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ABSTRACT

The report summarizes current knowledge about immigrant students in California public schools. First, the most recent available evidence concerning the size, ethnic composition, and other characteristics of fluent-English-proficient and limited-English-proficient language minority students enrolled statewide is reviewed. Data from the Los Angeles Unified School District, the nation's second largest, and from a recent statewide survey of immigrant students are presented, and comparative indicators of the educational performance of immigrant students in San Diego high schools (including dropout rates, grade point averages, achievement test scores, and educational aspirations) are examined. Finally, findings of four recent case studies of the adjustment of selected immigrant and refugee groups are discussed. The evidence suggests that most of these youths are making rapid and positive adjustment, often outperforming even native-born majority-group high school students in such areas as grades and graduation rates. The case studies focus on four immigrant groups: Southeast Asians, Central Americans, Punjabis, and Mexicans. Graphs and tables present statistical data. Contains 23 references. (MSE)

CDS

THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

Immigrant Students in California Public Schools: A Summary of Current Knowledge

Rubén G. Rumbaut

Report No. 11

August 1990

CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON EFFECTIVE SCHOOLING FOR DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS

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Immigrant Students in California Public Schools

A Summary of Current Knowledge

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The Center

The mission of the Center for Research on Effective Schooling for Disadvantaged Students (CDS) is to significantly improve the education of disadvantaged students at each level of schooling through new knowledge and practices produced by thorough scientific study and evaluation. The Center conducts its research in four program areas: The Early and Elementary Education Program, The Middle Grades and High Schools Program, the Language Minority Program, and the School, Family, and Community Connections Program.

The Early and Elementary Education Program

This program is working to develop, evaluate, and disseminate instructional programs capable of bringing disadvantaged students to high levels of achievement, particularly in the fundamental areas of reading, writing, and mathematics. The goal is to expand the range of effective alternatives which schools may use under Chapter 1 and other compensatory education funding and to study issues of direct relevance to federal, state, and local policy on education of disadvantaged students.

The Middle Grades and High Schools Program

This program is conducting research syntheses, survey analyses, and field studies in middle and high schools. The three types of projects move from basic research to useful practice. Syntheses compile and analyze existing knowledge about effective education of disadvantaged students. Survey analyses identify and describe current programs, practices, and trends in middle and high schools, and allow studies of their effects. Field studies are conducted in collaboration with school staffs to develop and evaluate effective programs and practices.

The Language Minority Program

This program represents a collaborative effort. The University of California at Santa Barbara is focusing on the education of Mexican-American students in California and Texas; studies of dropout among children of recent immigrants are being conducted in San Diego and Miami by Johns Hopkins, and evaluations of learning strategies in schools serving Navajo, Cherokee, and Lumbee Indians are being conducted by the University of Northern Arizona. The goal of the program is to identify, develop, and evaluate effective programs for disadvantaged Hispanic, American Indian, Southeast Asian, and other language minority children.

The School, Family, and Community Connections Program

This program is focusing on the key connections between schools and families and between schools and communities to build better educational programs for disadvantaged children and youth. Initial work is seeking to provide a research base concerning the most effective ways for schools to interact with and assist parents of disadvantaged students and interact with the community to produce effective community involvement.

Abstract

Since the passage of the 1965 Immigration Act, the immigrant population of the United States has grown rapidly and has diversified with newly-arrived contingents from all over the world. Mexicans, Filipinos, and other Asian nationals are among the largest of the groups who have been admitted under regular immigration quotas. Their diversity has been heightened by the addition of political refugees, primarily from Southeast Asia. Unlike older waves of immigrants (some 90% of whom came from Europe) who concentrated primarily in northeastern and midwestern states, the new immigrants (some 90% of whom have come from Asia and Latin America) have settled principally in California. As a consequence of their sharply increased immigration, combined with the lower fertility of native-born women, foreign-born groups are growing much more rapidly than native-born groups -- a phenomenon that is redefining the state's ethnic mosiac. Although little is known at present about the U.S.-born or U.S.-reared *second generation,* immigrant children are bound to represent a sizable component of the next generation of Americans.

The objective of this report is to summarize current knowledge about immigrant students in California public schools. First, we review the most recent available evidence concerning the size, ethnic composition and other characteristics of both FEP (Fluent English Proficient) and LEP (Limited English Proficient) language-minority students enrolled statewide in K-12 public schools. Data from the Los Angeles Unified School District (the nation's second largest) will also be reviewed, as well as data from a recent statewide survey of immigrant students. Next we examine comparative indicators of the educational performance of immigrant students in San Diego high schools (including dropout rates, GPAs, achievement test scores, and educational aspirations). Finally we highlight the findings of several recent case studies of the adaptation of selected immigrant and refugee groups in California high schools -- focusing on Mexicans, Southeast Asians (Vietnamese, Lao, Hmong, Cambodian), Punjabi Sikhs from India, and Central Americans (Salvadorans, Guatemalans and Nicaraguans) -- and discuss the implications of these studies.

Introduction

Recent Immigration to the United States and to California

Since the passage of the 1965 Immigration Act, the immigrant population of the United States has grown rapidly and has diversified with newly-arrived contingents from all over the world, especially from Asi and Latin America (Portes and Rumbaut, 1990). Each year during the 1980s an average of 600,000 immigrants and refugees were legally admitted into the country, and a sizable if indeterminable number entered without documents (U.S. Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service [INS], 1989). In 1989, over three million formerly undocumented immigrants qualified for legalization of their status under the amnesty provisions of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA).

Mexicans, Filipinos, and other Asian nationals are among the largest of the groups who have been admitted under regular immigration quotas. Their diversity has been heightened by the addition of political refugees coming under various legal provisions. Cubans, Vietnamese, and other Southeast Asian and Middle Eastern groups are among the principal refugee nationalities who have settled in the United States during the last two decades.

Unlike the pre-WWI waves of immigrants (some 90% of whom came from Europe) who concentrated primarily in northeastern and midwestern states, the new immigrants (some 90% of whom have come from Asia and Latin America) have settled principally in California. A notable exception to this pattern of settlement involves Caribbean immigrants: Cubans and Haitians are concentrated in Florida, and Dominicans and other West Indians in New York. Still, in 1980 in California 3.6 million persons of the state's population of 23.7 million were foreign-born, and many more were U.S.-born children of these immigrants.

The recency of their immigration varies significantly by national origin: 92% of the Vietnamese in California at the time the 1980 census was taken were foreign-born (reflecting the fact that almost all of them immigrated after the fall of Saigon in 1975), as were 83% of the Koreans, 74% of Asian Indians, 68% of the Filipinos, and 62% of the Chinese. By contrast, only 36% of the Mexican-origin population and 29% of those of Japanese descent were foreign-born, reflecting the comparatively earlier immigrant origins of these two ethnic groups (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1983).

More significantly, while California's population constituted only 10% of the national total, the 1980 census showed that 42% of all Mexican-origin persons in the United States resided in California, as did 46% of the Filipinos, 40% of the Chinese, 37% of the Japanese, 34% of the Vietnamese, 29% of the Koreans, and 16% of Asian Indians (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1983). Since then, these proportions have grown even more as a result of continuing immigration: 49% of all Mexican immigrants legally admitted into the U.S. between 1980 and 1988 gave California as their intended state of residence, as did 50% of the Filipinos and Salvadorans, 42% of the Vietnamese and Guatemalans, 33% of the Cambodians and Laotians, 28% of the Koreans, and 17% of Asian Indians (INS, 1989).

The distribution of undocumented immigrants is even more concentrated, with over half estimated to be in California (Kellogg, 1988). In addition, because of secondary migration into California from other states during the past decade, over 40% of the national Indochinese population (Cambodians, Hmong, Lao, Mien, Vietnamese and ethnic Chinese) is now concentrated in California. As a consequence of their sharply increased immigration, combined with the higher fertility of foreign-born women, all of these populations of newcomers are growing much more rapidly than native-born groups -- a phenomenom that is redefining the state's ethnic mosaic (Bouvier and Gardner, 1986; Rumbaut and Weeks, 1986).

Implications and Objectives of this Report

The surge of immigration has been accompanied by a rapid growth of the scholarly literature on the topic and by research on various aspects of the immigrant experience. This effort has been concentrated, almost exclusively, on the *first generation* -- immigrants of working age who came to the U.S. in search of economic gain or political refuge. These studies have added significantly to our knowledge of the origins and modes of reception of foreign minorities and have modified, in the process, existing theories about the character of adaptation to new environments (for a review see Portes and Rumbaut, 1990).

Yet little is known at present about the U.S.-born or U.S.-reared *second generation*. With the rapid growth of immigration and the decline of domestic fertility below replacement levels, immigrant children are bound to represent a sizable component of the next generation of Americans. They are already a highly visible presence in the schools and in the streets of many U.S. communities.

Some preliminary reports have recently sought to document the impact of these new waves of immigrant children on American school systems, both nationwide (First and Carrera, 1988) and especially in California, where they are highly concentrated in a handful of metropolitan areas (Olsen, 1988). These generally reflect the concerns of policy-oriented advocates of immigrant students. However, few in-depth studies have been conducted so far on their adaptation process and prospects for the future. Those that are available have been done primarily by educational anthropologists.The objective of this report is to summarize current knowledge about immigrant students in California public schools. First, we will review the most recent available evidence concerning the size, ethnic composition and other characteristics of both FEP (Fluent English Proficient) and LEP (Limited English Proficient) language-minority students enrolled statewide in K-12 public schools. Data from the Los Angeles Unified School District (the nation's second largest) will also be reviewed, as well as data from a recent statewide survey of immigrant students conducted by California Tomorrow.

Next we will examine comparative indicators of the educational performance of immigrant students in San Diego high schools (including dropout rates, GPAs, achievement test scores, and educational aspirations). Finally we will highlight the findings of several recent case studies of the adaptation of selected immigrant and refugee groups in California high schools, focusing on Mexicans, Southeast Asians (Vietnamese, Lao, Hmong, Cambodian), Punjabi Sikhs from India, and Central Americans (Salvadorans, Guatemalans and Nicaraguans).

Immigrant Students in California Public Schools

We begin with some caveats about the limitations of available information on immigrant students. Because California school districts do not collect data on the national origin or immigration status of their students, precise figures on the size of the state's immigrant student population do not exist.

The schools do collect data on enrollments by broad ethnic categories (such as "Hispanic" and "Asian"), but these classifications lump together students of diverse national origins without regard to nativity. Thus, in 1986 the California State Department of Education reported that 29% of the K-12 student enrollment was "Hispanic" and 7% "Asian," but these included U.S.-born students whose parents may also have been U.S.-born, especially (as suggested by the 1980 census data noted above) among those of Mexican and Japanese descent. California's Emergency Immigrant Education Program -- which provides funds to school districts that meet certain restrictive eligibility criteria -- is the only data source that specifically addresses immigrant children in the state's public schools. Nearly 200,000 immigrant students (almost 5% of the state's public school enrollments) were served by this program in 1985. However, because this program is voluntary and is limited to eligible students who have been in the U.S. less than three years, these data greatly underestimate the foreign-born school-age population. Also, the number of immigrant children who do *not* enroll in school remains undocumented -- but it is believed to be fairly sizable among low-SES children who immigrate to the U.S. during their teenage years (Olsen, 1988).

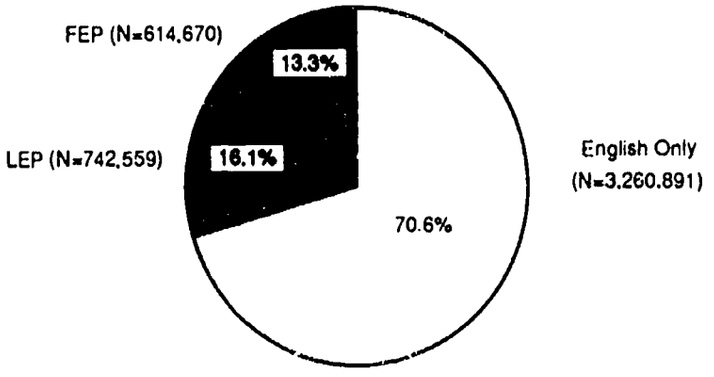
The best (if necessarily inexact) statewide estimate of the immigrant student population can be derived from data collected through the annual Home Language Census, reported by all schools to the California State Department of Education. Partly as a consequence of Title VI of the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the U.S. Supreme Court's 1974 decision in *Lau v Nichols* -- which govern guidelines to ensure equal educational opportunity for language-minority students -- the California public schools are required to assess the English language proficiency of students who speak a language other than English at home to determine their ability to learn successfully in classrooms where English is the only language of instruction.

In general, based on various criteria, those students are classified either as "Limited English Proficient" (LEP) or as "Fluent English Proficient" (FEP). The FEP classification does not necessarily indicate actual "fluency" in English, but marks an arbitrary threshhold of English language proficiency which school authorities can then use to "mainstream" those students from bilingual or ESL classrooms to regular classes. Indeed, bilingual education in California consists largely of "transitional" programs whose goal is to place LEP students in the English-taught

curriculum as quickly as possible. The State Department of Education reclassifies an average of 50,000 students from LEP to FEP each year, with most of the reclassifications taking place within three years after a student enters the school system. Although immigrant children gain proficiency in English at different rates -- depending on such factors as age at arrival, parental social class of origin, economic and community contexts, and other situational and psychocultural characteristics (see Portes and Rumbaut, 1990: chapter 6; Hakuta and García, 1989) -- very few remain designated as LEP beyond five years (Olsen, 1988).

Figure 1

Primary Language Status of Students in California Public Schools Spring 1989 (N=4,618,120)



Source: California State Department of Education

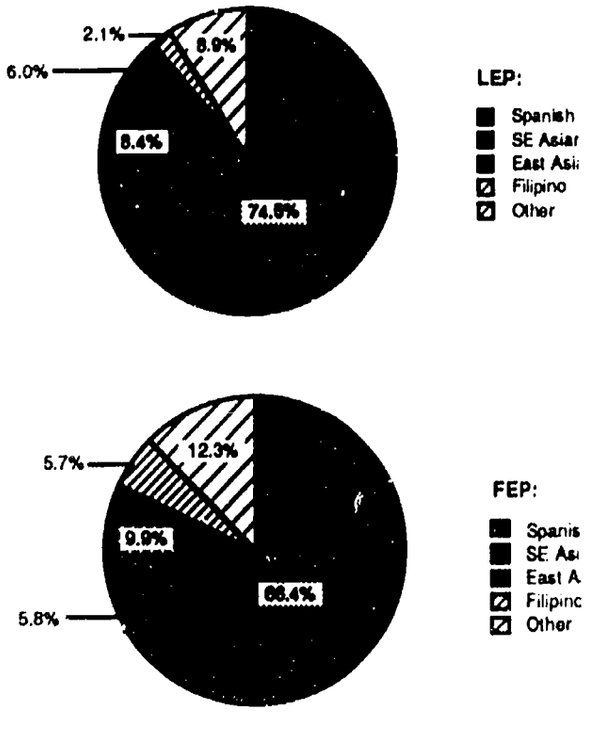
As Figure 1 shows, in 1989 the Home Language Census found that 1,357,229 (29.4%) of California's K-12 public school children spoke a primary language other than English at home. Of those, 742,559 (16.1%) were designated as LEP and 614,670 (13.3%) as FEP. Given the well-established immigrant pattern of a shift from the mother tongue to English monolingualism within three generations in the United States (Portes and Rumbaut, 1990), *nearly all students who speak a primary language other than English (whether classified as LEP or FEP) may be assumed to be either immigrants or native-born children of immigrants.*

Moreover, many students who report speaking English as their primary home language may themselves be children of immigrants whose home environment has been effectively anglicized over time. Among these, children of well educated immigrants from the Philippines (a former U.S. colony) and India (a former British colony) are most likely to be overrepresented since English remains an official language of instruction in those countries.

In any case, LEP students represent the closest approximation to the number of the *most recently arrived* immigrant children enrolled in California schools. Although these students speak about 100 different languages -- reflecting the extraordinary diversity of contemporary immigration to the U.S. from all over the world -- Spanish is by far the single largest language group, reflecting the predominance of Mexican-origin groups, whose numbers are augmented by Central American and other Spanish-speaking immigrants in California today. As Figure 2 shows, in 1989 nearly three-fourths of the LEP population (and two-thirds of the FEP) consisted of Spanish speakers. Another 8.4% of the LEPs were Southeast Asians (4.4% Vietnamese, 2.4% Cambodians, 1.6% Hmong and Lao), followed by 6% East Asians (3.7% Chinese, 1.6% Koreans, 0.7% Japanese), and 2.1% Filipinos (speakers of Tagalog and several other Filipino dialects).

Figure 2

LEP and FEP Students in California Public Schools, by Major Language Groups, Spring 1989



Source: California State Department of Education

Within the Chinese group are found mainly Cantonese and Mandarin speakers from Taiwan, Hong Kong and mainland China, but also ethnic Chinese from throughout Southeast Asia who speak several other distinct Chinese dialects. The remaining LEP students represented a wide variety of other language groups, including Farsi speakers from Iran; Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Gujarati and other Indian dialects; Arabic and Hebrew, Thai, Afghan, Armenian, Russian, and a polyglot range of European, African and other immigrant languages. In general these proportions reflect fairly well the relative size of recently arrived immigrant groups in the state.

Figure 3

LEP Students in California Public Schools, 1973-1989

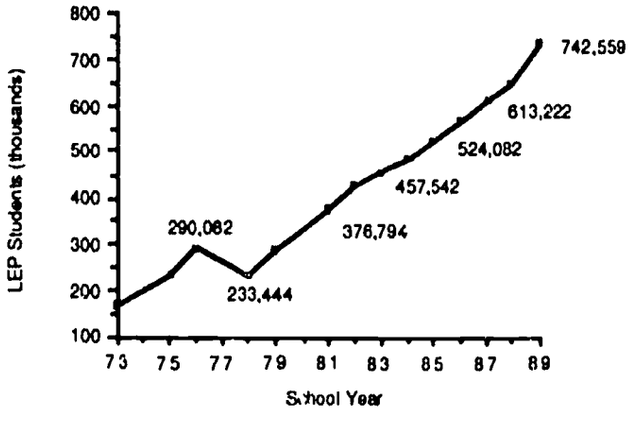


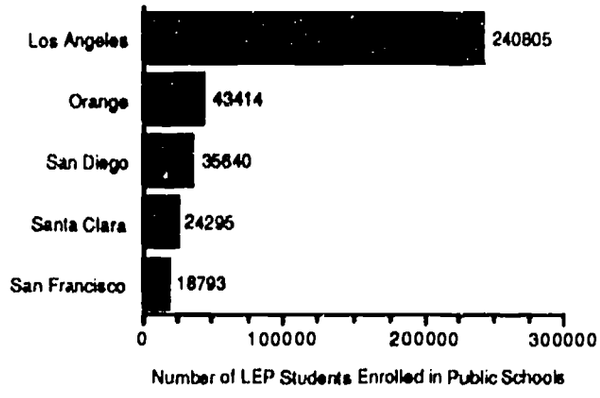
Figure 3 presents trend data on the enrollments of LEP students in California public schools over the 16-year period from 1973 to 1989. In 1973 there were a total of 168,159 students classified as LEP in the state. That number climbed sharply to 290,082 by 1976, reflecting the sudden influx of the first-wave Vietnamese who were evacuated to California in the aftermath of the war. As those students were reclassified as FEP and as the resettlement of Indochinese refugees slowed to a trickle over the next two years, the LEP population fell to 233,444 in 1978.

Each year since then, however, their numbers have increased dramatically, more than tripling in the span of a decade. The sharpest increases, especially from 1979 to 1983, coincided with the flood of second-wave "boat people" from Vietnam and the survivors of Cambodia's "killing fields," the concomitant decision of the U.S. government to admit large numbers of Laotian highlanders such as the Hmong for resettlement, the beginning of the mass exodus of Salvadorans and Guatemalans fleeing civil war conditions in their countries, the increase in the number of Iranians who came after the 1978 revolution and the fall of the Shah, and the continuing movement of undocumented immigrants from Mexico to California -- all alongside the increasing numbers of regular immigrants (especially from Mexico and the Philippines, Korea and China) who have been admitted into California under the occupational preferences and family reunification provisions of U.S. immigration law. Clearly, the number of immigrant students in California schools has increased rapidly in both absolute and relative terms during the 1980s.

The impact of the influx of these limited-English immigrant students has not been evenly felt throughout the state, however.

Figure 4

California Counties with Greatest Number of LEP Students, 1985



As Figure 4 shows, LEP students in 1985 were most numerous in the school districts of Southern California -- in Los Angeles, Orange and San Diego Counties -- followed by the northern metropolitan areas of Santa Clara (which includes the "Silicon Valley" city of San Jose) and San Francisco Counties. In recent years school districts in California's Central Valley -- especially in Fresno and San Joaquin Counties (the latter including the city of Stockton, site of the 1989 massacre of Indochinese children at an elementary school) -- have been experiencing a sharp increase in language-minority students.

Within counties, specific school districts in turn vary in the degree to which they have been impacted by the enrollments of LEP newcomers. The greatest impact is on smaller elementary school districts in areas with large immigrant populations: for example, in 1989 LEP students constituted 83% of the enrollment in the San Ysidro schools (in San Diego County) and 79% in Calexico (in Imperial County), both school districts adjacent to the Mexican border. Among the largest school districts, 56% of total K-12 enrollments in 1989 in the Santa Ana Unified School District (in

Orange County) were LEP, compared to 43% of the students in Glendale schools, 31% in Los Angeles, 28% in San Francisco and Stockton, 25% at Long Beach, 22% at Oakland and Fresno, and 17% in San Diego and San Jose (California State Department of Education, 1989). The number of language-minority FEP students nearly doubled those proportions, such that in districts like Santa Ana's over 90% of the students were of immigrant origin.

These shifts have generally been accompanied by "white flight" from the most impacted public schools, producing an extraordinary mix of new immigrants and native-born ethnic minorities; for example, in the Los Angeles Unified School District the proportion of native white students declined sharply from 65% in 1980 to only 15% in 1990.

LEP Students and Bilingual Education in the Los Angeles Unified School District

Data from local school districts provide a more detailed picture of the impact of immigrant students in California communities than do statewide data. Nowhere are the dimensions of the new immigration more visible than in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), which has the nation's largest number of LEP students and the most diverse array of languages. In 1987, of the approximately 640,000 K-12 students enrolled in the district, 48% were native English speakers, 25% were non-native students deemed fluent in English, and 27% were LEP students (mostly concentrated in the elementary grades). In all, the LAUSD counted 159,260 LEP students -- a quarter of total enrollments and almost 40,000 more than the LEP total just four years before (Woo, 1988).

As shown in the chart on the following page, these LEP students spoke no fewer than 81 different languages. Ten years before, almost all LEP students in the district spoke Spanish as their primary language, and relatively few other languages were represented among the smattering of other LEP groups; today, the overwhelming diversity of the LEP population is presenting unprecedented challenges to the public school system.

The most immediate problem faced by the schools is that teachers who know second languages are rare: in fact, in 1987 only 7 of the 81 languages spoken by the LEP students were served by certified bilingual teachers, and district-wide the LAUSD had only one bilingual teacher for every 100 LEP students. Of the 1,478 bilingual elementary teachers in the LAUSD in 1987 (120 fewer than the district had three years prior), 1,409 (95%) spoke only Spanish as their second language.

The remaining bilingual teachers consisted of 33 Cantonese speakers, 28 Korean, 4 Japanese, 2 Armenian, and one Filipino and Vietnamese each. There were about 6,000 LEP students speaking 74 other languages for whom not a single bilingual teacher was available. Moreover, as noted earlier, such students become proficient in English at different rates: in the LAUSD, higher-SES native speakers of Farsi and Japanese have been the quickest to be transferred to the all-English curriculum, while lower-SES native speakers of Spanish and Khmer (Cambodian) have transferred at the lowest rates. Under these circumstances the nature and availability of "bilingual education" programs for limited-English students becomes widely uneven and inequitable.

Like many other districts in California, the LAUSD offers three basic types of programs for LEP students: standard bilingual classrooms, an "individual learning plan," and ESL (English as a Second Language). In the bilingual classrooms, LEP students (mostly in the elementary grades) learn reading and writing in their primary language and math, science and social studies in simplified (or "sheltered") English, while gradually learning to speak, read and write in English.

Under the individualized program (especially when fewer than 10 students at one grade level need bilingual help), the teacher speaks in English while the students are helped by a bilingual aide (who is not a certified teacher), if available. This is the only way to serve young immigrants who speak the less common languages, and a quarter of all LEP students are placed in this type of program.

In the secondary school grades, LEP students are placed in an ESL program in which instruction during the entire day is conducted primarily in English, although the teachers are trained to speak more slowly and use more body language and other illustrations to carry out a lesson. Other approaches to instruction -- such as the "Eastman Program" that segregates Spanish-speaking from English-speaking students for much of the school day (thus using bilingual instructors more efficiently), and "immersion" programs in which youngsters are taught entirely in Spanish through the third grade and 50% in English in grades four to six (which have been used by the San Diego Unified School District) -- are being considered for expansion or implementation by the LAUSD.

Primary Languages (of LEP Students)

These are primary languages among students with limited English proficiency in the Los Angeles Unified School District.

Language	Elem.	Sec.	Special Educ.	Total
Afghan	8	30	1	39
Afrikaans	2			2
American Indian				
Cherokee	1			1
Hopi	1			1
Navajo	2			2
Amharic	14	20		34
Arabic	193	116	13	322
Armenian	438	362	41	841
Assyrian	28	20	2	50
Basque		3		3
Benfali	14	4		18
Bulgarian	6	5		11
Burmese	12	10		22
Ceylonese	4	2		6
Chinese				
Cantonese	1,607	722	36	2,415
Mandarin	134	136	4	274
Taiwanese	57	59	5	121
Toishanese	46	20		66
Other Chinese	310	186	15	511
Creole	3	21	1	25
Croatian	6	3	2	11
Czech	10	7		17
Danish	1	2		3
Dutch		2		2
Farsi	519	453	27	999
Finnish	3		1	4
French	50	28	5	83
German	19	13	2	34
Greek	18	5		23
Guamanian	2			2
Gujarati	3	32	2	37
Haitian Creole		2		2
Hawaiian	3			3
Hebrew	229	173	5	407
Hindi	59	28	7	94
Hmong	6			6
Hungarian	41	13	2	57
Ibo		2		2
Icelandic	1	1		2
Indoesian	34	22	1	57

Language	Elem.	Sec.	Special Educ.	Total
Italian	32	16	11	59
Japanese	63	92	11	166
Javanese	2			2
Khmer	624	331	12	967
Korean	1,745	1,206	38	2,989
Kurdish	2			2
Lao	61	51	4	116
Latvian	1			1
Lithuanian	1		1	2
Malay	14	2	1	17
Melanesian	6	2		8
Nepali	1			1
Norwegian	6			6
Punjabi	39	26	1	66
Pashto	10	10		20
Philippine				
Ilocano	31	12	2	45
Pilipino	868	491	48	1,407
Visayan	9	5		14
Polish	47	17		64
Portuguese	33	29		62
Romanian	61	31	4	96
Romany	2	1		3
Russian	70	36	3	109
Samoan	102	19	2	123
Serbian	3	1		4
Serbo-Croatian	8	3	2	13
Sinhalese	4	4		8
Slovak	3	1		4
Spanish	108,355	31,035	4,156	143,546
Swahili		2		2
Swedish	9	2		11
Thai	192	153	4	349
Tibetan	1			1
Tongan	18	9	1	28
Turkish	16	3	1	20
Urdu	56	22	2	80
Vietnamese	1,008	827	42	1,877
Yoruba	4	3		7
Yiddish	1			1
Other	60	22	2	84

	Elementary	Secondary	Special Education	Total
Total	117,704	37,035	4,521	159,260

Based on Elementary, Secondary and Special Education Bilingual Program Surveys (Forms 20, 21 and 23), February, 1987.
Source: *Los Angeles Times*, February 10, 1988.

However, many teachers refuse to learn a second language and public sentiment against bilingual education runs high, as passage of California's Proposition 63 (English-only) in 1986 indicated. In 1988 Governor Deukmejian vetoed an extension of the state's bilingual education requirements (considered to be among the nation's strictest), leaving the vague federal mandate that limited-English students should have access to "equal education" without specific mechanisms to implement it. Monolingual teachers assigned to bilingual classrooms had been expected to learn a second language within six years under the law that was allowed to expire, but since the veto the state was left without the authority to require such teachers to take the classes needed for a bilingual education credential -- although local districts may continue the practice at their discretion.

Recently the local teachers' union in Los Angeles voted to adopt a new policy favoring intensive English teaching over bilingual education. Indeed, bilingual education remains a highly charged political issue that is at the heart of militant nativist movements such as "U.S. English" and debates about the meaning of "American" identity vs. "ethnic" pride, and that is likely to fuel more battles in the immediate future, both in Sacramento as well as in local school districts (Woo, 1988).

The California Tomorrow Statewide Survey of Immigrant Students

Outside of the data collected by the State Department of Education, the only statewide study to date of the experience of immigrant students was recently completed by California Tomorrow, a member organization of the National Coalition of Advocates for Students (Olsen, 1988). This "Immigrant Students and the Schools Project" was begun in 1986 and included public hearings, interviews with educators and community agencies, and information on school programs and policies collected from administrators and teachers in 29 participating districts.

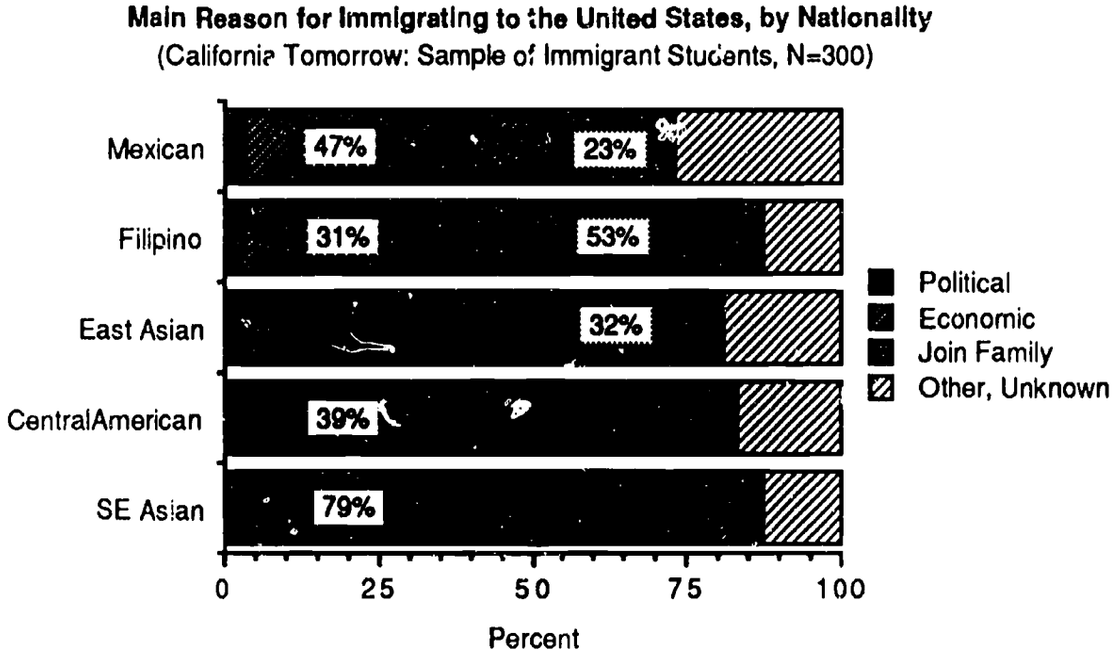
In addition, structured interviews with many open-ended questions were conducted by a team of bilingual interviewers in 33 communities throughout California with a sample of 360 recently arrived immigrant students (ages 11 to 18). The sample was limited to the major immigrant and refugee groups in California schools in rough proportion to their numbers: 45% of the students were Mexicans, 19% Southeast Asians, 10% Filipinos, 10% Central Americans, and the remaining 15% consisted of other East Asian immigrants (Chinese, Japanese and Korean). Half of the sample had been in the U.S. more than three years, a third between one and three years, and 15% less than a year. The majority were below grade level for their age.

Although the representativeness of this sample cannot be ascertained from the information provided -- the students were identified "through the schools and immigrant community agencies" -- the interviews did produce a rich source of ethnographic materials concerning their diverse social backgrounds, migration experiences, and adjustment in their first few years in California schools.

Some of the survey findings reported by this study are worth highlighting. Figure 5 presents data on the reasons for immigrating to the U.S. given by the students in the sample. Political conditions (war, political violence, oppression) were cited most frequently by the Southeast Asian (79%) and Central American (39%) refugees. Economic reasons were cited primarily by the Mexican immigrants (47%), while family reunification reasons were noted mainly by the Filipinos (53%) and East Asians (32%).

A substantial minority of each group gave other reasons or indicated that they did not know why their parents decided to leave their homelands. In fact, fully a third of the sample said that they were not told they were leaving until the journey began. All of the Filipinos completed the journey to America in less than a week, as did 85% of the Mexicans, 56% of the East Asians, and 51% of the Central Americans, while more than half of the Southeast Asians waited from one to three years in refugee camps overseas prior to resettlement in the U.S. For most the migration experience involved an emotionally charged mix of adventure and stress.

Figure 5



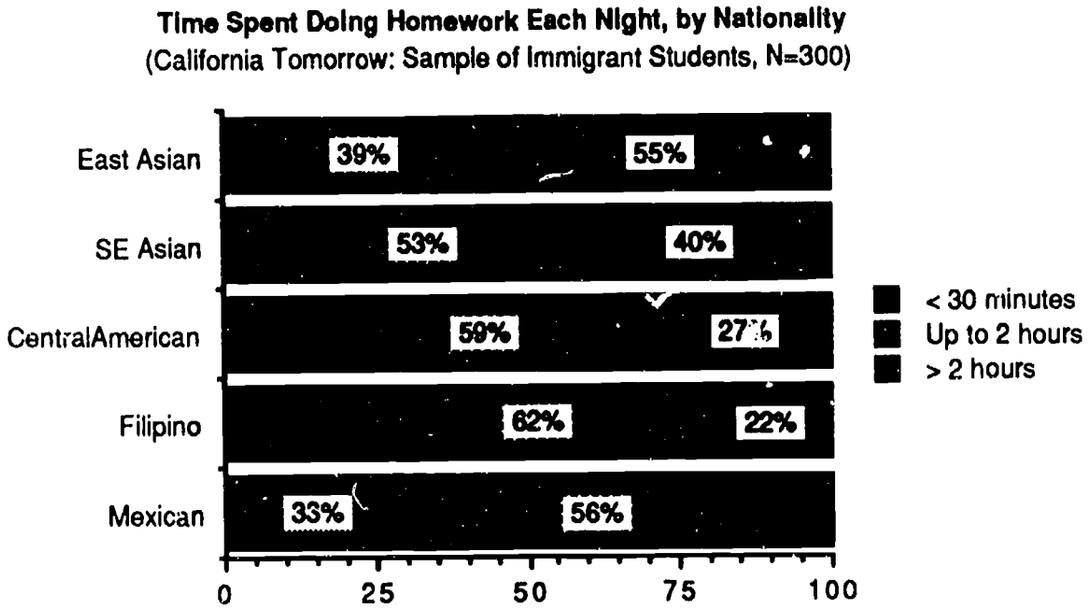
During their first school year in California almost every student in the sample reported "incidents of being called names, pushed or spat upon, deliberately tricked, teased and laughed at because of their race, language difficulties, accent or foreign dress" (Olsen, 1988:35). Half of the middle school students and two-thirds of the high school students reported "severe tensions or problems" in ethnic/racial relations between immigrants and others at their schools. This was especially the case among adolescents and those who had arrived in the U.S. most recently. Less overt hostility but a similar sense of isolation characterized the experience of those students who immigrated in their elementary school years. Two-thirds of the sample said that their friends were primarily other co-ethnic immigrants.

The California Tomorrow study was unable to collect official school data on grade point averages (GPA) and test scores for this sample of immigrant students. Self-reported GPAs were collected (but these data were not specifically provided in the report). In general the survey found that Asian students as a whole appeared to receive very high grades, but found "no clear patterns among Hispanics concerning GPAs" (Olsen, 1988:87).

It also cited 1985-86 statewide data on California Assessment Program (CAP) test scores among 12th graders, which indicate very high *math* achievement among Korean, Japanese and Chinese FEP students (all above the 70th percentile), but very low *reading* scores among Hispanic and Southeast Asian FEP students (in the bottom third statewide). Immigrant FEP students of all groups do much better on the 8th grade CAP test than on the 12th grade test, probably suggesting the positive effects on school performance of having immigrated at an earlier age in their elementary school years. (Because of their limited proficiency in English, most LEP students do not take the CAP battery of tests.)

The survey did report significant differences in study habits between the various immigrant groups. When asked who they seek out for help with their schoolwork when it is needed, 47% of the East Asians, 31% of the Southeast Asians and 25% of the Filipinos mentioned *other immigrant friends* -- reflecting their greater tendency to form study groups for academic as well as social support -- while nearly a quarter of the Mexicans and Central Americans said that they had no one to rely on for help. Almost half of the Filipinos mentioned *siblings, parents or relatives* -- far more than any other group. A third of the Southeast Asians and a quarter of the Mexicans and Central Americans went to their *teachers* -- while very few Filipinos or East Asians did so. Hardly anyone mentioned American friends or special program staff.

Figure 6



An even sharper contrast was noted in the sheer hours of effort that the immigrant students put into studying, as Figure 6 shows. Over half (55%) of the East Asian immigrants reported spending more than two hours each night on their homework, followed by Southeast Asians (40%), Central Americans (27%), Filipinos (22%), and Mexicans (11%) -- a rank order that roughly parallels their self-reported grades in school, suggesting (although no multivariate analyses were carried out) that the hours of hard work gradually pay off for these students despite their handicaps (Olsen, 1988:84-89).

Although the California Tomorrow exploratory study is the best available statewide overview of the situation recent immigrant students in California schools -- it is certainly the most comprehensive policy-oriented treatment -- it is limited in several respects, including its inability to collect objective data on educational attainment for its small and selective immigrant student sample. A more detailed comparative assessment of patterns of school performance among FEP and LEP students representing a wide variety of ethnic groups has recently been reported for high school students in the San Diego Unified School District (Rumbaut and Ima, 1988b; Ima and Rumbaut, 1989; Portes and Rumbaut, 1990: chapter 6). We turn to a review of its major findings.

Immigrant Students in San Diego High Schools

Few communities have been affected by the new immigration more than San Diego, recently referred to by the media as "Ellis Island West." During the 1980s, San Diego has been the 8th highest destination of new immigrants among all U.S. metropolitan areas -- a disproportionately large share considering that San Diego ranks 19th among metropolitan areas in total population. Further, the number of new immigrants coming to San Diego has been *increasing* every year: for example, INS figures show that 8,373 came in 1985, 9,895 in 1986, and 12,706 in 1987 (Economic Research Bureau, 1988). Of these, 31% were Mexicans, 24% Filipinos, and 16% Southeast Asian refugees.

The impact has been especially noticeable in the rapidly changing ethnic composition of students in the San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD): ethnic "minorities" are now in the majority. As SDUSD pupil censuses show (San Diego City Schools, 1988), of the 121,233 students enrolled during 1976-77, 66% were White Anglos while 34% were ethnic minorities; but of the 116,371 students enrolled during the 1988-89 school year, only 41% are White Anglos while 59% are ethnic minorities, including about 27,000 "Hispanics" (overwhelmingly of Mexican origin), 9,000 Southeast Asians, and 9,000 Filipinos. These latter groups are largely composed of immigrant children.

Table 1 depicts the composition of the entire 1986-87 SDUSD high school student cohort (N=38,820 seniors, juniors and sophomores), broken down by the students' ethnicity and gender, language spoken at home, and FEP/LEP status.

Roughly half of the students were White Anglos, followed by Hispanics, Black Americans, Southeast Asians, Filipinos, East Asians (Chinese, Korean and Japanese), Pacific Islanders (mostly Samoans and Guamanians), and finally other immigrant students from Europe, Africa and Southwest Asia. Note (at the bottom of the first column) that about 75% of these students -- almost all of them U.S.-born -- spoke English as their primary home language. The other 25% spoke a language other than English at home. Of these, roughly half were classified as FEP and the other half as LEP -- reflecting the statewide patterns noted earlier.

Most likely these students are immigrants or children of immigrants, because speaking another language at home is a good indicator of second-generation status. However, there is considerable variance in the percentage of LEPs from group to group. Over two-thirds of the Southeast Asians (and among them, over 90% of the Cambodians) were classified as LEP, reflecting the fact that they are the most recently arrived immigrant group. By contrast, less than a third of the Hispanics were LEP, and less than 15% of the East Asians and Filipinos. Half of the Filipinos were FEP, however, pointing to their homegrown advantage in English proficiency relative to other major immigrant groups. In general, these data suggest the recency of the migration of these groups and the relative extent to which they are currently handicapped in their command of English. There were no apparent gender differences in English language status.

These data include both currently enrolled students as well as "inactive" students who *entered* their respective high school cohort in the 9th grade but who later dropped out of school or left the district. Thus the data are not biased in favor of only "active" students. This is important because dropout rates vary widely by ethnicity.

In San Diego high schools, Pacific Islanders and Hispanics have had the highest annual dropout rates, followed by Blacks and White Anglos, while Asian students as a whole have reflected lower-than-average dropout rates. These patterns are reflected in Table 2, which documents the proportion of "inactive" students -- a reasonable proxy for dropouts -- by ethnic origin, gender, and English language status. Overall, LEP students were far more at risk of leaving school than FEP students. More importantly, FEPs had much lower dropout rates (about ten percentage points) than English monolinguals. There were no significant gender differences, although females were slightly less likely than males to leave school.

Table 3 presents scores on CTBS (Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills) achievement subtests of English and mathematical skills. The *reading vocabulary* score is the most English-based and culture-bound skill area measured by the CTBS, and this is the area where immigrant LEP students do worst and White Anglos do best.

The *math computation* score, by contrast, is the least language-bound measure, and huge differences exist between math and reading scores among the ethnolinguistic minorities. The scores are expressed in "stanines" (a standardized scale of nine units, distributed normally, with 5 as the mean and 2 as its standard deviation). A stanine score of 9 places students in the top 4% nationally, a score of 1 in the bottom 4% nationally, and a score of 5 in the middle 20% nationally. Note the extremely high math achievement scores among the East Asians and the Vietnamese (even among the LEPs), as well as the Filipinos.

Among the Indochinese groups specifically, the FEPs show math scores well above those of White Anglos and other native-born ethnic minorities, whereas reading vocabulary scores for both LEPs and FEPs are the lowest in the school district. Parenthetically, among the various skill areas measured by the CTBS, the *math* score is by far the most predictive of GPA, explaining over 40% of the variance in GPA in multiple regressions.

Table 4 provides data on GPAs for each of these groups in rank order, again broken down by ethnicity, gender and language status. These are cumulative grade point averages earned by the students in high school academic courses since the 9th grade.

The mean GPA for White Anglos is 2.24. Lower GPAs are found for "castelike" minorities (Ogbu, 1987) -- Pacific Islanders, Hispanics and Blacks -- whereas all other groups reflect higher GPAs. Remarkably, with the main exception of Hispanics (who are generally of lower socioeconomic status), all of the non-English "immigrant" minorities are outperforming their English-only co-ethnics as well as majority Anglo students. This applies in most cases *both* for FEP and LEP students alike, although clearly FEP students are doing significantly better than their LEP co-ethnics.

Table 1.

Percentage of San Diego High School Students Who Are English-Monolinguals, Fluent-English-Proficient Bilinguals (FEP), and Limited-English-Proficient (LEP), in Rank Order, by Selected Ethnic Groups and Gender, 1986

(N = 38,820 high school seniors, juniors and sophomores in the San Diego Unified School District)

Ethnic Groups	PRIMARY LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME						TOTAL	
	ENGLISH[1]		NON-ENGLISH[2]					
			FEP[3]		LEP[3]			
	N	Row %	N	Row %	N	Row %	N	Column %
White Anglos:	19,796	100.0					19,796	51.0
Black Americans:	5,720	100.0					5,720	14.7
East Asians:	493	59.7	220	26.6	113	13.7	826	2.1
Pacific Islanders:	123	45.4	101	37.3	47	17.3	271	0.7
Filipinos:	794	38.5	1,034	50.1	236	11.4	2,064	5.3
Hispanics:	2,296	32.8	2,631	37.5	2,080	29.7	7,007	18.0
Southeast Asians:	140	5.9	607	25.4	1,641	68.7	2,388	6.2
Vietnamese			451	38.1	733	61.9	1,184	3.1
Hmong			30	26.5	83	73.5	113	0.3
Lao			94	16.8	466	83.2	560	1.4
Cambodian			32	8.2	359	91.8	391	1.0
Other Immigrant Students:								
Europeans:			308	74.9	103	25.1	411	1.1
Africans:			69	68.3	32	31.7	101	0.3
Southwest Asians:			127	54.5	106	45.5	233	0.6
Female Students	14,441	76.1	2,511	13.3	2,020	10.7	18,942	48.8
Male Students	14,951	75.2	2,588	13.0	2,339	11.8	19,878	51.2
TOTALS:	29,362	75.6	5,099	13.1	4,359	11.2	38,820	100.0

1 Students whose primary home language is English; generally includes all native-born students.
2 Students whose primary home language is not English; generally includes all immigrant students.
3 If primary home language is not English, FEP = Fluent English Proficient; LEP = Limited English Proficient.

Table 2.

Percentage of "Inactive"[1] San Diego High School Students Who Have Transferred or Dropped Out of School, in Rank Order, by Selected Ethnic Groups, Gender, and English Language Status, 1986

(N = 38,820 high school seniors, juniors and sophomores in the San Diego Unified School District)

Ethnic Groups	Gender	ENGLISH LANGUAGE STATUS[2]			TOTAL
		ENGLISH[2]	NON-ENGLISH[2]		
			FEP[3]	LEP[3]	
Pacific Islanders:	F	57.1	55.1	55.6	56.1
	M	49.3	38.5	79.3	51.4
Hispanics:	F	50.3	42.2	59.8	50.1
	M	55.9	41.7	64.1	53.1
Blacks:	F	44.9	N.A.	N.A.	44.9
	M	50.4	N.A.	N.A.	50.4
White Anglos:	F	44.5	N.A.	N.A.	44.5
	M	46.4	N.A.	N.A.	46.4
East Asians:	F	40.1	19.6	38.3	34.4
	M	35.9	21.2	49.1	33.7
Southeast Asians:*	F	30.1	21.2	36.7	32.0
	M	34.3	22.9	45.7	39.7
Filipinos:	F	35.3	23.3	44.9	30.4
	M	36.5	25.2	43.4	31.6
TOTALS:	F	44.6	34.7	49.9	43.9
	M	47.4	34.3	54.5	46.5

* Southeast Asians:					
Vietnamese	F	30.1	18.6	30.7	26.0
	M	34.3	20.3	47.5	37.9
Hmong	F	N.A.	28.9	40.5	40.0
	M	N.A.	16.7	45.6	39.7
Cambodian	F	N.A.	15.8	36.4	34.4
	M	N.A.	53.8	43.7	44.4
Lao	F	N.A.	28.9	43.7	41.2
	M	N.A.	28 6	43.8	41.3

[1] "Inactive" = students who transferred or dropped out of high school after entering the 9th grade.

[2] Students are classified by whether their primary language spoken at home is English or other than English.

[3] If primary home language is not English, FEP = "Fluent English Proficient"; LEP = "Limited English Proficient".

Table 3.

CTBS Standardized Achievement Test Scores[1] of San Diego High School Students, Measuring English Reading Vocabulary and Math Computation Skills, by Selected Ethnic Groups, Gender, and English Language Status, 1986

(N = 38,820 high school seniors, juniors and sophomores in the San Diego Unified School District)

Ethnic Groups	Gender	ENGLISH LANGUAGE STATUS[2]							
		ENGLISH[2]		NON-ENGLISH[2]				TOTAL	
				FEP[3]		LEP[3]			
		Read	Math	Read	Math	Read	Math	Read	Math
East Asians:	F	5.62	6.71	5.77	7.70	4.18	8.10	5.50	7.18
	M	5.33	6.45	5.95	7.66	3.77	7.69	5.36	6.94
Southeast Asians:*	F	4.37	6.70	3.95	7.21	2.39	5.64	3.08	6.25
	M	4.16	6.91	4.06	7.43	2.42	5.86	3.06	6.39
Filipinos:	F	4.86	6.35	4.92	6.71	3.60	4.96	4.79	6.43
	M	5.00	6.29	5.02	6.57	3.45	4.82	4.86	6.29
White Anglos:	F	5.60	6.19	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	5.60	6.19
	M	5.59	6.06	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	5.59	6.06
Pacific Islanders:	F	4.28	5.76	3.73	5.91	1.50	4.00	3.88	5.73
	M	4.23	5.42	4.09	5.43	2.69	4.67	3.99	5.32
Hispanics:	F	4.31	5.33	3.97	5.23	3.22	4.65	3.91	5.13
	M	4.44	5.27	4.13	5.22	3.25	4.27	4.04	5.03
Blacks:	F	3.91	4.92	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	3.91	4.92
	M	3.81	4.60	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	3.81	4.60
TOTALS:	F	5.12	5.88	4.31	5.97	3.01	5.21	4.83	5.84
	M	5.13	5.73	4.46	6.00	2.94	5.18	4.84	5.72
*** Southeast Asians:**									
Vietnamese	F	4.37	6.70	4.20	7.55	2.65	6.47	3.58	6.97
	M	4.16	6.91	4.30	7.63	2.69	6.53	3.49	7.00
Hmong	F	N.A.	N.A.	3.00	5.87	2.30	4.57	2.56	5.02
	M	N.A.	N.A.	3.25	7.58	2.11	4.97	2.45	5.68
Cambodian	F	N.A.	N.A.	3.47	6.83	2.08	5.18	2.26	5.39
	M	N.A.	N.A.	3.00	6.20	2.13	5.69	2.20	5.73
Lao	F	N.A.	N.A.	3.37	6.30	2.29	5.12	2.56	5.41
	M	N.A.	N.A.	3.31	6.67	2.23	4.99	2.49	5.35

1 In STANINE scores: a standardized scale of nine units, scored 1 (low) to 9 (high); the mean is 5; the standard deviation is 2.

2 Students are classified by whether their primary language spoken at home is English or other than English.

3 If primary home language is not English, FEP = "Fluent English Proficient"; LEP = "Limited English Proficient".

Table 4.

Academic Grade Point Averages (GPA)[1] of San Diego High School Students, in Rank Order, by Selected Ethnic Groups, Gender, and English Language Status, 1986

(N = 38,820 high school seniors, juniors and sophomores in the San Diego Unified School District)

Ethnic Groups	Gender	ENGLISH LANGUAGE STATUS[2]			TOTAL
		ENGLISH[2]	NON-ENGLISH[2]		
			FEP[3]	LEP[3]	
East Asians:	F	2.51	3.09	2.95	2.73
	M	2.27	3.02	2.68	2.52
Southeast Asians:*	F	2.66	3.02	2.47	2.64
	M	2.66	2.75	2.17	2.34
Filipinos:	F	2.42	2.68	2.32	2.54
	M	2.23	2.39	1.76	2.26
White Anglos:	F	2.37	N.A.	N.A.	2.37
	M	2.11	N.A.	N.A.	2.11
Pacific Islanders:	F	1.80	2.03	1.93	1.91
	M	1.88	1.88	1.68	1.84
Hispanics:	F	1.94	1.94	1.85	1.91
	M	1.69	1.76	1.57	1.68
Blacks:	F	1.85	N.A.	N.A.	1.85
	M	1.54	N.A.	N.A.	1.54
TOTALS:	F	2.24	2.31	2.15	2.24
	M	1.97	2.13	1.89	1.98
*** Southeast Asians:**					
Vietnamese	F	2.66	3.11	2.69	2.84
	M	2.66	2.83	2.20	2.44
Hmong	F	N.A.	2.55	2.41	2.46
	M	N.A.	2.83	2.16	2.30
Cambodian	F	N.A.	2.90	2.32	2.38
	M	N.A.	2.58	2.29	2.30
Lao	F	N.A.	2.86	2.34	2.43
	M	N.A.	2.41	2.04	2.10

[1] GPA = Cumulative grade point average since 9th grade, excluding Physical Education; A=4, B=3, C=2, D=1, F=0.

[2] Students are classified by whether their primary language spoken at home is English or other than English.

[3] If primary home language is not English, FEP = "Fluent English Proficient"; LEP = "Limited English Proficient".

The highest GPAs are found among immigrant Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Vietnamese, and Filipino students. More remarkably still, even the , whose parents are largely preliterate peasants from the Laotian highlands, and the more recently-arrived Cambodians, who are mostly rural-origin survivors of the "killing fields" of the late 1970s, are outperforming all native-born American students -- and again this pattern applies for both FEP and LEP students among these refugee groups. We also found that this finding holds for GPAs in both ESL and mainstream courses; that is, the refugees' GPAs are not an artifact of the curriculum (Rumbaut and Ima, 1988a; 1988b).

Finally, unlike the other measures discussed above, the data in Table 4 show clearly noticeable gender differences in GPA, with female students of every ethnic group and language status systematically outperforming male students.

In the mid-1980s the SDUSD began a career counseling program which required students in the 10th grade to complete a comprehensive questionnaire about their educational and occupational aptitudes and goals. In the process students were asked to select their top two career choices from a list of about 200 occupations.

Available data on occupational aspirations were collected for all sophomores and juniors in our cohorts (N=13,778), and mean prestige scores for their career selections were calculated based on Treiman's Standard International Occupational Prestige Scale (SIOPS). The results are presented in Table 5, broken down by ethnicity and gender (because the career questionnaire required an adequate level of English proficiency, it was not given to most LEP students). The mean SIOPS score for White Anglos was 49.8, and Pacific Islanders, Hispanics and Blacks reflected aspirations slightly below that norm. By contrast, East Asians, Southeast Asians and Filipinos had higher average prestige values that generally paralleled their patterns of academic achievement noted earlier, and their selections of higher-status professions were disproportionately in science, engineering, health care and math-based fields, where their relative English language handicaps would be least likely to place them at a competitive disadvantage.

Among U.S.-born students and especially White Anglos, those aspiring to the professions were much more likely to select careers in arts and letters rather than in math or science. Among the Indochinese students, the Vietnamese and the Hmong had SIOPS scores above 50, while the Cambodians and the Lao reflected notably lower aspirations. Over 40% of the Vietnamese chose math-based professions and another 15% selected high-status professions in the arts and letters, while two-thirds of the Cambodians and the Lao chose lower-status blue-collar, clerical or personal services jobs. These data also show sharply different types of career selections between males and females for all ethnic groups, reflecting traditional patterns of occupational segregation by gender.

We can also look briefly at data on school suspensions. The San Diego City Schools reported a total of 8,102 suspensions of K-12 students for the 1984-85 school year. These were disaggregated by ethnicity and per capita suspension rates were calculated based on the respective enrollment levels of each ethnic group. The results are presented in Figure 7.

Figure 7

School Suspension Rates, by Ethnicity

(San Diego City Schools, All Grades, 1985, N=8,102)

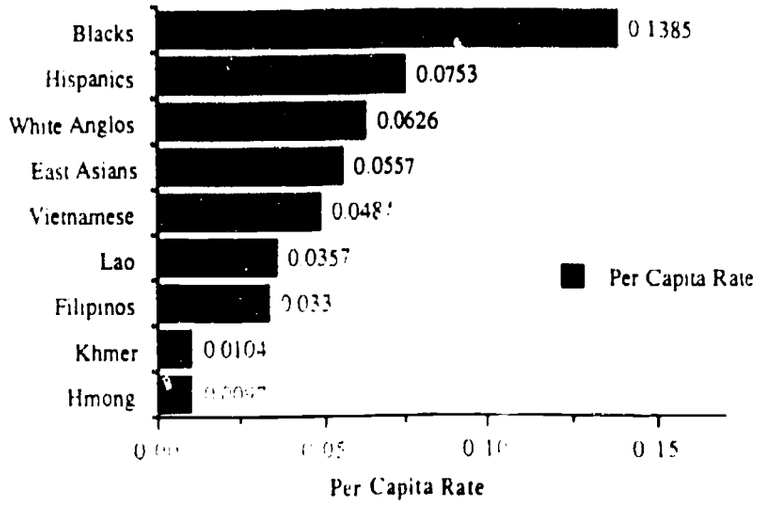


Table 5.

Occupational Aspirations of San Diego High School Students, in Percentages, by Selected Ethnic Groups and Gender, 1986

(N = 13,778 high school juniors and sophomores in the San Diego Unified School District)†

Ethnic Groups	Gender	HIGH-STATUS PROFESSIONS				LOW-STATUS OCCUPATIONS			
		Science, Math, Engineer (%)	Health Care Professions (%)	Arts, Social Profess. (%)	Law, Other Profess. (%)	Clerical, Technical Assistance (%)	Personal Services (%)	Police, Fire, Military (%)	Blue-Collar Jobs (%)
East Asians:	F	12.4	21.5	22.6	2.8	11.3	16.9	1.1	7.9
	M	25.3	14.8	13.7	4.4	3.8	1.1	12.6	20.3
Southeast Asians:	F	17.6	14.7	15.9	3.4	26.5	10.8	0.5	7.0
	M	22.7	10.7	6.6	4.5	7.7	2.5	7.0	34.3
Filipinos:	F	20.2	21.2	16.6	4.4	15.4	11.4	2.9	3.7
	M	19.3	9.0	11.6	8.6	3.7	1.8	14.3	28.9
White Anglos:	F	9.1	11.4	32.2	5.1	8.3	17.8	2.4	8.2
	M	17.0	5.8	18.1	8.3	4.2	2.1	14.2	25.2
Hispanics:	F	11.1	9.4	24.5	3.9	20.9	18.2	3.6	3.6
	M	15.3	4.9	14.4	6.2	5.4	2.9	14.0	34.1
Blacks:	F	12.8	16.2	23.3	6.4	14.4	16.7	2.8	4.4
	M	15.4	4.5	12.5	6.7	5.3	3.5	19.4	27.9
TOTALS:	F	11.4	13.0	27.0	4.8	13.2	16.9	2.6	6.3
	M	17.2	6.6	15.3	7.5	4.8	2.5	14.2	27.7
*** Southeast Asians:**									
Vietnamese	F	23.0	17.3	15.7	4.4	19.4	12.5	0	4.8
	M	27.8	13.7	6.3	4.1	5.6	2.6	4.1	31.9
Hmong	F	0	15.8	31.6	0	31.6	15.8	0	0
	M	27.8	5.6	11.1	0	5.6	0	16.7	33.3
Cambodian	F	13.1	8.2	14.8	1.6	39.3	6.6	0	9.8
	M	12.1	3.0	7.6	6.1	12.1	3.0	13.6	40.9
Lao	F	9.2	11.5	13.8	2.3	36.8	8.0	2.3	12.6
	M	14.0	8.1	5.8	5.8	11.6	2.3	9.3	37.2

† Based on responses to a questionnaire in which sophomores and juniors were asked to identify their top two career preferences from a list of some 200 different occupations. Data in the table reflect the primary career preference indicated by the students. Since this questionnaire required an adequate level of English proficiency for its completion, most LEP students did not take it.

Black students exhibited the highest suspension-to-enrollment ratios, followed by Hispanics and Anglos, East Asians, the Vietnamese and the Lao, and Filipinos. The lowest suspensions rates in the city schools were observed for the Cambodians (Khmer) and the Hmong.

However, although overall the Indochinese were suspended less frequently than other students, Indochinese suspensions had increased more rapidly than for any other group over the previous year, and they were by far the most likely to be suspended for "fighting/physical injury." Among suspended students, half of the Indochinese were suspended for fighting with other students, compared to one-third among all other students. School officials pointed to "increasing prejudice toward all Asians, particularly the Indochinese" in city schools, and "increased physical retaliation by Indochinese students in response to verbal and physical abuse from other students." This pervasive nativism -- as had been reported by the immigrant students in the California Tomorrow survey reviewed earlier -- interferes with academic concerns and, especially among those who are most vulnerable (such as unaccompanied minors), increases their motivation toward joining "gangs" for self-protection.

The data further show that the Vietnamese and the Lao are more likely to fight in reaction to race-baiting, name-calling and other discriminatory behavior; the Hmong and the Khmer evidently manage to avoid or withdraw from such conflict situations, reflecting culturally patterned coping strategies (Rumbaut and Ima, 1988a:55ff).

As with dropout rates, FEP vs. LEP status, GPAs, test scores and occupational aspirations, these data again underscore the complex internal diversity that exists even within the "Indochinese" refugee population, or the still broader "Asian" and for that matter "Hispanic" categories of immigrant students. Official data from school districts do not permit a systematic analysis of causal factors, however, because the schools do not collect information on such key variables as immigration status, time and age of arrival in the United States, parents' social class of origin, their modes of exit from the homelands and modes of incorporation in the local economy, level of and attitudes toward acculturation into American life, psychological factors, patterns of social relationships, or the nature of existing ethnic communities. All of these variables may influence directly or indirectly the observed differences in the educational adaptation of immigrant students, and they need to be studied through detailed and contextualized case studies.

Selected Case Studies of Recent Immigrant Students in California

In this final section, four such case studies are selected for review: two groups of "Asians" (Southeast Asians and Punjabi Indians) and two groups of "Hispanics" (Mexicans and Central Americans) attending high schools in various areas of California during the 1980s. Two of these groups consist primarily of "political" refugees (the Southeast Asians and the Central Americans), and two are mainly "economic" immigrants (the Punjabis and Mexicans). Despite the many differences between them, and in contrast to the children of well-educated professional and managerial immigrants, most of these high school students have in common the fact of their relatively modest social class origins.

Southeast Asian Refugee Students in San Diego Secondary Schools

The "Indochinese Health & Adaptation Research Project" (IHARP) collected survey data in 1983 and again in 1984 through in-depth interviews with a sample of Indochinese refugees in San Diego. The sample (representative of a 1983 population universe of nearly 40,000 in San Diego County) included 739 adults from the five major Indochinese ethnic groups -- Vietnamese, Chinese-Vietnamese, Cambodian, Hmong, and Lao -- ranging in age from 18 to 71, with about equal numbers of men and women.

The interviews were conducted in the home and language of the respondents and collected migration histories and data on social background, English proficiency, employment, income, acculturation and mental health (Rumbaut, 1989).

A follow-up "Southeast Asian Refugee Youth Study" (SARYS) was done in 1986-87 to examine the educational adaptation of all of the children of these refugees who were enrolled in the San Diego Unified School District. Complete academic histories for this sample of Indochinese students (including GPAs and standardized achievement test scores) were then obtained from the school district and matched with the extensive IHARP data on their parents and households. Combined data were thus collected on 340 elementary school children and on 239 secondary school students, and these were supplemented by intensive ethnographic fieldwork (Rumbaut and Ima, 1988a).

Characteristics and determinants of educational attainment for the subsample of 239 Indochinese secondary school students are summarized below. This subsample is representative only of children who came accompanied by one or both parents; it does not include the relatively small minority of children who came without their parents, nor does it include second-generation children who have been born in the United States. Rather, they are members of what we have called the "1.5" generation of refugee youth who were born in Southeast Asia but are being educated and are coming of age in America.

Moreover, the characteristics of the parents of this student subsample are not necessarily representative of the larger universe of refugee adults, because childless couples, single or elderly adults, and parents whose children were not enrolled in San Diego city schools were excluded by definition. About half of the adults in the IHARP sample had school-age children who met the criteria for inclusion in the SARYS subsample. Still, the socioeconomic profile of the households in the SARYS study matched in most essential respects that of the larger IHARP study. The academic characteristics of the students in the SARYS subsample also generally correspond to those noted above for all Indochinese students in San Diego high schools.

Table 6 presents relevant data for each of the five main Indochinese groups in the SARYS subsample. As expected, Vietnamese and Chinese students showed the highest levels of educational attainment: they had higher GPAs and higher CTBS test scores in math and reading. Less than half of the Vietnamese and Chinese were classified by the school district as LEP; the majority were classified as FEP. Although their reading scores were below the national average, reflecting their limitations with the English language as recently arrived newcomers, their GPAs were well above those for White Anglos in the district and their math achievement scores placed them in the top quartile of the nation. Cambodian and Lao students showed the lowest levels of attainment both in GPAs and test scores among these refugee groups, although their GPAs matched the Anglo norm and their math scores were at about the national average.

The ranking of these four groups paralleled that of their parents' level of education: Vietnamese parents were the most educated, followed by the Chinese, Cambodians and Lao. Surprisingly, however, the Hmong occupied an intermediate position in both GPAs and test scores between these four other groups -- despite the fact that Hmong parents had by far the least amount of education (just above the first grade level). Thus, the refugee students' current educational achievement was not simply a function of their parents' social class of origin. About 75% of all of these students lived in households with incomes below the federal poverty line; indeed, their families were the poorest in the San Diego area. About 90% of the Vietnamese and Chinese lived in intact homes with both parents, as did about 85% of the Hmong and the Lao. But less than half of the Cambodians lived in two-parent households -- most lived with widowed mothers, reflecting the extremely high death rates in Cambodia during the Pol Pot period of the late 1970s. Cambodian mothers also showed the most elevated levels of depressive symptoms, followed by Hmong and Lao mothers, with the Vietnamese and Chinese reflecting the best mental health profiles.

The second panel of Table 6 provides information on basic student characteristics: there were no significant differences in age or gender among the students in the sample, but the Cambodians and the Lao were the most recently arrived groups and hence had fewer semesters in American schools and a higher proportion of LEP students.

All of these independent variables were examined for their effects on two outcome measures of educational attainment: GPAs and English reading test scores. The results of a multiple regression analysis are presented in Table 7. Because of multicollinearity between the two variables of parents' education and level of English literacy ($r = .70$), a single index was produced by summing both of these indicators of parental social class resources.

In each regression analysis three sets of predictor variables were entered into the equation one at a time: (1) a set of *ethnicity* dummy variables was entered first (with the Chinese as the reference group); (2) a set of *family* characteristics was entered next, to look at the effects of parental composition and social class as well as cultural and psychological variables which are not often considered in analyses of educational attainment; and lastly (3) a set of *student* characteristics to control for age, sex, FEP/LEP status, time in the U.S. and semesters in U.S. secondary schools. The change in the square of the multiple correlation (ΔR^2) -- the percent of the variance accounted for by each set of predictors as it was entered into the equation -- is noted in Table 7 at each step, and the total R^2 for each model is given at the bottom of the table. The final standardized regression coefficients (betas) are also noted for each predictor variable, with all other variables controlled.

Table 6.

Academic Grade Point Averages, Standardized Achievement Test Scores, and Characteristics of Indochinese Refugee Students and Their Families, by Ethnic Groups

(IHARP-SARYS Sample, N=239 Students, Grades 7-12)

Characteristics	Vietnamese (N=54)	Chinese (N=45)	Cambodian (N=35)	Lao (N=58)	Hmong (N=47)	p[a]	Total (N=239
Educational Attainment:							
Academic Grade Point Average[b]	2.97	2.88	2.64	2.57	2.78	*	2.77
CTBS Reading Test Score[c]	4.07	3.45	3.30	2.78	2.96	**	3.34
CTBS Math Test Score[c]	6.97	6.80	4.81	5.48	5.73	**	6.09
% Limited-English Status (LEP)	48.1	42.2	74.3	77.6	55.3	**	59.4
Students' Characteristics:							
Year Born in S.E. Asia (19--)	70.3	70.0	69.3	70.0	69.6	NS	69.9
Year Arrived in U.S. (19--)	78.3	79.9	80.1	79.6	79.1	**	79.3
Semesters in U.S. 2ndary schools	5.0	5.4	4.2	4.4	5.2	*	4.9
% Male Students	51.8	51.1	51.4	44.8	57.4	NS	51.0
Family Situation:							
% Live in 2-Parent Household	90.7	91.1	45.7	82.8	83.0	**	89.7
% Below Poverty Line	61.1	77.8	73.5	82.8	80.9	**	75.2
Parents' Characteristics:							
Parents' Education (years)	8.9	5.7	4.4	3.8	1.3	**	4.9
Mother's English Literacy (0-5)[d]	1.85	1.00	1.15	1.05	1.10	**	1.25
Parents' Acculturation Attitudes	3.54	4.14	4.03	3.99	4.24	**	3.97
Mother's Psychological Distress	1.57	1.37	2.14	1.75	1.70	**	1.69

[a] Significance (p) of differences between ethnic groups: ** < .01, * < .05, NS = Not Significant.

[b] Cumulative academic Grade Point Average, excluding Physical Education courses, where: A = 4, B = 3, C = 2, D = 1, F = 0.

[c] Scores achieved on the Reading (English vocabulary and comprehension) and Math subtests of the CTBS (Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills), a nationally standardized achievement test given annually to all students in San Diego City Schools and widely used by schools throughout the United States. Results in the table are presented in STANINE scores: a standardized scale of nine units, scored 1 (low) to 9 (high), distributed normally (a bell-shaped curve) with a mean of 5 and a standard deviation of 2. A score of 1 thus places students in the bottom 4% nationally and a score of 9 in the top 4% nationally, while a score of 5 places students in the middle 20% nationally among same-grade-level peers who took the CTBS.

[d] Index of English reading and writing proficiency; mean scores are interpretable on a 6-point scale where 0 = none, 1 = poor, 2 = son 3 = fair, 4 = good, and 5 = fluent, as reported by the respondent.

Table 7.

Predictors of English Reading Achievement Test Scores (Y_1) and Academic GPA (Y_2) Among Indochinese Refugee Students in San Diego City Schools: Results of Multiple Regression Analyses for Sample of Secondary School Children†

(IHARP-SARYS Sample, N = 239 Students, Grades 7-12)

Analytical Category	Predictor Variables (X_n)	Y_1 = Reading Score Beta	p	ΔR^2	Y_2 = GPA Beta	p	ΔR^2
Ethnicity:	Vietnamese (Yes=1, No=0)	.079	NS		.216	**	
	Cambodian (Yes=1, No=0)	-.010	NS		.135	NS	
	Hmong (Yes=1, No=0)	-.097	NS	.101	.073	NS	.035
	Lao (Yes=1, No=0)	-.092	NS		.040	NS	
Parents' Characteristics:	Parents' education + English literacy	.153	*		.001	NS	
	2-Parent home (Yes=1, No=0)	-.101	NS		-.024	NS	
	Below poverty (Yes=1, No=0)	-.067	NS	.178	-.076	NS	.120
	Parents' acculturation attitudes	.105	NS		.245	**	
	Psychological distress (Mother)	-.029	NS		-.176	**	
Students' Characteristics:	Year born (19--)	.277	**		.448	**	
	Year of arrival in U.S. (19--)	-.277	**		.157	*	
	Semesters (in U.S. secondary schools)	.042	NS	.194	.359	**	.177
	English status (FEP=1, LEP=0)	.262	**		.264	**	
	Gender (Male=1, Female=0)	-.030	NS		-.074	NS	
TOTAL R^2 (explained variance) =				.473			.332

† Significance levels for betas: ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$; NS = Not Significant. The betas shown are the final standardized regression coefficients with all variables entered in the equation. R^2 = square of total multiple correlation for each equation. ΔR^2 = change in the R^2 (or explained variance) due to *each* of the 3 sets of predictor variables as each set was entered into the equation (ethnicity variables were entered first, then parents' characteristics, and finally students' characteristics).

The regression model accounted for nearly half of the variance in English reading test scores (R^2 = .473). The set of ethnicity variables, entered first, accounted for 10% of the variance; however, the betas for the specific ethnic variables were not significant when other variables were controlled.

The set of parental characteristics contributed another 18% to the explanation of English reading test scores; the key predictor variable here was the parents' level of education and English literacy. None of the other parental and family variables had a significant effect on these test scores.

Finally, the set of students' characteristics added another 19% to the explanatory power of the model. Reading scores were not significantly different by gender. With FEP/LEP status controlled, the strongest predictors of reading ability were the students' age and time in the U.S.: the younger the student and the longer in the U.S., the better their reading ability in English. In general FEP students were significantly more likely to come from intact families with higher average levels of education, income, and U.S. residence (Ima and Rumbaut, 1989).

Turning next to the analysis of GPAs, the regression model accounted for 33% of the variance (R^2 = .332). Ethnicity alone accounted for just 3%; however, with all variables controlled, Vietnamese ethnicity emerged as a strong positive predictor of GPAs, underscoring the fact that Vietnamese students had the highest GPAs in the entire school district.

The set of student characteristics contributed 18% to the explanation of GPAs. All of these variables except gender showed significant positive effects: the younger the students and the longer in U.S. schools (where they "learn the ropes" of the American school system), the higher their GPA; and FEP students clearly had an advantage over those classified as LEP. The set of parental and family characteristics explained another 12% of the variance in GPAs. But notably, the significant predictors of GPA among the parental and family characteristics were not the more "objective" variables measuring parental education or poverty or family composition, but two "subjective" psychocultural variables: (1) the more *psychologically distressed* the mother, the lower the student's GPA -- a finding that underscores the pivotal role of mothers in their children's upbringing; and (2) the greater the parents' score on an index of *acculturation attitudes*, the higher the GPA.

The parents' acculturation score is a summed index of four items, each item measured on a 0-to-6 scale from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree," with 3 as a neutral midpoint. Specifically, the four items expressed the degree to which refugee parents felt that (1) their ethnic group must stay together as a community to preserve their own culture and identity even as they adapt to the American economy to "make a living;" (2) they should stick together as a group for social support and mutual assistance; (3) they should live in co-ethnic neighborhoods; and (4) they would *not* return to their homelands even if there were a change in government. This index thus provides a general measure not of assimilation or "Americanization," but rather of ethnic resilience among parents who intend to stay in the U.S. while affirming their ethnic culture and social networks. The higher this score, the higher the GPA of their children. This finding runs counter to assimilationist assumptions that argue that the more Americanized immigrants become, the greater will be their success in the competitive worlds of school and work. In fact, it suggests an opposite conclusion: that "Americanization" processes among the Indochinese may be dysfunctional for educational attainment.

In summary, parental socioeconomic status was more predictive of reading test scores than of GPA. Objective family characteristics did not affect GPA directly, a result which suggests that their influence is mediated by other factors, such as English language knowledge. By contrast, the set of more subjective variables -- the parents' "psychocultural status" -- was strongly predictive of GPA, but not of reading test scores. This finding points to the importance for GPA of subjective factors in parent-child (and especially mother-child) relationships. Of these, the parents' affirmation of ethnic identity and solidarity within family and community structures was of greater import.

Finally, age and time variables were quite important. The (younger) age of the student is predictive of higher GPAs and test scores. But time in the U.S. has a different effect -- and meaning -- depending on age at arrival. The key difference seems to involve those youth whose age at arrival in the U.S. was prepuberty (or roughly younger than 12) *versus* those who arrived post-puberty in their later teens. The older students are more handicapped by language deficiencies, may have "lost" more time from normal schooling during their often prolonged stays in refugee camps overseas, have had less time to learn the ropes of the new system, and must cope simultaneously with the additional developmental stressors of middle and late adolescence.

However, the finding that educational achievement improves for younger Indochinese refugees and over time in the U.S. may reflect a temporary effect that

will plateau and then begin to diminish as a function of a process of "becoming American" that may ironically prove counterproductive for educational attainment in competitive school settings. The younger ones, even though their English competency and their knowledge of American society is better, may become less driven and less single-minded in their pursuit of school and work goals, and thus at some point less apt to reach the levels of attainment of their more motivated and harder-working older siblings. The exact transition may depend on the structural ability of Southeast Asian families to develop and maintain bicultural values, norms and pressures that lead to high achievement net of the parents' social class resources, and that assist them in bridging effectively their native and adoptive worlds.

Punjabi Sikh Immigrant Students at "Valleyside High" in Northern California

Over the past two decades immigrants from India have constituted one of the most highly educated groups of newcomers to the United States, reflecting classic patterns of professional "brain drain" international migration (Portes and Rumbaut, 1990). There is considerable internal diversity among the Indians, however, as illustrated by a recent case study of the children of Punjabi Sikhs attending Valleyside High School in an agricultural region of northern California (Gibson, 1987; 1989). Most of the Indians in "Valleyside" (evidently in the Stockton area of the San Joaquin Valley), who in 1981 numbered around 6,000, were Punjabi Sikhs. Unlike the Indochinese refugees discussed above, the Punjabis emigrated primarily for economic reasons; but like the rural-origin Cambodians and Laotians, most of them came from small farming Punjab villages in northern India.

The study, conducted during 1980-82, collected school performance data for all 2,100 students attending Valleyside High (grades 9-12), of whom 231 (11%) were Punjabi Sikhs. Intensive ethnographic research then focused on the experiences of a random sample of 44 Punjabi seniors and a comparison group of 42 White Anglo seniors.

At the time of fieldwork, the median income for Punjabi families with children enrolled at Valleyside High was about $15,000 -- roughly half the income of comparable Anglo families. A third of the Punjabis had been in the U.S. less than 5 years, a third between 5 and 10 years, and a third over 10 years. Half of the Punjabi fathers worked as farm laborers in the nearby fruit orchards, usually for the minimum wage; another quarter (mostly those who had come by themselves before 1970 and later sent for their wives and children) had become entrepreneurial orchard farmers themselves, and the remaining quarter commuted to factory jobs in Sacramento or the San Francisco Bay Area. The majority of the Punjabi mothers (much like the Hmong and the Khmer) were illiterate or semiliterate. The fathers were more educated, but less than half of them had finished secondary school in India. Punjabi was the language spoken at home, and most parents spoke English only with difficulty.

Compounding these socioeconomic and language handicaps was a situation of "severe prejudice" confronted by the Punjabi students in the school setting as well as "sharp conflicts" between home values and those promoted by the school. Gibson (1987:268) describes it this way:

"Valleyside is 'redneck' country, and some white residents are extremely hostile toward immigrants who look different, act different, and speak a different language. In school, Punjabi teenagers are told they stink... told to go back to India... accused of being illegals... physically abused by majority students, who spit at them, refuse to sit by them in class or in buses, crowd in front of them in line, stick them with pins, throw food at them, and worse. They are labeled troublemakers if they defend themselves... In one way or another, Punjabi students are told that India and Indian culture are inferior to Western and American ways... criticized for their hairstyle, their diet, and their dress... faulted because they defer to the authority of elders, accept arranged marriages, and believe in group decision making... condemned most especially for not joining in majority-dominated school activities and for resisting as best they can the forces for cultural assimilation."

Despite their relative disadvantages, the Punjabi high school students exhibited a generally more favorable picture of school performance than majority-group Anglo students. The study found that 85-90% of the Punjabis graduated from high school, compared to 70-75% of Anglo students. Among the Punjabis, there was a strong relationship between *age at arrival* in the U.S. and their performance in high school (a pattern also observed among the Indochinese students in the San Diego study); and that variable (along with *male* gender, a pattern similar only to the Hmong in the Indochinese study) was a stronger determinant of educational attainment than were the parents' income, education, occupation, or level of English proficiency.

Upon entering the 9th grade, more Punjabis were classified as LEP and placed into remedial or ESL English classes (overwhelmingly those who had emigrated from India after the fourth grade), while more Anglo students were placed into remedial math.

Punjabi students who had received all of their education in the U.S. were as likely as their Anglo classmates to be placed in college-preparatory courses. During high school, Punjabi boys surpassed the GPAs of majority peers, and were more likely to take advanced math and science classes and to express aspirations for careers in computer science, engineering and electronics. Punjabi girls tended instead to enroll heavily in business classes in their last two years of high school and to reflect their parents' wishes that the girls should marry first, leaving decisions about higher education and career options to be made later with their husbands and in-laws.

Unlike the Punjabi students, most Anglo students participated in extracurricular activities at school, held after-school jobs, and maintained an active social life. Anglo boys in particular invested little time in homework and held to the view that the senior year was "kickback time," explaining that they could always take advanced classes in math, science or English later on in college.

By contrast, the Punjabis (especially the girls) led extremely restricted social lives, and 75% of the boys reported doing more than an hour of homework each day on average. They were rarely absent from school, reportedly created few discipline problems, and teachers characterized them as "highly motivated, hard working, and coming from households where the parents seemed to value education" (1987:267). Punjabi parents pressured their children against too much contact with non-Punjabi peers which would "dishonor" their families and community, and defined "becoming Americanized" as "forgetting one's roots and adopting the most disparaged traits of the majority group" -- including leaving home at age 18 to live independently, making decisions without parental consent, dating and dancing. Their frame of reference was not the Anglo majority group but rather members of their own ethnic group here and in India, and from this comparative point of view the Punjabi immigrants expressed considerable psychological satisfaction with their situation overall.

At the same time, the parents urged their children to abide by school rules and to learn useful skills from their teachers, to ignore racist remarks and avoid fights, to look up to successful American adult role models, and to become proficient in English and in the ways of the dominant culture in order to help them deal with the host society -- provided that they *also* maintained strong roots within the Indian community. Gibson (1987, 1989) referred to this additive bicultural strategy as *"accommodation without assimilation"* -- a process again reminiscent of the findings of the Southeast Asian case study reported above.

Immigrant and U.S.-Born Students of Mexican Descent at "Field High" in Central California

The Mexican-origin population constitutes by far the largest ethnic minority in California schools, and throughout the 20th century Mexican immigrants have constituted by far the largest segment of both documented and undocumented immigration to the state. Indeed, Mexican immigration to California has accelerated since the end of the Bracero program in 1964.

Official data on the educational performance of Mexican immigrant children, however, are unavailable from school districts. As noted previously, the "Hispanic" ethnic category used by the schools lumps all Spanish-speaking students together irrespective of nativity or country of origin; also, the presence of a sizable component of U.S.-born children who speak Spanish at home makes it impossible to rely on FEP or LEP classifications as proxies of immigrant status.

However, a recent comparative study does address the educational performance of Mexican-descent students enrolled at "Field High School" in a small coastal community in Central California (Matute-Bianchi, 1986). The economy of this community (it is apparently Wattsonville, in the Santa Cruz area) has long been tied to agricultural production and to immigrant farm labor, and the region has experienced a succession of waves of immigrants over the years, especially from Mexico. This is reflected in the changing ethnic distribution of students enrolled at Field High: in 1971, 60% of the total enrollment of 2,507 students were White Anglos and 34% were Spanish-surname students, but by 1984 only 33% of the 2,377 students were Anglos while the proportion of Spanish-surname enrollments had jumped to 57%. The Asian student population (primarily of Japanese and Filipino ancestry) had remained relatively small, increasing from 5% to 10% over the same period.

The Class of 1985 was selected for analysis in this study. The class entered Field High as 9th graders in September 1981 (N=643 students). A first indicator of school performance among these students concerned their dropout rates. Data maintained by the school showed that among White Anglo students, 40% failed to graduate with their class in 1985. By comparison, among Japanese-Americans only 13% dropped out, while among the Spanish-surname students 51% did not graduate with their class. Significantly, however, only 35% of the Spanish-surname students who had been classified as LEP (primarily immigrants) failed to graduate, whereas the majority of the Spanish-surname students who had been

identified as U.S.-born had dropped out by 1985. This finding has been supported by another study in a different community which found that Mexican-born immigrant students were less likely to drop out from high school than U.S.-born students of Mexican descent (Valverde, 1987). Intensive ethnographic fieldwork identified five general categories of ethnic identity into which most Mexican-descent students could be placed (Matute-Bianchi, 1986:236-241).

(1) *Recent Mexican immigrant students.* These are Mexican-born, Spanish-speaking students who are most frequently classified by the school as LEP and placed in ESL classes, and who are also identified by other Mexican-descent students as well as teachers and staff as dressing differently (unstylishly) from the rest of the student body. In interviews these students claimed an identity of "Mexicano" and consider Mexico their permanent home. Students within this group include "legals" vs. "illegals," permanent settlers vs. those who migrate seasonally back to Mexico, and they generally make various other distinctions among themselves that are of significance in Mexico, such as their rural vs. urban origins and their "mestizo" vs. "indio" ethnicity.

These students differ significantly in their level of proficiency *in Spanish*, and the most academically successful are those who are most proficient in both oral and written Spanish (reflecting their class origins and level of previous education in Mexico). Almost all of them, however, are described by teachers and staff as more courteous, more serious about their schoolwork, more respectful and eager to please, more industrious and well behaved as well as more naive and unsophisticated than all other students at Field High.

(2) *Mexican-oriented students.* These are most often bilingual students with varying degrees of proficiency in English, though they speak Spanish at home and are typically classified by the school as FEP. They have strong bicultural ties with both Mexico and the United States, reflecting the fact that most of them were born in Mexico but have lived in the U.S. for more than five years. They claim an ethnic identity as "Mexicano" and are very proud of their Mexican heritage even as they see themselves as different from the Mexican *"recién llegados"* and from the "Mexican-Americans," "Chicanos" and "Cholos." The latter two in particular they see in derogatory terms as people who have "lost" their Mexican culture, while they view "Mexican-Americans" as "arrogant" people of Mexican parents who were born in the U.S.

The students in this group tend to be active in soccer and especially in the *Sociedad Bilingue* club, the most visible Mexican-oriented organization on campus which is involved throughout the year in fund raising events for college scholarships and cultural events such as school dances and the *Cinco de Mayo "Semana de la Raza"* celebrations in May. Although not all of them are academically successful, most are -- indeed, virtually all of the Mexican-descent students who graduated in the top 10% of their class in 1985 were identified by teachers and other students as members of this group.

(3) *Mexican-American students.* These are native-born students of Mexican parentage who identify themselves as such (or as "Americans of Mexican descent"). They are much more American-oriented than the two other types above, and they clearly distinguish themselves from the *"Mexicanos."* They often do not speak Spanish well (or even if they do they prefer to speak English in school), and are frequently described by school personnel as "totally assimilated." At the same time they consider the term "Chicano" offensive and synonymous with "Cholo" and "Low Rider."

Some of the most active and academically successful students at Field High are in this group. They do participate more than any of the other Mexican-descent groups in mainstream school clubs and in student government (along with the Anglos and Japanese); yet, significantly, few of them get involved in either the Mexican-oriented club (the *Sociedad Bilingue*) or in the Chicano-oriented MATA club (Mexican-Americans Taking Action).

(4) *Chicanos.* According to Matute-Bianchi, this group consisted of the largest segment of Mexican-descent students at Field High, with perhaps as many as 40-50% of the Spanish-surname enrollment. They do not find the term "Chicano" offensive, though many of them will also identify themselves as "Mexicano." Instead, they refer derisively to academically successful Mexican-descent students (those who are seen carrying books around the campus, who attend classes regularly and obey school rules) as "schoolboys" and "schoolgirls," and they refer to the more assimilated Mexican-American students as "Wannabees" (meaning "wanting to be" white or Anglo). They reflect an *oppositional* orientation to what they perceive to be mainstream norms and values, and behave in self-fulfilling ways that promote failure (frequent absences from or disruptive behavior in classes, failure to bring their books or to do their homework when they do attend).

These students are most distinguished from the above three groups by their level of alienation from the school. They are much more concerned with "loyalty" to the Chicano group than with school pro-

grams or activities, with the exception of their activities in the MATA association. In practice, according to Matute-Bianchi, "to be a Chicano" meant: "to hang out by the science wing... *not* eating lunch in the quad where all the *gringos*, 'white folks,' and schoolboys hang out... cutting classes by faking a call slip so you can be with your friends at the 7-11... sitting in the back of a class of *'gabachos'* and *not* participating... *not* carrying your books to class or doing your homework... *not* taking the difficult classes... doing the minimum to get by" (1986:253).

(5) *Cholos*. This was by far the smallest of the five Mexican-descent groups identified by the study, but also the most easily identifiable by their deliberate manner of dress, walk, speech, and other highly visible stylistic cultural symbols. They were frequently identified by others as gang members or gang sympathizers (though not all students who manifested the sartorial Cholo symbols were gang members), and as "Low Riders." Like the Chicanos, the Cholos too are held in low esteem both by the other Mexican-descent students and by mainstream students, they are marginalized and disaffected from the school community, do poorly academically, and tend not to be involved in any school activities.

Teachers generally perceived the Chicanos and Cholos as more "irresponsible," "disrespectful," "mistrusting," "sullen," "smart-mouthed," "street tough," "apathetic" and "less motivated" than their ethnic counterparts -- and explained their poor school performance as the inevitable result of such attitudes and behaviors (or "secondary cultural differences"). By contrast, teachers explained the poor performance of other Mexican-descent students as based on their difficulties with English or the relative lack of skills and school savvy among those who come from peasant backgrounds in Mexico -- in short, on the basis of "primary cultural differences." (For the distinction between "primary" and "secondary" cultural differences as distinguishing features of "immigrant" vs. "castelike" minorities, see also Ogbu, 1987.)

Matute-Bianchi interviewed a group of 35 "successful" and "unsuccessful" Mexican-descent students over a two-year period to ascertain their educational and occupational aspirations and perceptions of the future. In general the successful students tended to see a definite connection between their high school education and their adult futures. They expressed an interest in going to college and looked upon adults at Field High as role models of success. "Success" was often defined as "being someone" and having "a nice car, a nice house, a nice job, and enough money that you don't have to worry about it anymore" (1986:242-243). Many of them were born in Mexico and received their earliest schooling there. They immigrated to the United States voluntarily in search of economic opportunities, and their frame of reference is "back home." Their parents typically showed strong interest and support for their schoolwork. One junior was quoted as saying: "My mother keeps telling me, *'Ay, mi hija, tienes que sacar buenas calificaciones en la high school para que no te estés chingando igual que yo.'* And you know, she has a point. I don't want to be doing that. I've been in the cannery before... I've got to do well in school so that I don't have to face this in my future."

Among these successful students were primarily Mexican-immigrant and Mexican-oriented students who saw no affective dissonance or contradiction between maintaining an identity as Mexicanos even as they adapted themselves to the American context, which they saw as a prerequisite to get ahead -- recalling the notion of an additive "accommodation without assimilation" among the Punjabis and the Indochinese.

By contrast, unsuccessful students reportedly lacked positive adult role models, defined success in terms of "working the system," said they came to school mainly to see their buddies, and generally had no clearly articulated sense of their adult futures. Others focused fatalistically on enduring, external barriers to opportunities: "Mexicans don't have a chance to go on to college and make something of themselves... People like us face a lot of prejudice because there are a lot of people who don't like Mexicans... Some people, no matter how hard they try, just have bad luck" (1986:252-253).

Most of these students were identified as non-immigrant Chicanos or Cholos who faced what they perceived as an either-or, substractive, "forced-choice dilemma" between doing well in school *or* being a Chicano. To "act white" was to be disloyal to the group. Additive accommodation was not seen as an option to the maintenance of collective identity. To the contrary, the construction of this ethnic identity, forged through a "reactive process" and "intensive intragroup reliance...as a disadvantaged, disparaged minority group," is interpreted by Matute-Bianchi as a multigenerational product of "historical and structural forces of exclusion and subordination by the dominant group, as well as the vehicle of resistance that the group has made to structured inequality" (1986:255). Similar observations about the development and maintenance of such an "oppositional identity" have also been made regarding Black American high school students (see Ogbu, 1987).

Central American Refugee Students in Inner-City Schools in the Bay Area

Although Mexican immigration to California has a long history -- indeed, California *was* Mexican territory until it was annexed by the United States in the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo that concluded the U.S.-Mexican war -- mass immigration from Central American countries (primarily from El Salvador and Guatemala, with a much smaller number from Nicaragua) is barely a decade old. In that short span of time, several hundred thousand Central Americans have crossed into California. While they generally share with Southeast Asian refugees many of the psychosocial characteristics of political exiles and escapees from war-torn contexts, they also often share with many Mexican immigrants an undocumented status -- because the U.S. government deems them "economic migrants" and has largely refused to grant them political asylum.

The recency of their arrival explains in part the paucity of information about the educational adjustment of young Central Americans in California schools. The only available case study is a psychosocially-oriented investigation carried out in two inner-city high schools in the San Francisco Bay Area and recently reported by Suárez-Orozco (1987, 1989).

The student body of each school was 90% minority, and almost 50% of the students were immigrants from Asia or Latin America. Roughly a third of the enrollments were Spanish-speaking students, another third consisted of Filipinos, Chinese or other Asians, and close to a quarter were Blacks.

In the two schools there were about 600 Central American youths who had entered the United States within five years before the start of the research. Of these, some 40 students (mostly Nicaraguans) from upper-status family backgrounds were eliminated from the study. From the remainder a convenience sample of 50 cases was selected for daily contacts, classroom observations and intensive interviews with the students and their families over the course of a year. The student sample included 30 males and 20 females between 14 and 19 years of age; 33 were from El Salvador, 9 from Guatemala, and 8 from Nicaragua. Over 400 TAT (Thematic Apperception Test) stories were also collected from this sample, scored and analyzed toward the end of the fieldwork.

The learning environment of these recent arrivals from Central America consisted of "overcrowded, understaffed classes in overcrowded, understaffed, poor inner-city schools... a school atmosphere of drugs, violence, low expectations, bitter teachers [who were often very afraid of their students], the seductive offers by more acculturated peers to join the street culture... and the need to work to help the family" (1987:290). Two-thirds of the sample worked 15 to 30 hours a week while attending high school full-time -- work schedules which sometimes affected their school obligations -- and shared their salaries with relatives in the U.S. or in Central America.

In addition, as undocumented immigrants, many of the students faced a "legal ceiling" in their post-graduation prospects, especially the *ilegales* who intended to go on to college but were shocked and depressed when they found that [at that time] colleges and universities required them to have legal residency to enroll.

Despite all of these problems, the Central American students managed to learn English at a rapid rate -- fast enough, in fact, that teachers privately reported to the researcher that the counselors were deliberately keeping the students in lower-level ESL classes longer than required because of lack of space in the regular classrooms. Most of them remained in school; half of the sample made it to the Honor Roll in high school; and, upon graduation, five of the 50 students were accepted into major American universities. The Central Americans received fewer school suspensions than either Anglo or native-born minority students, and teachers generally considered them more "respectful" and "nicer to have around." Two experienced bilingual teachers confided at one point that "they could never go back to teaching 'American [minority] students' because their immigrant students [mostly Central American and Asian] were so eager to learn, so appreciative, and, above all, so polite that they could not face regular unruly classes in the rough inner-city high school" (1987:289).

To be sure, however, some of the Central American students -- particularly the 14-to-16-year-old recent arrivals -- developed specific problems in response to the culture of terror they had escaped from and the systematic school hostilities they experienced in the new setting. Under the circumstances, the more challenging question that is raised by these outcomes is why these students remained in school at all.

At one level, Suárez-Orozco attributes part of this favorable and highly-motivated school performance more to parental expectations than to parental education. Only 6% of the mothers and 8% of the fathers had completed college. Of the mothers, 57% had not completed an elementary education and 78% had not completed a secondary education; of the fathers, 39% had not completed an elementary education and 55%

had not completed high school. But the parents often emphasized that a primary factor in their decision to flee their homeland was the welfare of the children (often in terms nearly identical to the statements of Indochinese parents in the San Diego study above).

One Nicaraguan mother with five children -- who left because she feared that her 16-year-old son would be drafted to fight the *contras* on the Honduran border -- put it this way: "We came here for them . so that they may become somebody tomorrow... I am too old, at my age it is too late for me...if anything, it is harder for me here than there [Nicaragua]" (1987:290).

The parents' expectations were defined in the context of a "dual frame of reference" comparing present opportunities in the United States with past realities of fear and economic scarcity. Their idealized belief in education and individual effort as a key to status mobility in the U.S. was contrasted to the perceived need to make it in the country of origin through networks of friends, nepotism or "*por apellido*." As one Salvadoran saw it, "Here [U.S.] is *what* you know, there [El Salvador] is *who* you know" (1987:291).

At the same time, life in the inner city offered most of the new arrivals a "crash course in reality" (1989:89). In accommodating to the pace of life in the inner city, an "additive" adaptive strategy was favored (much as in the previous cases considered above): learning the language of the host society and acquiring its requisite behaviors and symbols for "success" without giving up the essence of their shared cultural code (1989:92)

Their children, in turn, were often keenly aware of the degree of parental sacrifice involved in getting out of the country of origin. They saw what their parents endured in the U.S. so that they could go to school to receive the kind of education that their parents never had.

Perceptions of parental sacrifice, in fact, emerged as a key interpersonal concern among the young immigrants' responses to the TAT, which were in turn connected to their strong motivation to achieve -- and in this respect they differed significantly from the responses to the same TAT cards found in Anglo, Japanese, or Korean immigrant samples (1989:85). That is, the Central American students showed a salient sense of duty to their parents and family members for their hardships, and a strong wish to achieve, to do well in school, in order to repay them by "becoming somebody:" *llegando a ser alguien*. Achievement motivation for them did not follow the pattern found among more individualistic Anglo-Americans, but was actually related to 'a wish for affiliation and mutual nurturance." That is, the most motivated and successful of the new refugee students from Central America were not individualists seeking independence and self-advancement, but rather were motivated by underlying feelings of guilt (something akin to "survivor guilt") and by the dream of helping those who had sacrificed on one's behalf (1989:143-154).

These findings of a unique motivational pattern undercut the often-made assimilationist argument that "Hispanic" students fail to achieve in school because they overemphasize family ties, honor and "interdependence" values that putatively hinder mobility while they neglect those that are conducive to "independence" -- and for that matter these findings undercut the myth of "Hispanic" homogeneity which is implied in such formulations. What they underscore is the need to understand the complex diversity of immigrant student adaptations in the larger social context (including the school context) within which they are situated, invented, tested, negotiated, and accomplished.

Conclusion

The four case studies reviewed above focused on recently arrived immigrant and refugee groups of widely different sociocultural origins. Despite their relatively modest social class backgrounds, a climate of pervasive prejudice, and initial obstacles in adapting to their new school environments in California, the evidence suggests that most of these children are making a rapid and positive adjustment -- and remarkably, in many instances they are outperforming even native-born majority-group high school students in such basic indicators as grades and graduation rates. These data offer a challenge to conventional theories of educational attainment among ethnic minority groups, particularly those explanations that have attributed the relatively poor school performance of native-born minorities to "cultural deficits," "cultural deprivation," a " culture of poverty," "cultural discontinuity," and "cultural and language differences."

Indeed, these data add to a mounting body of evidence which suggests that some minority groups do well in school even though they do *not* share the language and culture of the dominant group that is built into the school system (for a review see Ogbu, 1987). In fact, some (though not all) of those who are doing exceptionally well in American schools differ *more* from the dominant group in language and

culture than those who are doing less well. Furthermore, as Ogbu points out (1987:316), other comparative evidence suggests that a minority group that does poorly in school in its own country of origin or has an involuntary minority status (such as Koreans in Japan) appears to do much better when its members voluntarily immigrate to another country where its language and culture are even more different than those of the dominant group of the host society (such as Koreans in the United States).

While suggestive on the face of it, such evidence does not necessarily prove the thesis -- self-selection factors, for example, may account for some of the observed differences in the Korean case. Nevertheless, as Ogbu emphasizes, although nearly all immigrant children confront substantial social adjustment and academic learning problems initially, these problems seem to diminish over time for some but seem to persist and to become aggravated over time for others. Why this is so remains an unanswered question.

Among educational anthropologists who have focused on this question, the work of Ogbu and his associates has focused on a minority group's experience in the post-school opportunity structure and on how their members' varying perceptions of dismal future economic opportunities influence in turn their perceptions of and responses to schooling. Variability in minority school performance is thus seen in part as a function of the history and structure of subordination of minority groups, especially those groups who differed in their voluntary vs. involuntary entry and incorporation into the dominant society; and in part as a function of the nature of the minority groups' particular instrumental and expressive strategies of response to their situation, which can make them "more or less accomplices to their own school success or failure" (1987:317).

Ogbu has argued that the responses of "*immigrant (voluntary) minorities*" appear to differ significantly from those of "*castelike (involuntary) minorities.*" For the former, learning English and other aspects of the culture of the dominant group are seen -- from the vantage of their "dual frame of reference" -- as barriers to be overcome in school through additive learning (at an instrumental level), but not necessarily as a threat to their own collective identity (at an affective or expressive level). Hence, "accommodation without assimilation" emerges as a feasible strategy of response.

For the latter, however, their responses are marked by an "oppositional" frame of reference which is conducive not to "additive" adaptations but to active or passive forms of resistance to a school system which they may perceive as ultimately irrelevant to their future adult opportunities. Here there can be no "accommodation without assimilation," as illustrated by the case of the Chicanos and Cholos summarized above; instead, a forced choice tends to be perceived between "acting white" *or* group loyalty, with self-fulfilling and counterproductive consequences.

For new immigrants in American schools, the data reviewed above point to a positive association between school performance and a resilient affirmation of collective ethnic identity. But as the example of native-born Chicanos (and Blacks) also suggests, a mere affirmation of ethnic solidarity cannot by itself explain positive or negative educational outcomes. The issue has to do instead with the specific nature, content and style of the minority groups' perceptions and adaptive responses to their specific social contexts. Thus, such a focus needs to take into account human agency itself, viewing students -- minority and majority, immigrants and non-immigrants alike -- as active subjects who are participants in their own development and not merely passive objects of impersonal circumstances.

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