was found unconstitutional, in part because it violated the Supreme Court's ruling in *Plyler*), Proposition 227 was repealed in 2016 (dual language immersion programs are now encouraged), and California Republicans became a minority party in the state. In the 2016 presidential election, Hillary Clinton beat Donald Trump by more than 4 million votes. State legislation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century has helped create a far more inclusive climate in California—for all immigrants, undocumented or not—than in the rest of the nation.

Elsewhere in the mid-2000s, a plethora of immigration-related state laws and municipal ordinances were passed restricting access to driver's licenses, education, employment, housing and rental, health care, even library cards—and older codes, such as trespass and loitering ordinances, have been selectively reapplied to conduct “alien sweeps,” prevent day laborers from congregating, even (in a New Orleans parish) to prohibit trucks from selling Mexican food. Most extreme were Arizona's 2010 laws on employment verification and enforcement, including SB1070, which created a state immigration enforcement scheme with criminal penalties attached. Other states such as Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina soon followed with similar copycat legislation. Their effects, coupled with nationwide ICE raids and nativist hostility, have been measurable in a palpable sense of dread in populations of workers and students, including legal permanent residents among them, who become subject to racial profiling and scapegoating (Freedman 2007).

But California, which shares an extensive border with Arizona, is at the opposite extreme, passing the most far-reaching laws in the country aimed to assist with immigrant integration, particularly those whose undocumented status blocks them from opportunity. Those policies have included in-state tuition for undocumented immigrants (passed in 2001) and financial aid for undocumented students (2011)—a package of state laws dubbed the “California DREAM Act;” statewide bans on local landlord ordinances (2007) as well as e-Verify mandates (2011); non-cooperation on federal immigration enforcement involving minor offenses (2013); access to driver



licenses and professional licenses for undocumented immigrants (2014); a 2015 law erased the word "alien" from California's labor code. And California became the nation's first sanctuary state in 2018, with the passage of a law (SB54) that limits cooperation by local law enforcement with federal immigration authorities. This "California package" on immigrant integration "goes well beyond any benefits envisioned in federal proposals on immigration reform, and toward a new conception of *de facto* state citizenship that operates in parallel with formal citizenship at the national level" (Ramakrishnan and Colbern 2015). All of those laws were passed after 2000, but accelerated after 2012, when President Obama took executive action (DACA) to shield from deportation young people brought to the country illegally.

Those changes have occurred with relatively little political rancor—all the more remarkable given the heated national debate about illegal immigration (Mason 2015). In a March 2018 PPIC survey, a solid majority of Californians (61%) supported the state taking action to protect undocumented immigrants. But there is a stark partisan divide, with 8 in 10 Democrats in favor of and 8 in 10 Republicans opposed to the state taking action. Still, there is majority support across the state's regions, including 55% support among residents of Orange and San Diego Counties, home to a majority of the cities opposing the sanctuary laws. Support is much higher in Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay Area, where it hovers around two-thirds. While immigration continues to divide partisans, it unites most other Californians across the state (Bonner 2018).

At the national level, however, in sharp contrast to California, a "Great Expulsion" has come to define the era since the mid 1990s. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century to date, over 5 million people have been deported, leaving behind several million spouses and children, many of whom are U.S. citizens. Today's "Deportation Nation" (Kanstroom 2007) has been forged by the militarization of the border and the criminalization of (undocumented) immigration; the passage of draconian federal laws in 1996 that greatly expanded the categories of deportable offenses; an immense, formidable and well-

funded machinery for immigrant detention and deportation—which was greatly expanded after the attacks and moral panic of 9/11, and saw the establishment of DHS and ICE; mass raids by ICE agents of farms, meatpacking plants and other workplaces as well as parking lots of malls and private homes across the country; and a sprawling gulag of hundreds of mostly for-profit detention centers (where over 400,000 immigrants are detained annually). The era has been marked by the paralysis of any meaningful comprehensive reform legislation at the federal since 1990, including the "DREAM Act" (which was introduced *before* 9/11), and by bills, such as HR4437, passed by the U.S. House of Representatives in December 2005, which would have made felons of an estimated 12 million undocumented immigrants and criminalized those who would assist them (it failed in the Senate after the bill had triggered protest marches by millions on the streets of cities across the country to demand just immigration laws); and by the introduction of hundreds of bills seeking to control immigration at the state and local level despite constitutional mandates to the contrary (Rumbaut, Dingeman and Robles 2019). As early as 2007, Pew’s National Survey of Latinos found that 53% of Hispanic adults (about a quarter of whom were undocumented immigrants) feared that they, a family member, or a close friend would be deported (Pew Hispanic Center 2007). Ironically, President Obama, who entered office in 2009 on campaign promises of comprehensive immigration reform, left office having presided over the largest number of deportations in American history: 3 million.<sup>1</sup>

### **The Setting: San Diego, California**

Paradoxically, San Diego is California’s oldest city, founded in 1769, yet it feels new, reflecting the fact that it started growing rapidly only after World War II (the site of the largest U.S. Navy and Marine Corps bases in the Pacific, many returning veterans settled there after the war), and notably after the 1960s with accelerating internal and international migration. It is California’s

second largest city, surpassing Detroit in 1982 to become the 6th largest city in the U.S., yet it was also known as “the largest small town in America” for its overwhelmingly White, Navy-town feel, conservative politics and relative lack of ethnic diversity. No longer.

San Diego County’s population has grown steadily in recent decades, and numbers more than three million people. The foreign-born population in the region grew very rapidly during the 1980s, and despite a deep recession it increased by 41 percent in the 1990s. Situated on the Mexican border, the San Diego-Tijuana corridor has been the largest international border crossing in the world, as well as a principal path for undocumented migration from Mexico (until the militarization and fencing of the border after 1993). The location of the U.S. Navy base there long ago led to the formation of one of the three largest Filipino communities in the country (the other two are also in California), given the exceptionally high rate of Filipinos in the U.S. Navy (indeed, by the 1970s there were more Filipinos in the U.S. Navy than in the Philippine Navy). The selection of Camp Pendleton (Marine Corps) as one of four main camps for the resettlement of Vietnamese refugees who fled after the fall of Saigon in 1975 helped make San Diego one of the principal areas of Vietnamese as well as Cambodian, Lao and Hmong refugee resettlement, peaking during the 1980s. And the establishment of University of California campuses in San Diego (as well as nearby Irvine, and Santa Cruz further north) in the mid-1960s and the region’s subsequent economic expansion also attracted many professional immigrants, especially from Asian countries, greatly diversifying the area’s ethnic composition (Rumbaut 2005).

For the children of immigrants and refugees, socioeconomic success hinges on access to public colleges and universities—which are affordable and available in San Diego, with many community colleges, the flagship state university campus (a second state university was later opened in north county), and the UCSD campus. California’s system of public higher education is

based on a three-tier “master plan” adopted by the legislature in 1960. Under the plan, the top eighth of the state’s graduating high school seniors (as determined mainly by GPAs and test scores) would be able to enter one of the University of California (UC) campuses, the top third would be able to enter one of the California State University (CSU) campuses, and the community colleges would accept all applicants—a crucial springboard for lower income students, many of whom are children of immigrants. Today, more than 2.1 million students are enrolled in the state’s 115 community colleges; eligible graduates can transfer to the CSU or UC systems in order to complete bachelor’s degrees. The 23 CSU campuses, which annually award about half of the state’s bachelor’s degrees and a third of its master’s degrees, enroll more than 480,000 students (with impacted campuses like San Diego State University—which at the time the CILS project began was the largest university in California—imposing more stringent admissions requirements). And nearly 240,000 students are enrolled in the 10 UC campuses; almost all doctoral degrees are awarded by the UC.

In view of the striking population transformations described above, it is accurate to say that California’s future—and San Diego’s—will be shaped by how the second generation of adult children of immigrants is incorporated in its economy and society. Virtually every aspect of that process will be affected by the extent of their attainment of post-secondary education. Immigrants and their children will be key to the growth of the U.S. labor force in the coming decades, with the fastest growing occupations requiring college degrees; in California, there are already not enough eligible college graduates to meet demand (Johnson and Reed 2007; Pastor 2018). [See *Appendix 2* for a profile of San Diego’s employment, real state and housing markets during the CILS study.]

### **The Study: The Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS) in San Diego**

We analyze survey and qualitative data drawn from the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS) in San Diego, a unique panel study which has followed for almost 25 years a

representative sample of young people growing up in immigrant families, from the end of junior high school through their late thirties. The baseline sample consisted of children attending 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> grades in all San Diego middle, junior high, and high schools in 1991-92. To be eligible for the study they had to be either foreign-born (coming to the United States before age twelve), or of foreign parentage (born in the U.S. of immigrant parents)—that is, they were either 1.5- or second generation.<sup>2</sup> The study used a school-based sampling frame<sup>3</sup> to accurately capture the population of immigrants' children in San Diego before they could legally drop out of school. Reflecting their proportions in the larger community, the largest ethnic groups were of Mexican, Filipino and Vietnamese origin, with smaller groups of Cambodians, Laotians, Hmong, Chinese (from the PRC, Hong Kong, Taiwan), Asian Indians, and other Latin American and Asian nationalities. Almost half were U.S. citizens by birth; most others had become naturalized citizens. Fewer than 5% reported their "race" as white or black. Because the data are limited to a sample drawn in Southern California in fall 1991, the findings cannot be generalized beyond this. However, San Diego was and remains a principal site of contemporary immigrant and refugee settlement.

### *Data Collection and Sample*

Respondents were surveyed four times (T1, T2, T3, and T4). The first survey was carried out in 1992 at the end of junior high (14.2 years old on average); the second in 1995 toward the end of senior high (17.2 years old); the third in 2001-03 (24.2 years old). That third phase of data collection obtained surveys from 1,480 respondents (in 2001-02) from whom a representative subsample of 134 was drawn and with whom in-depth, open-ended qualitative interviews were conducted about a year later. More than twelve years later (2014-16), this subsample of 134 was systematically tracked, and a full fourth wave of surveys and in-depth qualitative interviews were

conducted with 112 respondents (84% of the 134<sup>4</sup>), who averaged 37.2 years old. Remarkably, two of them were already grandmothers at age 38.

The third and fourth data collection periods took longer due to the difficulties of tracking, locating and surveying this very mobile population, most of whom were no longer residing in their parents' homes. At T4, they were located not only in California (86%) but all over the country, from Alaska, Arizona and Texas, to New York City, Chicago, Baltimore and Atlanta, as well as Mexico. More specifically, at the T4 interview 62% remained in San Diego County, 16% lived elsewhere in Southern California, and 8% in Northern California. Three were homeless; two were in group quarters (a state prison, a rehab center). See *Appendix 1* for a profile of the T4 sample.

The flexible interview format at T4 allowed us to delve deeply into the most important aspects of each person's experiences, while collecting standard survey data comparable to earlier survey responses. We combined data collected through closed-ended responses with existing CILS longitudinal data, analyzing it using descriptive statistics. We analyzed the interview data in Dedoose, a software program for analyzing qualitative and mixed-methods data, using the constant-comparison method, in which we coded responses into conceptually similar categories, and compared within and across groups by key attributes to discern patterns (Boeije 2002; Glaser and Strauss 1967).

### *Background Characteristics of the Sample*

The sample's national origins also reveal much about their parents' class origins and time of arrival. The two largest groups, the Mexicans (29% of the sample) and Filipinos (24%), came earlier than the others, most arriving in the 1970s. The refugees from Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos (26% of the sample) arrived predominantly in 1980 (the peak year of refugee resettlement in U.S. history) or in the early 1980s—with the Vietnamese also reflecting a sizeable first wave who arrived in 1975,

after the fall of Saigon. The Chinese and Indians (16%) arrived mainly in the 1980s. The pre-1982 years of arrival for the overwhelming majority of the Mexican immigrants and the passage of IRCA in 1986 ensured the legalization of their status before the CILS sample was drawn. As a result, our sample has virtually no undocumented respondents or parents—a crucial characteristic.

Half of the respondents' mothers (50%) and 40% of their fathers had less than a high school education; the least educated were the Hmong, Cambodians, Lao and Mexican parents. Only 14% of the mothers and 23% of the fathers had college degrees; the most educated came from India, the People's Republic of China, and the Philippines. In between were Vietnamese refugees and immigrants from Hong Kong and Taiwan. In San Diego, their children grew in neighborhoods that varied sharply by poverty rates (when the sample was drawn in 1991, the San Diego poverty rate was 14.2%), and closely tracked the parents' levels of education. A third of the CILS sample (33%) lived in areas of concentrated poverty (census tracts where the 1990 poverty rates exceeded 50%); another third lived in tracts with poverty rates below 15%; and the remaining third in tracts with poverty rates between 15% and 40%. Over half (54%) were homeowners, while 46% were renters.

Over half (54%) of our respondents were foreign-born—i.e., members of the “1.5” generation (although the majority of them came as pre-school age children, 5 or younger). The rest were born in the U.S. of two foreign-born parents (32%) or of one foreign-born parent and one U.S.-born parent (the “2.5” generation, comprising 13% of the sample—a variable that influences acculturation patterns and language outcomes especially). The sample is roughly balanced by gender: slightly more than half of the respondents are women (54%), slightly less than half are men (46%). In terms of family structure, 71% lived in 2-natural-parent homes; 29% in single-parent homes or other arrangements. Less than half of the Cambodians and 58% of the Mexicans lived in 2-natural-parent families, in contrast to between 90 to 100% of the Indian, Chinese, Hmong and Filipinos, 83% of the

Lao, and 66% of the Vietnamese. In the Cambodian case, the family rupture was due to the fact that many of their parents (more typically widowed mothers) were survivors of the “killing fields” of the late 1970s. (For analyses of CILS findings from T1 to T2, see Portes and Rumbaut 2001; for T3, see Portes and Rumbaut 2005.)

## **FINDINGS**

The T4 CILS survey and in-depth interviews collected data on a wide range of outcomes, including language, religion, values, political beliefs and affiliations, voting patterns, ethnic identities, transnational ties, intermarriage, family formation, early childbearing, arrests and incarceration, cultural practices, occupation and work histories, earnings and household income, student debt, net worth, and much more (including detailed information on each of their siblings, as well as spouses/partners). For our purposes here, we consider only a few selected outcomes.

### **Bachelor’s Degree Attainment**

To show how the children of immigrants in middle adulthood from the San Diego CILS have fared socioeconomically, we focus on one of the most important indicators: the attainment of a bachelor’s degree (Tamborini *et al.* 2015). *Table 1* presents data on the percentage of respondents in our sample who have earned a bachelor’s degree or more, by national origin. We also include comparisons to a similar sample of adult children of immigrants (aged 30-39) from the Current Population Survey, for San Diego County and the Southern California region, at about the same time period. These comparisons are important because Southern California, and San Diego in particular, has a more highly educated population than the United States overall, stemming from the availability of relatively affordable public higher education (historically), and an economy reliant on high-skilled workers. We also note that the educational attainment of Mexican-origin respondents, in particular, is notably greater in San Diego than in the greater Los Angeles region, suggesting that



San Diego is a destination for more selective immigrants than enclaves such as East Los Angeles and Santa Ana. A similar positive selectivity appears to be the case for Vietnamese in San Diego, compared to enclaves like Westminster and Garden Grove in Orange County or elsewhere in the region.

*Table 1* shows that our respondents fare favorably in terms of educational attainment, relative to the similar non-Hispanic White population in San Diego. Overall, 53% of our sample had completed at least a bachelor's degree by their late 30s (this includes 20% who had completed an advanced degree—14% earned master's degrees, 6% earned MDs or doctorates). By comparison, only 43% of similarly-aged non-Hispanic Whites in San Diego completed a bachelor's degree.

However, educational attainment varies widely by national origin. Although sample sizes in both the CILS and, for many groups, the CPS, are small, the patterns of difference across groups are clear. Adult children of immigrants from China, India, and Vietnam earn bachelor's degrees at extraordinary rates, and Filipinos and others also surpass the national average. None of the Cambodians had earned a bachelor's degree by their late 30s, nor had two thirds of the Lao—not surprising given their low socioeconomic origins—although the Hmong did much better than would be expected. Given their similarly low SES origins, however, the attainment of a bachelor's degree or more by Mexican-origin respondents (39%) is notable as this percentage is only slightly lower than that among native-parentage Whites of comparable age in San Diego (43%) or nationally (40%).

For most CILS respondents, but especially for those who attained bachelor's degrees or higher, public higher education was key. In fact, 72% of those who attained a bachelor's degree or higher earned their highest degree (whether a bachelor's, master's, or professional degree) at a California public university. Delving further into the often complex educational paths taken towards

higher degrees, we found that a remarkable 95% of those who attained a bachelor's degree or higher attended at least one public institution of higher education (including California community colleges) along their journey to their eventual highest degree. Thus, the educational attainment of the CILS respondents was inextricably linked to the accessible California public higher education system during the time they were attaining their degrees.

We will discuss the implications of this finding in more detail below. This brief overview points to relatively positive outcomes along a key dimension of socioeconomic achievement. Next we turn to cultural indicators of integration.

### **Identifying as American**

We have focused elsewhere on our findings showing a range of ethnic self-identifications among immigrants' children in middle adulthood, varying between and within national-origin groups (Feliciano and Rumbaut 2018). While the majority of adult children of immigrants express ethnic self-identities indicating at least some attachment to their home countries/origin culture, a significant minority (30%) indicate no real connection to their ethnic background – with some indicating they were really “just” American (14%) and others indifferent towards ethnic or national identity labels altogether (16%) (Feliciano and Rumbaut 2018).

Here, we note that even among the largest group of respondents (37%) who expressed strongly that an identity rooted at least partly in their ethnic background was central to their sense of self, expressions of strong ethnic identities do not correspond to rejections of American identities. Nearly all with strong ethnic identities also clearly identify as American. For example, thirty-six-year-old Isabella<sup>5</sup> emphasized her American identity along with her Mexican identity: “[My identity as Mexican American] is very important because my family is from Mexico and . . . they came here to be better, you know, for that American Dream . . . I'm proud...to say that I'm Mexican, but I was

born here, so I am American”. Similarly, 1.5- generation Anh recognized her dual identities:

“[Identifying as Vietnamese] is very important because it’s a huge part of me . . . [being Vietnamese American] is really important too . . . I do all the stereotypical American things.” Respondents who were actively trying to maintain aspects of their national-origin culture also saw no contradiction in ethnic maintenance and being American. For example, Houa, a 1.5 generation Hmong-American woman explains:

“I want [my children] to have a conscious of, okay, my parents are these type of people. They come from here... so I mix the culture, a little bit here, a little bit there.. But then now we are.. American... we’re trying to fit in like everyone else. Trying to make a living, like everyone else. We’re also American. You know?”

Similarly, 1.5 generation Noi explains that she began to feel more American after the 9/11 attacks.

“But I don’t feel like I’m less....Lao. But I feel like I’m more American.... I mean, I’m really happy that I’m an American. A Lao-American.”

While we did not explicitly ask respondents whether they identified as American, as is clear in the excerpts above respondents often brought up their American identities organically. These findings indicate that ethnic and American identities are not zero-sum. Respondents who maintained identities rooted in their home countries also identified strongly as American and saw no contradictions in maintaining both identities.

### **Part of Mainstream America**

Respondents *were* asked explicitly whether they considered themselves part of mainstream America, and they overwhelmingly responded affirmatively (69%). Again, we found no relationship between feeling part of the American mainstream and having a strong ethnic identity rooted in the home country. For example, Nancy, a pre-school teacher, maintains a strong identity as Mexican-American, has married a Mexican-American man, and maintains several Mexican cultural practices

(although her household speaks mostly English) but also sees herself as fully part of mainstream America. She explains,

“We celebrate a lot [on] Fourth of July, Labor Day, we usually...put up a flag, and it means a lot to us. Especially now that my brother’s in the military...that makes us really proud that he’s serving his country...And...Thanksgiving,... we’ll mix it up a little bit. The Thanksgiving food...We’ll have the turkey and then we’ll have probably like mole or enchiladas...”

Others defined the American mainstream as American cultural practices, and stated because they did what most Americans do, they are part of the mainstream. For example, Emma who is married to a White American man and has an infant daughter, uses her Chinese immigrant mother’s cultural practices as a counterpoint to explain why she is a mainstream American:

I don't cook like Chinese food every night for dinner. You know, we cook American or Mexican... But my mom at home, she only ever eats Asian food. She only cooks Asian. She doesn't ever, she hasn't adopted like, she doesn't like burgers or fries or any of that stuff so. And she shops at the Asian markets and I shop at Von's. You know, Trader Joe's is my favorite store...

While most in our sample responded with a clear “yes” that they were part of mainstream America, this was not the case for everyone. A small minority (9%) indicated that they were decidedly not part of the mainstream. Yet, this was an idiosyncratic group and their explanations did not involve their ethnic or national origins, with only a couple of exceptions. Some could not articulate why they felt they just didn’t fit in. Others felt completely outside of the mainstream because of unique situations, such as homelessness (n=2) or incarceration (n=1). Some viewed the American mainstream as “what everyone is doing” and considered themselves outside because they did not keep up with latest trends, as Philippines-born Elias explains: “I don’t really pay attention to all [that]... every decade is always the trend, there’s always something new.” Lucas notes he can’t be part of mainstream America because he lives in Mexico (and commutes to work in San Diego).

We found that feeling part of the American mainstream did not vary substantially by educational attainment or family socioeconomic background or immigrant generation. However, the

few non-citizens (n=8, or 7%) felt more outside of the American mainstream than their U.S. citizen peers (38% of non-citizens felt fully mainstream vs. 72% of citizens). Also notable is that 13 of the 14 respondents (93%) who had married White Americans considered themselves fully part of mainstream America, a higher percentage than those married to co-ethnics (70%), others in the same panethnic group (76%) or another non-white person (54%).

A common theme among respondents who provided a qualified response—they felt partly in and out of the mainstream, in some ways but not others (22%) – was to note that mainstream America varied by context. Vietnamese-born Kim Cuc, for example, states astutely that in San Diego she is part of the American mainstream, but not everywhere:

“I’ve been to states like Texas and Florida where they see you as like an alien...looking at you as though they’ve never seen an Asian person in their life. Where here... you see people from all walks of life... [In] big urban areas, I feel more mainstream but in isolated areas I don’t.”

Similarly, second-generation Gloria notes, “I think in certain parts I wouldn’t be part of the mainstream. Just because there’s not a lot of... Mexican population there. So you kinda feel out of place...”

Gloria’s perspective was more common among Mexican-origin respondents than those from some other backgrounds. For example, 55% of Mexican-origin respondents responded in unqualified terms that they were part of the American mainstream, compared with 75% or more among Filipinos, Vietnamese, Cambodian/Lao/Hmong, and Chinese respondents. Moreover, among the Mexican-origin respondents, 10 of the 15 who did not feel fully part of the mainstream referenced culture or race/ethnicity as factors, which was far less common for those from other national-origin groups. One and a half generation Claudia, for example, asserts, “I just think we...we should be part of mainstream Amer...we are part of the mainstream America, but we’re

underrepresented.” Daniel suggests that those living in minority neighborhoods cannot be part of the mainstream:

“from a cultural perspective, I think I’m definitely outside of the mainstream...in terms of, I still live in a neighborhood that’s generally...minorities, so I think I’d be somewhat outside of the mainstream still. But our core values and all those are more mainstream...”

Second-generation Mexican-American Briana suggests she does not feel fully accepted in some places because she has an accent:

“it just depends, where I might not say that [I am part of the mainstream everywhere] because... I have an accent. And some people have said, “well, why do you have an accent?” ... So, depending on where I’m at, people actually... stop you and go, “why do you have an accent?””

It was not only Mexican respondents who suggested that minorities were not currently accepted as mainstream Americans. Rina, who was born in Panama and identified as Afro-Latina, forcefully articulated a similar view:

“I definitely don’t consider myself part of the American mainstream...when I think mainstream, I still think WASP. You know, White Anglo Saxon Protestant...and everything outside of that, even if...the minority is actually becoming the majority, but everything outside of that is not.”

This view, while not the most common, suggests a feeling of not being fully accepted as American, akin to that expressed by racial minorities in other studies (Waters 2001). Thus, even within a largely inclusive context, we see that some ethnic and racial groups do not feel fully accepted as part of mainstream, which reflects both how the political climate is experienced differently by ethnic background (e.g. Mexican-origin respondents’ awareness of the “Latino threat” narrative), and historical legacies of racial exclusion (*cf.* Telles and Ortiz 2008). Nevertheless, the most common pattern even among Mexican respondents is to identify, in unqualified terms, as fully part of the American mainstream.

Overall, our findings thus far suggest a varied, but largely “successful” pattern of socioeconomic and cultural integration among children of immigrants from diverse countries in

terms of educational attainment, identification as American, and feeling part of mainstream America. Does this mean that immigrants' children who came of age in Southern California have been completely insulated from the recent deportation regime? We turn next to this question.

### **Deportation Knowledge and Experiences**

We asked our respondents in middle adulthood whether they had any knowledge of anyone who had been deported or nearly deported. Overall, more than half of the sample (54%) knew of no one who had such experiences. But 20% *did* know of a close family member or friend who was deported, and another 26% of a more distant relative or acquaintance who was deported. Not surprisingly given recent deportation patterns, a substantial share of Mexican-origin respondents (36%) had *close* relatives or friends who had been deported—as did half of the Cambodians and a third of the Lao. By contrast, *none* of the Vietnamese, Chinese or Indians reported that they knew of any close family member or friend who had been deported, as did only 18% of the Filipinos (although the majority of those cases involved Mexican immigrants). Only a third (36%) of Mexican-origin respondents responded that they knew no one, even distantly, affected by deportation, compared with 85% of Vietnamese, 75% of Indians, 63% of Filipinos, and 54% of the Chinese. The Cambodians, Lao and Hmong were less insulated from (and vulnerable to) the deportation system than the other Asian groups: only 29% had no knowledge of a deportation case. In one rare instance, a deportation resulted in a violent outcome, as in the case of a respondent's sister who was murdered in Mexico after she was deported.

The qualitative data reveal a principal pattern of disengagement with the issue of deportation, even among those who had distant knowledge of deportation cases, as illustrated by Vanna, who was born in the U.S. of Cambodian parents:

“I’ve heard friends that have family members that are afraid of [deportation]. But I’ve never really personally known anyone...I don’t really know much about that...it’s not something that really crossed my mind to really get involved with knowing about.”

In another example, the way second-generation Mexican-origin Ana recounts one deportation case suggests a lack of concern with the issue:

“The only person I can think of is one of my best friend’s former coworkers. That’s about it...I know he was caught driving under the influence... and so he got deported (laughs).”

However, a few who were aware of distant stories felt strong sympathy for deported immigrants and their families. For example, Mexican-American Nancy, mentioned above, explains:

“...I’m putting myself in the shoes of the mother, the children, [often] it’s the husband that is deported. And this affects the whole family...especially the children. They miss their father. The whole family’s torn apart... He’s probably the main breadwinner. And now the mom has to go out and...for the first time look for employment. However, she has no experience...And now she’s put in this situation...it’s really sad.”

Among respondents who had a close family member or friend deported, perspectives varied depending upon the perceived fairness or justification for deportation. For example, U.S.-born Martín’s sister, a legal permanent resident, was deported to Mexico in 2010. When asked how he felt about that, Martín responds: “Well...I mean her actions spoke for her... she should have thought twice about doing bad things... she was a grown woman and she should have known from right and wrong.”

Cambodian-born Sena had several close friends and family members who were deported over the years. Her reactions to each situation varied based on whether she thought their infractions warranted such a penalty. Regarding the deportation of a few friends prior to 9/11, she states, “I don’t like it, but, what they did was uncalled for and unacceptable.” However, she perceived more recent deportations as unfair:

“ Everything just changed [after 9/11]... It was heartbreaking...to know that your friends and relatives are back over there for something they didn’t do majorly... They didn’t kill nobody...It was over little minor stuff...”



These deportations, which included her son's father and a cousin, led to fears that this could happen to her:

“you don't know what else gonna happen...They'll probably like, uncitizenize me and send me back...if I do something stupid, you know? ...now they're saying that they can change your status from citizen to non-citizen and send you back to where you come from. I'm like, 'that's not right.' You can't do that...Why?”

While Sena is unique, her case illustrates that even among adult children of immigrants who came of age in more inclusive contexts, the current era of deportation—which began prior to Trump's election—can deeply influence their sense of security, depending upon their social location.

However, most adult children of immigrants in our sample are detached from the communities most affected by the current era of deportation, which has likely contributed to their overall feeling of inclusion.

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

The latest outcomes of the adult children of immigrants in our study, born in the late 1970s and coming of age in San Diego in the 1990s, must be considered within a particular historical, social, political, economic, demographic and geographic context—a context that was far more inclusive than that in which many children of immigrants throughout the country today are coming of age. The educational and cultural integration of this segment of the new second generation, who were part of arguably the most inclusive immigration era in U.S. history, in a state which as a result of immigration had become “majority-minority” by 2000 (in fact, more than half of the state's population consists of immigrants and their children), has been largely positive.

In terms of educational attainment, the higher than average educational attainments in our panel of adult children of immigrants followed from early adolescence into middle adulthood are particularly remarkable given the modest class backgrounds and harsh migration histories of many of their immigrant and refugee parents. This positive outcome is shaped by the accessibility of

affordable public higher education in San Diego and in California, and is illuminated by recent national studies. The Commission on the Future of Undergraduate Education (2016) completed a comprehensive portrait of U.S. postsecondary education, including public and private universities. *Chart A (in Appendix 3)* from that study compares two birth cohorts—an older one born in 1961-1964 and a younger one born in 1979-1982 (similar to the CILS sample)—and graphs the fraction of students from each cohort completing a 4-year college degree, by income quartiles. It shows that educational attainment is increasing over time across all income quartiles, but that the gap in educational economic inequality is widening. In the younger cohort (born at about the same time as the CILS respondents), only 9% of students from families in the lowest income quartile completed college, in contrast to 54% of those in the upper income quartile. Significantly, the 54% achieved by the children of the more affluent families is almost identical to the 53% achieved by the T4 CILS sample during 2014-2015, despite the much lower socioeconomic background of the CILS parents.

*Chart B (in Appendix 3)* is drawn from a recent paper on “The Fading American Dream,” by Raj Chetty and colleagues (2016). They estimate rates of “absolute income mobility”—the fraction of children who earn more than their parent—by combining historical data from Census and CPS cross-sections with panel data for recent birth cohorts from millions of de-identified tax records. They find that rates of absolute mobility have fallen from approximately 90% for children born in 1940 to 50% for children born in the 1980s; i.e., for children born in 1980 (akin to those in the CILS sample) it is a coin flip whether they will do better than their parents. Higher education is seen as a pathway to intergenerational mobility; but which colleges shape upward mobility? In a subsequent paper on “Mobility Report Cards,” measuring intergenerational income mobility at each college in the United States using data for over 30 million college students from 1999-2013, Chetty et al. (2017) show that it depends on *access* (to colleges), which varies greatly by parental income; and on *success* outcomes. More specifically, they calculate a mobility measure for each college, defined as

the product of the percentage of students at the college who are drawn from the lowest quintile of income distribution (low-income parents) and the percentage of those students who went on to careers that placed them in the top one or two quintiles of the distribution. The colleges receiving the highest mobility scores were mid-tier public institutions, including many CUNY campuses and UC/CSU California colleges and universities. A related New York Times' College Access Index, an annual ranking of 170 colleges with a five-year graduation rate of at least 75%, seeks to "measure which top institutions are doing the most to promote the American dream." It is based on the number of lower-and middle-income students that a college enrolls and graduates and how much those students must pay. The top of the ranking is dominated by campuses in the University of California system (see Leonhardt 2017).

Finally, *Chart C (in Appendix 3)* shows the percentage change of per-student state funding in public higher education since the financial crisis (the Great Recession) for the largest 15 states, from 2008 to 2016. Of those states, California shows the *lowest* negative change in per-student funding of higher education (-3%)—well below the national average of -18%. It is followed by New York and Indiana (-6%). But other large states have *disinvested* massively in public higher education, deeply cutting per-student funding by 20% (Michigan, North Carolina, Georgia, and Washington), by almost 25% (Florida and New Jersey), by 33% (Pennsylvania), and even above 50% (Illinois and Arizona). Our findings in CILS in California point to the crucial role of public colleges and universities in providing a structure of educational opportunities for an economy that will demand more college-educated workers. The logical policy conclusion is to invest more in public higher education, not to disinvest. Indeed, such a role has historically served as a springboard for the upward mobility of children of European immigrants in the last century, most notably of the campuses of the City University of New York. It has also been strongly supported by the evidence reported in *Passing the Torch* (Attewell et al., 2007), which followed the educational achievements

over 30 years of three generations of women who entered CUNY between 1970 and 1972, and how their attainments affected their children's own educational achievements.

In terms of cultural measures of integration, a key outcome that has been the subject of contentious debate (*cf.* Huntington 2004), is whether immigrants' children consider themselves fully American. Our findings support another recent study of children of immigrants who came of age in earlier eras, in that our respondents with the strongest ethnic attachments also overwhelmingly identify as American (Telles and Sue, *in press*). Moreover, a large majority consider themselves fully part of the American mainstream. Yet, some respondents were aware of the important role of context in shaping their perceptions, indicating that they would not be accepted as fully American outside of the diverse multicultural California context in which most (86%) still live.

Even within Southern California, contexts of reception vary by national-origin. While a minority even among the Mexican-origin respondents, more of the Mexican respondents than other groups felt that they could not fully be accepted as part of the American mainstream, a finding that likely reflects an awareness of the "Latino threat narrative," that, while noticeably louder today under the Trump administration than it was during the adolescence and early adulthood years of our respondents, has long pervaded U.S. society (Chavez 2008).

Further, while most adult children of immigrants across national-origin groups, including Mexicans, have largely been insulated from the threats of the current deportation regime, Mexicans (as well as Cambodians) more often had significant others or friends who had been deported. These experiences shaped them in different ways. Some who saw loved ones or friends deported for minor infractions felt vulnerable themselves, even as U.S. citizens, while others who perceived deportation as a suitable punishment for a serious criminal offense, were unaffected. Existing studies suggest

that the rising number of deportations, especially for non-violent offenses, lead to fear and insecurity among a broader swath of children of immigrants coming of age today (Dreby 2015).

Overall, while our California-based study of a sample drawn over a quarter century ago suggests that the story of the new second generation is largely one of successful integration across a number of dimensions, a key question moving forward is whether similar outcomes are likely to be repeated in the future, in different contexts of inclusion and opportunity. We argue that an inclusive multiethnic context with a strong and accessible public higher education system was key to shaping the positive integration of our CILS respondents. However, with a current context characterized by a Great Expulsion of immigrants and a Great Exclusion of refugees and asylees, and a continuing retreat from investments in public education by most states, the future for the next generation of children of immigrants is far from certain.

## END NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> A story by Daniel Duane (2018) titled “City of Exiles” captures vividly an unanticipated outcome of today’s “age of deportation.” The Tijuana-San Diego corridor had long been the principal entry point for undocumented border crossers from Mexico. The border wall that began to be built in the mid-1990s—a multilayered collection of steel-and-concrete fences—made Tijuana “the U.S. government’s preferred dumping ground for people kicked out of the U.S.—4 million human beings in the past 20 years.” Now, as the Trump administration has drastically reduced the number of refugees admitted into the United States, Tijuana has *also* attracted thousands of asylum-seekers (notably those fleeing violence in El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala) because it is one of the few places you can walk up to the U.S. border and plead your case in person. But “Customs and Border Protection is now so overwhelmed and so insufficiently staffed to cope with the volume that Tijuana’s plazas teem with people who have been turned away. Combined with the many thousands of deportees arriving in the city every month, the net effect is *the transformation of Tijuana into one of the world’s great cities of exile*. Without a single major aid organization providing significant relief, this flood tide of outsiders is pushing Tijuana toward a humanitarian crisis.”

<sup>2</sup> The larger CILS study included a South Florida sample (followed through T3) not used here.

<sup>3</sup> See Portes and Rumbaut (2001, 2005) for further information about the original CILS sample.

<sup>4</sup> Logistic regressions comparing the 112 interviewed at T4 and the full T1 baseline sample showed *no sample attrition bias* on *any* characteristic (age, gender, generation, GPA, family SES, etc.) *except* national origin, which was by design. The T3 in-depth interviews intentionally included a larger Chinese sample to facilitate ethnic comparisons.

<sup>5</sup> All names are pseudonyms.

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<b>Table 1. Percent with Bachelor's Degree or Higher, by National Origin</b>				
	CILS-San Diego, T4 sample		Current Population Survey <sup>a</sup>	
	Education attained		Education attained	
National origin (1.5 and 2nd generation)	% with BA or more	n	% with BA or more	n
Overall	<b>52.7</b>	112		
<i>Non-Hispanic White, 3rd+ generation<sup>b</sup></i>	-	-	<b>43.1</b>	231
Mexican <sup>b</sup>	39.4	33	23.5	116
Filipino <sup>c</sup>	51.9	27	47.9	85
Vietnamese <sup>c</sup>	78.6	14	54.9	45
Cambodian-Lao-Hmong <sup>c</sup>	26.7	15	35.2	19
Chinese <sup>c</sup>	84.6	13	81.8	45
Indian <sup>c</sup>	100.0	4	95.3	16
Other 1.5/2nd generation <sup>c</sup>	33.3	6	48.5	530
<sup>a</sup> Percentages are weighted population estimates based on merged CPS survey data for the years 2010-2015, for children of immigrants ages 30-39; n is the sample size.				
<sup>b</sup> CPS estimate is for San Diego County only.				
<sup>c</sup> CPS estimate is for the Southern California 6-county region.				

## Appendix 1. The CILS-San Diego T4 Sample

Characteristic	N	%
<b>Total</b>	112	100.0
<b>Gender:</b>		
Female	61	54.5
Male	51	45.5
<b>Ethnicity:</b>		
Mexican	33	29.5
Filipino	27	24.1
Vietnamese	14	12.5
Cambodian-Lao-Hmong	15	13.4
Chinese	13	11.6
Indian	4	3.6
Other Latin America, Asia	6	5.4
<b>Age at T4 interview:</b>		
36	31	27.7
37	39	34.8
38	33	29.5
39	9	8.0
<b>Generation:</b>		
"1.5" (foreign-born, came to US under age 13)	61	54.5
"2.0" (US-born, both parents foreign-born)	36	32.1
"2.5" (US-born, one parent foreign-born)	15	13.4
<b>Citizenship status:</b>		
US citizen	104	92.9
Not a US citizen	8	7.1
<b>Marital status:</b>		
Married	63	56.3
Cohabiting	10	8.9
Single	24	21.4
Divorced, Separated, Other	15	13.4
<b>Have children?</b>		
Yes	72	64.3
No	40	35.7
<b>How many children do you have?</b>		
0	40	35.7
1	20	17.9
2	29	25.9
3	11	9.8
4 to 5	12	10.7

**Age at birth of first child:**

16-21 years	19	17.0
22-27 years	22	19.6
28-32 years	14	12.5
33-37 years	17	15.2
No children	40	35.7

**Highest degree attained:**

High school/vocational	38	34.2
Associate's degree; 3-4 yrs college (no degree)	13	11.7
Bachelor's (BA, BS)	37	33.3
Master's (MA, MS, MBA)	17	15.3
MD, PsyD	6	5.4

**Labor force status:**

Employed full time	91	81.3
Employed part-time	11	9.8
Unemployed and looking for work	5	4.5
Not in labor force (homemaker; disabled)	5	4.5

**Are you bilingual?**

Yes	79	70.5
No (English only)	33	29.5

**Any relatives in home country?**

Yes	104	96.3
No	4	3.7

**Do you keep in touch with them?**

Yes, directly	58	52.3
Indirectly through parents or others	30	27.0
Not at all	23	20.7

**Anyone you know been deported?**

No	59	52.7
Yes, close friend or family	22	20.0
Yes, distant friend or acquaintance	29	25.9

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## **Appendix 2.**

In San Diego, when the CILS study began soon after the 1990-91 recession, the unemployment rate was 7%, but fell to 3% by the end of 1999, when most CILS respondents were in college; unemployment increased after the 2000-01 recession, but by 2006, on the eve of the Great Recession, it was a low 3.7%. From December 2007 to June 2009, the U.S. economy lost over 8.7 million jobs. In the months after the recession began, the unemployment rate peaked at 10% and American households lost over \$16 trillion in net worth. The San Diego unemployment rate peaked at 11.1% in 2010, but has dropped annually every year since, to below 3% in 2018.

The San Diego region, a technology hub with a high overall cost of living, has been an economic roller-coaster, especially in real estate and housing prices. During the economic recession of the early 1990s, when the CILS study began, a housing bubble burst as median real estate values dropped sharply after a sustained period of rapid inflation. This economic slump created opportunities for many immigrant families to purchase homes in lower-income communities or trade up to suburban residences, with either or both events influencing the type of school their children would attend. As the state rebounded from the recession, the region benefited from an influx of wealth and economic opportunities, especially in the computer and biotechnology industries.

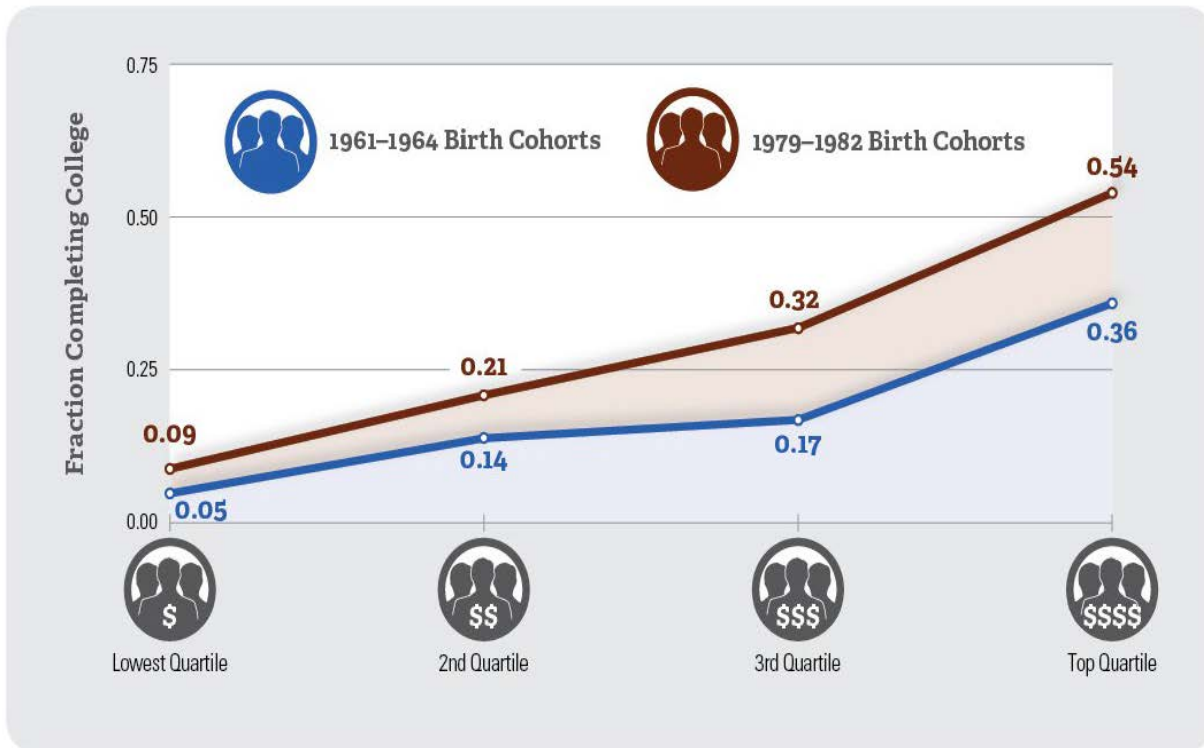
A reverse economic effect occurred with the “dot.com bust” and that recession worsened in the aftermath of September 11, 2001; but this downward economic trend had again reversed by 2003, allowing many families the opportunity to cash in on appreciated home equity. As mortgage interest rates fell, housing prices in the San Diego region soared, and home affordability became the harshest in the state. In the middle of 2003, the California Association

of Realtors reported that only 16 percent of the county's households could afford to buy an average 1,000 square foot home at the reported median price of \$498,000, more than double what it was ten years prior. In the lower income areas, where immigrant families tend to settle, an average home under 1,000 square feet had a median price of \$282,000, and such areas were experiencing rising prices. Rental rates had accelerated as well with little hope for incomes to keep pace. Most mortgage lenders require six-digit incomes of their applicants. The average annual household income in San Diego at that time was \$50,657, and individual annual wages were just under \$22,000 (Borgen and Rumbaut 2011).

The housing market peaked in April 2006. At that time, 65% of the most populated metros in the U.S. were listed as overvalued, including San Diego. During the housing boom, investment in mortgage-backed securities led to high demand for sub-prime mortgage assets across the country, and many markets became overheated. When interest rates rose, monthly payments increased on adjustable rate mortgages, leaving many borrowers unable to pay their mortgages. In 2007, the housing bubble burst. California saw a 42% decline in home prices from 2007 to 2009. Many of our CILS respondents, then turning 30 and some having become homeowners for the first time, were hard hit—indeed, some lost their recently purchased homes and had to move into rentals. The market bottomed out in March 2011; the bellwether markets in California recovered quickly. From 2016 to 2017, homes in the San Diego and Los Angeles metro areas gained \$39,096 and \$39,887, respectively, far exceeding the national average equity gain of \$14,888.

### Appendix 3.

#### A. Fraction of Students Completing College by Income Quartile and Year of Birth: Comparing 1961-1964 vs. 1979-1982 birth cohorts



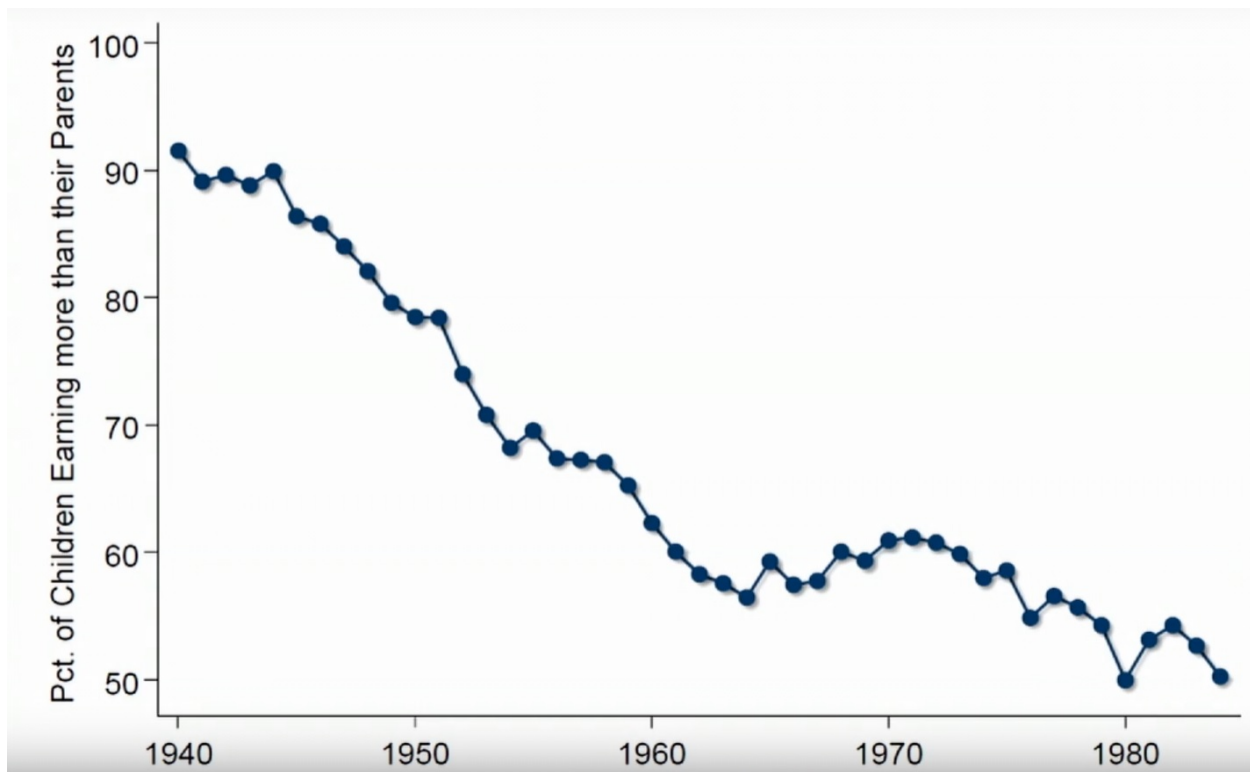
From *A Primer on the College Student Journey* (American Academy of Arts & Sciences, 2016)

Respondents in our CILS sample were born between 1977 and 1979... close to the 1979-1982 birth cohort in this chart. The chart graphs the % of students completing a 4-year college degree by income quartiles nationally as of 2015. Only 9% of students from families in the lowest income quartile completed college, in contrast to 54% of those in the upper income quartile.

NOTE: That **54%** top income-quartile figure is almost identical to the **53%** achieved by the T4 CILS sample during 2014-2015, despite the much more modest socioeconomic origins of the CILS respondents overall.

Source: Commission on the Future of Undergraduate Education, [A Primer on the College Student Journey](#) (American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2016). It provides a comprehensive data-rich portrait of American postsecondary education, including public and private universities.

**B. “The Fading American Dream:” Percent of Children Earning More than Their Parents, by Year of Birth**



From: “The Fading American Dream: Trends in Absolute Income Mobility Since 1940”, by Raj Chetty, David Grusky, Maximilian Hell, Nathaniel Hendren, Robert Manduca, & Jimmy Narang. December 2016 - *NBER Working Paper* No. 22910.

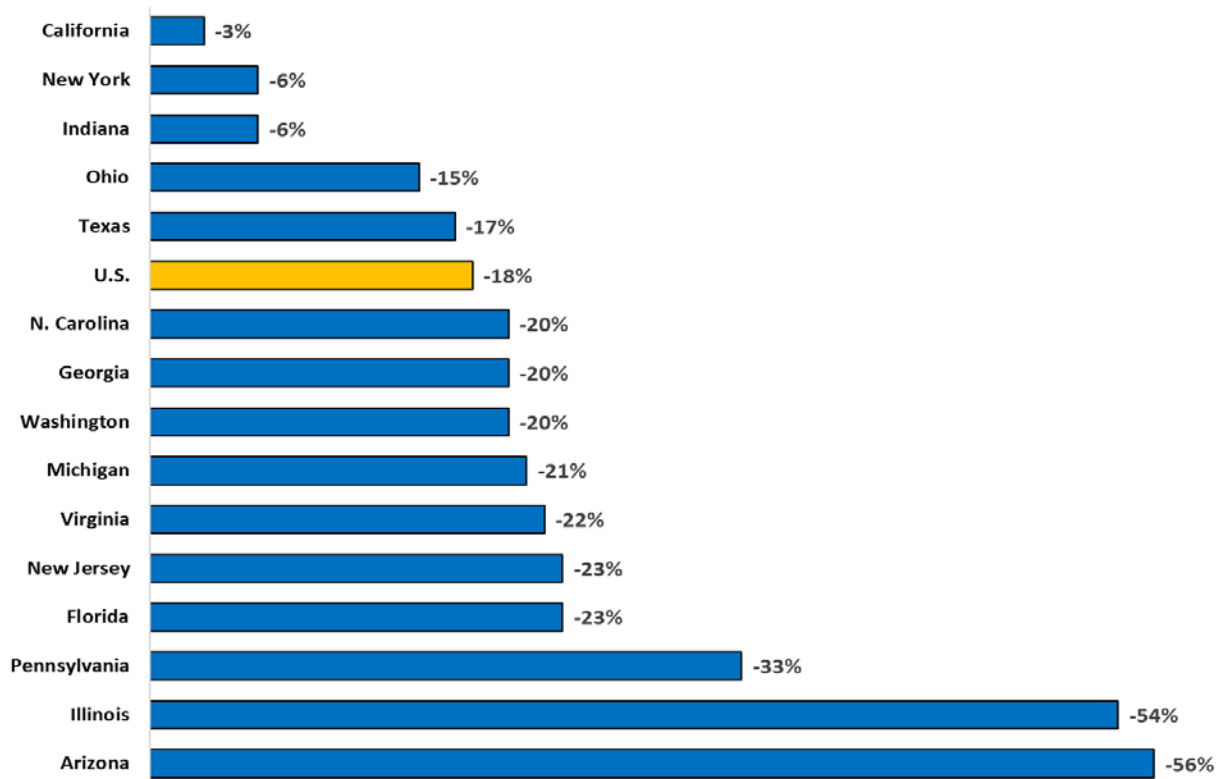
The authors estimate rates of “absolute income mobility”—the fraction of children who earn more than their parents—by combining historical data from Census and CPS cross-sections with panel data for recent birth cohorts from millions of de-identified tax records. They find that rates of absolute mobility have fallen from approximately 90% for children born in 1940 to 50% for children born in the 1980s; for children born in 1980 it’s basically a coin flip whether they will do better than their parents. [NOTE: The CILS respondents were born just before 1980.] The results imply that reviving the “American Dream” of high rates of absolute mobility would require economic growth that is spread more broadly across the income distribution.

Relatedly:

Higher education is widely seen as a pathway to upward mobility... but which colleges shape upward mobility? It depends on ACCESS (to colleges) which varies greatly by parental income; and on SUCCESS outcomes. See: Raj Chetty et al. “Mobility Report Cards: The Role of Colleges in Intergenerational Mobility,” 2017 (*NBER Working Paper* No. 23618).

### C. Disinvestment: Declining Support for Public Higher Education

#### Change in per-student funding of higher education in the largest 15 states, 2008-2016



This chart shows, for the largest 15 states, the percentage change of per-student state funding in public higher education since the financial crisis (the Great Recession), for the period from 2008 to 2016. Of those states, California shows the *lowest* negative change in per-student funding of higher education (-3%)—well below the national average (-18%). It is followed by New York and Indiana (-6%). But other large states have disinvested massively in public higher education, cutting per-student funding by 20% (such as Michigan, North Carolina, Georgia, Washington), or by almost 25% (Florida and New Jersey), by 33% (Pennsylvania), and even above 50% (such as Illinois and Arizona). Our findings in CILS in California point to the crucial role of public colleges and universities in providing a structure of educational opportunities for a new workforce that will demand more and more college-educated workers. The logical policy conclusion is to invest more in public higher education, not to disinvest.

Source: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. “Funding Down, Tuition Up: State Cuts to Higher Education Threaten Quality and Affordability at Public Colleges,” August 15, 2016.