

Chapter 1 | Origins and Destinations

IMMIGRANTS ARE REMAKING America, from bottom to top. At the bottom stand the workers doing the difficult, dangerous, and dirty work that most native-born shun, whether picking crops, cleaning toilets, or slaughtering and carving up the animals that appear on the American dinner table. At the opposite end of the spectrum, one finds the immigrant overachievers, who, as inventors, corporate moguls, financiers, or Nobel Prize winners, often leave the native-born population far behind.

The mass arrival of the foreign-born can be transformational, and nowhere is the legacy of immigrants more lasting than in their descendants, starting with their children—the second generation. This second generation is the inevitable by-product of immigration itself: since the young are the people most likely to leave their old home in search of a better future elsewhere, immigrants reach their new home at precisely the age when family formation usually begins. Consequently, their arrival yields large numbers of children born in the host society yet socialized by parents who were raised in a different environment, one with expectations and orientations typically foreign to the place that their children experience as their native world. In beginning again, the parents start out in a new, strange country that must be learned, triggering a process of adaptation that even when successful is almost always error-prone and transmits the signal—to the immigrants themselves, to their children, and to the outsiders around them—that perhaps profoundly, perhaps ineffably, they remain out of place. Moreover, moving in a world where no one is free to cross state borders simply as he or she wishes, all immigrant parents commence anew as aliens, lacking the full rights enjoyed by the citizens of their adopted country and often enough discovering that the route to joining the citizenry is arduous, long, and sometimes impossible to successfully traverse.

This common background provides the scaffolding from which the children of immigrants are launched into the world. Despite these salient features shared by almost all immigrant offspring, they nonetheless do not turn out the same. Even as they contribute to the greater diversity of the societies that their parents decided to join, these immigrant offspring are themselves incredibly diverse, standing out from their fellow second-generation counterparts on myriad dimensions.

That simple straightforward observation motivates this book: we seek to understand the origins of the many differences among today's second generation, looking for sources stemming from countries of origin, immigrant groups' experience in the United States, and the characteristics of immigrant households and individuals. We provide new questions to guide our exploration, introduce a novel perspective for framing our inquiry, import a methodology used elsewhere in the social sciences but rarely applied to these issues, and engage with the scholars who have gone before us so as to provide a systematic assessment of the many hypotheses generated by the past quarter century of research.

THE QUESTION

The central question animating this book is purposefully broad and aims to demonstrate the utility of our methodology and our perspective across a variety of domains: *What are the primary individual- and group-level determinants of second-generation variation in school, work, ethnic attachment, and political life?*

The foreign-born in the United States truly represent the world, providing a cross-section of the globe's economic and cultural diversity. Today's newcomers arrive from both the planet's poorest states and its richest, from not only deeply religious societies, such as those in Central America or the Philippines, but also the most dramatically secular, such as the former Soviet Union and China. That diversity is fully reflected in the immigrant home, making for a set of socialization experiences that are far more variegated than those among the children of native-born Americans. And yet, while parents' foreign origins affect the destinies of their offspring, those progeny themselves follow a life course that unfolds in a setting very different from that experienced by their parents. That new context tends to diminish the yawning social and economic gaps among the foreign-born, largely because the wealth and institutional framework of the society of arrival improves conditions for even the least fortunate of those residents who started out abroad. Since society-wide investments in public goods in the United States greatly outdistance the levels attained in the poorer

countries of emigration, and since the everyday environment provides a higher level of security and stability than the parents could have found at the point of origin, the children of immigrant farm and factory workers typically follow career and educational pathways that increasingly resemble those of their counterparts from wealthier nations as well as the native-born.

Movement toward convergence with the standard of the society of arrival provides the telltale sign that assimilation, as defined by the textbooks, is well under way. Thanks to that same tendency, the distance between high and low immigrant origin achievers somewhat diminishes from first to second generation. Nonetheless, a very significant gulf remains. On average, for example, the children of Chinese immigrants in Los Angeles complete sixteen years of schooling, as opposed to thirteen among their Mexican-origin counterparts. Likewise, the offspring of Filipino migrants are far more likely to work as professionals or managers than their Salvadoran-origin peers. These intergroup disparities catch the eye of both amateur and professional students of migration and ethnicity, yet represent only one axis of variation in second-generation experiences and trajectories. Despite everything that might separate the offspring of immigrants originating in one country from those of another immigrant group, the gaps separating persons who share the same national roots turn out to be no less important—and are sometimes even more important. Of course, in this respect, the children of immigrants are just like their counterparts among the children of natives: U.S.-born parents are not all cut from the same mold, and more importantly, as parents do not all possess the same resources, some are more equipped to help their children than others. But the children of immigrants are all the offspring of people who grew up in foreign places and who had to somehow adapt to a country that was initially unfamiliar and not their own; thus, on this count, the children of immigrants are *not* just like their counterparts among the children of natives.

Parents' common international experiences—their exposure to different economic and social conditions in their home country, their continuing ties to significant others there, and their lengthy, perhaps permanent, experience as aliens living among citizens in a foreign land—shape their lives in a variety of ways. Even so, the course of parental adaptation does not follow a single path: as some quickly abandon homeland loyalties and practices while others instead hold fast to them, their children are given different models to follow that might—or might not—prove of use. Immigrant parents further depart from their native-born counterparts in that they belong to family networks that stretch across national boundaries.

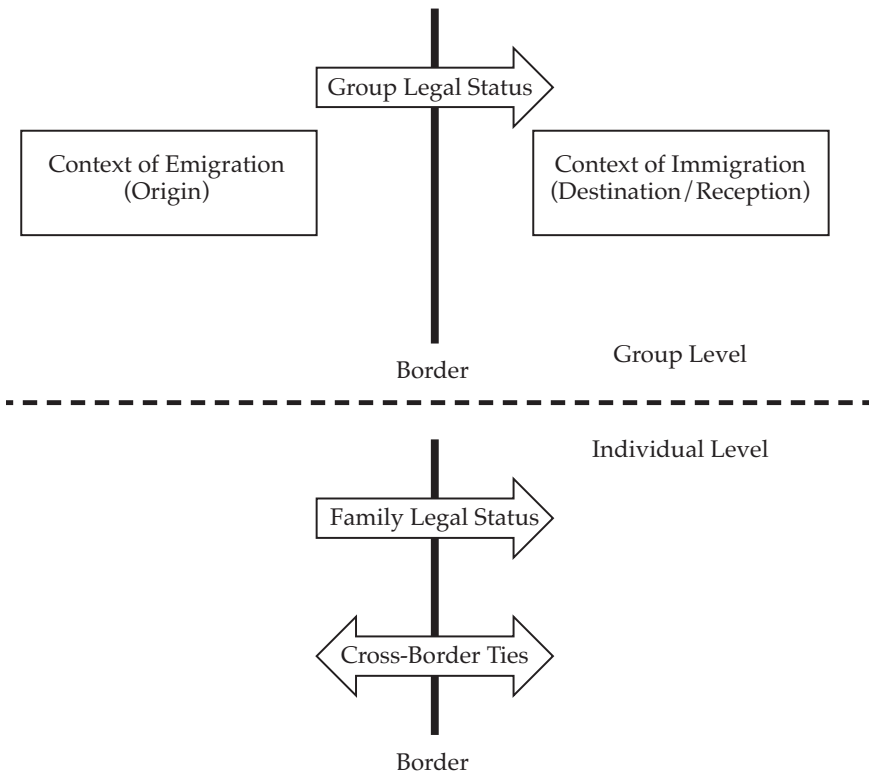
As previously noted, migration is a selective process that leads some—typically young adults—to depart and others—often children and parents—to stay in place. Because that very selectivity internationalizes kinship ties, the children of immigrants often grow up in households with a foreign connection that may serve as either a recipient of help or a focus of concern, activities that could then have an influence on the resources available to immigrant offspring and the orientations that they adopt.

As the reader will soon see, we follow the scholars in our field by searching for the roots of intergroup variation; however, we depart from the researchers who have gone before us in that determining the source of intragroup variation ranks equally high on our agenda. At the intergroup level, we seek to understand how population-wide disparities in the contexts of emigration and immigration yield population-wide disparities among immigrant offspring, whether seen through their achievements or their behavior. By contrast, our quest at the intragroup level requires that we assess how differences in parental starting points and parental responses to the constraints and opportunities offered by the new environment produce new lines of distinction among their offspring. Once we delineate the sources of inter- and intragroup differences, as well as the outcomes affected by those differences, we then strive to discover whether differences among immigrant nationalities or differences within those same groups have the greater effect on today's second generation.

A NEW PERSPECTIVE

With few exceptions, as scholars examine the unfolding of the destinies of the second generation after migration, they do so with their backs to the receiving-country border. By contrast, we adopt an international perspective that keeps both the origin and destination country in view as we contend that the influences related to both the spanning and the delimiting of national political boundaries comprise the salient traits distinguishing the children of immigrants from all others. We underscore the shared conditions linked to place of origin that produce interethnic differences while also highlighting the household-level at-entry characteristics and subsequent life-course decisions that produce intraethnic, family-level variation. As we proceed, we bring together place of origin and place of destination, as well as identities rooted in the former and those that develop in the latter. The trajectories recounted and analyzed in the chapters that follow involve the encounter with multiple boundaries—territorial, political, and social—and the various social and political spaces within which the adult children of immigrants pursue their lives.

Figure 1.1 Schematic Summary of the Explanatory Approach



Source: Authors' compilation.

Taken together, our explanatory model includes determinants of second-generation difference that we map in a two-dimensional space, visualized in figure 1.1. On the vertical axis, we consider the *level* of influence: what are the most important characteristics of the immigrants themselves, and of the national-origin groups to which they belong, in determining a range of socioeconomic, political, and cultural outcomes? On the upper half of this axis, which we conceptualize as the contexts of emigration and immigration, lie group-level traits: the salient attributes prevalent in the sending country and in the coethnic community in the United States. The lower half includes individual factors central to the perspective advanced in these pages. Consequently, we abstract other relevant

variables—all to be discussed at later points of the book—to single out only those influences that uniquely shape the experience of immigrants and their descendants, namely, their social ties to the country of origin and their family-level experiences of alien status.

On the horizontal axis of figure 1.1, we consider the *location* of influence: unlike the children of U.S.-born parents, the children of immigrants are likely to be shaped by both group- and individual-level factors that operate on *both* sides of the U.S. border. At the top right stands the context of destination factors that arise within the United States; at the top left is the context of the origin factors deriving from the parents' home countries. In the bottom half, denoting the individual-level characteristics, are individual- and family-level traits that extend across places: the international locations of significant others and the ensuing cross-border engagements, as well as the legal status at arrival, which reflects decisions made by both immigrants and states when the former are still living in the origin country.

The relative importance of these influences varies depending on the outcome under consideration. In the next section, we provide a brief general overview of these characteristics and the ways in which they are expected to impinge upon the children of immigrants.

Intergroup Differences: Contexts of Emigration and Immigration

The lives of immigrants are deeply shaped by influences that derive from the country of emigration and separate their experiences from those of all others in the country of immigration whose lives unfold entirely within the boundaries of the state where they were born and subsequently remained. First comes the simple fact that immigrants start out from someplace else: born and educated in another country, immigrants were socialized in a political, cultural, and economic system different from the one they encounter after migration. Upon their arrival in the receiving country, the lessons they learned and the orientations they absorbed in that earlier context, in tandem with their individual-level resources, then influence their understanding of their new environment and their reactions to its demands. As such, group-level variation early in immigrant parents' life course deeply affects variation in outcomes later in their lives. As those variations extend to how parents go on to raise their children, we expect that socioeconomic and cultural characteristics of the context in their home countries will influence the outcomes realized by that second generation.

Thus, unlike their U.S.-born and U.S.-bred counterparts, immigrant parents are socialized abroad, albeit in national contexts that systematically

differ from each other. Upon arrival, immigrant parents and children also encounter contrasting contexts of immigration that can either constrain or facilitate their pursuit of the good life in their new home. Those contexts involve conditions that immigrants share with their conationals and that vary across groups: in the resources potentially available from coethnics, which we define as “ethnic capital”; in the degree of societal acceptance, which we conceptualize as location in the American system of “skin-color stratification”; and in exposure to the differential effects of migration policies, which we conceptualize as “migration-status disparities.”

Only the last of these contextual features is distinctive to international migrants, who, unlike ethnically or racially distinctive groups of U.S. nationals, begin their American lives as foreigners starting out with at best limited rights to continued residence and social membership. International migration, unlike internal migration, involves traversing territorial borders that are gated so as to separate the relatively few who are wanted or tolerated from the far more numerous who are seen as undesirable or unacceptable. In today’s globalized economy, however, the demand for migrant workers—whether of the high- or low-skilled sort—almost always supersedes the levels of permanent migration that receiving-country nationals are prepared to accept. In their efforts to reconcile the conflicting pressures of business demand for labor and consistently negative popular views of immigration, states implement migration control policies that yield a proliferation of legal statuses, ranging from the tolerated but unauthorized, at the most disadvantaged end, to those lucky enough to eventually cross the internal border of citizenship, at the most advantaged end.

For several reasons, the prevailing legal status varies from one nationality to another, furnishing an influence on intergroup differences that stems not from the place of origin but from the receiving society. From the outset, the incidence within a nationality of more protected status (refugee) or more vulnerable status (asylum seeker or unauthorized resident) affects both societal perception and the overall level of resources on which coethnics can draw if and when they turn to one another for support. Members of groups most likely to enter with rights of permanent settlement are put on the quickest path to citizenship, while groups among whom unauthorized migration is common or even prevails count many fewer members who are even eligible for citizenship; hence, group-level differences in legal status and citizenship prevalence widen over time. Although any individual immigrant may enjoy a legal status more or less advantageous than that of the median member of his or her group, that median status will still affect population-wide resources and standing, thereby yielding impacts at the individual level, with further consequences for the ways in which immigrant parents’ resources affect second-generation outcomes. Thus,

regardless of individual attributes, the contexts of emigration and immigration yield long-lasting effects on the experiences of the foreign-born as well as their descendants.

Intragroup Differences: Cross-Border Connections and Civic Stratification

Every immigrant is also an emigrant, simultaneously getting oriented to the place of reception while retaining ties to the people and places left behind. That duality between immigration and emigration results from the political and social logic of international migration. Since migration is selective, as we have already noted, it inevitably produces international families by pulling kinship networks apart. Over time the core network often shifts location, but rarely completely, with the inertia experienced by the elderly causing others to stay in place. In today's world, moreover, the internationalization of families reflects the additional impact of receiving states' intensifying efforts to police national boundaries. Because gaining entrance into the developed world is so hard, the people who emigrate are those who can get through or across obstacles, inevitably leaving at home those who cannot traverse the political barriers to mobility.

Thus, in departing from one country and moving to another, migrants ironically and unintentionally tie those two countries together. The migrants and their descendants reside on the *immigration*-country side of the territorial border. Yet their continuing connections to the *emigration*-country side extend their social ties across that same frontier. And because those social ties connect to significant others, they remain meaningful, yielding influence even on experiences undergone in the country of reception.

Homeland ties are pervasive, motivating both immigrant parents and offspring to expend resources and time to keep up with and possibly support the relatives and communities left behind. However, the quotidian experience of those connections varies across groups and families, with implications for their transmission from one generation to the next. On the one hand, immigrant agency matters. Immigrant parents decide whether to cut homeland ties or instead continue to remit, to call, to visit, to engage in homeland politics, or some combination of these. These efforts then serve as a model for children to follow, who then have to decide whether to follow the parental example or not. On the other hand, the maintenance of cross-border ties depends on a complex set of factors related to the location of core family members, the options and appeal of family reunification, and the communication efforts of those left behind, all of which are largely beyond the control of immigrant parents or their second-generation children. Hence,

differences in the persistence of the homeland tie and its importance range widely among the adult children of immigrants, with consequences for outcomes unfolding in the country where they actually reside.

After crossing the territorial boundary, every newcomer starts as an alien confronting a series of other internal, often invisible, but vitally important boundaries, each one of which demarcates a zone corresponding to a distinctive set of rights. The first stages of a migrant's life—and more often than not, the entirety of the migrant's experience in the new country—take place in that conceptual space between the external territorial boundary and the internal boundary demarcating citizens from aliens. Consequently, immigration yields additional migrations, this time not spatial but rather political as the migrants move from one status to another. Unlike the move that brought them to the United States, impelled by their own initiative and their willingness to sacrifice for a better life, migrants have limited control over their ability to cross status boundaries. Moreover, the resources that helped them get from there to here—whether their willingness to assume risk or their ability to gain help from relatives and friends already present in the United States—prove much less useful when politicians and state officials are the people determining who can cross over status boundaries and under what conditions.

Presence in that liminal zone between citizenship and the territorial boundary does not prevent migrants to the United States from enjoying many of the advantages of life there. Yet, as long as they persist in that space, they are still foreigners, lacking the standing of “new Americans,” with consequences that ramify widely and take myriad form. International migration inherently generates civic stratification as the newcomers are sorted into different statuses, each with a distinctive set of entitlements, depending on the legal circumstances under which they gained entry into their new environment.¹ Since upon-arrival rights differ, so too do the resources that immigrant parents can mobilize for the benefit of their families and transmit to their children. Those starting out furthest from the inner circle of citizenship enjoy the fewest protections, experience the greatest vulnerability to territorial expulsion, and need to leap over multiple hurdles before citizenship becomes an option. By contrast, for those beginning with rights of permanent residence, citizenship can be accessed without excessive difficulty, allowing status advantages to cumulate over time. Of course, since, for the eligible, citizenship acquisition is optional, choice comes into play, widening disparities among persons who started out with the same options. These first-generation discrepancies in legal status and citizenship all have second-generation effects, but their impacts work through different channels, depending on whether the offspring were themselves born abroad, and thus experience

civic stratification directly, or instead, if born in the United States, undergo its effects indirectly via their parents.

These boundaries within and between states, the spaces between them, and the bridges across them define the terrain covered in this book. We train our focus on the adult children of immigrants, a population made up of two related, yet different groupings. One consists of those children of immigrants who were themselves born abroad but were brought to the United States as young children and raised there. For these adult children of immigrants—often labeled the 1.5 generation—the trajectories limned in the previous paragraphs provide a close match with their own personal experiences, as they too began as emigrants and became immigrants, embarking on the extended process of becoming an American, in both its formal and informal senses. But for those adult children born in the United States—let’s call them the “true” second generation—the process is somewhat different.² The origin country and alien status lie in the background. Directly experienced by immigrant parents, those realities are often, though not always, conveyed to the children through household practices and socialization, yielding impacts that affect the children’s own ability to function as full-fledged Americans who are accepted as such without a moment’s hesitation. But if the children are born “here,” they nonetheless grow up with relatives—sometimes their own parents—still residing “there.” If they come into the world as American citizens, they usually grow up in households where at least one parent lacks that status and may have begun his or her sojourn in America in a much more precarious legal condition. If the children speak flawless English, they may nonetheless retain some facility—perhaps even complete fluency—in their parents’ native tongue. On the other hand, precisely because they are Americans in fact, as well as in head and heart, they are especially attuned to the differences among the various types of ethnic Americans. Moreover, regardless of whether the children are born or just raised in the United States, they are affected by the broader social context in which they come of age.

MULTILEVEL MODEL AND ANALYSIS

Our conceptual model thus operates at two levels: at the group level of *interethnic* effects, and at the individual or family level of *intraethnic* effects. Throughout this book, in order to properly model these conceptually distinct levels, we use multilevel analysis, a statistical technique equipped with the power to assess effects generated by factors that simultaneously operate at these two levels. On the one hand, we know that the children of immigrants from some origin countries may be more or less alike

compared to the children of immigrants from other countries: as an example, we hypothesize that immigrants and their offspring with roots in poorer societies may maintain stronger links to the homeland than those who come from richer societies. At the same time, we also suspect that even within the national group disposed toward tighter homeland connections, the children of parents who frequently travel back to the homeland may remain more closely tied to the sending country than those whose parents never or rarely return home. Multilevel models allow us to simultaneously test for country of origin and individual-level differences such as these. Moreover, by using multilevel models, we gain the capacity to distinguish how much of the variation in second-generation outcomes can be linked to each level separately. In other words, how well does the analysis explain differences *between groups*—those with tighter or looser homeland connections—and how successfully does it perform in explaining those same differences *between individuals*? Gaining traction over these two dimensions generates significant intellectual rewards, as the scholarship with which we will engage attacks sources of both inter- and intragroup differences. And yet, as the reader will soon see, it does so without explicitly identifying the focal level of interest and never seeks to assess the relative importance of one level as compared to the other.

The strengths of multilevel analysis are threefold. First, the unit of analysis in the second level of a multilevel analysis becomes the national origin itself. But whereas nationality is just a name—a nominal variable lacking in rank order—we can unpack theoretically relevant characteristics pertaining to both the place of origin and the population of immigrants who started out from there and turn them into measurable variables, the consequences of which can then be assessed. The growing national-origin diversity of America's foreign-origin population, which encompasses far too many national-origin groups to meaningfully compare one at a time, makes this property especially important. Thus, looking at a large number of groups, we can compare outcomes—whether involving schooling or the acquisition of citizenship or political participation—across groups among whom advantageous legal statuses are prevalent versus those among whom less-advantaged statuses, such as lack of authorized presence, are more common. And if we can identify relevant aspects of the home-country context, we can also assess the impact of differences in the prevalence of one legal status or another, controlling for those very same home-country attributes. As we will shortly explain, these two shared, contextual features—one related to the context of immigration and the other to the context of emigration—belong at the center of any effort to understand the sources of intergroup difference, as they involve the distinctive and enduring characteristics of population movements across

state boundaries. And since those dimensions can also be measured—in ways that we shall soon describe—they can be converted into variables, which in turn provide the means for determining just when differences in context matter and, when they do, with what impact.

Second, multilevel models allow us to simultaneously measure the effect of individual- or family-level variation while controlling for contextual factors. They also enable us to separate the individual- and group-level influences of the same concept—for instance, educational attainment. We know that the children of highly educated parents achieve higher levels of education themselves; we also expect that, regardless of parental resources, the children belonging to immigrant populations with higher average levels of education will attain higher levels of schooling. Simultaneously modelling both parental and group-level resources in a multilevel framework allows us to separate the variation explained by a characteristic at the group and individual level. For instance, we can assess how much variation in educational attainment is explained by the average education level of the group, holding constant the education of the parent. We can also examine how much variation is explained by the educational resources of the parent while holding constant the education level of the group.

Finally, multilevel models enable us to test for interactions across levels. Keeping with the example, does parental education matter more or less in determining second-generation schooling for immigrants from coethnic communities with high levels of education, or among those immigrants from communities where the average level of education is low? On the one hand, we might anticipate that parental education will matter more when the coethnic community has fewer resources and thus less to give; on the other hand, parental education may matter more in contexts where the presence of other highly educated coethnics generates pathways by which foreigners can translate their educational knowledge into the new U.S. environment. In chapter 5, our modeling strategy enables us to properly assess the cross-level hypotheses that are a central part of existing explanations of second-generation variation.

We note that we are not the first to employ multilevel analysis to plumb the sources of difference among the second generation; indeed, European scholars have led the way, though that research has examined neither a similar set of group-level influences nor individual-level influences.³ But following the example from the other side of the Atlantic allows us to significantly improve on previous U.S.-centered scholarship, for which the search for the sources of national-origin disparities has typically defined the overriding intellectual goal. The most innovative of recent U.S. approaches explicitly sought to move away from the old-fashioned group-by-group comparisons that almost always ended up producing

an ethnoracial Olympics—this one excels, that one lags behind.⁴ Instead, those investigations aspired to shed light on the way in which differences in a shared variable—a context that cumulated advantages for some groups and disadvantages for others—affected a broad range of second-generation outcomes. Unfortunately, practice diverged from theory as researchers, failing to isolate the relevant attributes of the shared context, fell back on group-specific comparisons—comparing the children of the Chinese to the children of the Mexicans, for instance, which in turn led back to generalizations about entire populations.

To be sure, these current efforts are careful to avoid anything that might smack of a cultural explanation, contending that differences between groups arise in the context of reception that immigrants encounter at arrival. Yet such scholarship is stymied by its research design, which seeks answers by pursuing pairwise group comparisons: A versus B. However, while the members of immigrant-origin group A may indeed fare differently from the members of immigrant-origin group B, the one-by-one comparison precludes the possibility of explanation: since so many attributes distinguish A from B—whether those related to the point of departure or of reception or those related to the circumstances of emigration or those involving the resources harvested before departing—the comparison of two cases leaves the grounds for adjudicating among the varying sources of influence inherently wanting. And regardless of the specific attributes that distinguish A from B, those traits are unlikely to be unique to these two groups alone; rather, if particular sets of attributes truly matter, they should be present to varying degrees across a wider set of populations. But to distinguish the relevant features, one has to abstract from the singularities associated with a particular group and identify the variables that are likely to count among immigrants coming from a broad set of countries. Doing so is all the more important now that the number of immigrant populations in the United States has multiplied: at the turn of the twentieth century, one might reasonably have asked why Jews were different from Italians, who were in turn different from Poles. However, because the immigrants and immigrant offspring of the early twenty-first century come from an ever-growing number of countries located around the globe, that exercise defies completion, necessitating the multilevel model used in this book.

Unlike other researchers, we focus only on the adult children of immigrants and do not extend the lens to later-generation members of the native population. The rationale for our self-limiting approach stems from considerations of both an intellectual and practical nature. Intellectually, we seek to understand the impact of the distinctively international influences of population movements across borders. Although we have yet to show how much those international influences matter, we can assure the reader that

the demonstration will appear again and again in the pages to follow. But there is every reason to assume that the impacts of those influences will be greatly attenuated among the children of the children of immigrants, who will all be born American citizens, will be raised by parents who are all de facto Americans and mainly de jure Americans as well, and will grow up with the country of origin as an increasingly distal presence in their lives. Yet even if international factors are of much diminished importance, it follows that the differences found among second-generation adults will leave at least some imprint on the third generation. And though even further decay of international influence is likely among the great-grandchildren of immigrants, they too are likely to bear slight, but detectable, signs of it.

Demonstrating both decay and persistence among these later generations requires the appropriate data, however, whether for second-generation parents or for first-generation grandparents, and that information is nowhere available. Alternatively, one could take the standard approach, which assumes that among the native-born children of the native-born or native-raised, neither generation nor contexts of immigration and emigration nor any of the other traits associated with a foreign origin yields differences that matter. But in that standard approach, the very factors that lie at the source of heterogeneity among the second generation disappear in the comparison to a generationally undifferentiated population of the native-born children of the native-born. Since the contrast group then becomes one in which there is no variation in the relevant factors—*all* parents are citizens, *all* speak English at home, *none* retain ties to the country of origin, and indeed, country of origin cannot even be traced—the capacity to assess the impact of disparities in parental legal status, language used in the parental household, ties to home-country relatives, or home-country culture is lost.

SECOND-GENERATION DESTINIES: THE NEED FOR A SYSTEMATIC ASSESSMENT

The following pages implement the agenda sketched out here, while maintaining dialogue with the work of the insightful scholars who have gone before us and the influential books that they have written. The destiny of today's second generation has ranked high on the immigration research agenda for roughly twenty-five years, an interest first triggered by Alejandro Portes and Min Zhou's pathbreaking 1993 article on "segmented assimilation."⁵ There, Portes and Zhou announced that the offspring of the new immigrants of the turn of the twenty-first century would cleave from the pattern of the past, following not one but several trajectories of adaptation. In this view, success would attend some groups, while others

would be more likely to encounter a dead end; moreover, for members of the materially less advantaged groups, the road to progress would be unlocked by retaining home-country loyalties and values, in contrast to what the conventional wisdom had long maintained.

That article did not just excite the field: it served as the manifesto for an empirical research project launched in San Diego and Miami by Alejandro Portes, working in harness with Rubén Rumbaut; that work eventuated in the award-winning book *Legacies*, published in 2001.⁶ Not surprisingly, so controversial an approach quickly prompted reactions, of which the most influential was probably Richard Alba and Victor Nee's book *Remaking the American Mainstream*.⁷ A work of synthesis, not original research—and thus unlike *Legacies*—that book sought to update assimilation theory for the twenty-first century; naturally enough, responding to the claims of segmented assimilation ranked high among these authors' objectives. Whereas Portes and his collaborators emphasized the importance of group membership, Alba and Nee instead focused on the individual. For these proponents of "neo-assimilation" theory, the key driver of assimilation lay in the ways in which the individual search for the better life simultaneously weakened group attachments and increased the capacity to transmit resources, thereby bettering the life of the next generation, notwithstanding any prejudice or discrimination that might be encountered along the way.

Thus, these competing perspectives projected two very discrepant second-generation futures, one more pessimistic, one more optimistic. Their differing forecasts also corresponded to a divergence in views regarding the central axis of variation: did it lie *between* groups, as contended by segmented assimilation, or among individuals *within* groups, as argued by neo-assimilation theory? In breaking open the debate, these critical contributions provided the ammunition for the next round of empirical assessments, this time based on new data collection efforts conducted in the leading urban centers of immigrant America—New York and Los Angeles. In a curious way, the researchers who studied the New Yorkers—Philip Kasinitz, John Mollenkopf, Mary Waters, and Jennifer Holdaway—provided an account that echoed both segmented assimilation and neo-assimilation theory.⁸ Like Portes and his collaborators, they organized their inquiry around the structuring power of groups. And yet like Alba and Nee, they perceived the advent of the second generation as pointing in a positive direction, in contrast to the gloomier view adopted by segmented assimilation theory. As Kasinitz and his coauthors saw it, second-generation New Yorkers were "inheriting the city" and benefiting from second-generation advantages linked to immigrant selectivity, the immigrants' optimism, the hybrid culture produced by the multiethnic

metropolis, and the institutional legacy left by past immigrations, which would facilitate the immigrant offspring's efforts to get ahead.

Whereas this perspective born on the East Coast emphasized the advantages shared by today's immigrant offspring, the scholars who focused on the southern California scene highlighted the disparities in second-generation resources and experiences, albeit while advancing very different perspectives and using contrasting methodologies. In *Parents Without Papers*, Frank Bean, Susan Brown, and James Bachmeier brought the obstacles to second-generation progress front and center: advancing a "membership exclusion" model, these scholars underscored the ways in which differences in parental legal status—and in particular, undocumented status—shaped second-generation trajectories.⁹ Though the book's subtitle—*The Progress and Pitfalls of Mexican American Integration*—pointed toward an account of intergroup differences, as a study of a single group it could only illuminate the sources of *intragroup* differences. And by emphasizing the weight of differences among individuals belonging to the same population, *Parents Without Papers* implicitly worked with the same perspective as neo-assimilation theory, albeit while introducing a variable left out of Alba and Nee's account.

By contrast, Jennifer Lee and Min Zhou sought to understand the intergroup differences lying behind the "Asian American Achievement Paradox," a puzzle that provided the title for their book.¹⁰ Though their raw material came from qualitative interviews drawn from a selected subsample of the same large-scale survey that informed *Parents Without Papers*, Lee and Zhou chose not to engage with the "societal exclusion" model. Instead, they sought to explain the factors propelling the rapid integration of Chinese and Vietnamese immigrant offspring, contending that a complex of factors—the hyperselection of immigrant parents; their import, not of home-country values, but of specific institutions; a "success frame" endorsed by students and parents; and a "stereotype promise" maintained by teachers—led to extraordinary achievement in the narrow span of two generations, even among those immigrant offspring raised by unskilled parents lacking in English-language facility. Thus, whereas *Parents Without Papers* highlights the ways in which legal-status *disparities* among immigrant parents stemming from the same country led to educational and occupational *differences* among their children, *The Asian American Achievement Paradox* roots the *commonalities* among Chinese and Vietnamese immigrant offspring—in this case, their success—in the *shared* attributes and behaviors of their parents.

These thumbnail sketches will be elaborated at greater length in the next chapter, but for the moment they suffice to demonstrate the lively nature of the debate fostered by a quarter century of scholarship on the

second generation. However, the picture we have traced here also shows that the authors of these influential works are not truly in dialogue with one another. For instance, a central divide among these works involves the emphasis that some put on the differences *between* groups versus the focus in others on the differences among individuals *within* the same group. Yet, as no major work has thus far sought to disentangle the factors that make for intergroup disparities from those that produce intragroup differences, scholars are often talking past one another. Similarly, researchers have not yet sought to systematically weigh the relative importance of variations between national-origin groups as opposed to those found within a group of people originating in the same place, nor have they assessed how the sources of difference may vary from one dimension of social life to another.

Moreover, each successive work, while building on the contribution of a predecessor, generates a new set of hypotheses, but without fully scrutinizing claims put forward at an earlier stage in the debate. Consequently, the field is long overdue for a systematic assessment of the many plausible, indeed deeply insightful, hypotheses generated by these earlier efforts to understand the experiences of today's second generation. Since that assessment hinges on a clear delineation of the issues in question, we carefully sift through the accumulated literature to spotlight the specific claims in contention and then subject those claims to the thoroughgoing test that they deserve.

THE PATH AHEAD

It is with this background in mind that we have written the pages to follow. We begin the first part of the book, "Perspectives," with a chapter that engages with the works just mentioned in a way that specifies the hypotheses advanced in each book, brings out the fundamental contrasts among these authors, and identifies the gaps remaining in this existing scholarship. Chapter 3 details our own approach, which we refer to as the "international perspective." We explain how the distinctive characteristics of international migrations—population movements across state boundaries occurring in the face of migration control systems designed to sift, select, and exclude—yield fields of influence that span international borders. We also describe how international migration creates *internal* borders that separate newcomers from native-born citizens as well as immigrants of different legal statuses. These influences specific to the immigrant experience distinguish the socioeconomic and political trajectories of the second generation from those of native-born minorities, simultaneously shaping intergroup differences while producing new forms of variation among

immigrant offspring with origins in the same place. We then present our plan for putting that approach into action. We introduce objective indicators of the characteristics of the contexts of emigration and immigration that are theorized to underlie national-origin differences. We then build these attributes into a two-level model containing family-level predictors of second-generation outcomes at one level, nested within countries of origin at a second level.

The rest of the book falls into two further parts. Part II, “Transmission,” engages with the theme that dominates the writings in this field: namely, the acquisition of the education, skills, and resources needed to fulfill the “American dream” to which so many of the immigrants and their descendants aspire. The focus of the two chapters in Part II will be familiar, but not so the mode of analysis. Chapter 4 contrasts our approach to the practices prevailing in the field, demonstrating the shortcomings of nationality-based comparisons and showing how our two-level approach can distinguish specific contextual effects that lie behind intergroup differences in educational and occupational attainment. In these pages, we tackle the enduring question of how best to understand intergroup differences in socioeconomic attainment by considering the impact of those shared contextual factors deriving from the context of immigration—a long-standing issue in migration scholarship—as well as those that stem from the context of emigration, which migration researchers have tended to neglect.

The following chapter drills down in greater detail, showing that second-generation schooling and occupational experiences reflect the influence of the migration process both as linked to shared, group-wide contexts of immigration and emigration and as connected to factors operating at the individual and household levels. Chapter 5 explores the sources of intra-group differences, systematically testing the hypotheses advanced in the literature discussed in chapter 2 as well as the perspective that we elaborate in chapter 3. Chapters 4 and 5 show that a consideration of contexts of emigration alters our understanding of second-generation socioeconomic attainment. Moreover, these two chapters demonstrate the value of a more disaggregated approach that opens up the black box of nationality so as to identify the specific characteristics shared among persons of common national background that are relevant to educational and occupational attainment.

The third part of the book, “Transformations,” looks at the processes and impacts of boundary-crossing and boundary-straddling as well as the consequences of the time spent in that liminal social space between the boundaries of the territory and the citizenry. Chapter 6 examines the acquisition of citizenship, unraveling the features that lead some foreign-born immigrant offspring to cross the internal boundary of citizenship status

while making it impermeable to others. Chapter 7 then considers political participation, a particularly strategic research site, as it gives us leverage for understanding a question that is increasingly important as the noncitizen population grows: how can noncitizens engage in citizenship, if not necessarily in the same way as status citizens?

Whereas earlier chapters treated parental and familial cross-border connections as determinants of different outcomes, chapter 8 addresses ties to the parental country of origin as outcomes in their own right and tries to explain the factors accounting for the prevalence and persistence of cross-border connections in the second generation. Looking at ethnicity, chapter 9 examines how and with whom these immigrant offspring choose to affiliate, from whom they opt to differentiate themselves, and how these patterns are affected by their distinctive backgrounds. This chapter also considers language change, detailing the shifts in language competence and preference and accounting for the sources of language retention and loss.

We conclude with a final chapter reviewing the lessons learned as this book has progressed, drawing out implications for the next generation of research and for the new America unfolding before our eyes.

SOURCES

This book mainly draws on two exceptionally valuable, indeed unique, sources of data: the Immigrant Second Generation in Metropolitan New York (ISGMNY) survey, conducted in 1998 and 1999, and the Immigration and Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles (IIMMLA) survey, conducted in 2004. These two ventures were both funded by the Russell Sage Foundation (which has also supported the writing of this book and the research on which it is based), as part of the foundation's long-term investment in the data and intellectual resources needed to understand contemporary immigration and its consequences. As the outgrowth of a single ongoing effort, these two surveys overlap in significant ways: they sought to answer similar questions, and hence both queried respondents in similar, sometimes identical, ways. Moreover, they adopted similar methodologies, namely, telephone surveys of young adult immigrant offspring ages eighteen to thirty-two in the greater New York area and ages twenty to forty in the LA metropolitan area.

In design and choice of locale, these two surveys also illustrate the promise and perils of research on this topic. In 2004, when the IIMMLA was fielded, 13 percent of the adult civilian population had at least one foreign-born parent. Although that percentage translates into a huge population, from a research standpoint, the people in that population remain

relatively hard to find with an instrument like a survey. Making the highly improbable assumption that every person contacted would agree to an interview, one would have to call nearly eight thousand people in order to get a sample of just one thousand. Moreover, the geography of second-generation America makes the numbers still more unfavorable: while 13 percent of persons may be the offspring of an immigrant, that population is strongly concentrated in a handful of states, so generating a nationally representative sample of one thousand members of the second generation would require screening calls far beyond that eight-thousand-person threshold.

For these very practical reasons, the researchers responsible for these studies wisely decided to focus their efforts on the two metropolitan capitals of immigrant America, Los Angeles and New York, where the second-generation population has expanded to truly impressive numbers. Of course, that sensible choice also entailed a cost, namely, that the lessons learned from these surveys cannot be fully generalized to the national second-generation population. On the other hand, because a disproportionate share of that population resides in these two places and very sizable fractions live in similar large metropolitan areas, such as Miami, San Francisco, and Chicago, information gathered in Los Angeles and New York is likely to tell us much of what we need to know about today's emerging second generation.

Nonetheless, zooming in on New York and Los Angeles presents challenges if the goal is to capture the diversity of today's second generation. For instance, a representative survey of one thousand immigrant offspring living in Los Angeles would generate a nicely sized subsample of Mexican-origin respondents, but far too few persons of Korean, Chinese, or Filipino background for accurate subgroup analysis. And given the greater national-origin spread of New York's immigrant population, a representative survey of immigrant offspring would probably yield so much ethnic heterogeneity that subgroup analysis would be almost impossible. Consequently, both surveys engaged in quota sampling of second- and 1.5-generation groups. In total, the ISGMNY interviewed 3,415 young adults in New York City and its surrounding suburbs. The survey targeted second-generation Chinese, Dominicans, former Soviet Jews, West Indians, and Latin Americans from Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru, and it also included comparison groups of native-born blacks, Puerto Ricans, and non-Hispanic whites. The IIMMLA conducted 4,655 interviews in the Los Angeles metropolitan area—comprising Los Angeles, Orange, Ventura, Riverside, and San Bernardino Counties. Like the ISGMNY, the IIMMLA engaged in quota sampling, including Mexicans, Vietnamese, Filipinos, Koreans, Chinese, Central Americans from Guatemala and

El Salvador, and a catchall category of “all other” as well as three native-parentage comparison groups comprising third- and later-generation Mexican Americans, non-Hispanic whites, and blacks. The IIMMLA thus provides 3,309 respondents with at least one foreign-born parent, and the ISGMNY 2,430.

Though quota sampling is an imperative for the reasons noted, it has both virtues and vices. On the one hand, it generates national-origin subsamples large enough for reliable analysis; on the other hand, the result is less heterogeneity in national origin than might have been yielded by a representative survey. Fortunately, both surveys generated a good deal of national-origin heterogeneity, and more than one might have expected based on the limited number of groups for which the survey researchers aimed. Most valuable has been the IIMMLA “all other” category for some immigrant offspring respondents. This target yielded over six hundred respondents with immediate or parental backgrounds from Canada, a variety of European countries (Germany, the United Kingdom, Italy, France), and numerous Latin American countries (most notably, Costa Rica, Cuba, Honduras, and Nicaragua). Other such categorizations were less clearly of a miscellaneous nature but nonetheless involved targets more properly thought of as categories than as groups. In seeking to interview a certain quota of West Indians, for example, the New York researchers captured persons originating in a variety of different countries of origin (Jamaica, Trinidad, the Bahamas, Barbados, Guyana, and so on). Other respondents categorized alike in the sampling strategy were nonetheless diverse in their national origins: the Chinese respondents came from Taiwan, Hong Kong, and mainland China, and the Soviet Jews originated in Russia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, and Belarus. Greater national-origin variance is of course a source of greater analytic leverage. And as we will explain in chapter 3, the capacity to make many fine-grained national-origin distinctions helps shed significant light on the ways in which contexts of emigration affect outcomes in the society of reception.

Both the IIMMLA and ISGMNY are cross-sectional surveys that provide a snapshot of this population at one point in time. As survey researchers know, the liability of the cross-sectional approach lies in the difficulties it poses to the drawing of causal inferences. For example, in this field we are often interested in the relationship between some behavior that is thought of as “ethnic”—such as retaining fluency in the tongue of one’s own or one’s parent’s country of origin—and some other outcome, such as obtaining U.S. citizenship. But with cross-sectional data, it is hard to determine whether it was the preference for maintaining mother-tongue fluency that led someone to refrain from obtaining U.S. citizenship, or whether concern about the symbolic importance of citizenship acquisition led that person

to make the effort to retain mother-tongue fluency. Thus, with information of this sort, the best we can say is that there is an association between language and citizenship (at this point, an utterly unfounded hypothesis), but not that one causes the other.

We have looked to chronology to gain leverage on causality: that *a* preceded *b* does not mean that *a* caused *b*, but it certainly precludes the possibility that causality could have gone the other way around. When some of the chronologically prior events of interest to us were not precipitated by the people whom we are analyzing but by someone else, we rule out reverse causality. As we examine, for example, the influence of place of birth—whether in the United States or abroad—we recognize that the relevant decision was made by parents, not children; hence, we need not worry that a child's preference for being born in the United States or elsewhere influenced some later outcome. Since the large majority of the foreign-born persons found in these surveys arrived in the United States at a very young age (75 percent arrived by age ten), we can also preclude the possibility that their preference for life in the United States might have provided the motivation for their migration. In the analyses to follow, we are particularly interested in the influences transmitted from parents to children, whether related to the parents' immigration experiences and statuses, aspects of their socioeconomic characteristics, or the household practices to which our respondents were exposed as children. Given this concern, we have tended to rely more on the IIMMLA than the ISGMNY, as the former provides greater in-depth information on events occurring prior to adulthood as well as parental attributes of importance. Moreover, the IIMMLA collected particularly detailed information on both parents' and, for the foreign-born members of the sample, respondents' legal status at the time of entry into the United States as well as at the time of the survey. With this information in hand, we can then begin to understand how the distinctively political nature of international migration influences second-generation trajectories, which is another reason why the chapters to follow make special use of the IIMMLA.

We are greatly indebted to the social scientists who designed and implemented these pathbreaking surveys: Philip Kasinitz, John Mollenkopf, and Mary Waters, who fielded the ISGMNY; and Rubén Rumbaut, Frank Bean, Leo Chavez, Jennifer Lee, Susan Brown, Louis DeSipio, and Min Zhou, who were responsible for the IIMMLA. Compounding our debt to these scholars has been our reliance on the issues that they deemed important and the questions that they decided to ask, which, by and large, have proved exceptionally wise, as we believe readers will come to agree as they read the pages to follow.

We note that considerable time has elapsed since the ISGMNY and IIMMLA were fielded, and in a social world in constant flux—all the more so on our ever more globalized planet—the picture captured toward the beginning of the millennium is likely to be somewhat different from what we would see if we could return to the field now, toward the end of the twenty-first century's second decade. Nonetheless, the changes that have transpired since immigrant-origin New Yorkers and Angelenos were interviewed for the ISGMNY and IIMMLA are modest when considered in the light of the recurrent fundamentals—displacement, the internationalization of families, adaptation, alien status—that shape the process of migration and settlement. Moreover, the important differences that might distinguish the present moment from the years when the ISGMNY and IIMMLA were conducted do not represent novel features, absent at that earlier time, so much as the further development of tendencies already then in place. To be sure, legal status now has a more powerful impact than it did at the turn of the twenty-first century, and the liabilities experienced by undocumented immigrants have surely grown. Yet these aspects of today's immigrant experience are fully incorporated into our analysis, as our perspective emphasizes the centrality of status prevalence at the intergroup level and citizenship and status on arrival at the intragroup level. Furthermore, the bias produced while using data collected at an earlier time when migration controls were not enforced as severely as they are today is downward, a shift that should be concerning only if the variables related to legal status consistently prove irrelevant. As the reader will see, the analysis recurrently demonstrates the importance of status-related variables, providing reason to think that we would find similar, though probably stronger, results were we able to access more recent data.

The ISGMNY and IIMMLA represent the last major effort to survey America's second generation and thus provide the best opportunity to demonstrate the utility of the international perspective we develop and the multilevel models we employ. Because so many of the previous major works have been based on these same data, returning to these sources provides an excellent opportunity to test competing hypotheses. We now move on to the next chapter, which takes stock of the current field before illustrating the ways in which the model outlined in figure 1.1 complements and extends these existing perspectives, the task to which we turn in chapter 3.