Intergenerational Residential Mobility among Young Adults of Mexican Origin in Greater Los Angeles

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Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Population Association of America in Philadelphia, March 31-April 2, 20005. We are grateful for the comments and contributions of Irene Graff, Patricia Lisme Lira, and Sabrina Palacio. We also gratefully acknowledge the other investigators from the project on Immigrant Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles: Frank D. Bean, Rubén G. Rumbaut, Jennifer Lee, Louis DeSipio, Leo Chavez, and Min Zhou, as well as the support of the Russell Sage Foundation. Contact Susan K. Brown at swierz@uci.edu.

Abstract

We examine the degree to which young adults of Mexican origin are spatially integrated into Metropolitan Los Angeles over generations in the United States. We find that children and grandchildren of immigrants live in neighborhoods with ever higher proportions of Anglos and greater median income but that the effect drops off slightly in fourth and later generations. By these later generations, however, the correlation between the proportion Anglo and the neighborhood income also drops off, suggesting that some young people of Mexican origin are moving to neighborhoods that are heavily Anglo but not especially wealthy. We view this as some evidence of assimilation into a working-class. Living in more suburbanized counties also allows those of Mexican origin to achieve greater neighborhood wealth and a higher percentage Anglo.

Despite the vast scope of Mexican migration to the United States, it remains a heavily debated question as to how Mexican immigrants and their offspring are faring. Some scholars have portrayed Mexican immigrants as unlikely to assimilate (Huntington 2004). On the other hand, some argue that Mexican incorporation is proceeding steadily but will take longer than incorporation of other groups because of the migrants' relative lack of education and the disadvantage faced by many initially as a result of unauthorized status (Bean and Stevens 2003). This paper addresses one significant aspect of Mexican-Americans' incorporation – what kinds of neighborhoods they live in. In particular, we use traditional spatial-assimilation markers of residential attainment to determine the level of integration of the Mexican-origin population in metropolitan Los Angeles by generation in the United States.

In the assimilation literature, spatial location has long been considered one of the mechanisms by which demographers can determine the level of incorporation of any immigrant group among other groups (Massey 1985, Alba and Nee 2003). A contrasting view holds that ethnic communities may persist despite the socioeconomic mobility of their members; certainly, this view has a long tradition in New York City (e.g. Glazer and Moynihan 1963, Rieder 1985), but tends to be based on ethnographic studies. Census-based studies of New York City (Alba, Logan and Crowder 1997, Alba et al. 1995) show ethnic shifting and dispersion and dilution of white ethnic neighborhoods in the suburbs; at the same time, they find evidence of apparently deliberate clustering in well-off non-white ethnic neighborhoods (Alba, Logan and Zhang 2002).

In the longstanding debate on the socioeconomic mobility of Mexican immigrants and their children, studies on Hispanic residential settlement patterns have generally a pattern of greater spatial assimilation (Alba and Nee 2003). This may seem initially counterintuitive, given that absolute levels of segregation of Latinos have been rising over the last decade (Logan et al.

2004). But in an assimilationist framework, the level of segregation should rise when immigration levels are high, because immigrant networks will channel newcomers into gateway cities, and within those cities, into co-ethnic enclaves, faster than old-timers can integrate into the rest of the population. In fact, insofar as the length of time a group has been in the United States relates to the group's residential integration into the population as a whole, White and Glick argue (1999) that Mexicans are unusually highly integrated.

But the data are not unambiguous, for several reasons. Hispanics have often faced discrimination in housing markets, and this affects their ability to learn of residential opportunities and the appreciation on the homes they buy. Moreover, as is the case in the spatial assimilation model, residential mobility is tied to socioeconomic status, and their status has been held back by poor schools, low (though rising) educational levels, and the reduction in income that follows from a low starting point in group mobility. Studies on residential incorporation lean both ways, both assimilationist (Massey and Denton 1987, 1988, Alba and Logan 1993, Myers and Yu 2004, South, Crowder and Chavez 2004) and segregation-based (Yinger 1995, Allen 2002, Flippen 2004, Krivo and Kaufman 2004). More specifically, nativity, socioeconomic status and existing ethnic concentration explain some of the levels of separation of the Hispanic population from non-Hispanic whites (Massey and Denton 1988, Massey 1979, Denton and Massey 1988, Hwang and Murdock 1998, and South et al. 2004). But the overall picture for Mexican spatial incorporation remains somewhat muddier than for other groups. We see several reasons for this:

1. Much research treats Mexicans as part of the pan-ethnic group Hispanics, even though the trajectory of those of Mexican origin differs from those of many other groups often

considered Hispanic, e.g. Puerto Ricans, Cubans or South Americans (Bean and Tienda 1987).

2. The phenomenal growth of the Mexican-origin population in the last 30 years has depressed many indicators of mobility, such as integration or aggregate-level studies wages; for wages, at least, analyses by immigrant generation tend to be much more optimistic about the mobility of those of Mexican origin (Bean and Stevens 2003). Nevertheless, even after three generations, there exists a large wage gap between Mexicans and whites, a good deal of which can be explained by the relatively lower educational levels of Mexican Americans (Trejo 1997). Mexicans also have less wealth, not only because of educational gaps, but also because of the relative youth of household heads and their greater numbers of children (Cobb-Clark and Hildebrand 2004). Intergenerational mobility for Mexicans is difficult to gauge, for several reasons.
3. Until the last decade, the Mexican population was fairly highly concentrated in just a few cities, making it somewhat more difficult to study in the context of nationwide segregation patterns. Furthermore, Mexicans often appeared more "suburban" than other immigrant groups, in part because of their traditional employment in agriculture and residence on the outskirts of metropolitan areas (Guest 1980).
4. Many researchers cite social and medical benefits to living in barrios (Peak and Weeks 2002) and argue that close social ties that develop in the barrio preclude many of the poor outcomes associated with ghettos (Moore and Vigil 1993). Positive outcomes associated with ethnic concentration among Mexicans relate as well to the literature showing same-group preferences among Hispanics as well as other groups (Clark 1992, Charles 2000). On the other hand, living in wealthier areas generally provides access to more amenities.

Further, integration at the neighborhood level seems to decrease social distance (Oliver and Wong 2003).

5. Intergenerational mobility for Mexicans is difficult to gauge, for several reasons. The gap between the educational level of Mexican immigrants and native-born Americans keeps growing, not because education in Mexico is stagnating but because it is growing at a slower level than the education rates in the United States. Further, intergenerational progress is hard to measure (Smith 2004). Research on socioeconomic mobility of Hispanics shows some slight apparent decline in progress by the third generation (Kao and Tienda 1995), or smaller returns to education for Mexicans than for other immigrant groups, even into the third and later generations (Neidert and Farley 1985).

Especially for the latter reasons, research needs to separate the Mexican-origin population by generation so that the size of the first generation does not obscure evidence of mobility among later generations. This kind of study can be done only crudely with current Census questions, which no longer ask about parents' place of birth and which offer relatively few relevant outcome variables for individual-level data on spatial assimilation, although percentage non-Hispanic white and median household income are the two most common (Alba and Nee 2003). Given these considerable constraints, researchers have made heroic efforts to determine assimilation patterns of Mexicans and other groups, but they also acknowledge the limitations they have faced and a need for new sources of data (Alba and Logan 1991, 1992, Logan, Alba and Zhang 2002).

This paper draws on data from a major new study, Intergenerational Immigrant Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles (IIMMLA), to address questions about the spatial mobility of those of Mexican origin in the five-county Los Angeles area. Although the Mexican-origin population is

beginning to scatter throughout the country, Los Angeles remains the premiere port of entry for Mexicans and the city with the largest and oldest Mexican-origin population. Those of Latino origin (about three-quarters of them Mexican) constitute Los Angeles' single largest ethnic group – more populous than even non-Hispanic whites. Historically, they have been treated subserviently and have congregated in barrios. Even now, the majority of Latinos in the Los Angeles area still live in Los Angeles County, though they have been moving eastward toward areas of greater development.

The study is also illuminating because Los Angeles is so unlike the concentric-circle urban model that formed the basis for Chicago School spatial-assimilation research. In Los Angeles, housing prices do not increase according to distance from the central city but, in general, from proximity to the ocean. These areas are for the most part built up. The fastest-growing suburban counties, Riverside and San Bernardino, are much hotter in summer than areas near the ocean, and the prevailing winds blow LA's smog their way. Commutes from these areas into Los Angeles can be enormous. But housing prices are considerably lower. So, unlike the old patterns of neighborhood life-cycle or persistence, whereby growth was concentrated in the most expensive areas, some of the fastest-growing regions in the metropolitan area are those that are less desirable geographically but consequently have more moderate prices. Hence residential assimilation here can take place in fast-growing areas here without the same level of relative socioeconomic status that might be required to move into newer housing in metropolitan areas where growth is concentrated in the most desirable parts of the area. For this study, we use counties as a crude proxy for distinguishing central city from suburbanized areas, because the traditional central-city/suburban divide is less meaningful in Los Angeles. Many of the biggest barrios in Los Angeles County are technically in suburbs, and the most concentrated Spanish-

speaking city in the country is Santa Ana, in Orange County, which also might be considered a suburb. Riverside and San Bernardino Counties, together often known as the Inland Empire, are probably the closest approximation to the traditional notion of suburbs in the Los Angeles area, at least for the Mexican-origin population.

Hypotheses

We are particularly interested in the ethnic and economic composition of the neighborhoods in which persons of Mexican origin live and grew up. Given past research with Mexican spatial integration, we do not expect to see a strict stratification model, that is, Mexican-origin residents remaining in barrios across generations. But because Hispanics in the United States have faced so many structural barriers – and because prior evidence has pointed to some evidence of stagnation on their progress after two generations in the United States, we may find some evidence of "bumpy-line" assimilation. Whereas a "straight-line" assimilation pattern would suggestion smooth transitions across generation, a "bumpy-line" pattern might show some shifting in residential patterns across generations, though the general pattern over many generations would indicate assimilation.

If those of Mexican origin are assimilating into the middle class in slow but straight-line fashion, we would expect to see their progress reflected in residential settlement through moderately high or even growing levels of correspondence between the proportion of non-Hispanic whites in their neighborhoods and the neighborhood's median household income. That is, across generations, the Mexicans would be moving gradually into richer neighborhoods with more Anglos, and these neighborhoods are likely to be in areas of highest overall growth. If many Mexicans are assimilating into the working class – and by this we mean more of the "bumpy-line" assimilation with more varied trajectories than outright segmented assimilation

into a segregated underclass – then we would expect to see the respondents living in neighborhoods with low levels of correspondence between median household income and the percent non-Hispanic white. In that case, over generations those of Mexican origin may be settling into older, less wealthy neighborhoods that have varying proportions of an Anglo population.

This settlement may also vary by the part of the metropolitan area where the residents reside. In traditional assimilation theory, suburbanization is the mechanism by which immigrant groups achieve socioeconomic and ethnic integration (Massey and Denton 1987). In Los Angeles, where the most growth is occurring in the desert, it is not clear how well traditional theory may apply. Insofar as immigrant groups are attracted to newer, more relatively affordable housing, we may see ethnic and economic integration, even though it is not at the highest end of the market. Because the fast growth of the Inland Empire – and because previous studies have shown that quickly growing areas become more integrated than built-up ones (Frey and Farley 1996) – we expect that average Mexican-origin person in the Inland Empire will live in a tract with a greater proportion of Anglos than respondents in Los Angeles or Orange counties.

Data

Our data come from a survey of 4,780 respondents, the Immigrant Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles (IIMMLA), taken in the fall of 2004. The survey targeted young adults of the 1.5 and second generations for a variety of Latino and Asian immigrant groups, with an oversampling of the Mexican-origin, because the size and longevity of that immigrant group allowed sampling of third and fourth generations as well. Through random-digit dialing, the IIMMLA survey aimed to reach 400 persons of Mexican origin from *each* of the 1.5, second, and third-plus generations, as well as an additional 125 from the first generation.

The actual sample totaled 1,369 of Mexican-origin. Through geocoding with census-tract data, we have added to the data characteristics of the neighborhoods in which respondents live as well as the data for the tracts in which the ones who are native Angelenos grew up. These data permit analysis of locational attainment *across* immigrant generations as well as *within* the same generation. These data are as yet unweighted.

The sample is limited to adults age 20-40, because for most immigrant groups that began arriving after 1965, the 1.5 and second generations have yet to reach middle age. While this restriction does not hold for those of Mexican origin, the Mexican sample is also constricted so as to enable eventual cross-group comparisons. Because we are capturing respondents relatively early in adulthood, many will still be living at home or in the makeshift arrangements of first apartments. Consequently, we see this study as a comparison of where different generations of respondents come out of the starting gate instead of where they end up.

We identified those of Mexican origin by asking respondents not only their ethnic identity but also their place of birth, their parents' and grandparents' place of birth, as well as whether they had *any* ancestors from Mexico. Of this group who were born in or descended from those born in Mexico, 97.2 percent identified themselves ethnically as Hispanic or Latino (including 95 percent of the people who had been in the United States for four or more generations), so the persistence and salience of this category is clear. And because of that stability across generations, it seems a reasonable framework to look at residential differences between those of Mexican origin and non-Hispanic whites (hereafter called Anglos). While Los Angeles is unquestionably multiethnic, these remain the two largest groups, and for purposes of coherence, we are restricting this paper to residential integration among these two groups.

Findings

The cross-sectional data for metropolitan Los Angeles show a distinct trend toward socioeconomic mobility across Mexican-origin generations (see Table 1). The data also show a downward trend in the proportion of people age 20-40 who are married and have children. By the second generation, the proportion who have not finished high school drops markedly, while the proportion receiving a bachelor's degree rises. Particularly in the 1.5 and second generations, respondents are getting much more education than their parents, although the disparity diminishes by the third generation. Median household income leaps from $27,748 in the first generation to $40,049 in 1.5 generation and then again to $53,798 in the second generation. Such measures of wealth as owning stocks or bonds or having a 401k retirement plan rise to nearly 70 percent by the 1.5 generation. Only the proportion who are home owners stays low, at just over one-fourth of the sample, and this finding reflects the relative youth of the sample and the skyrocketing cost of entry into the housing market in the Los Angeles area. The proportion of respondents' *parents* who own their own homes rises to nearly 70 percent by the second generation.

INSERT TABLE 1 HERE

Characteristics of the household tract also follow a trend toward socioeconomic mobility and greater proximity to Anglos. Ethnic integration shows the greatest increase over generations. The proportion of Anglos in the respondents' neighborhoods rises from 37 percent in the first generation to roughly half in the fourth generation, or by 34.1 percent, while the proportion Mexican drops similarly. Note that for all four generations, Mexicans and Anglos together comprise 85 to 90 percent of the total population of neighborhoods. The level of socioeconomic mobility is not quite so impressive but nonetheless substantial. Over generations, those of

Mexican origin are also steadily moving into tracts that are more heavily owner-occupied, from 44.1 percent in the first generation to 55.3 in the fourth. Of course, as the individual records show, the respondents are less likely to be homeowners themselves than the average householder in their tracts, but they nonetheless are moving into neighborhoods with high proportions of owner-occupied housing. Further, median household incomes in their tracts rise 23.4 percent from the first to fourth generation, though from the 1.5 generation on, the respondents have incomes higher than the tract median. Across all generations, too, a growing percentage is living in the so-called Inland Empire of Riverside and San Bernardino counties.

The results in Table 1 would be unabashedly in line with straight-line assimilation were it not for the mobility levels of the fourth and higher-order generations. On nearly all indicators of socioeconomic mobility, the fourth generation has dropped slightly back from the third. The drop is six percentage points for those getting a bachelor's degree, four percentage points for home ownership and about $8,000 for median household income. The reasons for this drop are unclear. It may be an artifact of a cross-sectional comparison, or it may be that higher fertility among those of lower socioeconomic status pulls down the means for all generations but that this trend was masked by the size of the real gains up until the fourth generation. Certainly, the parents of the fourth and higher generations are less likely to have college degrees or to own homes than the parents of the third generation. But the apparent drop in socioeconomic status for the fourth generation shows that ultimate assimilation trend for those of Mexican origin may be bumpier than the initial gains of the children and grandchildren of immigrants would indicate. Nevertheless, even with a drop in several indicators, the fourth and later generations in the United States still show substantial socioeconomic gains over the 1.5 and second generations.

If the spatial settlement of those of Mexican origin follows a similar pattern – straight-line through three generations and "bumpy-line" in the fourth generation – the correlation of proportion non-Hispanic white and median household income should also rise for three generations and fall in the fourth. Figure 1 tests this, with the results broken out by county as well as generation. (We omit Ventura County because of the small number of respondents.) As Figure 1 shows, this pattern holds for Los Angeles County, where the majority of those of Mexican origin live. It is also true for the Inland Empire, although in Riverside County, the drop occurs in the third generation rather than the fourth. And in all four counties, the third or fourth generation shows decline from the previous ones, suggesting that by later generations, many households of Mexican origin are living in neighborhoods with many Anglos but not such high median incomes. Only in Orange County does one not see the expected pattern of growing correlations of percentage Anglos and median household income at the tract level. It is possible that the extremely high cost of housing in Orange County ($555,000 is the current median-priced house, compared with $424,000 in Los Angeles County) may restrict residents' choice of neighborhood more than in other counties.

FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

Further, the correlation of percentage Anglos and median household income for the tracts where respondents live is relatively low in Los Angeles County compared with the more suburbanized counties, suggesting that the traditional Chicago School mechanism of attaining ethnic and economic mobility through suburbanization also holds true to some extent for Los Angeles. Scatterplots of the correlation points show that in the Inland Empire, there simply are no respondents in tracts that have high proportions of Mexicans and high median incomes.

Nevertheless, even in Los Angeles County, the overall correlation coefficient is .505 for the tracts in which Mexican-origin respondent live.

But the question remains whether those of Mexican origin are moving to neighborhoods that are wealthier or more Anglo or both because of their human capital, wealth or simply the passage of generations and ensuing acculturation. We test this first in Table 2 with an OLS regression examining the proportion Anglo in the neighborhood for Mexican-origin respondents. Because the dependent variable is normally distributed, we do not log it. The table shows substantial increases in the proportion Anglo for later generations. Model 1, which controls only for demographic characteristics, shows a six-percentage-point difference in percentage Anglo in the neighborhoods of first and second generations and a nearly 18-percentage point difference for the first and third generations. Later controls for household income, education, and wealth explain much of that difference between the first and second generations but not the differences for the third and fourth generations.

TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

Two other demographic characteristics are negatively associated with percentage Anglo in the neighborhood: living with one's parents and having children. The effect of living with parents is particularly important, because it suggests that successive generations are moving into more Anglo neighborhoods. Nor does the magnitude of this measure attenuate across models, so that controlling for respondents' education, income and parental characteristics shows no real effect. The presence of children is negative – significantly so in the first model but less so in later ones. The effect can be explained in part by education, in that respondents with higher levels of education are less likely to have children. However, since the birth of children is often associated with such life-course moves as moving to a larger home and seeking a good school district, it is

telling that Mexican-origin children are growing up in neighborhoods that are less integrated with Anglos than the average Mexican household.

As Model 2 shows, household income and respondents' education are strongly associated with the percentage of Anglos in the neighborhood, in expected ways. Getting any college education at all, as opposed to ending with a high school diploma, matters the most, although getting a bachelor's degree shows slightly even greater effect, accounting for a seven-percentage-point increase in the proportion Anglo. However, the effect of education washes away when one considers the effect of family background and overall status.

Model 3 elaborates on these measures of wealth and status. Ownership of a home and stocks, bonds, and retirement plan have little direct effect on the proportion Anglo. This is notable, because home ownership is often considered the "American dream" and one route whereby immigrant groups have traditionally attained mobility. And while that may well be so, home ownership among these Mexican respondents – at least in Los Angeles – is not related to living among Anglos. What is important is parents' education. The grown children of college-educated parents are more likely to live among Anglos, net of the children's own education. It appears that there is some springboard effect, with parents' educational status helping to propel children into more Anglo neighborhoods. Supporting this idea is the strong negative impact of growing up in trouble-ridden neighborhoods, as measured by an index looking at the level of problems caused by gangs, drugs and crime that respondents recalled from their childhoods.

But most influential of all is an indicator for whether the respondent had moved to another county in the LA area between childhood and adulthood. This one indicator accounts for a 13-percentage-point increase in the percentage Anglo in the neighborhood. Most of the moves measured were from Los Angeles and Orange counties to the Inland Empire of San Bernardino

and Riverside counties, but even the moves between the more built-up counties or the even rarer moves from suburban counties to more urbanized ones also showed increases in the percentage Anglo. While only 11 percent of the sample had made such moves, these moves appear to be opportunities concentrated among later generations.

Table 3, a regression on median household income of the census tract, provides our second test of the question of whether those of Mexican origin are moving to neighborhoods that are wealthier because of their human capital, wealth or simply the passage of generations. In this table, too, the different generations live in neighborhoods of substantially different levels of wealth, as shown in Model 1. Whereas the first generation lives in neighborhoods where the median household income is less than $30,000, the third generation lives in neighborhoods where the median income is over $40,000. Married respondents are significantly more likely to live in wealthier neighborhoods, but so are respondents who are still living with their parents (many of whom would still be in prime earning years).

TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

Model 2 shows the substantial effect of household income and respondents' education. More than $4,000 separates the median tract-level household incomes of those who have a high school diploma versus those who do not. Somewhat surprisingly, the effect of a college degree is less strong than a high school diploma, although household income accounts for some of this discrepancy. The controls for income and education strongly reduce the influence of generation in the United States, most particularly for the 1.5 and second generations. The children of Mexican immigrants must rely on their own human capital, not their parents', to be able to afford wealthier neighborhoods.

Model 3 examines the effect of wealth and status. Owning a home is significant; homeowners live in tracts where the median income is more than $3,400 higher than in the tracts of renters. Home ownership by parents provides an independent boost about half as high, although it does not reach the level of significance. As in the previous table, growing up in a problem-plagued neighborhood also has a significantly negative effect. And also as in the case of the previous table, the biggest predictor of all is an intercounty move between childhood and adulthood. Those who moved are living in tracts where the median household income is roughly $5,000 higher than those who did not. The reasons for the magnitude of this difference are not clear. Movers, of course, are those who have a reason to move and the wherewithal to do so in the first place, but they also may be choosing the tracts they live in with an eye toward maximizing their investment in neighborhood. Those who do not make such moves may have different ways of searching for housing or different reasons for choosing their neighborhoods, such as wanting to remain close to family. More research is needed on this point.

We see three key differences between the findings in Table 2 and Table 3 that may suggest that the proportion Anglo and the median tract-level income may be tapping different dimensions of mobility. First is the effect of education. Respondents need only a high school diploma to seek out wealthier neighborhoods, and the effect of their education persists despite various controls for wealth and status. But respondents who have been to college are more likely to move to more Anglo areas, and these respondents are even more likely to live in Anglo areas when their parents have been to college. This finding suggests that the cultural capital and exposure provided by education may make integration more desirable. The second key difference is the effect of living with one's parents. Those who have moved out of their parents' homes are residing in less wealthy neighborhoods (after all, many respondents are just starting

out), but these neighborhoods are also significantly more Anglo. This finding suggests that some young Mexican-origin respondents are finding housing in older Anglo neighborhoods. Third, home ownership seems to be a key mechanism for achieving residence in wealthier neighborhoods, but it has minimal effect on the proportion Anglo in a neighborhood.

Thus far, however, we have not stratified the results by county, even though Figure 1 showed substantial differences by county in the correlation of median household income and proportion Anglo at the tract level. Figure 2 presents the predicted proportion of Anglos in the census tracts where Mexican-origin respondents live, by immigrant generation and county. Two distinct trends emerge. First, respondents are more likely to live among Anglos in more suburbanized counties rather than in Los Angeles County, and this trend persists across all generations. Second, in all counties, the third generation is much more likely to live among Anglos than previous generations. In Los Angeles and Orange counties, which have large barrios where the first generation often settles, the 1.5 and even second generations are also more isolated. But because Riverside and San Bernardino are much less likely areas of first settlement, their relatively few first-generation respondents are not nearly so clustered. However, by the third generation, settlement in Anglo areas becomes particularly pronounced in Los Angeles and Orange counties, though it diminishes in these counties for subsequent generations.

FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE

Figure 3 shows the results of such stratification in the predicted median household income of the census tract, by generation in the United States. We can see enormous differences here in the median household income by tract. Mexican-origin respondents in Riverside County are living in neighborhoods with a median neighborhood income of roughly $50,000. This income level is substantially higher than that of the next highest county, Orange, even though the

median housing price in Orange County is far above that of Riverside County and the zero-order level of tract-level median income is higher in Orange County. Residents of Los Angeles and San Bernardino counties are living in the least wealthy tracts. Because these predicted values already control for human capital and wealth, we can see that given the same level of resources, households in Riverside County are attaining the most neighborhood wealth.

FIGURE 3 ABOUT HERE

Notably, this trend is mostly flat across immigrant generations, for all counties. So whereas the proportion Anglo in neighborhoods was rising for the third and fourth-plus generations, net of household resources, the median household income is not. These disparate findings suggest that for the third and especially later generations, the proportion Anglo is increasingly becoming decoupled from neighborhood income. This is especially true in the fast-growing Inland Empire, where the proportion of Mexican-origin respondents in Anglo neighborhoods is continuing to rise over generations, net of respondents' human capital, but the median household income of their neighborhoods is flat.

Discussion

The key question is whether those of Mexican origin are being spatially integrated in a traditional middle-class pattern, with neighborhood incomes rising in tandem with the proportion Anglo, or whether some other pattern suggests that they may be spatially integrating in a different way. The evidence is mixed. With these cross-sectional data, at a zero-order level, it looks as if spatial integration is occurring in traditional straight-line fashion through three generations, then regressing. This pattern appears in both the correlations of tract-level income and proportion Anglo and in Table 1. But when we control for characteristics of parents and background as well as individual characteristics, a different pattern emerges. The growth in

median household income is almost completely a function of human capital: household education, income, and the ability of these characteristics to attain home ownership and moves. The third generation attains slightly wealthier neighborhoods aside from these characteristics, but the effect tails off by the fourth or higher generations. Mobility is more pronounced in the case of proportion Anglo, with a nearly 10-percentage-point jump between the second and third generations. Nor does the proportion Anglo fall off nearly so much in the fourth and later generations (and not at all in the Inland Empire).

What we are seeing for these third and later generations is increasing integration with Anglos, but not necessarily in wealthy neighborhoods. In every county of the metropolitan area, some members of the third and later generations are more likely to settle into modest but highly Anglo neighborhoods, where home ownership does not appear to be a requirement for entry. This trend is not universal, in that many other respondents are entering wealthier neighborhoods and continuing what might be considered middle-class assimilation. But we are seeing greater dispersion of Mexicans in later generation across the income range in majority-Anglo neighborhoods – hence the drop noted in Figure 1 in the correlation between percentage Anglo and median household income. This settlement in more modest neighborhoods fits with the idea of working-class assimilation. The Mexican-origin respondents are assimilating, in that they are entering largely Anglo areas. But for some of them, earnings and accumulated wealth are not permitting them to keep the same pace of mobility with respect with median tract income. Of course, this sample is restricted to respondents age 40 and under. As they grow older, they might build savings and equity and thus be able to afford wealthier neighborhoods.

Both in terms of percentage Anglo and neighborhood income, the Mexican-origin appear to be doing the best in Riverside County. While at the zero-order level, the median household

income is higher in expensive Orange County, controls for income and education show the better return in Riverside County. The Mexican-origin fare less well in San Bernardino County in terms of income, but they have a high proportion of Anglos in their tracts. Overall, then, assimilation measures appear to be working better in collar counties than in Los Angeles County, in keeping with traditional assimilation theory.

What spatial assimilation into the working class augurs is not entirely clear. But given that the Mexican-origin and Anglo populations are roughly equivalent in size, for the later generations of the Mexican origin to reside in tracts that are half Anglo seems highly integrated. One would not expect complete integration, in part because of historical patterns of residential discrimination and co-ethnic preferences, and in part because members of a group whose income distribution lies below the distribution of another group would be restricted in the range of neighborhoods that they could afford. But it remains to be seen how stable the ethnic makeup of these working-class neighborhoods is. If young Mexicans are succeeding Anglos who have aged in place or are leaving the metropolitan area, apparent integration may be only a passing phase. The stability of these neighborhoods is a question for future research.

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Table 1. Socioeconomic and demographic characteristics by immigrant generation for Mexican-origin respondents in metropolitan Los Angeles, ages 20-40

Generation	1st	1.5	2nd	3rd	4th plus	Total
Personal characteristics						
% Male	56.8	49.1	49.4	50.9	44.7	49.6
Average age	32.2	28.9	27.7	30.2	28.8	28.9
% Married	57.6	44.3	37.1	41.5	40.4	41.7
% With children	88.7	80.1	70.7	65.5	69.3	73.4
% <HS education	72.6	32.4	15.4	11.8	16.0	23.7
% Parents <HS	68.8	55.7	32.9	9.4	12.8	34.6
% 4-yr. degree	7.3	14.1	20.8	22.7	17.0	17.9
% Parent 4-yr. degree	4.8	5.5	9.6	18.9	17.0	10.7
% Homeowner	25.6	32.0	25.3	31.1	27.1	27.9
% with parents who own home	N/A	42.3	69.1	78.3	64.9	58.2
Median HH income	$27,748	$40,049	$53,798	$63,087	$51,023	$49,502
% with stocks, bonds	45.6	69.8	79.0	82.1	76.1	74.1
Tract characteristics						
% Mexican origin	48.7	48.1	46.7	34.9	40.0	44.4
% N-H white	37.0	38. 6	41.4	54.7	49.6	43.6
% Owner-occupied	44.1	49.1	52.4	55.9	55.3	51.9
Median HH income	$35,011	$38,756	$40,904	$46,206	$43,171	$41,082
% in Riverside or SB counties	20.0	20.6	25.7	31.6	34.6	26.2
N	125	291	553	212	188	1,369

Source: Immigrant Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles (IIMMLA)

Table 2. Regressions of proportion of non-Hispanic white in neighborhood for Mexican-origin respondents, ages 20-40

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Demographic characteristics			
Age	.002	.001	.001
Female	-.008	-.010	-.012
Living with parents	-049**	-.060**	-.050**
Married	.025	.011	.004
Own children in household	-.045**	-.027	-.029
1st generation	--	--	--
1.5 generation	.024	-.012	-.001
2nd generation	.062*	.008	-.004
3rd generation	.179***	.121***	.097**
4th –plus generation	.137***	.088**	.059
Human capital			
Household income (000s)		.001***	.000**
R's ed HS/voc		.029	.012
R's ed some college		.065**	.038
R's ed BA or better		.070***	.039
Wealth			
Own stocks, bonds, 401k			.028
R owns house			.028
Parents' ed HS			.019
Parents' ed college			.044*
Parents' ed unknown			.003
Parents own home			.011
Index of problems in childhood neighborhood			-.012***
Moved to another county			.130***
Constant	.329***	.325***	.353***
R-square	.08	.11	.15
N	1,328	1,328	1,328

Table 3. Regression of median household income of census tract for Mexican-origin respondents, ages 20-40

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Demographic characteristics			
Age	142.72	65.54	-15.58
Female	-656.50	-417.80	-581.84
Living with parents	2,574.41*	1,545.38	2,196.48
Married	4,508.07***	3,244.44***	2,048.99*
Children	-1,920.64*	-775.79	-952.40
1st generation	--	--	--
1.5 generation	4,352.85**	1,282.51	925.35
2nd generation	6,723.78***	2,060.90	1,094.40
3rd generation	11,568.82***	6,329.32***	4,950.96*
4th –plus generation	8,808.41***	4,406.46*	2,950.60
Human capital			
Household income (000s)		83.47***	64.36***
R's ed HS / voc ed		4,016.92***	2,988.18**
R's ed some college		4,542.88***	2,878.65*
R's ed BA or better		2,788.53*	875.39
Wealth and status			
Own stocks, bonds, 401k			1,772.95
R owns home			3,457.22**
Parents' ed HS			-23.81
Parents' ed college			1,540.86
Parents' ed unknown			392.08
Parents own home			1,726.12
Index of problems in childhood neighborhood			-639.76**
Moved to another county			5,004.62***
Constant	29,475.00***	28,367.79***	31,259.42***
R-square	.07	.13	.17
N	1,326	1,326	1,326

Figure 1. Correlation between proportion non-Hispanic white and median household income for respondents' neighborhoods, by immigrant generation and county

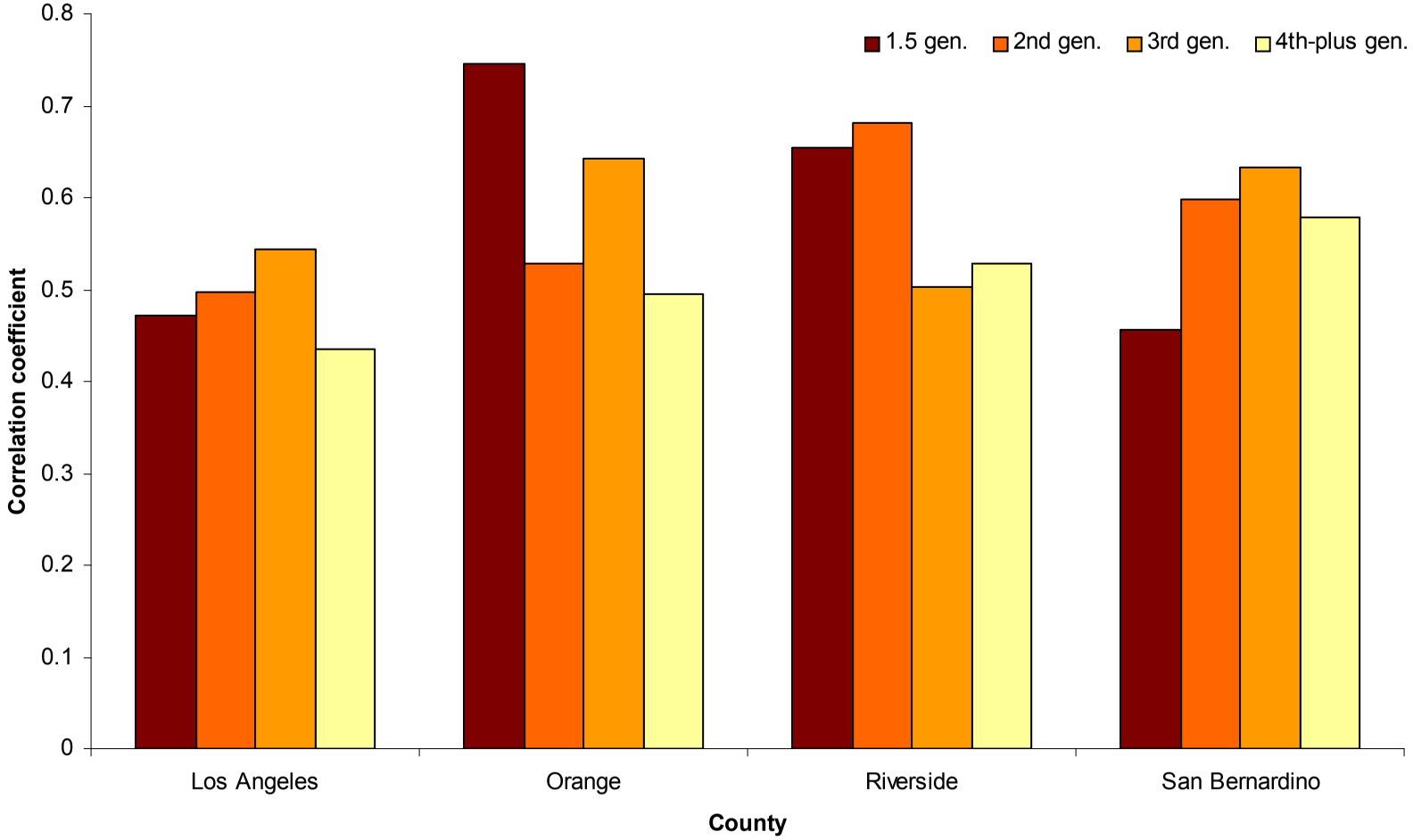

Figure 2. Predicted proportion of Anglos in census tracts, by generation in the United States and county of residence, among Mexican-origin residents, ages 20-40

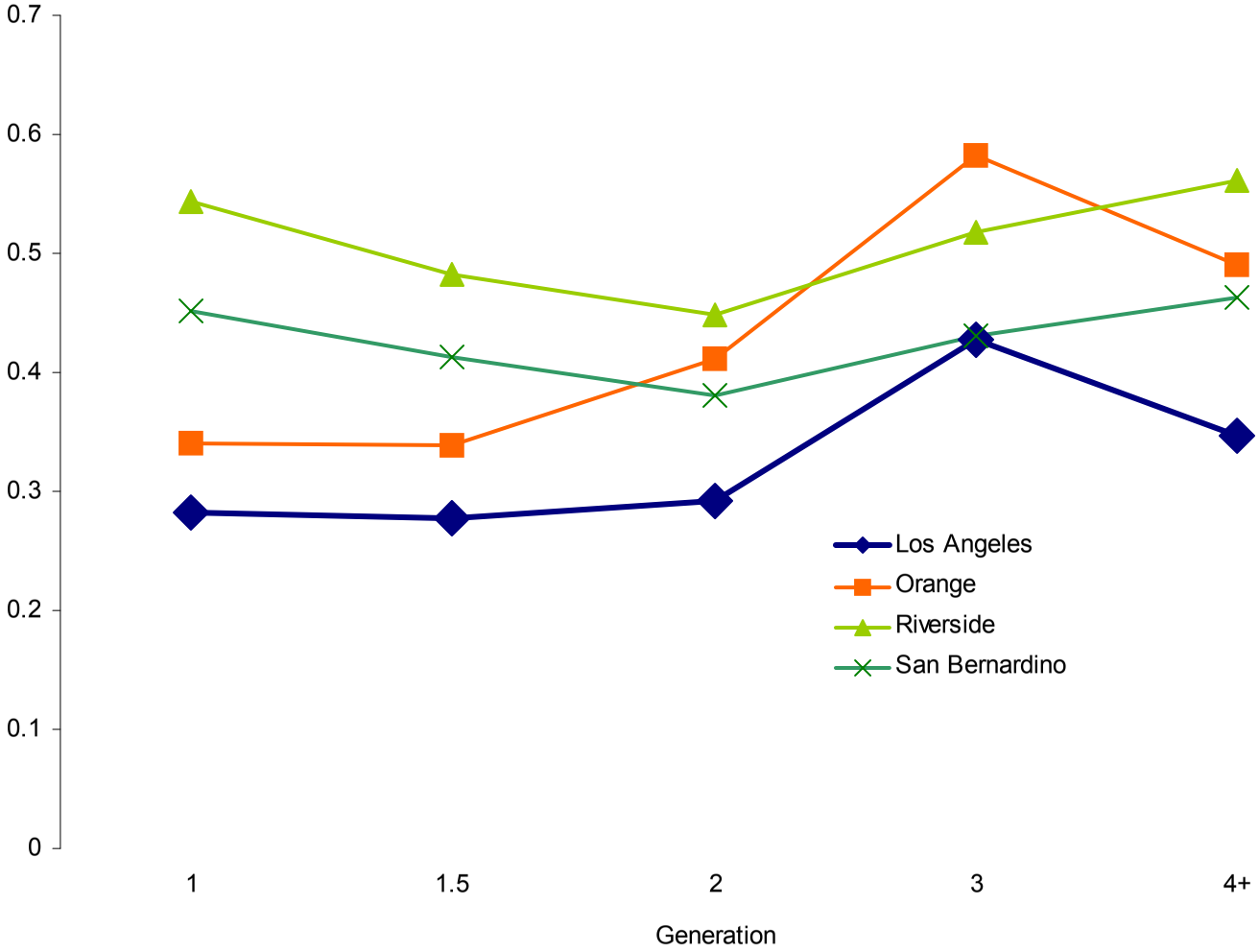

Figure 3. Predicted median household income of census tract, by county of residence and generation in the United States among those of Mexican origin, ages 20-40