

**THE IMPLICATIONS OF UNAUTHORIZED MIGRATION FOR THE EDUCATIONAL
INCORPORATION OF MEXICAN-AMERICANS**

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Ever since the 1880s and the development of rail connections between northern Mexico and the U.S. interior, Mexican migrants have been coming to the United States in notable numbers (Cardoso 1980; Spener 2009). Those lacking official permission to enter are often today called “unauthorized” migrants (Bean and Lowell 2007), although most arriving before World War I (and even long afterward) would scarcely have entertained the idea they were “unauthorized” (Massey, Durand and Malone 2002). Indeed, there was no official government agency charged with the responsibility of interdicting illegal border crossers until 1924, when the Border Patrol was established (Zolberg 2006). But most Mexican migrants, then and now, move because they need jobs and U.S. employers need their labor. Consistent with this, the United States for more than two decades permitted Mexican contract laborers to enter the country legally through the *Bracero* program. When that program ended in 1964, the number of unauthorized migrants began to escalate (Calavita 2010). The difficulties such migrants face have always been considerable (Chavez 1998; Gonzalez 2006). And after the penalties for unauthorized entry began to increase in 1996 (National Research Council 2011), their hardships became even more severe. Yet the country continues to rely as much as ever on unauthorized less-skilled Mexican workers (Bean, Brown and Bachmeier 2012). This contradiction highlights the growing relevance for public policy of assessments of how unauthorized migration affects the incorporation of Mexican-Americans.

Numerous research studies have documented that unauthorized Mexican migrants pay an earnings penalty and that earnings rise with legal status (Donato and Massey 1993; Hall, Greenman and Farkas 2010). Such findings have fueled recent theoretical arguments that

unauthorized migration status may hinder the incorporation of immigrants just as much, if not more than, other disadvantages (Bean and Stevens 2003; Brown and Bean 2006). Empirical research by Brown (2007) shows that having unauthorized parents reduces the ability of the Mexican-American second generation to move to richer, more integrated neighborhoods. And another recent survey-based study provides explicit empirical indication that unauthorized entry handicaps educational advancement, especially among the children of Mexican immigrants (Bean et al. 2011). Because educational attainment “captures the human capital necessary for full social, political and economic participation in society” (Jiménez and Fitzgerald 2008: 344), this chapter focuses on how unauthorized status among Mexican immigrants affects the educational incorporation of their descendants.

We take a five-pronged approach. First, we outline the context of unauthorized migration and its potential effects on the education of Mexican-American children. Second, we discuss several critical theoretical and methodological issues involved in assessing the educational incorporation of immigrant groups. Third, we summarize the results of our research on how much difference having an unauthorized parent makes for the educational attainment of the second generation. Fourth, we extend the implications of these findings to the grandchildren of immigrants, calculating the extent to which removing the second generation’s educational deficits would boost the third generation’s attainment. Such a multi-generational approach enables us to draw inferences about what educational incorporation might look like absent the long-term effects of unauthorized status. Fifth, we suggest that among the plausible mechanisms linking unauthorized status to education, the need to work among the immigrants and their children is a major one, and we discuss the implications of this for educational incorporation.

I. THE UNAUTHORIZED MIGRATION CONTEXT

One of the bedrock issues in policy debates about immigration reform in the United States involves whether to provide legal residency to an estimated 11 million unauthorized immigrants (Passel and Cohn 2011). Little research has explicitly addressed whether not being able to legalize handicaps unauthorized immigrants and their children. Here we focus on Mexican immigrants because they comprise by far the largest U.S.- immigrant group in general, and because so many of them come without papers (Bean and Stevens 2003; Bean, Brown and Bachmeier 2010). Likewise, Mexican-origin children account for a large majority of children with an unauthorized immigrant parent. According to current estimates, 70 percent of the 5.5 million children of unauthorized immigrants in the United States have a Mexican-born parent (Passel and Cohn 2011). These numbers imply that more than half of the 7.3 million children of Mexican immigrants residing in the United States in 2010 had an unauthorized parent (King et al. 2010).

Most children of unauthorized parents, about 80 percent as of 2009, are born in the United States and are thus U.S. citizens (Passel 2011). Even though U.S.-born children of immigrants presumably enjoy access to the same education and jobs as any other citizen, their parents' migration-status histories reflect their first membership experiences with the host society (Hochschild and Mollenkopf 2009). Unauthorized Mexican migrants endure only the most marginal membership, hardly anything more than mere presence in the country, which makes for a precarious situation likely to exert lasting effects on their second-generation children. To overcome this marginalized state, such immigrants may try many difficult or expensive pathways to obtaining legal permanent residency (LPR), even including marriage to a

U.S. citizen. Some of those who obtain LPR status may eventually naturalize and become U.S. citizens. But many are never able to legalize.

Different reasons for migrating can make for varying parental legal status trajectories both within and among couples. Compared with other immigrant groups to the United States, more Mexicans have traditionally circulated back and forth between the two countries (Cornelius 1992; Portes and Bach 1985; Massey et al. 2002). Circular migrants often change their temporal intentions over time, gradually becoming permanent migrants (Roberts 1995), in a process that may occur over many years (Menjívar 2006; Roberts, Frank and Lozano-Ascencio 1999). As migrants move from *sojourner* to *settler* status (Chavez 1988), their frames of reference shift from the society of origin toward the society of destination. Thus, when poor, unskilled labor migrants (especially males) who initially migrate for temporary employment begin the transition to more permanent work, they often seek ways to legalize. This process may take years to implement, however, because legalization often depends on the migration status of other family members (Dreby 2010).

By making legal entry for almost all labor migrants dependent on family relationships, U.S. immigration laws encourage the development of complex family-based strategies for achieving legalization (Curiel 2004; Glick 2010; Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994). Whatever the strategies employed by particular families, it is clear that many Mexican immigrants spend long periods as unauthorized migrants and varying amounts of time in “transition” from one migration status to another. The uncertainty of these transitions appears to reinforce immigrants’ needs to work, with this tendency occurring disproportionately among those in the most precarious contexts. This dynamic in turn can deter schooling in the second generation and, through legacy effects, later generations as well. The centrality of education

to the overall incorporation of immigrants makes clear the importance of examining outcomes across generations, as well as of comparing the outcomes of later-generation groups to those of the non-Hispanic white majority group. To do so, we introduce survey data that include four generations of young adult (ages 20-40) Mexican-Americans in Los Angeles. (See Bean et al. [2011] for more details on the survey, called Immigrant Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles, or IIMMLA.)

II. IMPORTANT RESEARCH ISSUES

Studying educational incorporation requires the consideration of several theoretical and methodological issues, each of which can influence research conclusions. Following Jiménez and Fitzgerald (2007), the most relevant of these for present purposes are: (1) specifying the appropriate comparative context of incorporation; (2) resolving the "generation/cohort" problem; (3) dealing with measurement error in assigning generational status, and (4) making sure comparison groups are similar on other variables that affect incorporation. Taking unauthorized status into consideration comes into play in at least the first two of these.

The "compared to what?" problem. Concluding that successful incorporation has occurred depends in the first instance on what is being compared. This is foremost a theoretical issue. Perhaps the most basic decision incorporation researchers must make involves deciding whether to compare the experiences of immigrants, including unauthorized migrants, to the situations of people in the country of destination, or to compare them to people in the country of origin. Because the very idea of incorporation (or of assimilation or integration) is framed in terms of country-of-destination dynamics, this usually means that the comparisons of interest are often made between immigrants and others in the destination society. If the United States is the

destination country, this means asking in turn any of several questions: To what extent are immigrants like natives in general, like native co-ethnics, like native majority-group members, or like native minority groups? But if the primary research interest focuses on reasons for leaving an origin country (as it might if one were examining how economic development influenced emigration), then the comparison instead might be on how dissimilar emigrants are from those left behind in the origin country, either when emigrants initially leave or after they have been in the destination country for a period of time. For example, research may show that Mexican immigrants are not doing very well in the United States compared with native-born Americans, but nonetheless better than non-migrants in Mexico. Having a job in the United States may be "better" than *not* having a job at all in Mexico. Becoming less like those who stayed in the origin country has been termed "dissimilation" because of ever-growing dissimilarities over time between emigrants and the natives of the origin country (Jiménez and Fitzgerald 2007).

Comparisons of certain groups within the United States are also more relevant to assessing some theoretical perspectives than others. For example, a classical assimilation perspective implies that immigrants and native whites converge with one another (suggesting focusing on comparisons of later-generation immigrant-group members with later-generation native whites), whereas an "assimilation as intergenerational process" perspective implies that later-generation members of the immigrant group are doing better than the first generation (suggesting comparisons among the first, second, and third generations) (Jiménez and Fitzgerald 2007). Similarly, a segmented assimilation perspective implies that at least some members of the immigrant group become like disadvantaged native minority groups (which suggests a comparison of third-or-later generation immigrants with third-or-later generation blacks) (Portes and Rumbaut 2001). Thus, various comparisons can result in one reaching different conclusions

about the degree of incorporation. Here our explicit focus on multi-generational incorporation dynamics makes us most concerned with comparisons that assess the classical and intergenerational assimilation hypotheses (i.e., to those that involve comparisons of Mexican-origin generations with each other and those of the Mexican-origin third generation with third-or-later generation whites).

The generation/cohort problem. Making intergenerational comparisons also requires dealing with generation/cohort problems. From the second to later generations, the educational trajectory among the descendants of Mexican immigrants often yields ambiguous if not contested results. Numerous cross-sectional studies show little differences in educational attainment between second- and third-plus generation Mexican-Americans (Farley and Alba 2002; Grogger and Trejo 2002; McKeever and Klineberg 1999; Reed et al. 2005; Zsembik and Llanes 1996). Other studies find notable and sometimes significantly lower educational attainment for third-plus generation Mexican-Americans (or Latinos) compared with second-generation Mexican-Americans (Bean et al. 1994; Keller and Tillman 2007; Wojtkiewicz and Donato 1995). Moreover, lower third-plus generation attainment also often emerges for groups that are non-Hispanic (Boyd 2002; Chiswick and DebBurman 2003; Glick and White 2004; Kao and Tienda 1995; Ramakrishnan 2004), suggesting that this particular kind of ambiguity is not unique to the Mexican case. The fact that this is also true for groups that migrate with higher levels of education than Mexicans implies that the small differences between second- and third-plus generation Mexican-Americans often observed may result from factors other than ethnoracial discrimination against the group.

One of these may be birth cohort heterogeneity within generational groups. Because Mexican immigration has been ongoing for well over a century in the United States, as Jiménez

and Fitzgerald (2007: 342) note: “Using only a generation as a temporal marker of assimilation is...not enough. Each generation of Mexican-origin individuals is made of people from a mix of birth cohorts, and each birth cohort contains individuals from many immigrant generations.” One way to deal with this involves controlling for age, or making generational comparisons within narrower age ranges, as we do here.

Evidence of this source of ambiguity also reveals itself in different research designs yielding different results. Repeated cross-sectional studies comparing parental cohorts with child cohorts, or longitudinal ones comparing actual parents with their children, show more consistent evidence of assimilation than do cross-sectional studies. Smith (2003; 2006) finds rising levels of education across three generations of men of Mexican origin and a corresponding decrease in the gap between their educational levels and those of non-Hispanic whites; he concludes that Hispanic men have made sizeable strides in closing the socioeconomic gap with whites. In another example, using longitudinal data measuring individual Mexican-American families, Telles and Ortiz (2008) find increasing education across the first three generations, although more at the level of high school than college completion. But in the fourth and fifth generations, they find stagnation in educational outcomes.

The “third-plus” generation problem. In addition, ambiguity in the findings of cross-sectional studies may result from problems in the definition of the third generation. All of the above such studies use measures that aggregate the third with later generations. As a result, the “third-plus” generational measure used actually includes fourth, fifth, sixth, and even later generations. Few studies are able to distinguish a true third generation (consisting of those with at least one Mexican-born grandparent) from later generations (consisting of those whose grandparents were all born in the United States). One study that does make this distinction relied

on General Social Survey data from 1972-2002 (Alba et al. 2011). When these surveys were examined cross-sectionally, only modest evidence of intergenerational mobility emerged. But when the education of respondents was directly compared with that of their own parents, the data indicated substantial mobility among both Mexican Americans and whites, but especially for Mexican-Americans, whose parents' education is particularly low. When this study directly examines the educational difference that emerges from using a "third-only" measure as compared to a "third-plus" measure, it finds that the third-only generation is attaining slightly more education, with one exception: third-only generation boys are less likely to finish high school. Using the IIMMLA data, which are more recent, we find a deficit of 0.3 years of school for third-plus generation males compared with third-only males (Table 1). For females, we find results similar in direction, although not so extreme in magnitude. In sum, when researchers have no alternative than to rely on a third-plus measure, as is the case with Current Population Survey (CPS) data, assessments of the third-plus generation education gap between this group and non-Hispanic whites are biased. Moreover, as a percentage of this between-groups gap, a deficit of 0.3 years constitutes a substantial part of the difference. Similarly, calculations of educational gain from the second to the third-plus generation substantially *understate* percentage advancements in schooling.

What accounts for this distortion? Recent research suggests it results mostly from selective attrition. Errors in defining the Mexican-origin group become more numerous the more generations are included since immigration. Any sampling frame that depends on ethnic self-identification for inclusion in the sample misses those people who no longer identify as either Hispanic or Mexican. This is particularly true for people with only one or two Mexican-born grandparents. For example, 30 percent of the third-generation children of Mexican-origin

women are not identified as Mexican under the Hispanic question in the CPS (Duncan and Trejo 2011). In a separate study of U.S. censuses from 1980 to 2000, Alba and Islam (2009) also find substantial apparent attrition from the Mexican-origin group. Those who no longer identify as Mexican appear to be highly selected among those whose parents have out-married. Not only is out-marriage fairly commonplace among Mexican Americans, but it occurs more often among the more highly educated (Bean and Stevens 2003; Duncan and Trejo 2011; Mittelbach and Moore 1968; Rosenfeld 2002). Selective attrition thus produces substantial downward bias in measures of socioeconomic attainment in samples selected on the basis of ethnic self-identification.

Making the reference group comparable. A final issue to consider involves making the reference group (the one being compared to an immigrant generational group for purposes of gauging the degree of incorporation) comparable to the immigrant group in terms of differences in other factors that could affect the educational levels of the two groups. In national-level studies, this can be achieved through multivariate analyses employing appropriate controls if the study includes measures of all relevant factors that matter. In other instances, this may be more difficult. For example, because of the post-industrial nature of their economic structures, Los Angeles, along with New York and several other major metropolises in the country, both attracts disproportionate numbers of college graduates and experiences out-migration of persons with only high school diplomas or less (the latter for cost-of-living reasons if nothing else). Moreover, this selective migration occurs to a greater relative degree among non-Hispanic whites than among the Mexican-origin population, because the former group contains a higher proportion of college graduates. Stated differently, the selective in-migration of educated whites and out-migration of less-educated whites means that the Los Angeles gap in educational

attainment between whites and Mexican Americans will substantially exceed this same educational gap in the rest of the country. For example, among males, the schooling gap between whites and Mexican Americans is 1.9 years in Los Angeles, versus only 1.2 years for the rest of the country. We adjust for this distortion below by subtracting from non-Hispanic white levels the average net differential between the Los Angeles and the rest of the country for both men and women.

Our research approach. We focus on examining both intergenerational and classical assimilation dynamics. The former involves making comparisons among Mexican-American generational groups, and the latter comparisons of the Mexican-American third generation with non-Hispanic whites. Following the discussion presented above about the heterogeneity and likely distorting effects of attrition in so-called "third-plus" generation data, we take advantage of the fact that a clear-cut "third-only" generation can be isolated in the IIMMLA data. Our comparisons thus consist of examining educational attainment levels for young adults (ages 20-40) in Los Angeles of Mexican immigrants (the first generation) and two groups of Mexican-Americans -- the second generation, including some who migrated to the United States as young children, and the third-only generation. Our goal is to estimate statistically the lingering depressive effects on the educational attainment of the third generation of unauthorized status of grandparents. This enables us to approximate the outcomes relevant to assessing the intergenerational and classic assimilation hypotheses *if* unauthorized Mexican immigrants were able to legalize.

III. UNAUTHORIZED STATUS AND ITS EFFECTS ON SCHOOLING

More than any other group, Mexicans are diverse both in initial form of entry and in not having finished the often lengthy process of moving from unauthorized sojourner to legal settler status (Roberts, Frank and Lozano-Ascencio 1999). The pathways they adopt to legalization and naturalization are similarly heterogeneous. As a result, their family structures reflect a wide variety of parental combinations of entry and subsequent legalization and naturalization statuses. As noted above, numerous studies have documented the deleterious effects of being unauthorized, especially in the labor market (Massey 1987; Massey et al. 2002; Hall, Greenman and Farkas 2010; Gonzales 2011). Recent studies have also found negative psychological consequences for the children of unauthorized immigrants, including stress and other anxieties that inhibit learning and cognitive development (Yoshikawa 2011). Such factors are also likely to limit children's educational attainment.

Educational attainment of children also seems likely to be reduced by the marginal lives unauthorized immigrant parents must live. Differences in levels of schooling substantially explain differences in employment and earnings between whites and many ethnoracial groups, with the notable exception of Mexican immigrants and blacks (Duncan, Hotz and Trejo 2006; Smith and Edmonston 1997). Among Mexican immigrants, this is a function of unauthorized status (Hall, Greenman and Farkas 2010), which in turn suggests that the incorporation processes for Mexican immigrants are likely to take considerably longer than those of other immigrant groups because Mexicans must find ways to legalize before they can take full advantage of American opportunities (Bean and Stevens 2003; Brown 2007; Bean et al. 2011). Because Mexican immigrants increasingly make up an essential part of the country's supply of less-skilled labor (Brown, Bachmeier and Bean 2009), the policy challenge for the United States is to

find ways to make their incorporation sufficiently successful so that the long-run costs of their remaining unauthorized do not exceed the short-run benefits from the important work they do.

But what are some of these costs? Mexican immigrants show various entry and subsequent migration status trajectories. Among the second-generation Mexican-Americans in the IIMMLA sample, for example, many of their parents are likely to have been unauthorized when they came to the country: 34.2 percent of Mexican mothers and 32.8 percent of Mexican fathers (Table 2). Nearly three decades after they migrated to the United States, the Mexican parents still have mostly not finished high school (averaging only a little more than eight-and-a-half years of schooling (Table 3). By contrast, their children complete an average of 13 years of schooling. Many of these Mexican-Americans did not speak English at home while growing up, although virtually all learned the language, and nearly three-fourths lived with both parents. The predominant migration status factor affecting their educational attainment involves whether the mother had legal status. Second-generation Mexican-American respondents with mothers who became legal get 2.04 years more schooling than those with unauthorized mothers (Bean et al. 2011). With statistical controls (for both respondent and parental characteristics), this gross difference shrinks to 1.51 years, which is still highly statistically significant. The educational advantage resulting from maternal legalization thus does not appear to owe substantially to other kinds of differences between these two kinds of mothers and their children.

However, such a relationship between mother's legalization and children's education could still be spurious (i.e. it could result from factors not observed in this research). An example is parents' level of initiative. Bean et al. (2011) take advantage of the fact that many parents legalized through the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act and use this fact to

help control for such factors. After employing this approach (termed an *instrumental variable* technique), they find that the education premium for legal status is reduced only slightly, to about one-and-one-quarter years (1.24) years. In other words, controlling only for factors that are observable in the data diminishes the education premium of mother's legal status by about one-third (from 2.04 to 1.51 years). Taking IRCA legalization into account as a way to adjust further for unobserved factors reduces the premium by about another one-sixth (from 1.51 years to 1.24 years). Thus, a substantial difference of nearly one-and-one-quarter years of schooling still appears related to mothers having achieved legal status.

IV. REMOVING THE EFFECTS OF UNAUTHORIZED STATUS FROM THE GENERATIONAL PATTERN

Now we turn to examination of the schooling pattern across three generations, but focusing on a third-only group rather than a third-plus group. Although the IIMMLA data allow the construction of a fourth-plus generational group, we do not use such a measure because it is subject to the distortions and deficiencies noted above for all "plus" measures that combine multiple generations into one. One of the most notable strengths of the Mexican-origin IIMMLA data is that they permit the isolation of a third-only generation, and this is what we rely on here. When we use this designation, it shows higher levels of schooling completed for third-only generation respondents (Table 4). For example, third-only males exhibit 13.4 years of school, a level up from 12.9 years in the second generation. This in turn is 3.3 years higher than the first generation's level of 9.6 years. We can also compare sons directly with their fathers. As in the case of previous research, the gains when examined this way are even bigger. For example,

third-only generation males exceed their fathers level of schooling on average by 1.7 years. Females show similar intergenerational mobility patterns.

Despite this evidence of greater educational incorporation based on the third-only generation measure, we must remember that the schooling levels in Table 4 still reflect the dampening effects of unauthorized migration status. Next we ask: what would the schooling levels of the second generation sons look like if all of their mothers had come to the country legally or if they had legalized instead of staying unauthorized? Since about 20 percent of the second-generation sons had mothers who remained unauthorized, this means that we would expect that about one-fifth of this portion of the Mexican-origin sample might have achieved an additional year-and-a-quarter of schooling on average but for the disadvantage of their mothers' status. Adding this schooling increment to the education level of the second-generation sons results in an average schooling level of 13.2 years for this group (Table 5). Turning to the third-only generation, we calculate an adjusted schooling level for this group by assuming it entails the same proportional increment in attainment between the second and third-only generations as was revealed in the unadjusted values in Table 4. There, the third-generation attainment for sons was 3.9 percent higher than that of second-generation males. Increasing the adjusted second-generation level in Table 5 by this *pro-rata* amount yields an adjusted attainment of 13.7 years of schooling for third-generation sons. This constitutes the estimated level of attainment we would expect if there were no adverse legacy effect of grandparents' unauthorized status on third-generation attainment. The results of similarly based calculations for females are also shown in Table 5.

However, the schooling levels for third-only males and females still fall below those for third generation non-Hispanic whites. For example, the 13.7 years for males lags the level of

14.5 for white males shown in Table 4, a difference of 0.8 years. But these levels, even though they have the effects of parental unauthorized status removed, still reflect distortion resulting from other differences between Mexican-Americans and whites in Los Angeles, including differential selective in and out-migration from and to the city. As a rough gauge of these differences, we can compare the difference in average level of schooling for native-born Mexican-Americans in Los Angeles to that for whites in the city, and then in turn compare this difference to the same difference in the rest of the country. But we cannot use IIMMLA data to accomplish this because they were collected only in Los Angeles. Instead, we use Current Population Survey data for native-born Mexican-origin males and females (with the same age ranges as the IIMMLA data) for both LA and non-LA residents. Using these data, Mexican-American males in Los Angeles average 1.9 fewer years of schooling than White males, whereas in the rest of the country, this difference is 1.2 years. In other words, the difference in the degree to which the White schooling level exceeds the Mexican-American level in Los Angeles is 0.7 years *more* than this same difference in the rest of the country. For females, this deficit is 0.9 years. As noted above, this bigger Mexican-origin deficit in LA could stem from differential migration into and out of Los Angeles by education on the parts of the two groups, or it could result from other factors that may affect it as well. If we took this differential excess as a rough proxy for the degree to which all such other factors make for LA-specific educational differences between the two groups (and it is only a very crude guide), we could further adjust the differential between the third-only Mexican-American schooling level and that for non-Hispanic third generation Whites by subtracting this difference from the White schooling level.

If we do this for males, we find that it accounts for most of the remaining difference between the two groups in attainment levels (as shown in the bottom row of the male column in

Table 6). In sum, removing the legacy effects of grandparents' unauthorized status, as well as adjusting in a very rough way for other kinds of differences that affect schooling levels for these two groups in Los Angeles, accounts for much of the educational attainment difference between Mexican American and white males by the third generation. More broadly, the extent to which these two kinds of adjustments individually and in combination affect the Mexican American third-only generation educational deficit compared to Whites is shown in Table 6. For females, much of the gap, as with males, is closed by the third-only generation as well. To be sure, this adjustment for unique LA-related influences may not only remove the effects of structural differences, but also the effects of other differences, one of which could be greater than average discrimination in Los Angeles. That is, the adjustment may take out of the picture some of the influence of discrimination (i.e., discrimination against Mexican immigrants in Los Angeles that could be stronger than elsewhere, thus dampening Mexican-origin attainment in the city compared to that in other parts of the country). In other words, while Mexican-origin educational attainment in LA is higher than it is in the rest of the country, it is possible that it would be even higher still if hypothetically higher discrimination in LA was not holding attainment down. But this seems somewhat unlikely given that Mexican-origin attainment in LA is in fact higher than it is elsewhere. Whatever the case, adjustment for city-specific differences undoubtedly captures at least a portion of the influence of other factors that make for particularly large White/Mexican-origin education differences in the city. The results thus suggest that about 30 percent of the ethnic differential in years of schooling remaining is explained by the legacy effects of unauthorized migration. Moreover, if one were comparing the LA third-only generation educational attainment to average White educational attainment in the rest of the

country, and one removed the legacy effect of unauthorized migration, even more of the educational difference would disappear.

V. WHAT EXPLAINS THE ADVERSE EFFECT?

What accounts for the dampening effect of parental unauthorized status on children's educational attainment? We consider three possible explanations, although there could be more. Sorting empirically through the various mechanisms that dampen the schooling success of the children of unauthorized migrants is an important area for future research. But what do we already know about their experiences? Perhaps first is simply that severe stress probably impairs the ability of unauthorized migrants to motivate and encourage their children to read and do their homework. Because unauthorized parents are forced to lead lives in the "shadows" (Chavez 1988), shadows that are particularly hard to escape or compensate for when one doesn't speak English, they necessarily "keep a low profile." They constantly fear detection and deportation. Most cannot get driver's licenses and thus worry constantly when driving to work or elsewhere that they will become involved in an accident, the aftermath of which will expose them to the police and other official scrutiny. Their continual cautiousness and furtiveness inevitably induce stress and frustration and reduce efficiency. This clearly is likely to take a toll on children's educational success.

At the same time, because most of the unauthorized are impoverished labor migrants, with little education or command of English, they must take poorly paying jobs, often multiple jobs, with nighttime or irregular hours. The lack of education and English ability limits these parents' ability to deal with schooling issues, and the long hours limit their available time. But poverty affects children's education in subtler ways as well. The family's very low income level

reinforces a family/household-based "social insurance" orientation to the labor market (Van Hook and Bean 2009). That is, given their migration and survival exigencies, it is more important to obtain work than it is to spend time finding the best paying work. In short, it is more important to minimize risk to the family from not having work than it is to pursue individual wage gains, which may be meager in any case. This means that for unauthorized parents, their "reservation wage," or the level of pay at which they are willing to accept a job, is likely to be much lower than for legal Mexican immigrants or native-born Mexican-Americans. This may explain the fact that lack of legal status rather than differences in education mostly explains the lower wages and slower wage growth for unauthorized Mexican immigrants compared with legal Mexican immigrants (Hall, Greenman and Farkas 2010).

This low reservation wage also makes it important to maximize the number of earners in the family. Thus, children are often encouraged to work as soon as they can, unless they show promise of being exceptionally good students, in which case they are encouraged to concentrate on their studies (Bachmeier and Bean 2011). This produces a greater tendency toward "role specialization" among the children of Mexican immigrants, especially among boys for whom the work imperative is greatest. Compared to blacks and whites, Mexican-origin immigrant and second-generation youth are more likely to be working when they are *not* enrolled in school, and also they are more likely *not* to be working if they *are* enrolled in school. This tendency can be seen clearly in Figure 1, which shows the relative tendencies of various generations of 16 and 17 year-old Mexican-origin boys to be working when they are not in school versus when they are in school, compared to this same tendency in comparable groups of later-generation Mexican-origin boys and blacks and whites. The differences are large. Boys who migrated to the United States when they were 12 through 17 years old (the 1.25 generation) are more than ten times more

likely to be working when not enrolled versus when enrolled, whereas whites or blacks show values of slightly less than two times more likely. In short, working and providing income for the family is overwhelmingly important among Mexican immigrants and their children. This imperative seems likely to drive down educational attainment among the children of the immigrants.

These subtle effects of long hours, low wages and an emphasis on staying employed would seem the most likely mechanism through which unauthorized status impinges on educational attainment. These, of course, may overlap with stress. Neither can we fully rule out a third possibility -- that ethnoracial discrimination against Mexican immigrants might explain some of the differences. Perhaps discrimination in school against the children of immigrants, many of whom are only learning English, also explains the poor outcomes. The fact that wage differences between unauthorized and legal immigrants are not entirely explained by legal status and education (Hall, Greenman and Farkas 2010) appears to lend credence to this idea. But the fact that wage differences between native-born Mexican-Americans and whites are fully explained by education and experience suggests that any effects from discrimination cease after the first generation. This in turn implies that any discrimination effect may derive more from nativity or legal status discrimination than from ethnicity. For example, if employers discriminate against unauthorized workers, then perhaps other people, like teachers, may also discriminate against the children of unauthorized migrants. Yet for discrimination against children based on legal status to explain the results would require that teachers be able to tell which children have unauthorized parents and which do not.

In the final analysis, we cannot say with certainty to what degree each mechanism might account for the patterns of poor educational outcomes. To some degree, the low educational

attainment in the second generation on the part of the children of unauthorized parents may result from contributions from all of these -- namely parental and second generation work imperatives, stress, and discrimination (probably in school) against unauthorized migrants' children, many of whom may not speak English very well. Our conjecture is that it is predominantly the work imperatives of Mexican-unauthorized immigrants face, together with the family/household risk minimization strategies these foster that most hold back educational attainment among their children, especially boys. Parsing out the effects of the various mechanisms more exactly awaits further research.

CONCLUSION

These findings indicate the importance of opportunities for immigrants to legalize for the success of their children. Given that most children of unauthorized immigrants are born in the United States, our analysis suggests that legislation providing the possibility of entry into full societal membership creates benefits not only for the immigrants themselves but also for their children and potentially their children's children. When those unauthorized entrants who have the opportunity to legalize do so, both they and their children are able to overcome many of the disadvantages confronting them. This resourcefulness constitutes strong evidence in support of granting full societal membership. Because parents' socioeconomic status has sizeable effects on children's education (Fischer and Hout 2006), the positive influence of such membership in the immigrant generation also carries over to later generations, boosting their schooling as well, as our extrapolated results to the third generation show.

Also, while the pattern of findings presented above does not rule out the possibility that discrimination accounts for educational differences between higher-generation Mexican

Americans and non-Hispanic whites, it does imply that a particular kind of discrimination may explain them, namely discrimination against unauthorized immigrants and their children. That is, at the end of the day, even though unauthorized migration exerts a negative legacy effect on education whose magnitude is large enough to explain much of the gap in attainment between third generation Mexican Americans and whites, this doesn't mean that there is *not* a gap, just that there probably wouldn't be nearly as big a gap *but for* unauthorized migration. Indeed, there are a lot of unauthorized migrants in the country now and they have a sizeable number of children. And their presence in the country, given their importance for the workforce, will probably continue. The twist then between our results and those of Telles/Ortiz is that ours suggest later-generation gaps in educational attainment occur just as much, if not more, as a result of discrimination toward unauthorized migrants (and toward their children, perhaps in schools) than as a consequence of discrimination against Mexican Americans per se (including discrimination against the third-and-later generations).

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Table 1. Years-of-Schooling Discrepancies between Third-Only and Third-Plus Measures of Respondents' Generation, Persons of Mexican Origin, Ages 20-40, Los Angeles, 2004

Gender	Generation Measure		Difference
	Third-plus	Third-only	
Males	13.1	13.4	-0.3
Females	13.4	13.6	-0.2

Source: IIMMLA data (see Bean et al. 2011)

Table 2. Percentage of Immigrant Mothers and Fathers with Various Nativity/Migration and Legalization/Citizenship Trajectories, Mexican-Origin Parents

Trajectory	Mothers	Fathers
Unknown	1.0	6.4
Never Migrated to U.S.	8.7	12.7
Authorized to Naturalized	32.1	25.6
Authorized to LPR	13.7	12.6
Unauthorized (or Unknown) to Naturalized	14.8	16.3
Unauthorized (or Unknown) to LPR	15.2	12.2
Unauthorized (or Unknown) to Unauthorized	4.2	4.3
U.S. Born		
(N = 935)	10.5	9.9

Source: IIMMLA data (See Bean et al. 2011).

Table 3. Means and Standard Deviations for Respondent and Parent Characteristics

Attributes	Respondents			
	Mean		SDs	
Age	27.8		0.19	
Years of education completed	13.0		0.08	
Male	0.5		0.02	
Second generation	0.67		0.02	
Spoke Spanish at home while growing up	0.91		0.01	
Enrolled in school at interview	0.3		0.02	
Lived with both parents while growing up	0.72		0.02	
	Mothers		Fathers	
	Mean	SDs	Mean	SDs
Years of education	8.7	0.13	8.6	0.13
Held laborer occupation in home country	0.24	0.01	0.5	0.02
Worked in white collar occupation in home country	0.21	0.01	0.17	0.01
Migrated from West Central Region of Mexico	0.52	0.02	0.51	0.02
Returned to home country for 6+ months after migration to U.S.	0.15	0.01	0.15	0.01

Source: IIMMLA study (see Bean et al. 2011)

Table 4. Years of Schooling Completed by Generation among Mexican-origin Respondents and their Parents

Generation of Respondent	Males		Females	
	Father's average education	Respondent's average education	Mother's average education	Respondent's average education
0	5.7	N/A	4.7	N/A
1st	7.4	9.6	6.6	8.5
2nd	11.7	12.9	11.2	12.8
3rd-only	12.6	13.4	11.8	13.6
Approximate period of high school attendance	1950-1980	1980-2000	1950-1980	1980-2000
3rd+ non-Hispanic whites	14.6	14.5	14.0	14.9

Source: IIMMLA data (Bean et al. 2011)

Table 5. Respondent's Average Schooling by Generation, Adjusted for Effects of Unauthorized Parental Status

Generation of Respondent	Males	Females
1st	9.6	8.5
2nd	13.2	13.1
3rd-only	13.7	13.9

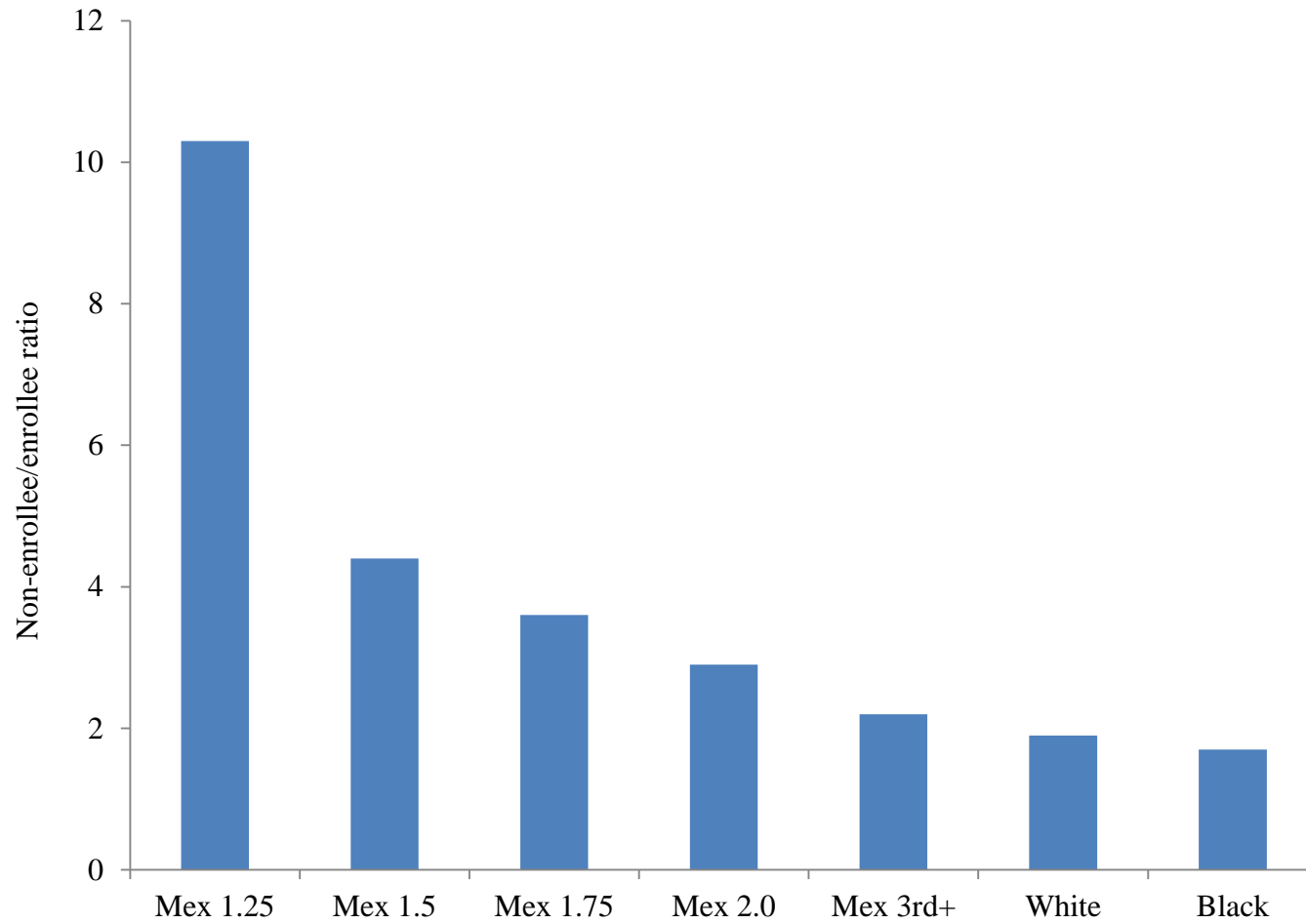
Source: IIMMLA data (Bean et al. 2011)

Table 6. Third-Only and Non-Hispanic White Education Gaps With and Without the Removal of Unique City Effects and Unauthorized Legacy Effects

Differences	Males	Females
<u>Gross Differences</u>	-1.1	-1.3
<u>Remaining Difference</u>		
With city effects removed	-0.3	-0.3
With legacy effects removed	-0.7	-0.9
With both removed	-0.1	-0.1

Source: IIMMLA data (Bean et al. 2011)

Figure 1. Non-enrollee/enrollee ratios in the adjusted odds of workforce participation among 16- and 17-year old boys, by generation and ethnoracial group



Adapted from Bachmeier and Bean (2011)