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**Volume V. 1989-90 - California Immigrants in World Perspective:
The Conference Papers, April 1990**

Title

Immigrant Women in Los Angeles

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/52d1c4hh>

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Publication Date

1990-04-26

University of California
Los Angeles

ISSR
Working Papers
in the
Social Sciences

1989-90, Vol. 5, Number 11

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by

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IMMIGRANT WOMEN IN LOS ANGELES

by

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for presentation at a conference of
The Immigration Research Program

"California Immigrants in World Perspective"

April 26 & 27, 1990
UCLA

This research was supported by the UCLA Academic Senate and the Inter-University Program for Latin0 Research of the Ford Foundation. Portions of this paper were previously presented in a conference of the Technical University Berlin co-sponsored with UNESCO, October, 1988, and contained in a report of the Research Group on the Los Angeles Economy titled "The Widening Divide: Income Inequality and Poverty in Los Angeles," June 1989.

IMMIGRANT WOMEN IN LOS ANGELES

In this paper we take a structural approach to understanding the role of female, and particularly Mexican, immigrants in the Los Angeles economy. It is structural in that recent enduring, if not permanent, macro-economic changes generated by increased global competition are affecting the nature of employment. The resulting structural shifts are reinforced by changes in the labor supply created by extensive immigration. Together these factors are contributing to a growing stratification of the laborforce that over the last several decades has taken the form of growing inequality along **several dimensions**: income, generational, spatial, gender, and racial inequality. To illustrate the extent of the problem, we examine the most economically disenfranchised segment of the population, recent Latina immigrants in Los Angeles. It is our argument that this group provides an accurate barometer of growing immiseration pervading society, and insight into the broader reaches of the burgeoning class of working poor in the U.S. Further, we feel that analysis of Los Angeles, the city which has experienced **both the** most significant industrial **growth** and largest influx of immigrants in the United States during the last decade, offers unusually strong evidence of these trends.

The Legacy of Economic Growth

Some of the most striking features of both the national and Los Angeles economies over the **last two** decades have been rapid and extensive changes in the employment structure coincident with a huge increase in the laborforce. Together, these contributed to extraordinary growth. It is no exaggeration to think of the U.S., and within the nation, Los Angeles, as primary generators of growth in the world economy. Throughout the '70s, the U.S. civilian laborforce grew by one fourth (from 82.8 million to 105.0 million people), and was one of the fastest growing industrial economies in the world. Despite extraordinary increases in new jobs, there was a troubling aspect to their nature. Since the late 1970s, there has been a growing polarization of job opportunities **as** reflected in the distribution of industries and occupations (Harrison and Bluestone, 1988).

As in many other cities in the U.S., within Los Angeles the new reality has been felt as a major restructuring of the economy precipitated by growing international competition. During the 1960s, Los Angeles emerged as a major industrial center in the U.S. With 30 percent of the workforce employed in manufacturing, this was a considerably higher percentage than for the country as a whole. However, from 1969 to 1988, the size of the manufacturing base began to shrink relative to services, despite an absolute growth from 880 thousand to 904 thousand manufacturing jobs. Yet compared to other urban centers, Los Angeles retained a strong and vibrant manufacturing base while others experienced a process of

"deindustrialization." Over the same period, Chicago lost 324 thousand manufacturing jobs, and New York 406 thousand. Because of its relative employment strength, Los Angeles has emerged as the largest manufacturing center in the United States, and one of the most prominent in the world.

Emerging from the transition is an economy based largely on services and with far less emphasis on manufacturing employment. What remained of manufacturing was visible in the extremes. As in the rest of the country, employment in traditional durable goods industries, such as steel, auto, and rubber, were lost here. Replacing these are jobs in both very high and very low technology industries. In Los Angeles, this profile consists of aerospace, communications equipment, and electronics on the one hand, and such labor intensive industries such as textiles, apparel, and furniture, which have been on the decline elsewhere in the U.S. Locally, high technology jobs are largely tied to capturing military contracts, while low-technology employment is linked to the ability to remain price competitive through the use of low-wage labor. The new structure of the employment base is characterized by a large number of **low-wage** jobs and a small number of high wage jobs.

Deteriorization of the middle class has contributed to a growing inequality of wages and income visible not only within Los Angeles but nationwide, as well (Harrison and Bluestone, 1988). However, the problem is particularly acute in the region. Despite a higher per capita income in Los Angeles than the nation as a

whole, income has always been more unevenly distributed here than in the U.S. In 1986, the per capita personal income in Los Angeles was \$16,988 compared to \$14,639 **for the** nation. The GINI index -- a widely used measure of income inequality based on income distribution -- indicates that income inequality among families in Los Angeles became more pronounced in the 1970s and remained **at the** same level of inequality in the 1980s (Ong, 1988, p15). Poverty data substantiate the pattern. The poverty rate in Los Angeles went from being two and a half percentage points lower than that for that for the whole nation in 1969, to over two percentage points higher by 1987, with the occurring in both the 1970s and 1980s (The Research Group on the Los Angeles Economy, 1989). The income and poverty data indicate **that economic** restructuring during the '70s was more extensive in Los Angeles than nationwide, and preceded the nation in occurrence. The trend toward inequality is consistent with the dual process of deindustrialization in high-wage manufacturing and reindustrialization in the low-wage sector that occurred in Los Angeles throughout the 1970s.

Table 1

POVERTY RATES

	Los Angeles	U.S.	Difference
Census Data			
1969	10.9	13.7	-2.6
1979	13.4	12.4	+1.0
CPS Data			
1979	12.2	11.7	+0.5
1987	15.6	13.5	+2.1

The bifurcation of jobs has had enormous impact on the recent generation of workers to enter the laborforce. The new entrants most affected by the changing structure of job opportunities have been women, youths, and immigrants. A majority of the growth of the labor force is comprised of women, followed by an unprecedented cohort of babyboomers, and unusually high numbers of immigrants. The clustering of women, youths, and immigrants has expanded the pool of traditionally low-wage workers into the laborforce (Stewart, 1974). In contrast to the other groups which were more homogeneously distributed across the U.S., the pool for immigrants is localized in particular regions of the country, with Los Angeles being the largest recipient of new immigrants.

New Immigrant Labor

The structural changes has coincided with a renewal of large-scale immigration to the United States. Throughout the decade of the '70s, the U.S. experienced a 19.1% rate of growth due to immigration, a figure that approximated rates apparent during the turn of the century (Greenwood and McDowell, 1986). The metropolitan area most affected by the large immigrant **wave** was Los Angeles, where a quarter of its growth came from new immigrants. The '80s also displayed a high rate of growth based on immigrants, with Los Angeles again being the primary center for this population (Bean, Vernez, and Keely, 1989).

From 1970 to 1980, Los Angeles County grew from approximately 7 million to nearly 7.5 million persons, and again in 1986 to

nearly 8.5 million. At the onset of 1970, most of the net addition to the County came primarily from youths, followed by domestic migrants. However, by 1980, the pattern was considerably different. The contribution made by immigrants had grown by 169% and among female immigrants by 161%, to surpass the input made by domestic migrants.

Immigration transformed Los Angeles' ethnic composition in the seventies. The racial composition of immigrants changed from being largely white (32.4%) in 1970 to primarily Mexican (43.4%) and Asian (24.1%) in 1980. Among female immigrants, the picture was nearly identical with 28.9% being white in 1970, only to see a shift toward Mexicans at 24.8% and Asians at 28.7% in 1980. According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census, 65.5% of all Mexican immigrants into Los Angeles between 1975 and 1980 were undocumented (Passel and Woodrow, 1984). Based on the growth of Mexican and Asian immigrants in the region combined with minority young entrants and domestic migrants, the overall racial distribution of the laborforce changed from one which was 74.1% white in 1970, to one that was almost half people of color in 1980, a trend which was mirrored by females.

While Asians played a part in the ethnic recomposition, Latino immigration was unquestionably the driving force, and its importance continued to grow in the '80s. Nationwide, Latinos accounted for one quarter of the nation's population gain from 1980 to 1985. Recent U.S. Census Reports call attention to the fact that Los Angeles has become both a Latino and an immigrant capital

in the U.S. In 1985, over one-half of the Latino population (9.5 million) lived in seven metropolitan areas, with Los Angeles having by far the largest concentration at 3.7 million. The gains made in Los Angeles far out-shadowed those in other parts of the nation:

Los Angeles' estimated 894,000 Hispanic population increase between 1980 and 1985 is greater than the total 1985 Hispanic population in any other metropolitan area except New York... Moreover, the estimated international migration component for Los Angeles of 463,000 for 1980-85 is in itself larger than the total 1985 Hispanic population in all but 6 other metropolitan areas. At the beginning of this decade, metropolitan New York's Hispanic population was 700,000 less than Los Angeles', but by 1985, the difference had doubled to 1.3 million (Word, 1989:66).

One of the most salient characteristics of Latino immigration to Los Angeles is the role of undocumented aliens. The U.S. Census estimates that from 1980 to 1985, about one half of the Latino immigrant population in the U.S. was undocumented (Word, 1989:65). The proportion in Los Angeles was probably even higher since Latino immigration is dominated by Mexicans and Central Americans, who are more likely to be undocumented. The significance of illegal immigration to this region can also be seen among the applicants for the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act, which enabled many long-term undocumented aliens to apply for amnesty. Over half of the applicants resided in California (Bean, Vernez, and Keely, 1989), with Los Angeles having the largest concentration within the state.

The timing of economic restructuring in Los Angeles and the reemergence of massive immigration, particularly from Mexico, is not coincidental. Other factors have stimulated this massive

movement of people, including the economic crisis and poverty in the sending country and the 1965 Immigration Act, which eliminated the discriminatory provisions in earlier laws. But these factors cannot explain why massive legal and illegal immigration did not occur prior to the seventies despite huge wage differentials that in theory should explain the movement of people. These differentials existed both before and during restructuring. The reason for the parallel timing is that restructuring has played a fundamental role in creating demand for immigrant workers, a point that we will examine later.

Recent Mexican Female Immigrants

Unlike prior years, female immigrants were significant contributors to the national laborforce during the 1970s. For immigrants in general, but even more so for immigrant women, entry into the economy displayed a distinct bi-modal occupational mix. Immigrants were significantly more likely than U.S. workers to report skilled professional **or technical** occupations, **yet they were** also twice as likely to be unskilled urban workers, four times as likely to be household workers, and three times as likely to be farm workers (Houstoun, Kramer, and Barrett, 1984). Immigrant women tended to cluster either at the top of the occupational scale, above male immigrants and domestic women, or, more commonly, at the very bottom.

In Los Angeles, Mexicanas (Mexican female immigrants) constitute one of the fastest growing source of low-wage labor.

During the seventies, the census data show that their ranks increased two and a half times from 34.5 thousand to 121.7 thousand. The actual increase was likely to be substantially larger since many may not have reported their employment if they were either undocumented or working in the informal economy. These workers have been incorporated into the local economy in narrowly defined niches: manufacturing and service work. Among **the** recently arrived, over half worked in manufacturing, particularly in nondurable industries, and nearly a fifth worked in service occupations, particularly in personal services (Morales, Ong and Payne, 1988). It is likely that service workers were disproportionately undercounted because many receive unrecorded payments. These limited venues of entry into the economy reflect an ethnic and racial hierarchical segmentation of the labor market.

On the whole, Mexicanas receive near minimum wage incomes, as indicated in Table 2. The average hourly wages for recent Mexicanas was only 67% of that for non-Hispanic white women, and only 40% of that for non-Hispanic white men. The figures for annual earnings were even lower, 53% and 24% respectively. The data also show that while wages and earnings increased with time in the United States, the improvements were minor. In fact, the ceiling is probably very low, as indicated by the average wages and annual earnings of U.S.-born female workers of Mexican ancestry.

One reason for extremely low wages is a lack of employment skills. Their average educational level was approximately eight years of schooling, with three-quarters having no high school

education, and over two-thirds possessing no or limited English-language ability (Ong and Morales, 1988). Furthermore, many were undocumented, which made them vulnerable to unfair labor practices. But perhaps an equally important force in explaining low wages are structural barriers that concentrated Mexicanas in a few employment niches.

Table 2

WAGES AND EARNINGS AMONG MEXICAN FEMALE WORKERS, 1979

	Mexican		
	US-born Chicanas	Established Immigrants	Recent Immigrants
Means			
Hourly pay	\$5.88	\$5.52	\$4.90
Annual earnings	\$7,700	\$6,640	\$5,540
Distributions			
\$4 or less per hr	43.4%	52.0%	74.3%
Over \$11 per hr	5.1%	5.4%	4.2%
Less than \$8k/year	55.4%	64.0%	82.8%
Over \$24k per year	0.8%	0.4%	0.3%
Observations	1,093	442	735

Established immigrants entered prior to 1970. Recent immigrants entered in 1970 or later.

Source: 1980 1% PUMS

One consequence of the structural barriers is that Mexicanas fared worse than other female immigrants. To gain a fuller understanding of the lowly position of Mexicanas during the 1970s, the primary period of restructuring -- the earnings differential between Mexicanas and other female immigrants was examined through a series of regressions in which age and education were held

constant (see Appendix). Among female immigrants who had been in the country five years or less, Europeans had the highest earnings, Mexicanas had the lowest, and the other groups fell between the extreme. Mexicanas were at the bottom of the wage distribution, earning from about a quarter to a half less than female immigrants from Asia, the Middle-East, or Europe. More troubling is the fact that the disparity between Mexicans and European immigrant females grew from 30% in 1969 to 49% in 1979.

A part of the difficulty experienced by Mexicanas is their inability to convert prior education and experience into higher earnings. Additional analyses, also reported in the Appendix, that examined the "rewards to human capital" for individual groups reveal considerable ethnic differences. The results show that human capital factors had no influence on the earnings of Mexicanas, while greater amounts of education and experience had a positive effect on the earnings of Asians and Europeans. This result is tied to the fact that a vast majority of Mexicanas were trapped in menial industries and occupations that rendered more education and experience useless.

A final result worth noting is that the earnings of Mexicanas did not vary over time. This latter point is particularly interesting because of the huge increase in the number of workers during the seventies. This latter result suggests that the supply of immigrants is perfectly elastic, with the earnings level set by conditions in the sending country and the demand for labor determined by restructuring.

Definins the Market for Labor:

How should we interpret the findings? At the outset, it is **important to** reiterate the context. To improve cost structures and response times in highly competitive and persistently volatile markets, manufacturers have redefined production relations. The result has been more unstable working conditions, lower wages, and greater subcontracting, which have gone hand in hand with growth of small firms, decline of unionization, rise of services, especially services to manufacturing, and a geographic shift of manufacturing to what were previously peripheral sites. These conditions result in a demand for a malleable workforce with low job attachment, for which immigrant workers with little education or job experience are particularly well suited.

This does not suggest that low-wage jobs are unique to immigrants or even to Los Angeles. Rather, it is consistent with trends evident elsewhere in the country. It is simply that the effects are differentially felt by other types of workers elsewhere. A 1986 study by Bluestone and Harrison shows that the nation has experienced a rise of low-wage employment and hollowing of middle strata jobs since 1979, which has had an uneven effect on white men, minority men and women, youths, full-time as well as part-time workers, and workers across the country, although the nation's rust-belt was most affected (1986). A more recent study by Harrison of Black workers shows that while for both white and Black workers nearly 60% of net new employment since 1979 paid

poverty level wages (this consisted of approximately \$6/hour in 1988 dollars, or \$12,000/year of full-time work for a family of four). At the other extreme, 17.6% of net new white employment was in jobs that paid three times the poverty level (\$18/hour or \$36,000/year), in contrast to only 5.4% of for Black employment (Harrison, 1988).

Given the proliferation of low-wage jobs nationwide, what explicit role can be attributed to immigrants? Here the findings are mixed. In Los Angeles, while the majority of new immigrants were employed in declining manufacturing sectors and in blue collar occupations, personal services, horticulture and other low-wage service jobs were also overly represented. In a 1986 examination of the Southern California region, Fernandez Kelly and Garcia found Mexican female immigrants employed in unskilled and semi-skilled jobs associated with what is normally thought of as high-tech integrated circuit board manufacturing. When asked about the choice of Southern California, one manager replied quite candidly: "The area offers virtually the same type of labor we found across the border, but here we don't have to deal with the Mexican red-tape and we are closer to our preferred markets" (Fernandez Kelly and Garcia, 1986:25). In general, employers sought an underemployed laborforce at low-cost locations, yet with good access to the Los Angeles market. In looking at high growth services, such as finance, real estate, and the like in the cities of New York and Los Angeles, Sassen found that immigrant workers predominated in low-wage jobs that "require low skill levels,

minimal language proficiency, and often include undesirable night or weekend shifts (Sassen, 1988:157). Overall, among all service sector industries, 16.7% of jobs were low wage, as were only 10.8% of jobs in finance, insurance and real estate. However, 23.9% of business services, and 18.9% of jobs were low wage in remaining services, which were the primary sectors of immigrant employment (Sassen, 1988:158). Thus, new immigrants appear to be crowding the lower end of the low-wage job structure in both services and manufacturing employment.

A further distinction by race shows **that the** most economically disenfranchised group consists of Hispanics -- and primarily Mexican workers in Los Angeles. In time it is expected that Central Americans will become increasingly prominent here. Similarly, a shift toward greater concern over Asians may develop as more residents from the Pacific Basin are represented.

When differentiated by gender, it appears that most net new female employment is in traditional immigrant industries, such as apparel, yarn and fabric, leather products, footwear and pottery, or low-wage occupations in high-tech industries that could alternatively be located in developing country sites, and in personal services, and as maids in hotels, while men are largely in declining manufacturing and low-wage consumer service industries (Morales, Ong and Payne, 1988). This distinction reflects a persistent gender division of labor, with women's employment being even less secure and of lower wages than apparent for men.

Contribution to Restructuring

Mexicanas have contributed in several ways to the restructuring of Los Angeles' economy. The first is in supplying labor needed for reindustrialization of low-wage industries. There is no question that Mexicana labor has been a key factor in the growth of several labor intensive industries, including apparel, textiles, and electronic assembly. These industries not only have been able to survive despite increased international competition, but they have actually expanded in Los Angeles. Of course, Mexicanas are not the only source of low-wage labor in this region. Mexicanos have been instrumental in furniture, auto parts, and metal finishing industries. Mexican immigrants have essentially supported growth of Los Angeles' manufacturing base despite job loss in heavy durable goods industries.

Mexicanas have also supported growth of professional and managerial jobs. These jobs have expanded in L.A.'s drive to become America's financial and corporate headquarter in the rapidly expanding Pacific Rim economy. However, economic growth has been coupled with a high cost of living largely because of escalating costs of housing. In the face of high household expenditures, domestic services performed by low-wage Mexicanas who clean houses and provide child care at "reasonable" prices have become necessary support activities. Low-wage Mexican labor, is a way to maintain growth at the high end of the labor market. Consequently, an element of **the** increased polarization involves direct complementary and interdependent relationships.

Finally, the increased supply of Mexicanas (and Mexicanos) has enabled Los Angeles to experience inner city redevelopment. Although Mexican immigrants can be found throughout the region, they are heavily concentrated in the area surrounding the central business district (CBD). These neighborhoods, where over half of the population is foreign-born and an even higher percentage of adults are foreign-born, are among the poorest in Los Angeles. Mexican immigrants settle in these areas because of the availability of housing and jobs. The development of these communities represent a spatial interlocking of labor and jobs. Unlike many poor urban neighborhoods, poverty in immigrant barrios is not caused by joblessness. Labor force participation (LFP) rates in immigrant barrios are just as high as those in neighborhoods dominated by American-born Latinos and considerably higher than in poor Black neighborhoods (Ong, 1989). Unfortunately, the wages are too low to pull these workers and their family out of poverty. This type of development has created poor and poverty neighborhoods unlike those described **in the** literature on the Black underclass. Despite incredibly low levels of educational attainment, employment ratios are high. Not surprisingly, a large percentage of workers are in blue-collar jobs. The irony, however, is that despite employment, poverty remains high. Here, the underclass consists largely of the working poor.

The availability of low-wage labor has attracted new investments into barrios. An analysis of building activities in the City of Los Angeles shows that the immigrant barrios received

roughly their share of office and commercial development, and more than their share of industrial and warehousing development (Ong, 1989). This remains true even after adjusting for the employment effect created by the CBD. There are also other investments not captured by building activities. For example, growth of the garment industry, located just south of the CBD, has relied on the conversion and subdivision of older buildings into the hundreds of sewing shops that populate the area. Consequently, a substantial proportion of employment in downtown and adjacent areas is comprised of low- and medium-wage jobs, of which a large number are due to an expansion of low-wage employment in manufacturing (The Planning Institute, 1988).

Future Prospects

Given the recent changes in the structure of the economy, it is unlikely that many new Mexican immigrants and their children will **experience the** same opportunities for upward mobility afforded European immigrants that poured into cities in the Northeast around the turn of the century, or even by European and Asian immigrants in Los Angeles today. There is no question that the vast majority of Mexicanas are part of the growing segment called "the working poor." While there is still room for economic improvement through greater assimilation since earning power is generally correlated with the number of years in the United States, there will be limited improvement because the economy now has far fewer avenues of upward mobility, particularly for minorities with limited

education. The restructuring has essentially stopped the growth of jobs in the middle-income sector. Unlike earlier decades, there are few opportunities to earn a decent living by working in durable manufacturing. Without concerted efforts to change the outcome, most Mexicanas will remain trapped in low-wage jobs.

The prospects for their children are equally bleak. The long time segregated residential pattern of Los Angeles coincides with a public educational system that reproduces social inequality. In Los Angeles, a student living in a low-income minority neighborhood, including immigrant barrios, is likely to receive an inferior education, and is likely to either drop out of school before graduating from high school or graduate with a less than tenth grade education (The Research Group on the Los Angeles Economy, 1989). For many American-born Latinos from poor barrios, the odds of making into the mainstream of American life has decreased dramatically. For example, while participation in gangs was merely a phase in the life of many Chicanos, it has now become a protracted life-style, caused in large part by the lack of stable, middle-income jobs. Without a decent education and meaningful employment, the children of Mexicanas are likely to remain on the margins of our society.

The creation of a permanent class of impoverished Latinos is not inevitable or unavoidable. What is needed are programs to overcome the structural and institutional barriers that keep this population at the bottom and that reproduce ethnic inequality over generations. What should be done, however, is a subject of debate.

There is no question that the lack of education contributes to the growth of the working poor, and this deficiency is a particular problem for non-English speaking immigrants with few job skills and little education. According to one report, 8 out of 10 recent Hispanic immigrants did not graduate from high school, while 7 out 10 had little or no English ability (Ong, 1988). Given this set of disadvantages, Ong found that with each recession in the economy, there were fundamental shifts in income distribution which pushed a disproportionately greater number of Hispanics into poverty (Ong, 1988). As a result, by the mid-1980's, Hispanics comprised nearly 60% of those living below the poverty line.

The educational deficiency is repeated nationwide. From 1980 to 1988, the Hispanic population increased by 34%, raising their number from 6.4 to 8.1% of the population (representing 19.4 million persons). Current projections suggest that Hispanics will comprise 10.7% of the total U.S. population by year 2000 (Koretz, 1989). However, this laborforce displays serious educational deficiencies that are passed on through the generations. Nearly 40% of all Hispanic youths drop out of high school, in **contrast to** 17% of all Black students and 14% of whites (Koretz, 1989). Thus, a serious call is being made by policy analysts to improve the human capital skills of individuals caught in society's lower end.

Nonetheless, improving the attributes of some individuals to make them more competitive in certain labor markets does nothing to change the structural trends underlying the proliferation of low-wage jobs. This more disturbing trajectory, coupled with the

emerging dispersed industrial landscape, puts a different pressure on society. Although some have argued that the U.S. needs new immigrants to fill the expanding number of jobs at the low end, that only solidifies the trend toward polarization. The issue is whether efforts can be made to recreate the job ladders or forms of income redistribution to compensate for the occupational and industrial polarity that is beginning to occur. This much larger question cannot be made the burden of in-coming immigrants and other new entrants into today's economy, and requires a more concerted examination into economic development policies.

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Appendix: Regression Analysis of Earnings of Female Immigrants

We use the following two regressions to analyze the relative position of female immigrants across ethnic groups but within a given year:

$$(1) \text{LnWg70} = a + \text{HG} + \text{EXP} + \text{EXP2} + \text{TOPW} + \text{DmOTHER WHITE} \\ + \text{DmMexican} + \text{DmAsian} + e$$

$$(2) \text{LnWg80} = a + \text{HG} + \text{EXP} + \text{EXP2} + \text{TOPW} + \text{DmOTHER WHITE} \\ + \text{DmMexican} + \text{DmAsian} + e$$

The first equation models the 1969 annual earnings of female immigrants entering the Los Angeles labor market between 1965-69, while the second examined the 1979 annual earnings of those entering between 1975-79.

The independent variables include the number of completed years of education (HG), and years of labor force experience (EXP). A second squared experience variable was included (EXP2) to approximate the quadratic effect of experience on wages. The fourth independent variable (TOPW) was used to overcome the inconsistency between coding of the wage variable in the 1970 and 1980 Census. The upper limit cutoff for annual earnings of the two Censuses differ (\$50,000 in 1970 and \$75,000 in 1980). When earnings from the 1970 Census are adjusted to 1979 dollars, the upper cutoff exceeds \$75,000. In lieu of more accurate estimates of upper limit earnings, the dummy variable for top wages (earnings of \$75,000 or more in each cohort group) was included to reduce the distortion caused by the cutoff.

The relative earnings position of races was established by using dummy variables with European immigrants being the category excluded from the group. Relative to the earnings of European immigrants, three races were examined: Mexicans, Asians, and Other Whites. The European group includes Canadians, Australians, and New Zealanders, as well as Western Europeans. The Other White category consists of immigrants from Eastern Europe and the Middle East, but not Latin America. Immigrants have changed significantly across cohorts. During 1965-69, more than 70 percent of the "white" immigrants were European, while in the second period, a larger percent came from Eastern Europe and the Middle East. Since the dependent variable is expressed in natural log terms, the coefficient for the dummy variables can be read as the percent difference from Anglo (European) earnings.

We use the following regression to analyze the relative position of immigrants across time but within individual ethnic groups:

$$(3) \text{LnWg} = a + \text{HG} + \text{EXP} + \text{EXP2} + \text{TOPW} + \text{Dm1979} + e.$$

The model uses a pooled sample of workers from both years (1969 and 1979). All incomes are covered to constant dollars, and a common upper limit is used regardless of year. The first four independent variables are described above. This model includes a dummy variable for 1979 observations, which should capture any differences across time, after controlling for educational level and potential years of labor market experience.

All regressions used persons who worked full-time and year-round to eliminate the influence of variations in the amount of employment. Data for this analysis come from the 1970 and 1980 Public Use Microdata Samples.

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Earning Regressions for Full-time Female Immigrant Workers,

Equations (1) and (2)

All Female Immigrants	1965-69 Cohort	1975-79 Cohort
CONSTANT	4.1520**	4.3526
HG	0.0416**	0.0228**
EXP	0.0038	0.0122**
EXP2	-0.0001	-0.0003**
TOPW	n/a	n/a
DmOTHERWT	-0.1632	-0.1838**
DmMEXICAN	-0.2991**	-0.4921**
DmASIAN	-0.0282	-0.2239*
Adj. R-Sq.	-0.3279	-0.2231

Equation (3)

Combined 1969+1979	European Females	Mexican Females	Asian Females
CONSTANT	4.1949**	4.1134**	4.0399**
HG	0.0304**	0.0021	0.0413**
EXP	0.0323**	0.0052	0.0178*
EXP2	-0.0010*	-0.0001	-0.0004**
Dm1979	-0.0112	0.0697	-0.2278*
Adj. R-Sq	0.1056	-0.0024	0.0922

** p<.01 * PC.05