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Assimilation Today

New Evidence Shows the Latest Immigrants to America Are Following in Our History's Footsteps

Dowell Myers and John Pitkin September 2010

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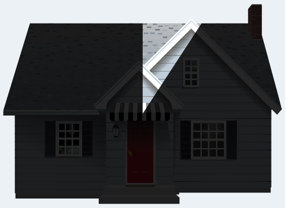
Fast facts on America's latest immigrants

Immigrants, whether from higher or lower starting points of social and economic attainment, have been integrating at high rates since 1990.

- **Only 9.3 percent of Latinos who were recently arrived owned homes in 1990, but the number surged to 58 percent by 2008.**

1990



9.3%
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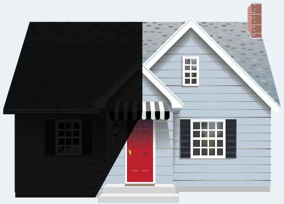
2008



58%
owned homes by 2008

- There are now 14 states that have foreign-born populations greater than the national average share of 12.5 percent. In a reflection of the movement of immigrants into new communities, the data shows 27 states with immigrant populations that are only recently arrived (i.e. since 2000) of at least two percent of the state population.

- Integration occurred fastest in the areas of citizenship and homeownership, especially in the first 18 years of U.S. residency, reaching the fabled "American Dream."

- The rate of citizenship grew at a similarly fast rate, from below 10 percent in 1990 to 56 percent by 2008, a substantial achievement given the constraints of federal citizenship law, which requires a five-year waiting period to become eligible for naturalization or three years if the immigrant is married to a U.S. citizen.

- High school completion and earnings also are rising. The share of foreign-born men earning above low income, for example, rose since 1990 from 35 percent, when they were recently arrived, to 66 percent in 2008, when they were longer settled.

- Immigrant children—especially among Latinos—have higher rates of attainment in education and occupation than adult immigrants, who have less access to education as newly-arrived workers.

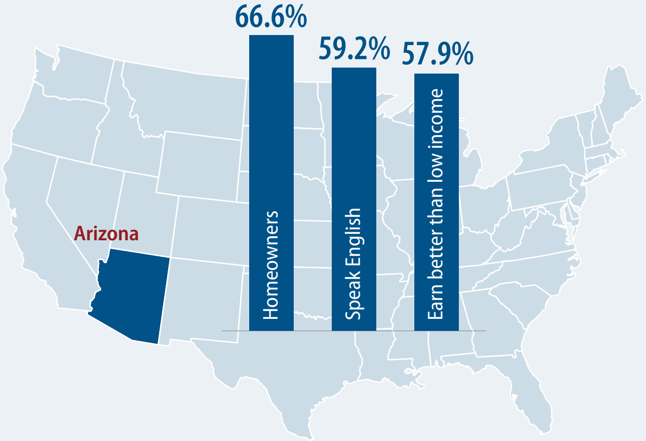
- U.S.-born children whose parents are immigrants have lived their entire lives in the United States and participate as citizens in their communities and their schools. They are exceeding their parents' educational attainment levels.

- Second-generation Latinos are more likely than their immigrant parents to have B.A. degrees (21 percent), higher-paying occupations (32 percent), be living in households above the poverty line (92 percent), and own homes (71 percent).

- The college graduation rate has steadily risen since 2000, supporting the theory that immigrant children are more able than adults to pursue opportunities for educational advancement. Lesser access to education and learning centers for immigrant adults also means a lower English proficiency rate, especially among Latinos, due to their work and income status, and also because language classes are not evenly provided across all states and have lost funding in recent years.

- New destination states such as Georgia and North Carolina have more "new" immigrants than immigrants who arrived before 2000. The opposite is true in the traditional destination states of California, New York, Texas, Florida, and Illinois.

- **The longer immigrants are in the U.S., the more integrated they become, a fact that remains consistent across the nation, regardless of whether they came from Mexico and Central America or from other countries.**



Arizona stands out as an example, where Latino immigrants have proven much more successful than some have assumed. For example, after 18 years of residence, 66.6% are homeowners, 59.2% speak English well, and 57.9% earn better than a low income.

Introduction and summary

The story of immigrants in our nation is about newcomers integrating into our society and then strengthening our culture and especially our economy. The longer immigrants have lived in the United States, the more "they" become "us." Pasta, salsa, sausage, and egg rolls are now as common place on American dinner tables as corn, pumpkin, and turkey. Soccer is now a national pastime, at least among youth, and millions of sports fans cheer the hundreds of immigrants who are members of Major League Baseball.

Nonetheless, opposition to immigration today is whipped up by conservatives who claim that assimilation is not occurring and that instead most immigrants are a burden on our society. But our history tells us otherwise. Immigrants to our shores today are following closely in the path of their predecessors, assimilating rapidly just like they did in the past—as most Americans witness every day in one way or another.

In this paper we use the most comprehensive U.S. Census Bureau survey data to investigate how well the process is working for today's immigrants. Replacing the misleading rhetoric of immigration opponents with firm data, this study shows that assimilation is happening across our nation. The illusion of nonassimilation is created by looking only at newcomers who have not had time yet to assimilate as fully as earlier arrivers. But once we examine immigrants' advancement over time—in this study from 1990 to the present—we discover that the longer immigrants are here the more they advance and the better they are integrated into our society.

The results are plain to see. Evidence showing how more recent arrivals to our country are progressing is derived from careful study of census data over two decades, with a focus on key areas that demonstrate the advancement and integration of immigrants into society. Our assimilation benchmarks are those we know from our history to be bellwethers, among them:

- Citizenship
- Homeownership
- English language proficiency
- Job status
- Earning a better income

These benchmarks demonstrate that immigrants in our country since 1990 are advancing at high rates no matter their social and economic status 20 years ago.

Integration is occurring fastest in the areas of citizenship and homeownership, with high school completion and earnings also rising. The share of foreign-born men earning above low-income levels in our country, for example, rose to 66 percent in 2008, the last year for which complete data is available, from just 35 percent in 1990 when the immigrants were recently arrived.[1] And Latino immigrants in the first 18 years of U.S. residency swiftly attained the hallmark of the "American Dream"—homeownership, with 58 percent achieving this feat in 2008, up from only 9.3 percent in 1990. This is a substantial leap. While lower than the 66.6 percent homeownership rate for non-Hispanic native born men, the homeownership levels for Latinos and other foreign-born immigrants rises as their time in the United States lengthens.

Integration is occurring fastest in the areas of citizenship and homeownership, with high school completion and earnings also rising.

Not surprisingly, the rates of assimilation in education and occupation are higher among immigrant children, especially among Latinos, than among adult first-generation immigrants who have less access to education because they are newly-arrived workers.

The college graduation rate among immigrants is also on the rise since 2000, demonstrating that immigrant children are more able to pursue opportunities for educational advancement. Lesser access to education and learning centers for immigrant adults also means a lower English proficiency rate, especially among Latinos, due not just to their work and income status, but also because language classes are not evenly provided across all states and have lost funding in recent years. But immigrant children are bridging this language gap exceedingly quickly.

Geographically, too, our nation's latest immigrants are following in the footsteps of our ancestors, spreading out across the country to assimilate in communities large and small. There are now 14 states that have foreign-born populations greater than the national average share of 12.5 percent. In a reflection of the movement of immigrants into new communities, the data show 27 states with immigrant populations that are only recently arrived (since 2000) of at least two percent of these states' population.

New destination states such as Georgia and North Carolina have more "new" immigrants than immigrants who arrived before 1990. The opposite is true in the traditional immigrant destination states of California, New York, Texas, Florida, and Illinois. The longer immigrants are in the United States, the more integrated they become—a fact that remains consistent across the nation, regardless of whether they came from Mexico and Central America or from other countries.

The longer immigrants are in the United States, the more integrated they become—a fact that remains consistent across the nation, regardless of whether they came from Mexico and Central America or from other countries.

Indeed, in Arizona—the state that now has immigrants in the crosshairs of its law enforcement officials—Latino immigrants have proven much more successful than some assume. After 18 years of U.S. residence, 66.6 percent are homeowners, 59.2 percent speak English well, and 57.9 percent earn better than a low income.

So why is it that some residents in some states with large new immigrant populations believe that integration is not occurring? One reason is that new arrivals increased over a short period while assimilation, by definition, can only be observed over time. Therefore, states with larger segments of long-settled immigrants also are states where their melding into society has had more time to unfold, and thus immigrant advancement and integration has grown more visible. Many Americans fall prey to the presumption, largely unconscious, that "immigrants are like Peter Pan—forever frozen in their status as newcomers, never aging, never advancing economically, and never assimilating… people who perpetually resemble newcomers."[2] Seeing the data on immigrant advancement may be surprising and should help dispel the illogical Peter Pan fallacy.

Almost a half century ago, President John F. Kennedy reflected on how the immigration process contributed to the evolution of our great nation and became "central to the whole American faith." Immigration, he added, "gave every old American a standard by which to judge how far he had come and every new American a realization of how far he might go." It reminded every American, old and new, that change is the essence of life, and that American society is a process, not a conclusion.[3]

In the pages that follow, this report documents in detail what President Kennedy described so elegantly a half century ago—the ever ongoing process and growth of immigrants' advancement and integration in the United States through citizenship, education, learning English, work, and fulfilling the "American Dream" of home ownership. The longer immigrants are here, the more they assimilate, resulting in even greater levels of achievement for their children and sowing the seeds of progress for generations to come.

Measuring immigrant assimilation

The successful outcome of assimilation by immigrants and their children who arrived in America early in the 20th century is well recognized some 100 years later. But the course of immigrant assimilation for those who came over the past 20 years is not as widely known, especially in parts of the nation where newcomers have most recently arrived. Initially, the upswing in immigration sweeping the United States after 1970 was concentrated largely in California, New York, Texas, Florida, and Illinois, but now it has spread much more widely across the country.

Because assimilation takes time before its effects are visible, and because, until now, firm data has been lacking to track its progress, there is confusion about whether assimilation is actually occurring, especially in communities in our country where immigration is a new phenomenon. Our study collects the most reputable data and organizes it to reflect the assimilation of recent immigrants to our country over time so that others can more fully comprehend their advancement over time. Sharing these data in such a plain format should help our political leaders on both sides of the aisle and their constituents assess the rate of assimilation with their own eyes.

This study presents a broad overview of immigrant assimilation in the United States that draws on new data carefully matched to U.S. Census Bureau reports from earlier decades, thus enabling the American public to understand the progress of immigrants over the past two decades. We trace the pathway of immigrant assimilation in the United States from 1990 to 2008 through trends in six key social and economic indicators:

- Citizenship
- Homeownership
- English-language proficiency
- Educational attainment
- Occupation
- Income

We then compare the current state of immigrant achievement across the country, focusing especially on the top nine states where most immigrants have settled. The nine states are:

- **California.** With an estimated foreign born population of 10.3 million, more than half of the Golden State's immigrants became homeowners after 18 years of residence.
- **New York.** The state's 4.7 million immigrants have a citizenship rate that is 9 points higher than the national average.
- **Texas.** Homeownership rates among the border state's 4.2 million immigrants rank above the national average regardless of when they arrived. Latinos who have resided in the United States at least 18 years have a high homeownership rate of 68 percent.
- **Florida.** The levels of citizenship, homeownership, and English proficiency exceed the national averages for the 3.9 million immigrants in the state.
- **Illinois.** Homeownership among the state's 1.9 million immigrants is at least 10 percent higher than the national averages for all immigrants and also for Latino immigrants.
- **New Jersey.** The state's 1.9 million immigrants rank well above other states in the areas of English proficiency, income, and citizenship.
- **Massachusetts.** The almost 1.1 million immigrants showed higher than average rates of advancement in the areas of English proficiency, citizenship, and above low income, including Latino immigrants.
- **Arizona.** With just over one million immigrants, the state has higher rates of advancement than many assume, especially in the area of homeownership, with Latino homeownership 10 points above the national average of 56.2 percent.
- **Georgia.** Educational advancement and homeownership rates place this state's one million immigrants above the national average.

Clearly, immigrants to these nine states are making the kind of headway toward full assimilation that our history teaches us to expect over time. But a deeper dive into the data gives us even more telling evidence of immigrant assimilation since 1990. We get at these facts by answering the following key questions in this report:

- How much do immigrants assimilate?
- Do immigrants achieve faster progress on some dimensions than others?
- In what realms do children make the greatest strides beyond their parents?
- Is assimilation occurring everywhere in our country or are there states where it is stalled?
- Do the patterns of assimilation vary substantially across different states of the nation?

This study will largely focus on immigrants who arrived as adults, rather than as children, although we also briefly address the greater assimilation of children. The study will assemble consistently measured data across a range of different socioeconomic indicators to describe the pace of immigrant advancement in order to describe objectively how much immigrants adjust over time. We leave it to others to judge whether the pace is adequate. The first step is to credibly measure whether and how quickly they are advancing. Our purpose is to display these trends plainly so that the American public can decide for themselves.

The growth in foreign-born U.S. residents

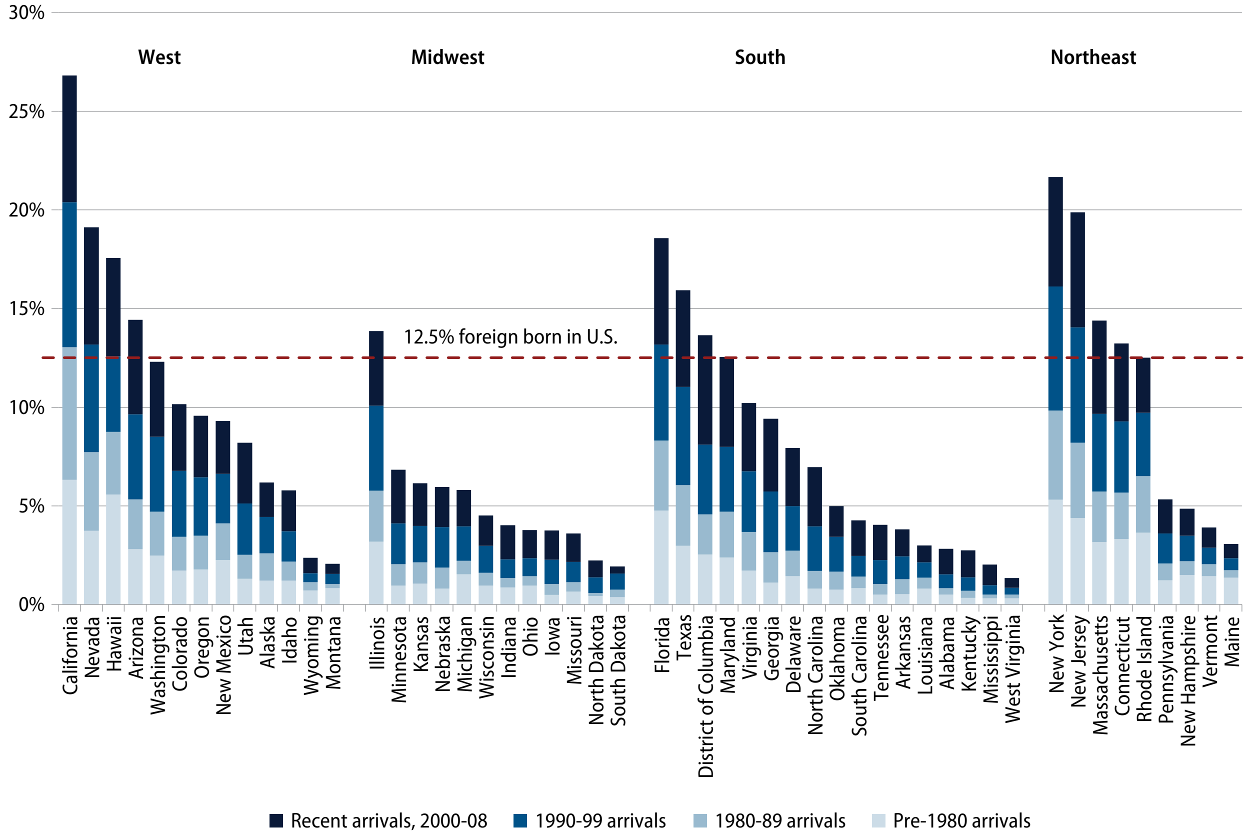
The foreign-born population of the United States reached 38 million in 2008, up from 19.8 million in 1990 (and 9.8 million in 1970). This increase followed several decades of declining immigration to our shores in the middle of the 20th century, such that the 4.7 percent share of the U.S. population that was foreign-born in 1970 was the lowest in American history. Since then, the foreign-born share of our total population rebounded substantially, first to 7.9 percent in 1990 and then reaching 12.5 percent in 2008—a level of immigrant residents still below that of the early 20th century, when it reached 14.7 percent at its apex in 1910.[4]

This new resurgence of immigrant residents was most evident initially in a handful of states—California, New York, New Jersey, Illinois, Florida, and Texas—but soon spread more broadly across the country. Growing demand for labor outside these Big Six states led to dispersed migration networks that spread immigrants more evenly, often to states where few immigrants went before.[5]

FIGURE 1

Waves of immigrants added in each state

Percent of each state's population that is foreign-born in 2008, by decade of arrival



The total percent foreign born is indicated by the full height of the bar for each state, with the portion that arrived before 1980 shown at the bottom of the bar and the portion arrived since 2000 at the top.

A current profile of the share of foreign-born residents in every state's population is provided in Figure 1, which ranks the states with the highest and lowest immigrant population in each region of the nation in 2008. Fourteen states have higher percentages than the national average (12.5 percent), with California (26.8 percent) leading the West, Illinois (13.9 percent) the Midwest, Florida (18.6 percent) and Texas (15.9 percent) the South, and New York (21.7 percent) and New Jersey (19.9 percent) the Northeast. In every state, however, a notable percentage of the state's population is comprised of newcomers who arrived here since 2000. In 27 states, at least 2 percent of the state's population is comprised of immigrant newcomers.

The percentage of a state's population comprised of the newest immigrant arrivals, those who came since 2000, is shown in Figure 1 at the top of the bar for each state, while the earliest arrivals, those who came before 1980, are shown at the bottom of each bar. States with the largest segments at the bottom are the traditional gateway states with long traditions of immigration. States with more recent histories of immigration, such as Georgia and North Carolina, have much larger segments of new immigrants than of earlier arrivals. Of key importance for this report, states with larger segments of long-settled immigrants are also states where assimilation has had a longer time to unfold.

Meanings and measurement of the assimilation concept

Assimilation is a contested topic. There are different points of view about what it means. The generally understood meaning, however, is one of immigrants' adjustment to life in America, yet the topic of assimilation is variously addressed in different debates or discussions with different audiences. It revolves around different terminology used to describe assimilation as well as the choice of reference groups that serve as models for immigrants when adjusting to life in America.

Another, more politically charged debate involves conservative activists who oppose any increases in immigration, some of whom question whether immigrants are assimilating at all and whether they can fit into America. This charge is especially leveled against Latino immigrants. Opposing this view are supporters of immigration, including the Center for American Progress, who point to our nation's deep immigrant heritage and view Latino immigrants as assimilating just as past immigrants have.

These differing points of view require us to define what we mean by assimilation and how we can measure it.

Assimilation: concepts and terminology

What all the discussions about assimilation have in common are concerns about the pace of change over time in immigrants' life in America. Often the facts are elusive because at any moment in time no observer can see all the changes. Assimilation might take several generations to complete, or be largely completed in a single generation, or, alternatively, it might reveal rapid progress in just a decade.[6] This is why the central question broadly shared in all debates is how rapidly immigrants change—something we term *the pace of advancement* in joining the American mainstream.

A number of different terms are used to describe the assimilation process. One set includes integration, incorporation, inclusion, or accommodation—all having to do with the process of knitting immigrant groups into our economy, polity, and society. Another set of terms which emphasizes immigrants' own changes includes adaptation and adjustment, or the process of immigrants' alignment with new constraints and opportunities. Each of the different terms embodies a particular concept or model about how assimilation should proceed.

An earlier model of assimilation embraced in the early and mid-20th century but rejected by most scholars today is termed "Anglo conformity," or the assumption that immigrants should abandon their old customs and traits and try to resemble white America as closely as possible. However, after decades of multicultural experience as previous waves of immigrants successfully integrated into our society, we are now very accustomed to validating and celebrating ethnic differences. Today's model of assimilation is less culturally restrictive and instead emphasizes advances by immigrants in civic and economic participation.

Assimilation is a two-way street as all groups in society converge to form a broad new mainstream of society.

Today sociologists ask: With whom do immigrants aspire to assimilate, or more academically what is the model to which they aspire? A major new theory proposed in the 1990s by sociologists Alejandro Portes and Min Zhou is the "segmented assimilation" model, which posits that different immigrant groups converge on the behavioral norms of different native groups.[7] This model does not espouse the goal of assimilation for any groups but merely seeks to better describe a more diverse empirical reality. More recently, sociologists Richard Alba and Victor Nee proposed a view of assimilation as simply the lowering of ethnic barriers and distinctions between groups.[8] They characterize the 20th century process in the United States as transpiring over several decades and multiple generations. Alba and Nee also reclaim the traditional term assimilation but take pains to separate it from the ethnic bias so evident in the outdated Anglo-conformity model. The two scholars also maintain assimilation is a two-way street as all groups in society converge to form a broad new mainstream of society.

The assimilation process over time

By and large, scholars agree that assimilation is a process that takes place over time, or more precisely the process of growing immigrant achievements we call *advancement*. But scholars from different fields tend to favor different "outcome indicators" of assimilation, or in everyday parlance those identifiable characteristics of assimilation such as English language fluency, naturalization, commitment to local communities through homeownership, and rising income levels. Change is not instantaneous and these kinds of indicators do not all change in the same way over time, so there is disagreement over the time frames for measuring progress.

One major distinction is differences by age at arrival in the United States. New research finds that certain measures of assimilation are highly sensitive to the age at which immigrants arrive, most prominently English-language proficiency and educational attainment—achievements that are greatly accelerated for immigrants who arrive as young children.[9] Other achievements such as homeownership appear to be unaffected by differences in arrival age, as long as it is before age 25. As a result of these differences, theories that emphasize English-language proficiency as the core indicator of assimilation emphasize greater assimilation prospects for immigrants who arrive as children or for the U.S.-born children of these immigrants.[10]

A second time frame is length of time in the United States after arrival. Instead of age at arrival, scholarship on labor and housing markets emphasizes the length of time in the United States since immigration as a key predictor of economic assimilation.[11] Citizenship and homeownership also increase dramatically the longer an immigrant lives here. Although English-language proficiency also increases with length of residence, that is less common for older immigrants than younger immigrants.

Education, by contrast, is little affected by the time spent in the United States for immigrants who arrived after age 20. That is because few immigrants or native-born go back to school when they are adults, no matter how long they live here

This length-of-time effect can be a major force in our momentary assessment of how well assimilation is working. Simply stated, assimilation seems greater when more immigrants have longer residence.[12] In contrast, when immigration is only recently on the rise, most immigrants are obviously more recent arrivals and they have not proceeded very far with their assimilation. Our early luminary Ben Franklin is often quoted for his despair about the seeming failure of Germans to assimilate into their new land when a great many had only recently arrived.[13] In another famous illustration, sociologist Richard Alba documents the 20th century transformation of Italian immigrants from raw newcomers to stalwarts of the professional class, a change that seemed impossible in 1920.[14]

In recent years, this perception is again on the rise. From a historical low point in 1970, the share of the nation's foreign-born residents dramatically increased, first in a few states, and then more broadly. The recent appearance of immigrants in new destinations doing what previous generations of immigrants initially did, forming immigrant clusters within communities, means they have had much less time on average to assimilate.

For this reason it is important to compare the pace of assimilation specifically for groups with the same length of time in the United States. Before doing so, however, we first need to settle on the appropriate indicators of assimilation. To this we now turn.

The recent appearance of immigrants in new destinations means they have had much less time on average to assimilate.

Indicators of assimilation

Given the broad notion of assimilation and variable speed of advancement for particular indicators it is important to address a suite of different outcome measures. Our selected indicators are:

- Citizenship
- Homeownership
- English-language proficiency
- Educational attainment
- Occupation
- Income

These are variables reported in the decennial census of 1990 and 2000 and in the American Community Survey of 2008 (see Methodology on page 31).

Each of these measurements can make a different contribution to our understanding of assimilation. For this reason it is important to highlight their unique qualities and not combine them in some kind of abstract overall index. Advancement toward higher percentages of attainment on each indicator is assumed to be a desired outcome by immigrants and their fellow Americans alike.

Some indicators could reach 100 percent, as suggested by native-born accomplishments such as in the case of citizenship or English-language proficiency. Other indicators, however, reach peak values at much lower levels, such as homeownership (since a substantial minority of the U.S. population does not own their own homes). In order to provide a rough gauge of possible attainment levels by immigrants, we will indicate what is the average observed among the native-born who are age 20 and older.[15] The selected indicators are measured as follows:

- **Citizenship**—the percent of our foreign-born population aged 20 and older who have naturalized to U.S. citizenship, with 100 percent attainment level observed among the native-born because by definition all native-born are citizens, though there is a waiting period for all eligible immigrants.

- **Homeownership**—the percent of our foreign-born householders aged 20 and older who own rather than rent their homes, with average attainment level of the native-born at 66.6 percent.

- **English proficiency**—the percent of our foreign-born population aged 20 and older who speak only English, or who speak English either well or very well, with 99.4 percent the average attainment reported among the native-born.

- **Education**—the percent of our foreign-born population aged 20 and older who complete a high school degree or General Education Development test equivalent (average reported among the native-born is 88.5 percent) and the percent of our foreign-born population aged 25 and older who complete a 4-year college degree or a more advanced degree, with average attainment among the native-born of 27.8 percent.

- **Higher occupation**—the percent of our foreign-born men aged 20 and older (whether employed or not) whose occupation is classified as professional or management, with average attainment among the native-born of 37.9 percent

- **Earnings better than low income**—the percent of our foreign-born men aged 20 and older (whether employed or not) who have individual earnings greater than the poverty threshold for a family of four, with average attainment among the native-born of 55.4 percent.

Each of these indicators measures a different aspect of successful immigrant integration and advancement in life in America. Citizenship represents political incorporation and is the threshold condition needed for voting and full participation in our democracy.[16] Homeownership is a central component of the storied "American Dream" and signifies both landed settlement in the United States and entry into the middle class.[17] English-language proficiency is an indicator of civic integration and also cultural adaptation.[18] Educational attainment is a widely-used measure of human capital formation helpful for successful economic incorporation, and improves chances for higher occupational attainment and a better income.

Estimating assimilation over time

In our study, each of these selected outcome indicators of assimilation is observed at three points in time: 1990, 2000, and 2008. We cannot trace individuals across 18 years in these three separate surveys using the data available, so we trace the average achievements of specified groups of immigrants as observed at these three points in time.

We take this approach even though a far more simple approach would be to calculate the average status attainment of all foreign-born adults in each year, and then trace the trend over time. That would include the average increase in attainment by immigrants who lived here longer. But that measurement also would include immigrant newcomers and would be biased by the growing numbers of new immigrants or young adults turning age 20 who would have to be added to the population of immigrants we would be studying each year. This over-inclusive method would not measure very well the progress of those adults who started out in 1990.

So the preferred solution adopted by immigration scholars and us in this report is to focus on a fixed cohort of immigrants defined by their arrival in one time period. The average attainments of this cohort can be repeatedly observed in successive surveys as all members of the cohort grow older and stay longer in our country. The same individuals are not observed over time—the repeated surveys are not connected to one another—but the same group of individuals can be sampled over time by repeatedly looking at members of a given arrival cohort.[19]

This study focuses on immigrants who arrived in the period of 1985 to 1989 and were first counted in the 1990 census. We then observe them 10 years later in the 2000 census, and another 8 years later in the 2008 American Community Survey, which is conducted annually by the U.S. Census Bureau.

In the scheme of things, 18 years is not a long enough time to observe the complete workings of assimilation. Certainly an earlier arrival cohort such as 1965-69 would afford a longer time span for inspection. But the more recent arrivals provide a better gauge of recent trends and conditions. The more recent arrivals are also more numerous and provide a better statistical sample, especially in states where immigrant populations are more recently settled. For these reasons, the 1985-to-1989 arrival group seems to be the best choice—long enough settled to witness the beginnings of assimilation, and recently enough arrived to provide current assessment.

For our primary analysis we will restrict the cohort to ages 20 and older in 1990, 30 and older in 2000, and 38 and older in 2008. In addition, two supplementary birth cohorts will be introduced for the analysis of English-language proficiency and education—one cohort initially aged 10 to 19 in 1990 and a second cohort initially aged 0 to 9 in 1990.

All of these cohorts are analyzed for the total foreign-born population living in the United States. A subset will also be selected for parallel analysis, namely our foreign-born population whose home country is Mexico or another nation in Central America. Predominantly Spanish speakers and with lower average educational attainment than other immigrant groups, this Latino population has been the subject of particular discussion about its degree of assimilation. Amounting to 40 percent of our foreign-born cohort chosen for analysis, this is an especially important subset of immigrants to study.

Finally, to round out the above analysis outlined for our foreign-born residents—the first generation of their family to live in the United States—we also draw on newly published research on the grown children of immigrants, these second-generation Americans. A newly published study in *Demography* authored by the sociologist and demographer Julie Park and Dowell Myers presents an extensive analysis that compares the average status attainments of immigrant parents in 1980 with the achievements of their grown children at the same age in 2005.[20] Many of the same indicators explored in our study of the first generation are also addressed by Park and Myers, thus permitting useful comparisons to assimilation between generations. We will summarize the Park-Myers generational findings, which pertain to a somewhat longer time period than our own study of the first generation alone.

Assimilation in the first generation

The overall pace of assimilation is best judged by displaying all of the indicators together. This section addresses trends in the United States as a whole from 1990 to 2008. A later section will provide a summary for the individual states. The first set of charts examines all immigrants taken together, to be followed by a specific look at Latino immigrants from Mexico and Central America.

A profile of the selected indicators of assimilation is provided in Figure 2, showing the changes in status attainment from 1990 through 2008 among all immigrants taken as a whole. The most striking gains are witnessed for homeownership, which rose from 16 percent to 62 percent during that time period; citizenship, up from 7 percent to 56 percent; followed by the increasing share of men who earn incomes above low income, which grew from 35 percent to 66 percent. Additional gains are found for speaking English well, which reached 64.1 percent, up from 56 percent, in the 2008 American Community Survey.

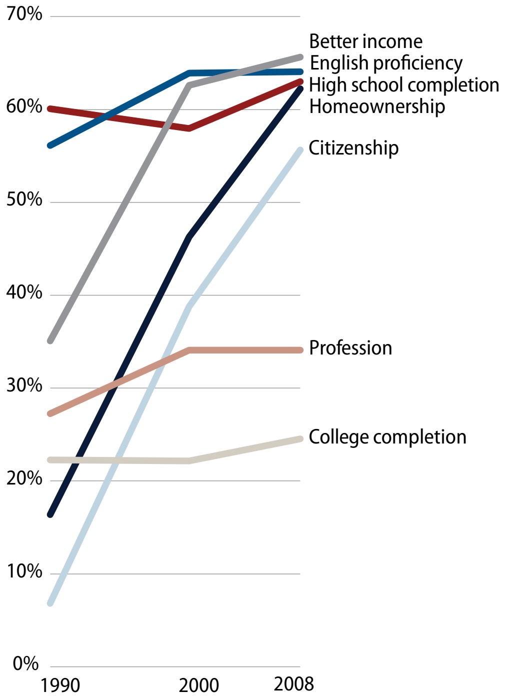
In contrast, three indicators show relatively little change over the 18 years—high school completion, attainment of a B.A. degree, and professional or management occupation. These immigrants were all at least 20 years old when first observed and their educational and career status appears to have been well established by that age.

The dramatic rise in homeownership in just 18 years reveals a strong desire to achieve the American dream. This reflects the practice of pooling multiple incomes in immigrant households and is aided by purchase of lower priced homes. Such sharp upward trajectories into homeownership are commonplace in the immigrant experience in the United States, revealing themselves in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, as well as the 2000s. A par-

FIGURE 2

Rapid assimilation

Key indicators of assimilation charted over two decades



allel rate of progress was found in all decades and in states with both high housing costs (California and New York) and low costs (Texas, Florida, and Illinois).[21]

The rise in citizenship has been on a similar trajectory despite limits in federal law, which requires legal immigrants to wait five years before becoming eligible to naturalize or three years if married to a U.S. citizen. Thus, becoming a citizen can be more difficult for an immigrant than finishing high school or earning a good wage, which can be obtained regardless of citizenship status.

English proficiency also rises in every decade, though it may be underestimated in our data for 2008. Consistency tests of the underlying data indicate to us that the measure of English-language proficiency is underestimated relative to the 2000 Census by about 4 percentage points, suggesting that the Census-consistent proficiency attainment in 2008 is roughly 70 percent.

Conversely, the same consistency tests indicate that high school completion may be over estimated in the ACS, relative to the 2000 Census by roughly 6 percentage points. Explanation of this reasoning is offered in the methodology on page 25. Recognition of this measurement bias helps to explain the apparent discrepancy visible in Figure 2, which indicates rising high school completion rates for this middle-aged cohort (38 and older in 2008). We do not correct these measurement biases but leave them visible as reflected in the raw data.

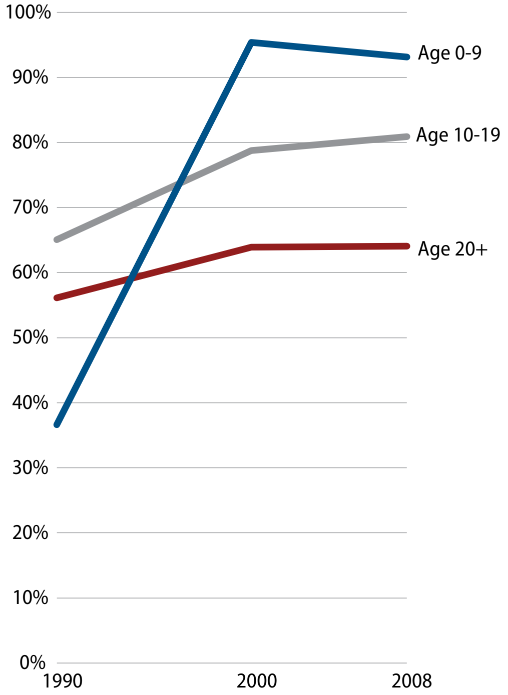
English proficiency and educational attainment are especially sensitive to the age at which immigrants arrive in the United States, according to research cited above. Accordingly, for these factors we repeat our analysis for two younger cohorts, those ages 10 to 19 and ages 0 to 9 at the time of arrival. Analysis of English-language proficiency shows immigrants who arrived as young children achieve proficiency in spoken English that is 20 percentage points more complete than among adult arrivals, reaching roughly 95 percent, though again the measurement difference between the 2000 Census level and the 2008 ACS is apparent in Figure 3.

High school completion is also more common among the youngest immigrant arrivals, reaching 82.9 percent among immigrants who arrived before age 10 compared to 63 percent among those

FIGURE 3

Speaking English well

Younger immigrants do best at mastering English (defined by their age at arrival)



who arrived after age 20. Those who arrive as children receive the opportunity of a U.S. education and the benefits of socializing with other Americans while in their most formative years for linguistic development.[22] In contrast, immigrants who arrive in their teens and twenties bring an educational attainment that reflects standards in their homeland, often shortened to eighth grade, and are not drop-outs from U.S. schools.

Assimilation among foreign-born Latino immigrants

We turn now to the trends in assimilation observed for Latino immigrants who were born in Mexico or Central America. Often these immigrants have the lowest educational attainment and lowest English-speaking skills. Criticism is sometimes expressed that these immigrants are destined for a life of poverty in America. Because all these assumed faults are often exaggerated, there is a compelling need to learn the Latino immigrants' path to assimilation.

The overall picture of assimilation trends for adult immigrants is displayed in Figure 4. The findings resemble those for all immigrants, with the anticipated difference that education levels are substantially lower, as is English-language proficiency. More striking, however, is the strong upward thrust of Latino immigrants in homeownership and earnings. Between 1990 and 2008, homeownership rates soared to 58 percent from 9.3 percent, and the percent of men earning above low income rose to 61.6 percent from 21.5 percent over the same period.

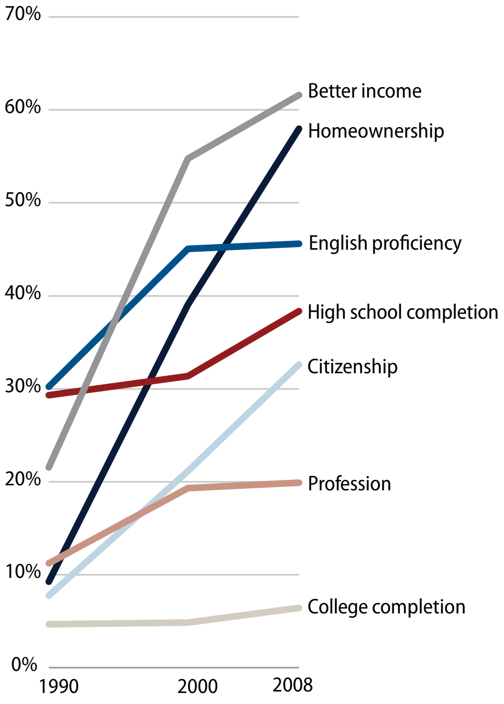
The upshot: Rapid economic advancement is occurring among foreign-born Latinos. When these immigrants were newly arrived in 1990 they may have resembled the negative stereotype of Latino immigrants mired in poverty, but that was before they began their assimilation into the middle class.

While Latino adult immigrants appear to be slow at increasing their English-language proficiency and do not increase their educational attainment once they start working, it is a different story for younger immigrants who arrive as teenagers or young children. The analysis above for all immigrants is repeated here for the subsample that was born in Mexico and Central America.

FIGURE 4

Focus on Latino Immigrants

Indicators of assimilation demonstrate key gains in income and homeownership



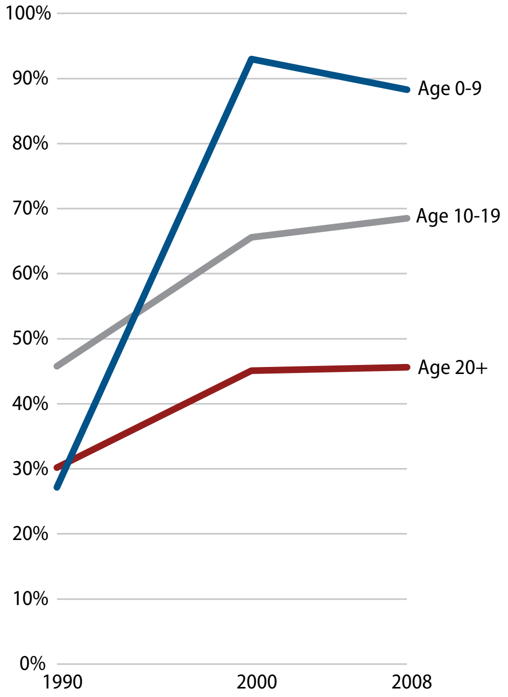
We find that English-language proficiency increases by an even greater amount for Latino immigrants who arrive at young ages than is the case for all immigrants.

In 2008, the percentage of those young Latinos who speak English well, even if underestimated at 88.3 percent, is more than 40 percentage points higher than for adult Latino immigrants (see Figure 5). High school completion by the young arrivals is also much more common than among the adult arrivals, reaching 71.6 percent among immigrants arriving before age 10, compared to 49 percent among those arriving between ages 10 and 19, or 38.3 percent among immigrants arriving after age 20. All in all, it appears that earlier arrival is a greater benefit for eventual adult achievements among Latino immigrants than among all immigrants (see box on programs to facilitate English-language proficiency).

FIGURE 5

English-speaking Latinos

Younger Latino immigrants also do best at mastering English (defined by their age at arrival)



Assimilation in the second generation

Our findings of greater assimilation by young Latino immigrants led to questions about the success of American children born to immigrants in the United States. These U.S.-born children may also have foreign-born parents but they have lived their full lives here, benefiting from citizenship from birth. By looking at this second generation we can learn more about assimilation.[27] To do so we make use of a new study released in *Demography,* drawing especially on the summary intergenerational mobility profile presented therein.[28]

The Park-Myers findings for second-generation Latino Americans indicate even greater increase in high school completion (84 percent) than reported in the current study for Latino immigrants who arrived at young ages. The second-generation status attainments are estimated at the age of 35, including the following additional outcomes: B.A. degree (21 percent), higher-paying occupation (32 percent), living in households above the poverty line (92 percent), and homeownership (71 percent).

Meanwhile, virtually 100 percent of the second-generation Latino Americans have mastered the English language, thus overcoming any barriers their parents suffered. On several of these scores this second generation of Latinos converges on the white native born attainment levels at the same age, such as households above the poverty line (just shy of the native-born standard of 93 percent), homeownership (71 percent vs. 79 percent for native-born) and higher occupation (32 percent vs. 40 percent).

Overall, the Park-Myers findings show dramatic gains in assimilation indicators between the first and second generations. Indeed, the immigrants who arrived as young children who were studied in the present report have posted achievements roughly halfway between those of the first and second generation. In fact, the term often applied to these young children of immigrant parents is the 1.5 generation.

> Virtually 100 percent of second-generation Latino Americans have mastered the English language, thus overcoming any barriers their parents suffered.

Naturalization rules

Immigrant populations in this report are drawn from U.S. Census Bureau data, which does not distinguish between legal and illegal immigrants. Some legal immigrants enter the United States as legal permanent residents while others earn legal permanent resident status over time spent in the country. Regardless, legal permanent residents must wait five years before becoming eligible to naturalize, or three years if married to a U.S. citizen, and be at least 18 years of age and willing to file a petition to naturalize.

Yet more than a quarter of all immigrants in the United States are undocumented and thereby ineligible for citizenship. As a result, citizenship attainment levels stated in this report, which due to data limitations amalgamate all legal and illegal immigrants including those who cannot apply for citizenship, almost certainly underestimate the aspiration of immigrants to naturalize.

Measuring spoken and written English skills

The key for immigrants that unlocks the door to integration in U.S. society is English-language proficiency. The greater the level of English-language skills, the higher the chance for educational and employment achievement and community leadership. The U.S. citizenship test also requires basic knowledge of English.

As this report indicates, younger immigrants are more likely to achieve English-language proficiency. Unlike their parents, immigrant children have access to education and socialization in schools and are often at a young enough age when their language skills are still developing. Latino immigrant children become proficient in English at a greater rate than all of our foreign-born adults, and the strides that our Latino immigrant children make beyond their parents' generation is greater than for all foreign-born children.

At the same time, it is more difficult for older immigrants to develop English-language skills, especially Latino adults. One major factor is that, outside of family, the top priority for immigrant adults is full-time employment.

But there is another significant reason: Funding cuts and diminished availability of English-language literacy training programs have reached crisis levels, creating a situation that the Migration Policy Institute describes as "among the most neglected domestic policy issues in our nation today."[23]

Adult immigrants are eager to learn English, according to several studies, but they face several obstacles. The first is this—a majority of English-as-a-Second-Language programs (57.4 percent) report having waiting lists, according to a 2006 survey and report.[24] Waitlists for ESL classes can range from a few weeks to more than three years, and waitlists are especially long for intensive-language courses and for evening classes when most immigrants are able to attend.

The second obstacle is this—despite a dramatic increase in demand for ESL classes, the federal government between fiscal years 2004 and 2008 reduced spending on adult education and ESL programs from $574 million to $554 million.[25] This $20 million reduction in funds over four years resulted in many cancelled classes, more underfunded classes, and an overall lack of professional educators and material.

What's more, ESL training is insufficient because the objective is for most students to read and speak at a fifth grade level. Because of reduced funding, even those programs still in operation cannot expand their training to bring immigrants English-language skills up to par. And as previously noted, adult immigrants have less time—and usually less resources such as transportation or money—to apply toward learning a second language.

Numerous recommendations on expanding access to English learning programs are made to Congress every year, such as combining ESL with workplace training—to no avail.

That's not the case in other traditional immigrant receiving countries. "Other English-speaking countries such as Canada and Australia have comprehensive national policies that address integration of new immigrants; however the United States lacks any such policy or system" testified Charles S. Amorosino, Jr., executive director of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc., during a House of Representatives subcommittee hearing last year.[26] "Although the mosaic of programs in the adult education system are effective, the adult education system as a whole is complex, fragmented, and in many places, ad hoc in nature."

As our study notes, Latino immigrants are integrating into the middle class despite lower rates of English-language proficiency and education for adults. The policy challenge is to expand adult educational opportunities, particularly in areas of the country that have become new gateway communities with growing numbers of immigrants.

Immigrant assimilation across our nation

Immigrants to our shores may not assimilate equally in all states because economic opportunities and public policies differ from state to state. But how much do immigrants' assimilation achievements really vary? In this section of our report we explore the differences among the 50 states in immigrant assimilation visible in 2008. We focus on this single year since many states did not have many immigrants in earlier decades, and because the most recent data permits the broadest comparisons. Also, this single snapshot most closely reflects what local observers can see today in each state.

We focus first on detailed findings assembled for the 9 largest states for immigrant settlement (over 900,000 foreign born residents in 2008). The achievements of immigrants in these states are examined separately for those who arrived since 2000 (0 to 8 years of U.S. residence), those with 8 to 17 years of residence, and those with 18 to 27 years of residence. Later in this section we will compare all 50 states, including ones with very small immigrant populations, and report simple averages that ignore any differences based on length of time in the United States.

Among Latino immigrants homeownership levels exceed 45 percent after two decades of residence in every key destination state except New York.

The impact of time spent in the United States

The first striking fact evident in the data is how much immigrants' achievements in every state depend upon the length of time they have spent in the United States. To illustrate this, trends are charted for the nine states with the largest immigrant populations, including California and Arizona in the West, Illinois in the Midwest, Texas, Florida and Georgia in the South, and New York, New Jersey, and Massachusetts in the Northeast. (Education and occupation are not charted because we've already examined why these two indicators do not change much for adult immigrants with time in the United States.)

Whether for all foreign-born residents (Figure 6) or Mexican and Central-American immigrants (Figure 7), the results are fairly consistent across states. Immigrants have much higher achievements when they have resided longer in the United States. The attainment that varies the most is homeownership, but that is a reflection of local housing market differences.[29] Immigrants are slower to achieve homeownership in New York and the high-cost states of California and Massachusetts.[30] Nonetheless, after two decades of residence, over 50 percent of all foreign-born households have achieved homeownership in all the key destination states except New York. This compares favorably to the national homeownership rate of 60.6 percent. Among Latino immigrants homeownership levels are somewhat lower but exceed 45 percent after two decades in residence in every key destination state except New York.

Affordability of housing is apparently much less important than the length of time immigrants have been settled.

States where immigrants are recent arrivals

States where a high proportion of the immigrants are only recent arrivals in the United States naturally have lower overall levels of immigrant advancement. The rapid introduction of this rising population has created confusion over the rate of assimilation and contributed to fear-based political debates. The evidence shown above, however, tells a clear story of rising assimilation in each state when immigrants grow longer settled.

Here we compare the average immigrant achievements (aggregated without regard to length of time in the United States) for all 50 states and the District of Columbia, as presented in Tables 2 and 3 on pages 34 and 36. Two supplementary tables are also provided to account for "confidence intervals" estimated for the sample in the American Community Survey, which is necessary because there are such small numbers of immigrants in some states.[31] These data reflect what an observer can see in each state at a single moment in time, but the averages are very misleading about the rate of assimilation. The great weakness of this snapshot is that it averages together all immigrants living in a state, no matter how long they have lived in the United States, and is much less accurate than the portrait of assimilation described in the previous section. We will demonstrate here how to make better sense out of these state comparisons by comparing the average achievements to how great a share of the states' immigrants are recently arrived.

FIGURE 6

Assimilation in key immigrant destination states

Four measures of assimilation by length of time in the United States

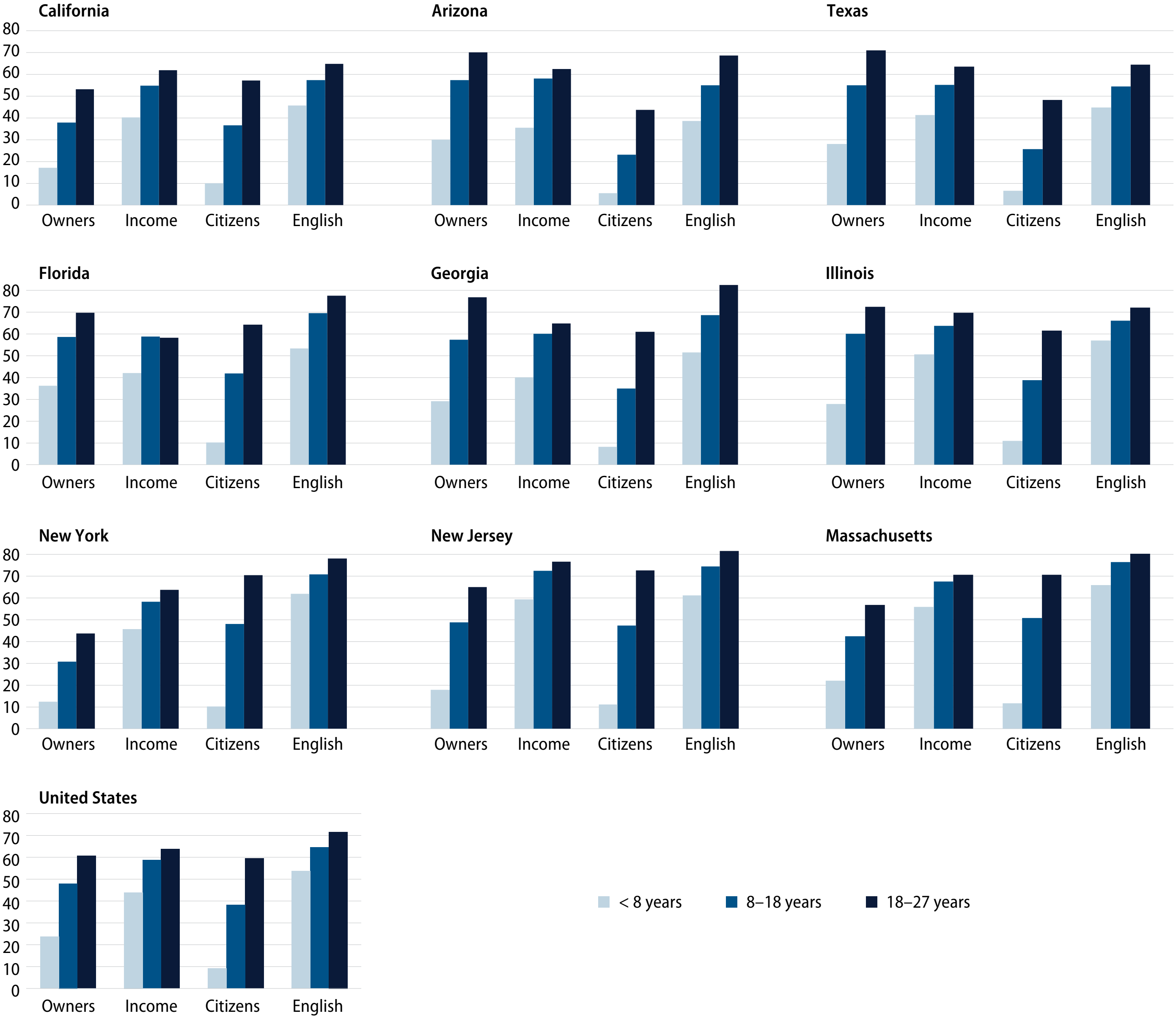
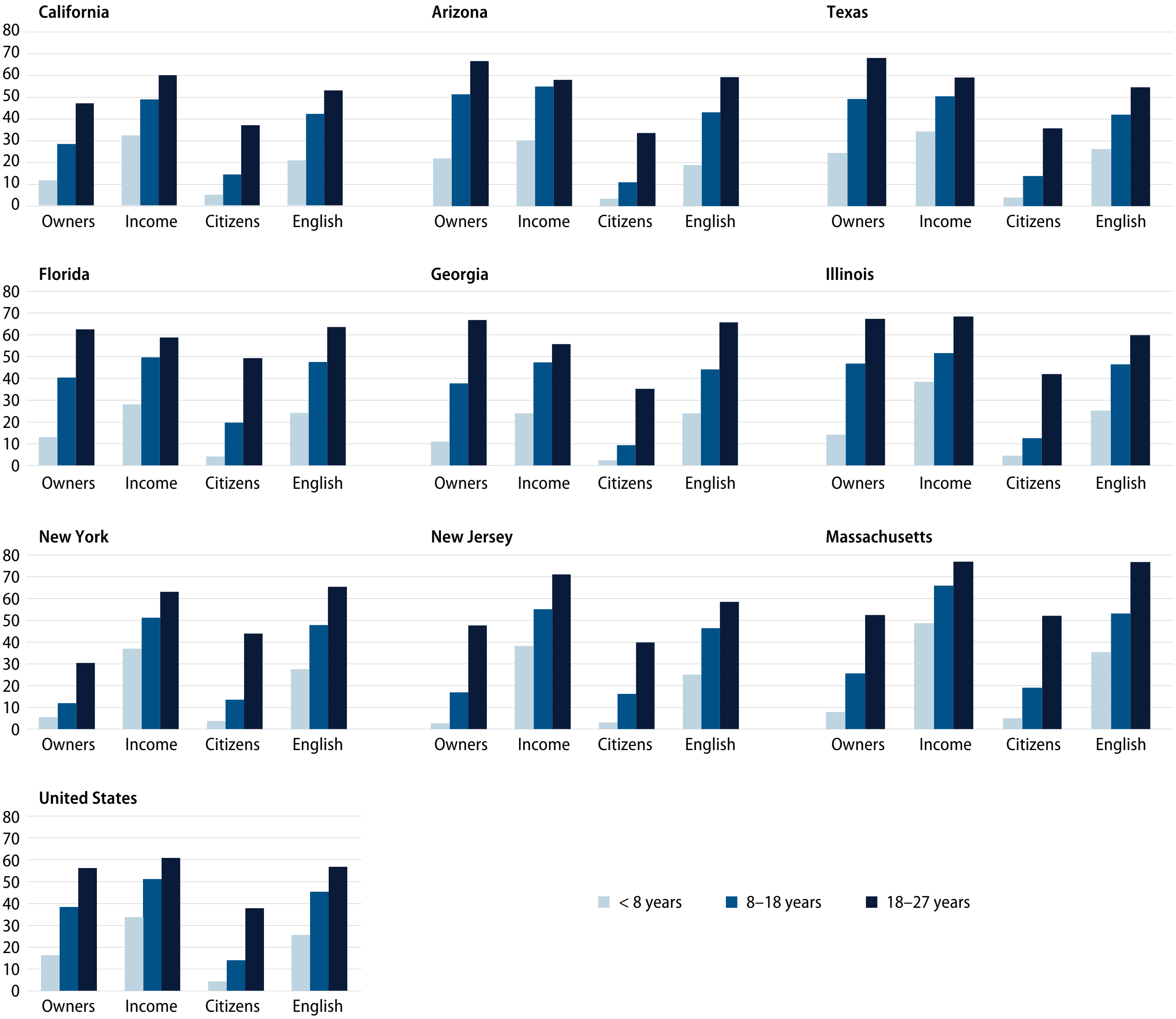


FIGURE 7

Latino assimilation in key immigrant destination states

Four measures of assimilation by length of time in the United States



States that have only recently received immigrant newcomers can expect rapid assimilation in coming years. This can be seen by comparing states that have larger shares of their immigrant residents who are newcomers with other states that have fewer newcomers and more long-settled immigrants. There is a wide variation between states in the share of their foreign born who are recently arrived (see the last column in Tables 2 and 3 on pages 35 and 37). Given the substantial rise in attainment levels among immigrants when they reside here longer, we would expect higher overall assimilation of immigrants in states where long-settled residents are more prevalent.

Conversely, states that are home to greater proportions of recent arrivals would have less assimilated immigrants, on average. Take three states as examples, focusing on Latino immigrants:

- In Arizona, 29.8 percent of Latino immigrants have arrived since 2000, and 53.8 percent of all Latino immigrant households are homeowners.

- Georgia is a new destination state, with 44.3 percent of its Latino immigrants having arrived since 2000. Accordingly, a lower share of Latino immigrant households in Georgia are homeowners—37.1 percent—than in states with longer-settled immigrants.

- South Carolina is a very recent destination for Latino immigrants: fully 55.4 percent arrived there since 2000, and only 24.9 percent of Latino immigrant households in South Carolina are homeowners.[32]

Housing prices offer little explanation for these differences in homeowner achievements. Arizona, with the highest homeownership of the three, has a median house value that is 16 percent higher than the national average, Georgia's median is 14.4 percent below the average, and South Carolina, with the lowest homeownership, has a median 29.8 percent below the national average yet also has the lowest immigrant homeownership. Affordability of housing is apparently much less important than the length of time immigrants have been settled.

These examples are representative of other states in the nation. We demonstrate this in a graph of the 50 states that plots each state's percent of immigrants who are recent arrivals on the horizontal axis and immigrants who are homeowners on the vertical axis (Figure 8). The three example states—Arizona, Georgia, and South Carolina—are identified along the central trend line of this distribution.

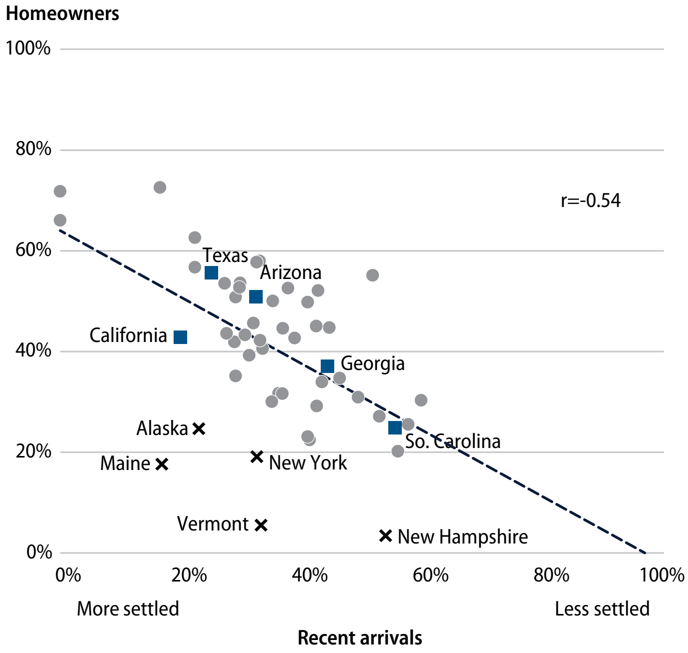
The downward sloping line reflects a negative relationship—the more newcomers, the lower the homeownership rate—(a correlation of –0.54 between the share of Latino immigrants in a state that are newly arrived and the share that are homeowners).[33]

Most states are clustered near the central trend line, indicating strong conformance to this basic relationship, but several are not. In particular, five states at the bottom of the graph have very low homeownership percentages for immigrants—Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont in New England alongside Alaska, and New York. All five of these states pose exceptional conditions for immigrants; four of the states are in the far north and have very small Latino populations, while in New York the conditions include very high housing prices and low homeownership for all residents.

FIGURE 8

Achieving the American Dream

Homeownership is high among Latino immigrants in states where more are long settled



What is more noteworthy in Figure 8 is Latino immigrants' high homeownership in California, despite prices that are 136.3 percent above the national average. Long-settled in California, Latino immigrants have fared surprisingly well in achieving homeownership under the conditions. Although it is not feasible to label every state in Figure 8, the exact figures for each state are reported in Table 3 on page 37 (with confidence intervals reflecting the uncertainty of estimates based on a sample in Table 3a on page 38).[34] The immigrant story implied by these data is visually displayed in Figure 8 and is well illustrated by comparing Texas and Arizona to California. Texas has 25.2 percent recent arrivals and 55.6 percent homeowners among its immigrants, which positions the Lone Star state above California in homeownership (due to Texas's much lower housing prices) and to the left of Arizona (because it has fewer immigrants who are newcomers).

Current measures of immigrant assimilation are heavily affected by the newness of immigrants. Similar correlations between how recently immigrants arrived and states' overall levels of assimilation are calculated for each of our attainment

TABLE 1

Correlations between recency of immigration and states' overall levels of assimilation in 2008

The table summarizes correlations computed between each status attainment and the percent new arrivals, drawing on the data for all 50 states in Table 2 (all foreign born) and Table 3 (Latino immigrants) in the Appendix beginning on page 34. Correlations can range from -1 to 0 to +1, and a strong relationship exceeds either 0.40 or -0.40. The results show that correlations with recency arrival are largely negative and stronger across most attainments for Latinos. This means that average assimilation levels in states are highly affected by the recency with which their Latino immigrant residents have arrived in the United States

	Above low income	English proficient	Higher occupation	Citizens	High school completion	College completion	Homeowners
All foreign born	–0.135	–0.190	0.014	–0.683	–0.108	0.120	–0.314
Mexican and Central American immigrants	–0.459	–0.447	0.251	–0.693	–0.238	0.083	–0.543

indicators, but these are not also charted as a graph. The correlations are reported both for all foreign-born residents and separately for those immigrants born in Mexico and Central America (Table 1). The correlations are different for all the attainment indicators, reflecting how much assimilation increases with length of time in the United States for different attainments. In addition, the correlations for all foreign born are affected when different immigrant groups are mixed into different decades of arrivals.

For this reason, the correlations focused on Latino immigrants alone may offer the clearest picture of the difference that newness of immigration makes for overall attainment levels of immigrants in each state. As expected, the education indicators are only slightly affected by when an immigrant arrived, but the occupation indicator shows a positive correlation that is anomalous because normally it is as uncorrelated as education. All the other correlations yield the strong negative effect to be expected: in citizenship (-0.69), homeownership (-0.54), income (-0.46), and English proficiency (-0.45).

Clearly, a greater share of recent arrivals lowers the overall attainments visible for a state's immigrants at one point in time. Once those newcomers have had time to assimilate, much higher achievement can be expected given the overwhelming evidence from other states that boast immigrants who arrived there earlier than 2000.

Conclusion

The evidence presented in this report shows that assimilation of immigrants in America continues at a rapid pace today. The insights from this study are achieved through careful assembly of comprehensive data spaced decades apart, taking great care to measure immigrant progress by the most consistent means possible. Our major task was to arrange the raw data in a format that reflects the time dimension of immigrant advancement so that others can see the changes over time. Sharing these data should help the American public assess the rate of assimilation with their own eyes.

The results are telling. Whether from higher or lower starting points of social and economic attainment—as observed when immigrants are newly arrived—the ensuing two decades reveal a dramatic rise. This remarkable advancement is most evident for citizenship and homeownership, followed by income and English-language proficiency. Educational attainment and occupation are relatively constant among immigrants who arrived as adults, but immigrant children exhibit tremendous gains over their parents.

Assimilation is all about advancement over time, contrary to the unwitting assumption that immigrants are frozen in time like Peter Pan. The dynamics portrayed in this study are often invisible to local observers of new immigrant populations, but rapid gains in immigrant achievements can be disguised when the number of more visible newcomers is greater than the number of longer-settled immigrants. Indeed, newcomers may be all that are seen in new destination states. Local residents simply may not know what to expect from immigrant assimilation.

Assimilation is all about advancement over time, contrary to the unwitting assumption that immigrants are frozen in time like Peter Pan.

As we demonstrate in this study, the first 18 years of U.S. residence by Latino immigrants results in a rise in homeownership to 58 percent from 9.3 percent, and a rise in the share of men earning better than a low income to 61.6 percent from 21.5 percent. Meanwhile, naturalization has risen to 32.6 percent. These are compelling indicators that assimilation is robust in the 21st century and follows the pattern of previous eras of American history.

The process of immigrant advancement appears to be broadly similar in different states, although it is affected by local economic conditions on earnings and housing market effects on homeownership. Less immediately visible may be the effects of state education policies that accrue over time and only become apparent years later when young people reach adulthood. Surely different state policies may impact the rate of immigrant assimilation, but on the whole the trends seem positive and encouraging of further efforts.

Claims that immigrants are stuck at the bottom of the ladder are due simply to the newness of immigrants and the lack of time for assimilation to occur. Given time, the evidence plainly shows that our immigrants today are growing ever more successful and becoming part and parcel of the fabric of our nation. This is the continuing legacy of our assimilation nation.

Methodology and data for this study

By far the most common data used in studies of immigrant assimilation are drawn from Census Bureau surveys—either the decennial census or the Current Population Survey. A newer survey, the American Community Survey, or ACS, is now coming into prominence because it is designed to replace most of the question content that was formerly asked in the decennial census. This includes all the questions about place of birth, language, education, income, occupation, and naturalization, among others. The ACS also fields a very large sample—of over 7 million people per year—and so is likely to provide useful-size samples for studying small groups even in small states. Given that assimilation takes place over long time periods, we compare data from the 2008 ACS with earlier data from the 1990 and 2000 census, as described below.

Although the ACS is intended to replicate the socioeconomic content of the decennial censuses of the past, differences in survey methodology make the ACS data slightly inconsistent with earlier censuses on some questions. Such inconsistencies have potential to skew the changes between previous censuses and the ACS that we are using to measure assimilation. Accordingly, a necessary prior task has been to evaluate the consistency of data between surveys, especially between the 2000 census and the 2008 ACS, using the intervening ACS surveys to inform this analysis. This evaluation is described in a separately available working paper and summarized here.[35]

Many people are familiar with the methodology used in the 2000 and 1990 censuses, in which questionnaires are mailed out to all known addresses and respondents are asked fill them out and mail them back. Interviewers are then sent to obtain responses for addresses from which the forms are not returned. In the 2000 census, 67 percent of households responded by mail. In the ACS, questionnaires are sent to a sample of households, 3 million per year, at a rate of 250 thousand each month. Follow-up interviews are conducted at first by phone. After two months a 1 in 3 sample of the remaining addresses are selected for in-person field interviews. In the 2007 ACS, 47 percent of households responded by mail.[36]

For linguistically isolated Hispanic households (in which no adult speaks English well) the mail response rate was 18 percent.

The lower mail-back rate in the ACS than census can be attributed to the speedier follow-up with personal interviews as well as greater visibility, publicity, and familiarity associated with the decennial census.

Systematic differences in responses to the items in this study appear to be related to the difference in response mode, since the wording of the questions in the census and the ACS is the same.[37] Not only does the ACS interview a much larger share of households in person (or by phone) than the census, but the interviewers are more highly trained permanent staff than those who carry out the census.

Our review of the ACS results for 2008 as well as all earlier years of the ACS finds that the data for the population in this study, 1985-89 immigrants from Mexico and Central America, appear generally consistent with the 2000 census results for most of the indicators used in our study.

The two notable exceptions are English-language proficiency and completion of a high school degree. We estimate that the English proficiency is 3 or 4 percent lower in the ACS than the census and completion of a high school degree some 6 percent higher in the ACS relative to the 2000 census. It is reasonable to infer, but we cannot prove, that these differences are due to the much higher rate of responses to trained and bilingual interviewers in the ACS. Subjective understanding of English language proficiency may be expected to differ in the context of a personal interview than a self-reported questionnaire. Interviewers might reasonably also be expected to provide additional information beyond the questionnaire about the correspondence between degrees obtained in different nations. For purposes of the present study, the main conclusion is not the relative accuracy of the two surveys but the simple fact that the responses systematically differ.

Despite these inconsistencies, in this study we do not adjust the data in order to impose consistency. Instead, we display the data as they are out of belief that greater trustworthiness is gained by reporting the unadjusted source data. As a guide to readers, we point out where there seem to be noteworthy differences between the observed and actual changes between two points in time and offer our insights on adjustments needed for greater consistency.

Another limitation posed by the American Community Survey is that its sample design yields estimates surrounded by a range of uncertainty. This factor becomes more prominent when the sample is smaller, such as in small states when examining small subgroups of immigrants. For the state-level analysis we have followed the procedures recommended by the Census Bureau to calculate by formula a 90 percent confidence interval around each estimate.[38] Rather than clutter the text and exhibits with these confidence intervals, we report the plus-or-minus range in a separate table for the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Also, we take care not to emphasize estimates for the smallest samples in our analysis, relying more on the larger groups. Where values for especially small samples are commented on, such as new immigrants in South Carolina, we indicate the plus-or-minus range in a footnote.

Appendix

Table 2 provides a 2008 snapshot from the American Community Survey that summarizes the status of all immigrants residing in each state. The figures for each topic are an average of all immigrants residing in each state, regardless of the differences between recently-arrived and longer-settled immigrants. Also shown in the percent of immigrants who have only recently arrived in the United States.

Table 2a is a companion to Table 2, showing the plus-or-minus range of 90% confidence that surrounds each percentage reported in Table 2. These confidence intervals are calculated according to procedures given by the Census Bureau in "PUMS Accuracy of the Data (2008)."
www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/2008/AccuracyPUMS.pdf.

Table 3 provides a 2008 snapshot from the American Community Survey that is selected only for Latino immigrants. The figures for each topic are an average of all Latino immigrants residing in each state, regardless of the differences between recently-arrived and longer-settled immigrants. This summarizes the status of Latino immigrants residing in each state and shows the percent of immigrants who have only recently arrived in the United States.

Table 3a is a companion to Table 3, showing the plus-or-minus range of 90% confidence that surrounds each percentage reported in Table 3. These confidence intervals are calculated according to procedures given by the Census Bureau in "PUMS Accuracy of the Data (2008)."
www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/2008/AccuracyPUMS.pdf.

TABLE 2

Snapshot in 2008 of average immigrant achievements and recency of arrival

	Above low income	English proficient	Higher occupation	Citizens	High school completion	College completion	Homeowners	Arrived 2000-08
Alabama	49.8	68.7	33.0	34.1	74.5	29.1	49.5	41.0
Alaska	61.3	82.0	29.9	57.5	84.1	24.7	57.8	25.0
Arizona	49.4	57.9	25.4	32.5	55.8	16.9	59.1	29.2
Arkansas	46.8	61.3	25.1	38.0	54.7	16.7	52.6	30.6
California	53.4	61.2	30.4	46.7	62.6	24.8	49.5	20.4
Colorado	50.8	65.8	29.6	34.3	59.9	24.2	51.6	28.6
Connecticut	63.2	80.6	37.9	46.8	79.3	32.8	59.3	26.2
Delaware	57.5	81.6	41.0	39.5	74.3	38.0	53.2	32.0
District of Columbia	65.7	86.8	47.0	34.7	73.1	46.7	34.5	38.1
Florida	48.6	69.8	31.6	49.7	75.3	25.1	63.2	25.3
Georgia	52.8	67.3	31.6	35.6	70.3	29.8	57.2	34.7
Hawaii	56.8	76.7	31.1	56.3	79.6	22.9	54.3	23.5
Idaho	52.1	64.8	26.5	34.5	55.6	18.0	56.6	30.3
Illinois	58.8	67.7	30.8	46.4	69.7	28.7	63.3	24.0
Indiana	51.7	71.1	35.1	37.8	69.0	29.2	59.0	36.7
Iowa	54.2	70.6	29.9	39.1	68.9	29.0	55.4	33.6
Kansas	56.5	69.4	29.2	37.9	63.3	26.8	57.5	31.4
Kentucky	48.0	76.2	35.5	35.3	75.4	33.1	51.0	45.0
Louisiana	50.4	73.3	33.9	48.4	68.2	26.0	56.3	24.2
Maine	46.7	91.7	34.5	58.5	78.2	24.7	66.0	18.1
Maryland	65.5	81.3	47.0	47.4	79.9	41.5	62.5	32.1
Massachusetts	60.5	75.0	39.4	50.1	75.6	34.3	49.0	29.1
Michigan	51.9	80.2	40.3	52.2	76.7	37.4	67.0	27.1
Minnesota	57.2	74.4	32.5	47.0	71.3	32.3	55.1	33.9
Mississippi	53.9	66.3	34.0	30.9	65.6	28.2	51.4	47.1
Missouri	49.1	72.6	31.3	41.0	73.5	32.9	53.3	33.6
Montana	46.2	93.0	37.5	52.6	82.8	34.6	63.4	19.5
Nebraska	56.1	64.3	24.2	38.9	58.7	20.0	51.5	28.2
Nevada	59.7	65.9	22.5	39.6	63.2	19.5	53.1	26.4
New Hampshire	64.7	88.0	44.2	54.3	81.4	41.9	57.8	23.3
New Jersey	65.1	73.6	38.9	51.8	78.8	36.1	53.3	25.8
New Mexico	47.3	58.8	24.4	30.6	51.0	15.9	62.4	24.8
New York	52.4	72.2	31.0	53.7	72.4	28.5	40.1	22.0
North Carolina	49.1	63.3	28.3	29.6	63.5	26.9	50.3	38.6
North Dakota	59.5	90.7	24.9	45.2	82.4	16.0	56.4	30.3
Ohio	54.3	82.6	42.7	51.1	81.6	41.8	58.6	31.9
Oklahoma	53.9	65.8	27.3	35.8	60.3	21.9	54.3	27.6
Oregon	48.6	65.7	26.5	37.9	66.0	25.4	55.9	28.0
Pennsylvania	58.2	77.7	39.4	51.1	78.4	36.9	59.6	27.8
Rhode Island	57.3	68.3	22.8	52.0	60.9	19.3	50.5	18.1
South Carolina	48.8	69.9	28.2	33.6	70.5	25.3	51.7	38.4
South Dakota	75.6	79.4	41.7	51.8	85.9	38.6	49.8	19.7
Tennessee	53.1	70.2	28.8	32.7	69.6	28.9	50.7	40.4
Texas	51.9	56.1	29.2	33.9	54.1	19.3	58.4	26.3
Utah	57.5	65.8	28.7	33.2	69.0	21.6	54.9	32.9
Vermont	46.3	89.9	39.6	56.7	83.5	33.8	66.0	20.6
Virginia	65.4	77.4	41.9	47.2	77.4	39.3	61.8	30.1
Washington	58.8	71.7	34.9	45.8	73.6	30.5	57.6	26.4
West Virginia	44.8	90.9	52.1	51.1	84.9	45.8	68.7	30.4
Wisconsin	52.3	73.6	28.3	42.8	68.8	25.9	57.0	29.8
Wyoming	50.5	73.6	16.8	35.9	85.7	17.7	53.6	30.9

Notes: Above low income: Percent of foreign-born men aged 20 and older (whether employed or not) who have annual earnings greater than the poverty threshold for a family of four.

English proficient: Percent of foreign-born population aged 20 and older who speak only English, or who speak English well and very well.

Higher occupations: Percent of foreign-born men aged 20 and older (whether employed or not) whose occupation is classified as professional or management.

Citizens: Percent of foreign-born population aged 20 and older who have naturalized to U.S. citizenship.

High school completion: Percent of foreign-born population aged 20 and older who have completed a high school degree or GED equivalent.

College completion: Percent of foreign-born population aged 25 and older who have completed a 4-year college degree or a more advanced degree.

Homeowners: Percent of foreign-born householders aged 20 and older who own rather than rent their homes.

Arrived 2000-2008: Percent of foreign born population aged 20 and older that arrived in U.S. in 2000 to 2008 (the date of the survey).

TABLE 2A

Confidence intervals for state indicators of achievements and recency of arrival for all immigrants, 2008

	Above low income	English proficient	Higher occupation	Citizens	High school completion	College completion	Homeowners	Arrived 2000-08
Alabama	± 5.4	± 3.4	± 5.1	± 4.6	± 3.2	± 3.5	± 5.9	± 4.8
Alaska	± 8.4	± 4.9	± 7.9	± 6.7	± 4.3	± 5.2	± 9.0	± 5.9
Arizona	± 2.0	± 1.8	± 1.7	± 1.8	± 1.3	± 1.1	± 2.2	± 1.8
Arkansas	± 5.5	± 3.9	± 4.8	± 4.7	± 3.7	± 3.0	± 6.4	± 4.4
California	± 0.6	± 0.6	± 0.6	± 0.6	± 0.4	± 0.4	± 0.7	± 0.5
Colorado	± 2.7	± 2.0	± 2.5	± 2.6	± 1.8	± 1.7	± 3.0	± 2.5
Connecticut	± 2.8	± 1.9	± 2.8	± 2.8	± 1.5	± 1.8	± 2.9	± 2.4
Delaware	± 7.5	± 4.4	± 7.0	± 6.5	± 4.4	± 5.1	± 7.1	± 6.2
District of Columbia	± 6.5	± 3.4	± 6.8	± 5.4	± 4.0	± 4.6	± 5.9	± 5.5
Florida	± 1.1	± 0.7	± 1.0	± 1.0	± 0.6	± 0.6	± 1.1	± 0.9
Georgia	± 2.0	± 1.3	± 1.8	± 1.9	± 1.3	± 1.3	± 2.2	± 1.9
Hawaii	± 4.4	± 2.7	± 4.1	± 3.9	± 2.2	± 2.4	± 4.3	± 3.4
Idaho	± 6.1	± 4.8	± 5.4	± 5.4	± 4.1	± 3.4	± 6.7	± 5.2
Illinois	± 1.4	± 1.0	± 1.3	± 1.4	± 0.9	± 0.9	± 1.5	± 1.2
Indiana	± 3.6	± 2.4	± 3.5	± 3.2	± 2.3	± 2.3	± 4.0	± 3.2
Iowa	± 5.0	± 3.6	± 4.3	± 4.4	± 2.9	± 3.1	± 5.0	± 4.2
Kansas	± 4.3	± 2.9	± 3.7	± 3.6	± 2.6	± 2.5	± 4.5	± 3.5
Kentucky	± 5.7	± 3.3	± 5.5	± 5.2	± 3.1	± 3.6	± 6.2	± 5.4
Louisiana	± 5.2	± 2.9	± 4.9	± 4.9	± 3.3	± 3.3	± 5.7	± 4.2
Maine	± 9.6	± 3.6	± 9.1	± 7.8	± 4.7	± 5.0	± 8.0	± 6.1
Maryland	± 2.2	± 1.4	± 2.3	± 2.2	± 1.2	± 1.6	± 2.4	± 2.1
Massachusetts	± 2.0	± 1.4	± 2.0	± 2.0	± 1.1	± 1.3	± 2.1	± 1.8
Michigan	± 2.3	± 1.4	± 2.2	± 2.4	± 1.4	± 1.6	± 2.4	± 2.1
Minnesota	± 2.7	± 2.2	± 2.5	± 2.8	± 2.0	± 2.2	± 3.0	± 2.7
Mississippi	± 8.0	± 4.1	± 7.6	± 6.9	± 5.1	± 5.1	± 8.9	± 7.5
Missouri	± 4.1	± 2.4	± 4.0	± 3.9	± 2.4	± 2.7	± 4.3	± 3.8
Montana	± 14.7	± 4.7	± 13.3	± 10.4	± 6.0	± 7.9	± 12.6	± 8.3
Nebraska	± 5.2	± 5.3	± 4.1	± 4.5	± 3.5	± 3.0	± 5.3	± 4.2
Nevada	± 2.7	± 2.4	± 2.3	± 2.6	± 1.8	± 1.5	± 2.9	± 2.4
New Hampshire	± 7.0	± 3.3	± 7.3	± 6.5	± 4.0	± 5.2	± 7.4	± 5.5
New Jersey	± 1.4	± 1.1	± 1.4	± 1.4	± 0.8	± 1.0	± 1.5	± 1.3
New Mexico	± 4.6	± 3.4	± 3.9	± 4.1	± 3.0	± 2.3	± 3.9	± 3.8
New York	± 1.0	± 0.6	± 0.9	± 0.9	± 0.6	± 0.6	± 1.0	± 0.8
North Carolina	± 2.4	± 1.4	± 2.1	± 2.1	± 1.6	± 1.5	± 2.6	± 2.2
North Dakota	± 16.0	± 7.1	± 13.0	± 12.2	± 9.4	± 10.3	± 14.1	± 11.3
Ohio	± 2.8	± 1.4	± 2.8	± 2.7	± 1.4	± 1.9	± 3.0	± 2.5
Oklahoma	± 4.2	± 3.3	± 3.7	± 3.5	± 2.8	± 2.5	± 4.4	± 3.3
Oregon	± 3.2	± 2.3	± 2.8	± 2.9	± 2.0	± 2.0	± 3.4	± 2.7
Pennsylvania	± 2.1	± 1.3	± 2.2	± 2.3	± 1.2	± 1.5	± 2.2	± 2.1
Rhode Island	± 5.4	± 3.3	± 4.5	± 4.9	± 3.4	± 2.9	± 5.4	± 3.8
South Carolina	± 4.5	± 2.8	± 4.0	± 4.0	± 2.7	± 2.8	± 4.8	± 4.1
South Dakota	± 12.0	± 9.6	± 14.8	± 15.3	± 7.3	± 10.4	± 13.0	± 12.2
Tennessee	± 3.8	± 2.3	± 3.5	± 3.6	± 2.4	± 2.5	± 4.2	± 3.8
Texas	± 1.0	± 0.7	± 0.9	± 0.9	± 0.7	± 0.5	± 1.0	± 0.9
Utah	± 4.1	± 3.2	± 3.7	± 3.7	± 2.4	± 2.3	± 4.2	± 3.7
Vermont	± 10.5	± 5.1	± 9.5	± 7.8	± 5.0	± 6.5	± 8.8	± 6.4
Virginia	± 2.1	± 1.2	± 2.2	± 2.0	± 1.2	± 1.5	± 2.3	± 1.9
Washington	± 2.2	± 1.6	± 2.1	± 2.1	± 1.3	± 1.4	± 2.3	± 1.9
West Virginia	± 12.3	± 4.8	± 13.1	± 10.7	± 5.6	± 8.4	± 12.2	± 9.8
Wisconsin	± 3.4	± 2.6	± 2.8	± 3.1	± 1.9	± 1.9	± 3.7	± 2.9
Wyoming	± 15.6	± 10.0	± 10.9	± 12.3	± 6.9	± 7.8	± 15.3	± 11.8

TABLE 3

Snapshot in 2008 of average Latino immigrant achievements and recency of arrival

	Above low income	English proficient	Higher occupation	Citizens	High school completion	College completion	Homeowners	Arrived 2000-08
Alabama	38.0	40.7	10.0	14.9	52.4	7.0	27.1	52.8
Alaska	59.7	65.6	4.4	56.5	59.5	2.9	24.6	23.1
Arizona	46.8	43.6	16.5	22.6	41.0	5.2	53.8	29.8
Arkansas	41.0	43.7	11.1	24.5	35.0	4.1	42.7	38.8
California	49.0	44.9	17.5	30.0	40.9	5.7	42.8	19.9
Colorado	43.0	48.2	13.9	16.4	38.9	5.9	39.2	31.3
Connecticut	51.4	47.0	18.9	18.4	57.9	12.0	31.6	36.1
Delaware	50.8	47.3	12.2	9.6	38.6	6.0	42.3	33.1
District of Columbia	57.5	74.1	13.0	17.2	29.7	7.0	22.5	41.3
Florida	43.8	47.2	18.0	27.8	52.2	10.9	45.6	32.0
Georgia	38.7	40.0	11.9	12.6	43.1	5.9	37.1	44.3
Hawaii	73.3	69.1	32.9	37.4	69.3	8.6	29.2	42.5
Idaho	50.6	48.8	13.3	24.7	32.8	2.2	52.9	29.7
Illinois	54.3	49.3	14.3	29.3	46.6	5.9	56.8	22.3
Indiana	49.1	49.0	14.4	21.3	43.6	5.4	52.1	42.7
Iowa	51.6	49.9	7.9	26.9	41.7	5.3	51.0	32.4
Kansas	51.3	53.1	13.5	23.8	40.0	5.7	58.0	33.0
Kentucky	26.5	48.8	12.9	18.0	42.2	3.2	20.2	55.9
Louisiana	48.5	65.6	17.3	38.3	54.9	7.3	43.3	30.6
Maine	57.0	71.4	14.0	49.7	54.5	27.9	17.6	16.8
Maryland	61.6	56.0	23.7	20.1	42.9	7.9	49.8	41.0
Massachusetts	59.6	53.5	21.5	25.0	57.5	13.4	30.0	35.0
Michigan	38.1	52.9	9.8	19.3	36.7	7.1	57.8	32.5
Minnesota	48.1	45.9	9.3	18.3	42.6	8.0	44.8	44.6
Mississippi	49.4	38.8	11.2	11.1	39.5	5.3	25.6	57.6
Missouri	37.6	46.2	7.8	19.0	39.0	5.6	45.1	42.4
Montana	49.4	73.8	0.0	59.5	64.5	0.0	66.1	0.0
Nebraska	55.0	48.9	11.7	30.0	37.5	2.1	53.5	27.2
Nevada	59.6	46.8	15.2	23.2	41.8	4.8	41.9	28.9
New Hampshire	71.5	51.7	7.2	15.3	36.6	1.9	3.4	53.9
New Jersey	51.0	41.6	13.6	18.6	47.2	6.6	23.1	41.1
New Mexico	46.1	47.1	16.0	23.8	37.1	3.6	62.6	22.3
New York	47.7	47.6	13.4	24.1	50.1	9.1	19.3	32.6
North Carolina	40.0	39.9	11.8	10.1	38.5	6.4	34.7	46.3
North Dakota	100.0	100.0	0.0	49.3	59.5	0.0	71.8	0.0
Ohio	35.9	52.5	12.3	23.1	50.8	11.8	30.3	59.7
Oklahoma	53.9	48.8	12.2	21.8	37.4	6.0	50.8	29.0
Oregon	41.3	42.5	10.1	16.3	37.6	5.4	40.5	33.5
Pennsylvania	56.5	45.9	16.8	18.8	45.3	6.9	34.0	43.3
Rhode Island	61.2	46.3	17.3	21.1	48.0	10.6	35.2	29.0
South Carolina	39.4	39.3	12.0	9.4	44.9	4.3	24.9	55.4
South Dakota	81.1	70.6	0.0	25.2	60.7	9.2	72.6	16.5
Tennessee	44.7	48.5	8.5	12.0	43.3	4.1	30.9	49.3
Texas	47.3	43.3	18.7	24.9	38.9	6.0	55.6	25.2
Utah	57.4	50.6	15.6	19.6	48.0	7.5	50.1	35.2
Vermont	81.1	53.6	40.4	35.1	58.1	0.0	5.7	33.3
Virginia	57.8	52.3	16.4	22.5	43.0	10.2	44.6	36.9
Washington	51.2	46.6	12.4	19.2	38.9	4.2	43.6	27.5
West Virginia	43.5	81.8	43.5	26.0	49.3	15.9	55.1	51.7
Wisconsin	48.2	51.8	10.8	19.5	46.7	6.3	52.6	37.7
Wyoming	61.6	49.1	2.9	22.0	77.6	1.0	31.7	36.7

Notes: Above low income: Percent of foreign-born men aged 20 and older (whether employed or not) who have annual earnings greater than the poverty threshold for a family of four.

English proficient: Percent of foreign-born population aged 20 and older who speak only English, or who speak English well and very well.

Higher occupations: Percent of foreign-born men aged 20 and older (whether employed or not) whose occupation is classified as professional or management.

Citizens: Percent of foreign-born population aged 20 and older who have naturalized to U.S. citizenship.

High school completion: Percent of foreign-born population aged 20 and older who have completed a high school degree or GED equivalent.

College completion: Percent of foreign-born population aged 25 and older who have completed a 4-year college degree or a more advanced degree.

Homeowners: Percent of foreign-born householders aged 20 and older who own rather than rent their homes.

Arrived 2000-2008: Percent of foreign born population aged 20 and older that arrived in U.S. in 2000 to 2008 (the date of the survey).

TABLE 3A

Confidence intervals for state indicators of achievements and recency of arrival for Latino immigrants, 2008

	Above low income	English proficient	Higher occupation	Citizens	High school completion	College completion	Homeowners	Arrived 2000-08
Alabama	± 7.5	± 5.7	± 4.6	± 5.5	± 5.8	± 3.3	± 9.0	± 7.7
Alaska	± 23.8	± 18.5	± 10.0	± 20.6	± 17.8	± 6.5	± 42.1	± 17.5
Arizona	± 2.4	± 2.2	± 1.8	± 2.0	± 1.6	± 0.8	± 2.8	± 2.2
Arkansas	± 6.8	± 5.2	± 4.3	± 5.4	± 4.6	± 2.1	± 8.5	± 6.1
California	± 0.8	± 0.9	± 0.6	± 0.8	± 0.6	± 0.3	± 1.0	± 0.7
Colorado	± 3.6	± 2.9	± 2.5	± 2.8	± 2.5	± 1.3	± 4.2	± 3.5
Connecticut	± 7.9	± 7.3	± 6.2	± 6.6	± 5.7	± 4.1	± 8.8	± 8.2
Delaware	± 13.5	± 11.5	± 8.3	± 8.0	± 9.9	± 5.2	± 14.7	± 12.8
District of Columbia	± 12.4	± 8.4	± 8.4	± 8.1	± 7.7	± 4.5	± 10.3	± 10.5
Florida	± 2.4	± 1.9	± 1.8	± 2.2	± 1.7	± 1.1	± 2.9	± 2.3
Georgia	± 2.9	± 2.1	± 1.9	± 2.1	± 2.2	± 1.1	± 3.7	± 3.2
Hawaii	± 19.4	± 16.6	± 20.6	± 21.2	± 13.8	± 9.0	± 23.2	± 21.7
Idaho	± 7.6	± 6.7	± 5.2	± 6.5	± 5.2	± 1.7	± 9.1	± 6.9
Illinois	± 2.1	± 1.7	± 1.5	± 2.0	± 1.5	± 0.7	± 2.4	± 1.8
Indiana	± 5.1	± 3.9	± 3.6	± 4.1	± 3.7	± 1.8	± 6.3	± 4.9
Iowa	± 7.7	± 6.4	± 3.9	± 6.4	± 5.0	± 2.5	± 8.0	± 6.8
Kansas	± 5.6	± 4.3	± 3.6	± 4.4	± 3.7	± 1.8	± 6.4	± 4.9
Kentucky	± 8.4	± 7.2	± 6.4	± 7.8	± 6.7	± 2.5	± 9.4	± 10.1
Louisiana	± 8.7	± 5.5	± 6.6	± 8.4	± 6.1	± 3.4	± 10.1	± 7.9
Maine	± 61.2	± 48.8	± 42.8	± 64.8	± 46.6	± 41.9	± 52.8	± 48.5
Maryland	± 4.6	± 3.8	± 4.0	± 3.9	± 3.3	± 1.9	± 6.0	± 4.8
Massachusetts	± 6.3	± 5.3	± 5.3	± 5.6	± 4.4	± 3.2	± 7.0	± 6.2
Michigan	± 5.0	± 4.3	± 3.1	± 4.8	± 3.9	± 2.2	± 7.1	± 5.7
Minnesota	± 5.4	± 5.6	± 3.2	± 4.8	± 4.9	± 2.8	± 7.1	± 6.2
Mississippi	± 11.1	± 6.5	± 7.0	± 7.3	± 8.2	± 4.1	± 12.6	± 11.5
Missouri	± 7.1	± 5.3	± 4.2	± 6.2	± 5.2	± 2.6	± 9.2	± 7.8
Montana	± 48.7	± 21.9	± 0.0	± 27.8	± 20.7	± 0.0	± 48.3	± 0.0
Nebraska	± 6.9	± 7.5	± 4.2	± 5.8	± 4.7	± 1.5	± 7.3	± 5.7
Nevada	± 3.5	± 3.5	± 2.6	± 3.1	± 2.5	± 1.1	± 4.0	± 3.3
New Hampshire	± 26.8	± 22.6	± 15.3	± 20.6	± 21.8	± 6.5	± 11.3	± 28.5
New Jersey	± 3.6	± 3.3	± 2.4	± 3.0	± 2.6	± 1.4	± 3.7	± 3.8
New Mexico	± 5.2	± 4.0	± 3.9	± 4.4	± 3.4	± 1.4	± 4.6	± 4.3
New York	± 2.6	± 2.1	± 1.8	± 2.3	± 1.9	± 1.1	± 2.6	± 2.6
North Carolina	± 3.1	± 2.0	± 2.0	± 2.0	± 2.3	± 1.2	± 3.7	± 3.3
North Dakota	± 0.0	± 0.0	± 0.0	± 34.5	± 33.9	± 0.0	± 27.7	± 0.0
Ohio	± 7.1	± 5.5	± 4.8	± 6.6	± 5.5	± 3.8	± 9.4	± 7.7
Oklahoma	± 5.4	± 4.7	± 3.6	± 4.2	± 3.8	± 2.0	± 6.1	± 4.6
Oregon	± 4.4	± 3.7	± 2.7	± 3.4	± 3.2	± 1.6	± 5.4	± 4.3
Pennsylvania	± 5.9	± 5.2	± 4.8	± 6.0	± 4.8	± 2.6	± 7.8	± 7.6
Rhode Island	± 11.1	± 8.1	± 8.6	± 9.3	± 8.1	± 5.3	± 12.1	± 10.3
South Carolina	± 6.2	± 4.8	± 4.1	± 4.0	± 4.8	± 2.1	± 7.3	± 6.8
South Dakota	± 19.4	± 21.2	± 0.0	± 26.2	± 20.1	± 12.7	± 22.8	± 22.4
Tennessee	± 5.4	± 3.9	± 3.0	± 3.9	± 4.1	± 1.8	± 6.4	± 6.1
Texas	± 1.2	± 0.9	± 0.9	± 1.0	± 0.8	± 0.4	± 1.3	± 1.0
Utah	± 5.6	± 4.8	± 4.1	± 4.4	± 3.7	± 2.1	± 6.1	± 5.3
Vermont	± 29.4	± 35.1	± 34.0	± 31.3	± 27.8	± 0.0	± 18.5	± 31.0
Virginia	± 4.2	± 3.0	± 3.2	± 3.6	± 3.0	± 1.9	± 5.1	± 4.1
Washington	± 3.8	± 3.3	± 2.5	± 3.2	± 2.7	± 1.2	± 4.6	± 3.6
West Virginia	± 35.0	± 17.2	± 37.4	± 24.7	± 20.8	± 15.4	± 33.5	± 28.2
Wisconsin	± 5.2	± 4.9	± 3.0	± 4.1	± 3.5	± 1.8	± 6.6	± 5.1
Wyoming	± 20.7	± 16.8	± 6.7	± 15.8	± 12.2	± 2.9	± 23.1	± 18.4

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Endnotes

1 We make use of the 1990 and 2000 censuses, along with the American Community Survey for 2008 (described below) because of the large sample size it offers.

2 Dowell Myers. *Immigrants and Boomers: Forging a New Social Contract for the Future of America*. (New York: Russell Sage Foundation,2007), p.104-05.

3 John F. Kennedy, *A Nation Of Immigrants* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1964), p. 36.

4 The terms foreign born and immigrant will be used interchangeably. The native-born are people who were citizens at birth, either because they were born in the United States or one of its outlying territories, or by virtue of birth abroad to a U.S. citizen. All other residents of the U.S. are termed immigrant.

5 A good discussion of the spreading out can be found in Douglas S. Massey and Chiara Capoferro. "The Geographic Diversification of American Immigration." In Douglas S. Massey, ed., *New Faces in New Places: The Changing Geography of American Immigration* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2008).

6 The classic statement about multiple generations is Milton Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964) and a more contemporary statement is Richard Alba and Victor Nee. *Remaking the American Mainstream: Assimilation and Contemporary Immigration*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003). For recent measurements of advancement between the first and second generations in several domains see Julie Park and Dowell Myers, "Intergenerational Mobility in the Post-1965 Immigration Era: Estimates by an Immigrant Generation Cohort Method," *Demography* 47 (May): 369-92.

7 Alejandro Portes and Min Zhou, "The New Second Generation: Segmented Assimilation and its Variants," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 530 (November) (1993): 74-96.

8 Alba and Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream.*

9 Dowell Myers, Xin Gao, and Amon Emeka. "The Gradient of Immigrant Age-at-Arrival Effects on Socioeconomic Outcomes in the U.S.," *International Migration Review* 43 (Spring) (2009): 205-229.

10 Rubén Rumbaut, "Assimilation and its Discontents: Between Rhetoric and Reality," *International Migration Review* 31 (4) (1997): 923-60; and Alejandro Portes and Rubén Rumbaut., *Legacies: The Story of the Immigrant Second Generation*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

11 Barry R. Chiswick, "The Effect of Americanization on the Earnings of Foreign-born Men," *The Journal of Political Economy* 86 (5)(1978): 897-921; Borjas 1985; Dowell Myers and Seong Woo Lee, "Immigrant Trajectories into Homeownership: A Temporal Analysis of Residential Assimilation," *International Migration Review* 32 (Fall)(1998): 593-625.

12 A full review of the several temporal biases that have hampered the proper understanding of immigrant advancement is provided in John Pitkin and Dowell Myers, "A Summary Period Measure of Immigrant Advancement in the U.S.," *Demographic Research* (2010, forthcoming). Underestimates of immigrant assimilation due to recency of arrival fall under the category of "unaccounted shift in durational composition."

13 "Few of their children in the country learn English; they import many books…. They begin of late to make all their bonds and other legal writings in their own language, which (though I think it ought not to be) are allowed good in our courts, where the German business so increases that there is continual need of interpreters…." Benjamin Franklin letter to Collinson, May 9, 1753, from H.W. Brands, 2000, *The First American: The Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin*, (New York: Doubleday).

14 Richard Alba, *Italian Americans: Into the Twilight of Ethnicity*, (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1985).

15 These attainment levels are taken from a special tabulation of the 2008 American Community Survey for native-born, non-Hispanic whites aged 50 to 59. The native-born attainment only provides an approximate guide to the different levels of attainment possible on different indicators. Our analysis of immigrant advancement will be based on how much immigrants increase their attainments over time on each indicator, not on how close immigrants come to the native-born maximum.

16 S. Karthick Ramakrishnan, *Democracy in Immigrant America: Changing Demographics and Political Participation*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005).

17 William A.V. Clark, *Immigrants and the American Dream: Remaking the Middle Class.* (New York: Guilford Press, 2003); Dowell Myers and Cathy Yang Liu, "The Emerging Dominance of Immigrants in the US Housing Market 1970-2000," *Urban Policy and Research* 23 (3) (2005): 347-65; Stuart A. Gabriel and Gary Painter, "Mobility, Residential Location and the American Dream: The Intrametropolitan Geography of Minority Homeownership," *Real Estate Economics* 36 (3) (2008): 499-531.

18 Frank D. Bean and Gillian Stevens, *America's Newcomers and the Dynamics of Diversity*. (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2003).

19 This cohort approach is widely used by immigration scholars. For a practical explanation of cohorts and how they differ from period cross-sectional data, see Dowell Myers, "Cohorts and Socioeconomic Progress." In Reynolds Farley and John Haaga, eds., *The American People: Census 2000*, (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2005) p. 139-66.

20 Park and Meyers "Intergenerational Mobility in the Post-1965 Immigration Era: Estimates by an Immigrant Generation Cohort Method." For the cohort method to work best it is ideal if cohorts have permanent membership and no one enters or leaves the cohort. Circular migration has potential to rotate cohort membership and it bears consideration whether this might bias the net advancement of cohorts, such as would be the case if the only immigrants to leave the U.S. were the "failures" or "successes." In fact, the evidence is that, despite individual movement in or out, there is little net bias and measures describing the cohorts' basic membership appear relatively stable across decades.

21 See the review of evidence in Myers and Liu "The Emerging Dominance of Immigrants in the US Housing Market 1970-2000." Homeownership levels were lower in the high cost states but the rate of homeownership increase with growing length of residence was roughly similar.

22 Rumbaut, "Assimilation and its Discontents: Between Rhetoric and Reality."

23 Margie McHugh, Julia Gelatt, and Michael Fix, "Adult English Language Instruction in the United States: Determining Need and Investing Wisely (Washington: Migration Policy Institute, 2007), p. 3, available at http://www.migrationinformation.org/integration/language.cfm.

24 Dr. James Thomas Tucker, "The ESL Logjam: Waiting Times for Adult ESL Classes and the Impact on English Learners (Los Angeles: National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials Educational Fund, 2006) p. 12.

25 Ibid.

26 Charles S. Amorosino, Jr., Testimony before the House Higher Education, Lifelong Learning, and Competitiveness Subcommittee.

27 For rich examples see Portes and Rumbaut., *Legacies: The Story of the Immigrant Second Generation*, and Philip Kasinitz and others, *Inheriting the City: The Children of Immigrants Come of Age.* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008).

28 See Figure 1 in Park and Myers "Intergenerational Mobility in the Post-1965 Immigration Era: Estimates by an Immigrant Generation Cohort Method."

29 The median price of owner-occupied housing varies tremendously between the states. In 2008, the median house price reported for the U.S. as a whole was $197,600. The median price in Hawaii was 183.5 percent above the U.S. median, while that in West Virginia was 51.5 percent below the U.S. median. Source: 2008 American Community Survey, table B25077.

30 Median house values are 61.4 percent above the U.S. median in New York State, 136.3 percent higher in California, and 78.9 percent higher in Massachusetts.

31 We must highlight here a major limitation posed by the American Community Survey—its sample yields estimates surrounded by a range of uncertainty when data are selected for states with very small populations of immigrants. The Census Bureau recommends calculating for each estimate a 90 percent "confidence interval around estimate", which is a plus-or-minus range that we report in Tables 2a and 3a. When examining the overall pattern of results this sampling variability is not of great concern. But if an individual number is singled out, then it is important to be aware of its confidence interval because estimated numbers based on small populations can have such a wide range within which the true figure lies. In practice, the true value for the population is more likely to lie near the sample estimate reported in Tables 2 and 3 than it is to lie near the outer extreme of the confidence interval. For more details see the Methodology.

32 As a very new destination, South Carolina has a much smaller Latino immigrant population, and so the confidence interval surrounding their homeownership rate is plus or minus 7.3 percent. This is in contrast with confidence intervals of 3.7 percent in Georgia and 2.8 percent in Arizona (see Table 3a).

33 The trend line is estimated by a bivariate regression, $y = -0.661x + 63.99$, which indicates that the overall homeownership rate (y) for Latino immigrants in a state declines by 0.66 points for every increase of one percentage point in the share that are recently arrived (x) instead of longer settled.

34 In fact, these "exact figures" are estimates based on a sample survey. Sampling variability in the American Community Survey creates greater uncertainty about the estimates provided for states with small immigrant populations, as discussed in the methodology section. Thus the exact location of the dot for each state can be higher or lower by some amount. Following Census Bureau recommended methodology, we are 90 percent certain that the homeownership level of Latino immigrants in California is plus or minus 1 percent of what is shown, while in South Carolina it is plus or minus 7.3 percent. Confidence intervals for all the state data reported in Tables 2 and 3 are reported in supplementary tables 2A and 3A.

35 John Pitkin, "Evidence of Trends or Artifacts of Methods? Differences in the Characteristics of Latino Immigrants Between the 2000 Census and the 2005 and Later American Community Surveys." Working Paper (2010).

36 U.S. Census Bureau, "American Community Survey Design and Methodology Report" (2009). 2007 is the latest year for which the response rate has been published.

37 Another difference between the surveys is that the census is taken as of a point in time, April 1, and the ACS is a rolling, or continuous, survey. This difference affects results for some questions but not those in this study.

38 U.S. Census Bureau, "2008 ACS Accuracy of the Data (US)" (2010), available at http://www.census.gov/acs/www/UseData/Accuracy/Accuracy1.htm.

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