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The Search for the American Dream: Interpersonal, Cultural, and Structural Constraints on Immigrants

By

Milenna Smith¹

ABSTRACT. The American Dream is a goal sought out by many people from around the globe. But immigrants must overcome many barriers that may inhibit that dream. This study attempted to understand, how structural (community distress and institutional prejudice), interpersonal, and bilingual constraints negatively impacted immigrant socioeconomic achievements and wealth accumulation. The study used a mixed methods approach; findings from a secondary quantitative survey data (Immigration and Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles) were elaborated on with qualitative interviews with six professionals who work with immigrants. Findings supported Feagin's systemic racism, viewed as a fundamental cause, which set up structural, interpersonal, and cultural constraints that hindered immigrant progress towards the American Dream. Suggestions for future research included oral history interviews, both with immigrants who have successfully achieved the American Dream as well as with those at varying stages of progress towards the dream.

INTRODUCTION

The American Dream beckons immigrants from all over the world, offering them the possibilities for economic opportunity and advancement. But although the United States is known to many as the home of immigrants, political discussions over the past couple of years have advocated for the limitation of future immigrants from specific countries, like Mexico and Syria (Bazelon 2015). Political advocacy against specific immigrants from certain countries borders the line of racial discrimination and interweaves another layer of prejudice into the fabric of American society. In turn, the stigma, of being, for example, a Mexican immigrant, is experienced in all sorts of institutions, such as work, social, and consumer environments, as well as in interpersonal interactions. The current and future immigrants who choose to call the United

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States their home may be exposed to a glaring reality of a life that may not live up to their expectations.

While many immigrants come to the U.S. to dedicate their lives to the careers that will help them achieve the American Dream, most are unaware of the institutionalized racism that awaits them and will affect the types of jobs they are able to earn. For example, minorities most likely occupy positions, like a cook, a janitor, or even busboy, where they are not seen and are invisible to consumers. In these jobs, limitations like not knowing English or the mainstream American cultural norms are not problematic. Ultimately, whether or not their jobs reflect the economic opportunity they believed was once possible to acquire in the U.S. will redefine their perception of the American Dream.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The following review of the extant literature that explored the experiences immigrant minorities face during the journey towards the American Dream touched on the many themes. In a society where privilege is defined by the dominant community, reaching the American dream for immigrant minorities can be very burdensome. Associated with the quest for the American dream are other meaningful dimensions of life, like earning an education, securing employment in a competitive job market, living in desired neighborhoods, and avoiding the potential health problems that come with racial stigmatization.

The Shifting Nature of the American Dream

James Truslow Adams was one of the first to coin the term “American” dream, in his historical publication titled, *The Epic of America* (Hauhart 2015:66). He used the phrase to describe his esteem towards a land where, with a little hard work and diligence, immigrants would be able to fulfill their very own “American” dream. Yet, as time has gone by, the nature of this famous phrase has evolved to fit a more realistic outlook on the dream. Over the years our nation’s “hopeful” slogan has become tempered by the forces of “class, stratification, status, intergenerational mobility, individualism, community commitment, ideology, race, and work and family life balance issues”, all of which have become pivotal to the American Dream (Hauhart 2015:67). Today the American dream is more narrowly defined as the opportunity for individual economic success. Even educational and professional networks are geared towards an individual doing well in a capitalist, consumer driven economy. It is widely accepted that education and networking will lead American dreamers to respectable careers, and ultimately towards the financial success and mobility to which they aspire.

Minorities and Education

While hard work and diligence are still major components of the new economically motivated American Dream, the days of achieving financial success without a college education is long gone. This very truth is why higher education is one of the most sought after tools in an effort towards becoming prosperous in the United States. However, for many racial minorities, because of intersecting social constraints, attending college is a very cumbersome process to begin, and even to complete. Some critical challenges that scholars identified were bilingualism, multicultural identities, working class backgrounds, and racial stigmatization.

In a survey, of one-hundred and fourteen college students, it was confirmed that most racial minorities were first generation college students, with one half hailing from working and low class backgrounds (Banks-Santilli 2014). Studies by Montoya and Magarati underscored the benefits and constraints that family social/SES backgrounds bring to student achievement (Montoya 2010:121,123 & Magarati 2010:197). For example, although fluently bilingual youth were more likely to enroll in college, they were, however, not more likely than non-bilingual youth, to graduate. Magarati also found that the faster youth assimilated to “American ways”, say becoming fluent in English, the more likely they were to gain upward mobility through higher education (Magarati 2010:199).

Shedding their multi-cultural, interdependent family identity and carving out a sense of individuated identity that comes with being away at college has been another marker of upward mobility potential (Banks-Santilli 2014), a widely accepted goal for most minority students. However, when minority students embraced the cultivated middle-class individualized values, they faced white racial prejudice, leaving many feeling isolated (Reynolds, Sneva, and Peehler 2010). In response, minority students are compelled to create separate multiple identities, one each for their home and school life and coerced to live “simultaneously in two vastly different worlds while being fully accepted in neither” (Banks-Santilli 2014:4).

Racial prejudice added another layer to the socio-cultural drawbacks that minorities faced in educational institutions. College students who experienced race-based prejudice from fellow students and staff felt insecure and were self-hindered by doubt about their academic abilities (Reynolds, Sneva, and Peehler 2010). Black and Latino undergraduates, in a sample of one-hundred and fifty-one students, who experienced race-based discrimination, internalized this negativity to the point where it affected their success in the classroom.

These scholars offered a variety of solutions, ranging from institutional to familial, to enable minority students be on their way to achieving the American Dream. Reynolds, Sneva, and Peehler (2010) advocated that college campuses must express and embrace positivity towards diversity. Suarez-Orozco, Onaga, & Lardemelle (2010:20 & 24) posited that it is only through building trusting relationships between family members, schools, and local communities that minority students will become cognitively engaged in their academics and cultivate the tools and guidance needed to succeed in college as well as in their later lives.

Jobs and Health Prospects

Unfortunately, even if minority students overcome the barriers working against them and earn college degrees, the obstacles they experienced throughout their educational career, continue to be manifested in their job searches and at places of employment. A lucrative job serves as a marker of a person’s financial success and status in society. Many scholars agree that Americans have made their careers the highest of their priorities, in an effort to achieve financial prosperity and economic mobility (Hauhart 2015). However, most minority college graduates have lost faith in the possibility of attaining jobs specific to their college degrees; institutional prejudice that they expect to follow them into their professional communities is a major reason (Reynolds, Sneva, and Peehler 2010). Tiffany Joseph’s qualitative study found many respondents experienced discrimination, based on racism and anti-immigrant practices, in sites of employment (Joseph 2011:175). But, Liu and Edwards (2015) found that employment chances of immigrants were contingent upon their English proficiency, in addition to the appropriate skill sets, social networks, and education. Two other studies confirmed Liu and Edwards’ findings, concluding that skills, tools, and English proficiency “have become

increasingly important determinants of success in the US labor market” (Duncan and Trejo 2012:549; Joseph 2011:170). Other scholars (Gorinas 2013) have also recommended that in order for (minority) immigrants to experience less discrimination within the job market, they must embrace and assimilate into the culture of the “host country”.

Unfortunately, immigrant minorities who are lucky enough to find a place in a respectable profession, continue to face the setbacks they faced in college and in their job search. In a long-term study of 88,432 medical faculty and their job promotion rates, Nunez- Smith, Ciarleglio, Sandoval-Schaefer, Elumn, Castillo-Page, and Bradley (2012) found differences between whites and minorities (i.e. Black and Latino). The average promotion rates of Black and Latino faculty, across 128 academic medical centers, were significantly lower than of white faculty. The reality of being denied equal promotion opportunities in a socially valued profession cheats immigrant minorities of the chance to choose a profession with the most economic gain, inevitably making their trek to their American dream even more difficult.

It has become axiomatic that securing a job in the competitive American labor market, that promises “equal opportunity for all to achieve monetary success” (Hauhart 2015:66), is an immense achievement. But, for low skilled/less educated immigrants landing a desirable job that is at least not physically taxing is rarely ever an option. While immigrant employment rates are far higher than that of natives, immigrants are also most likely “to accept jobs with sub-standard conditions that result in pay penalties”, exploitation, and even threats from their employers about potential reports to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (Duncan and Trejo 2012; Liu and Edwards 2015:406; Joseph 2011:175). Such strenuous working conditions often times results in unhealthy living and serious health problems, like poor dieting, body weight swings, sleep deprivation, depression, and anxiety (Joseph 2011:175). Studies have also confirmed that minorities received poorer quality medical care than white Americans; they noted that limited access to basic health care and the costs, both medical and psychological, has become part of the migrant lifestyle (Joseph 2011:177; Phelan & Link 2015:321).

Challenges of Structural and Community Integration

Another important marker of the American Dream and assimilation into American culture has been home ownership and other wealth indicators. However, a barrier that many immigrants have faced is the well- preserved social phenomenon of residential segregation. According to Xie and Zhou (2012) residential segregation has persisted because of white residents’ resistance to live in an area where their race is considerably outnumbered. Hall’s study confirmed that natives tend to flee areas where immigrant populations are newly appearing, out of fear “of declining housing values or concerns about the future (safety) of neighborhoods” (Hall 2012:1891). Mundra & Sharma found a housing gap, not between immigrants and natives, but between races, most likely because racial minorities “tend to live in neighborhoods where the supply of homes are inadequate” (Mundra & Sharma 2014:67). Self- segregation by both white and minority groups and policies from bank lenders have also exacerbated the residential disparities between native and immigrant minorities (Hall 2012:1891).

Residential integration and neighborhood demographics are not only economic markers of the American Dream they also have consequences for the living conditions of residents. For example, Phelan and Link’s study affirmed poor neighborhoods are linked to poor health and mortality, because of limited recreational opportunities, nutrition, harmful substances, and crime. They found segregated neighborhoods to be targets of tobacco and alcohol industries, to lack recreational facilities, to have two to three times as many fast-food outlets, and experienced

poor fire and police protection (Phelan and Link 2015: 322). These environmental deficiencies and associated psychological and physical health risks rendered mortality rate for minorities, and African Americans specifically, five times higher than that of white Americans (Phelan and Link 2015:322).

Racial profiling is yet another structural obstacle that many immigrants face in their search for the American Dream. In a study of 1,976 immigrants Graziano, Schuck, and Martin (2010) confirmed the roles that institutions play in creating and sustaining the racial profiling challenges that many immigrants face. Institutions, such as the police and the media, create assumptions about race that shape the public's opinions and beliefs on social issues such as racial profiling. The media and police lead white residents to believe that possible prejudicial treatment towards minorities by the authorities was simply a "byproduct of neutral crime fighting activities and not of prejudice" (Graziano, Schuck, and Martin 2010:55). Racial profiling has not only become an overlooked social problem, it has been added to the multitude of challenges that immigrants, and particularly first generation undocumented immigrants, face in their search of the American Dream.

The 9/11 crisis has also strained the relationship between American natives and other immigrant groups, with the resulting assumptions that immigrants as hostile and distrustful (Rousseau, Hassan, Moreau, & Thombs 2011:912). Over the years immigrants have "become the scapegoats for the nation's economic difficulties and reduced employment opportunities and with blessing of the conservative politicians, policies like Arizona's SB 1070 (the authorization to stop an individual based on their physical characteristics as an indicator of their illegal status) have become part of the legislative policy (Wallace 2014:284). Ibe, Ochie, & Obiyan (2012:185) focused on the unlawful practice of using race in police, immigration, and airport security procedures. Millions of immigrant minorities are subjected to racial profiling leaving them with "feelings of anger, powerlessness, and stigmatization" (2012:187). In a longitudinal study concerning fifty- five undocumented Latinos, he found that out of fear of being targeted, most first generation immigrants preferred to stay clear of any actions that may jeopardize their stay in the United States (Abrego 2011: 342).

Fortunately, many minorities refuse to buy into the notions constructed by the media and the police, even though most have experienced racial profiling and prejudice in ways that have translated into forms of police negligence and maltreatment (Graziano, Schuck, and Martin 2010). Unlike the first- generation immigrants, the 1.5- and later generation immigrants are less fearful of speaking out against their stigmatized status, in an effort to fight against the "setbacks" that come with a stigmatized identity (Abrego 2011). But, despite the progress made in counteracting the barriers that stigmatized identities bring, there still rarely is ever full acceptance of immigrants. Consequently, the challenges to the American Dream that those with different intersecting identities face, will continue.

Summary

The extensive literature reviewed above has documented the multitude of challenges faced by immigrant minorities in their search of the American Dream. Starting with the stigmatized status of immigrant minorities, their challenges in education, in their encounters with the police, as consumers, and even in their occupational and housing opportunities are among the many challenges that scholars have identified. Internalized discrimination stood in the way of minority students doing their best in college. For those who successfully completed their college education prospective employment opportunities proved slim and for the few with professional

careers upward mobility was close to impossible when white competitors were favored for promotions. In the community, residential segregation and racial profiling by authorities like the police, stimulated fear in immigrants/minorities and thwarted their fuller integration. At every step of the ladder of American Dream, immigrant minorities faced challenges that prevented much progress towards achieving an equal share of the American dream. This research paper will add to the conversation by simultaneously considering, a set of constraining factors that stand in the path towards the American Dream. Specific focus will be on the effects of structural constraints, interpersonal challenges, and cultural resources on the American Dream.

RESEARCH QUESTION

This study explored how structural constraints, interpersonal prejudice, and bilingual proficiency hindered the efforts of immigrant minorities in accomplishing the American dream. The American Dream was defined by socio-economic achievements and wealth accumulation. Two dimensions of structural constraints were examined: institutional discrimination and community distress. Interpersonal prejudice in the social interactions between minority immigrants and whites as well with other minority groups was the second set of challenges considered. The third constraint, bilingualism, aimed to capture whether or not that being bilingual was an asset or a disadvantage for those hoping to achieve the American dream lifestyle.

THEORIES AND HYPOTHESES

Research is very clear that the pathways to the American Dream are strewn with hurdles that are very different for minority U.S. immigrants than for white Americans. The constraints faced by immigrants can best be framed within Feagin's theoretical model of systemic racism (2006). In the systemic racism perspective, racism is the fundamental cause of the disparate pathways in socio-economic and wealth achievements in the U.S. Phelan and Link (2015:315) operationalized systemic racism thusly: flexible resources, like the access to institutional/structural resources, individual resources of social/cultural capital, and the ensuing social psychological and physical ramifications are set up in a way that disadvantages those excluded from the dominant white community. Racism becomes systemic because the dominant white community has access to the resources that help "facilitate the reproduction of inequalities by race" (Phelan and Link 2015: 315). In other words, the knowledge, power, prestige, and social networks that are useful assets to advance in the social ladder get located in institutions of governmental agencies, political leadership, court systems, educational institutions, mass media, real estate, banking, medicine, and entertainment. These resources and the associated ideology of white domination/superiority, vested in institutions, either covertly and/or overtly play a significant role in the perpetuating of racial inequalities.

More specifically, immigrant minorities in the U.S. experience discrimination, have fewer life chances, and ultimately have limited opportunities for achieving success. At a micro level, racially hostile actions by the dominant group directed towards members of subordinate racial groups is what Feagin (1996:503) termed individual racism. On a cultural level, the dominant group views their culture, beliefs, and members as positive while out-groups are compared and perceived to be negative. Feagin termed this ethnocentrism, "the view in which one's own group is the center of everything, and all others are scaled and rated with reference to it" and considered it to be a major reason behind discrimination against subordinate groups (1996:15). Ethnocentric cultures do not favor those who do not reflect their own values and culture, and so immigrants who are bilingual are often ostracized for their lack of assimilation. This ongoing

negativity manifests itself as prejudices and stereotypes that can eventually “influence social, economic, and political interactions among groups” (Feagin 1996:15). In an ethnocentric social environment, even subordinate out-groups feel pressure to conform, and the only way to conform is to practice the same ethnocentrism that continues to persecute your own group against other out-groups. Pair the pressure to conform along with the need for scarce resources that open up opportunities for achievement, fierce competition between out-groups ensues.

Systemic racism pervades everyday life: in public education, in housing opportunities, and even in the workplace. While segregation and discrimination are very hard to detect and prove, empirical evidence continues to be amassed about immigrant minorities being disadvantaged in colorblind work positions, neglected in public schools, and relegated to impoverished neighborhoods. These are manifestations of institutional discrimination or institutional practices that tend to create disparity and negatively affect members of a subordinate group (Feagin 1996:503). There are two forms of institutional discrimination that perpetuate inequality. The first is direct institutional discrimination; these are practices that intentionally create exclusion and are consciously known to have negative effects on the excluded subordinate groups. Examples include Jim Crow laws, the Japanese internment camps, and residential segregation. Modern day residential segregation is often seen in the informal norms shared by white real estate agents, who steer minority homebuyers away from white neighborhoods (Feagin 1996:20). Under these exclusionary conditions, even when immigrant minorities seek progress, the shared informal norms of dominant group keep them out.

The second type of systemic racism is indirect institutional discrimination. Indirect institutional discrimination is the unintended harm and segregation that results from the practices, regulations, and policies initiated by the dominant group. Public education, for example, is an institution that is governed by the policies and regulations created by the dominant group. Often these policies create unequal playing fields between dominant and subordinate groups, hindering the chances of minority achievement in education, and sequentially limiting their opportunities in the job market (Feagin 1996:20). Such cloaked forms of inequality enable the “behind the scenes racism” manifested in the forms of general policies, regulations, and practices that ultimately maintain the stereotypical views of minorities (Phelan and Link 2015:316).

Assuming the circumstances of systemic racism are axiomatic, it could be predicted that the more discrimination at the structural and interpersonal levels minority immigrants have experienced, the harder it would be for them to achieve the American Dream, irrespective of their age, sex, ethnicity, generation, and health status. Additionally in a systemically racist society like the United States, bilingualism would be a hindrance rather than a useful resource in advancing in the American Dream.

METHODOLOGY AND DATA SOURCES

Mixed methods, a combination of both a quantitative survey and qualitative interviews, were used in this research. The quantitative survey data was from a secondary source, while the qualitative data comprised of interviews with immigrant professionals as well as professionals on the specific immigrant related topics. The findings from the survey will be supplemented with the lived and professional experiences of the interviewees.

Secondary Survey Data

The secondary survey data used in this research was from the Immigration and Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles (IIMMLA) study, a 2004 telephone interview study conducted by scholars² from Southern California Universities. The study focused on the mobility patterns among different generations and races of immigrants. The original sample was comprised of first, 1.5, and second-generation immigrants. There were 38.8% of Latin American origin, 36.5% Asian American origin, and 24.7% of those who identified as African and White American decent. Although the researchers used multistage random sampling, they specifically targeted groups with a wide diversity of socio-cultural orientation, occupational backgrounds, and immigration statuses. Participants (n=4,655) in the study were between the ages of 20 to 39 residents of Los Angeles area.

The respondents I chose to concentrate on were of the 1.5 and second-generation (n=3,440)³. The average age of respondents (on a range of 20-40) was 27.9 (standard deviation = 6.0). The ratio for male and female respondents was split in half. As for generational status, a little more than half (57.8%) were second generation immigrants; the rest (47.2%) were 1.5 generation immigrants. As for ethnic distribution of the sample, close to half (49.3%) of the respondents were Asian, 40.9% were Latino, 8.6% were white, and 1.2% were Black. They were in quite good health; less than 10% had poor wealth (Appendix A). These demographics were controlled in the multivariate analyses of the immigrant's efforts in achieving the American dream.

Primary Qualitative Data

In keeping with the sequential mixed methods design, narrative interviews with six professionals who had work and/or lived experiences in the U.S. provided supplemental data. Three interviewees have worked with immigration issues. The first of these was an experienced (23-years) attorney at an immigration law firm (The Attorney); this interviewee was located through connections of several local businesses and customers that have used the law firm's services. The second interviewee was an Office Manager (7 years) who was recommended by the immigration law firm where the Attorney worked. An Attorney's Assistant (3-year experience at immigration/ worker's rights firm) was the third interviewee. The remaining three professional interviewees were immigrants with lived experiences working toward the American Dream. They were: a 20-year immigrant business owner of a Landscaping Company whose employees have always consisted of fellow immigrants; an owner and agent of an Insurance Agency, who insures mostly newcomers to the United States; and a Daycare Provider for 12 years, and interacts with families who have recently been exposed to American society. All interviews were conducted by telephone. Refer to Appendix B, for consent form and interview protocol.

² Rubén G. Rumbaut, Frank D. Bean, Leo R. Chávez, Jennifer Lee, Susan K. Brown, Louis DeSipio, and Min Zhou.

³ The original collector of the data, or ICPSR, or the relevant funding agencies bear no responsibility for use of the data or for the interpretations or inferences based on such uses.

DATA ANALYSES

Operationalization and Descriptive Analyses

Univariate analysis were used to describe the sample using their progress on the Achievement of the American dream (socio-economic achievements and wealth accumulation). The constraints that immigrants encountered in their pursuit of the American Dream were also outlined.

The “American Dream”

The “American Dream” (i.e. dependent concept) as measured in this study, pertained to valued assets that encompass all that is the American Dream. The common assets include education, work, and other wealth assets (Table 1.A).

**Table 1.A. Achievement of the American Dream
2004 Immigration and Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles (n=3177-3440)**

Concept	Dimensions	Indicators	Values and Responses	Statistics
The American Dream	Education Level:	Q25_a: What is the highest grade of school or year of college that you have completed and gotten credit for?	1= Did not complete high sch.	4.9%
			2= High school graduate	16.7
			3= Vocational or trade school	3.2
			4= Some college	36.4
			5= College graduate	27.7
			6= Graduate school	11.0
	Occupation:	Q12_1: Current Job-Occupation	1= Non- Skilled/ non-Professional	34.3%
			2= Skilled Workers/ Managers	24.1
			3= Business Owners	03.5
			4= Professionals	38.1
	Wealth:	Index of Socio-economic Achievements	Mean (SD)	10.56 (7.6)
			Range	1-24
Q37: Do you rent or own your home?		0= Rent or Other	72.2%	
		1= Own	27.7	
Q174_a: Do you have a savings and/or checking account?		0= No	11.4%	
		1= Yes	88.2	
174_b: Do you have mutual funds, stocks or bonds, and/or a 401k- retirement plan?	0= No	53.4%		
	1= Yes	45.7		
Index of Wealth	Mean (SD)	1.6 (9.2)		
	Range	0- 3		
Index of Achievement of the American Dream ³	Mean (SD)	20.1 (20.6)		
	Range	0-72		

¹ Index of Socio-economic Achievements: Q25_a _ Highest Education * Q12_1: Current Job- Occupation;

² Index of Wealth: Q37_Home Arrangement + Q174_a_Bank Accounts + Q174_b_Stocks, Bonds, 401k;

³ Index of the Achievement of the American Dream= Index of Socio- Economic Achievements * Index of Wealth.

A plurality (36.4%) in the sample has gained some college education, while a third (27.7%) had completed their Bachelor's degree. Although, only 11% of the sample had completed graduate school, a much larger segment (24.8%) had not even reached a college level education. Not surprisingly, their bi-modal occupational ranking matched educational levels. While a plurality worked in professional jobs (38.1%) a third (34.3%) were non-skilled workers; no doubt, a full quarter was skilled workers (24.1%). On average, the immigrants were half-way through in their socio-economic achievements (\bar{x} index = 10.56 on a range of 1-24)

As for wealth accumulation, the immigrants had achieved at least two out of three assets (\bar{x} = 1.6 on the wealth index; ranging from 0- 3). A majority (88.2%) had their own bank and saving accounts; only a minority (11.4%) did not. As for owned investments, half (53.4%) had invested their money in stocks, bonds, mutual funds, and even 401k- retirement, while the other half had not (45.7%). However, only a third owned a home (27.7%); the rest (72.2%) were either renters, or lived at home with their parents, or resided in situations where they did not pay a mortgage. Measured by the overall index of the Achievement of the American dream, the immigrants had more work to do on their progress toward the American Dream (\bar{x} index= 20.1 on 0- 72 range).

Institutional Prejudice

One of the structural barriers immigrants may face when attempting to advance towards their American dream is Institutional Prejudice (i.e. an independent concept). The police, work place, and housing were three institutional domains considered in this analysis. These discriminatory practices lay the groundwork or rather policies that encourage interpersonal prejudice.

**Table 1.B. Structural Racism Constraints: Institutional Prejudice
2004 Immigration and Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles (n=3434)**

Concept	Indicators	Values and Responses	Statistics
Institutional Prejudice	Q199_a: Did this involve the police?	1= Not applicable 2= No 3= Yes	67.6% 26.9 5.6
	Q199_b: Did this happen at work or while you were looking for work?	1= Not applicable 2= No 3= Yes	67.5% 20.5 12.0
	Q199_c: Did this happen when you were looking for a house or apartment?	1= Not applicable 2= No 3= Yes	67.6% 29.6 2.9
Index of Institutional Prejudice ¹		Mean (SD) Range (n)	4.2 (1.7) 3-9 (3434)

¹ Index of Institutionalized Racism= Q199_a_Police+ Q199_b_Work+ Q199_c_Housing.

The most common site of institutional prejudice was the work place; 12% had experienced prejudice in their job search or at their work place (Table 1.B.). Only a small minority had either experienced prejudicial treatment during their interactions with the police (5.6%) or while looking for housing (2.9%). Overall, there were relatively low levels of institutional prejudice experienced by the sample immigrants (Index Mean = 4.2 on a range of 3 to 9).

Community Distress

The extent of distress in the communities in which immigrants grew up was a second measure of structural constraints in their pursuit towards the American dream. Community distress was indicated by the levels of crime, gangs, and encounters with correctional institutions. The assumption was that an immigrant who had been exposed to high levels of crime, deviance, and risk in their communities was less likely to have had the opportunities to secure the aid and accumulate the tools needed for their advancement towards the achievement of the American dream (Table 1.C).

**Table 1.C. Structural Racism Constraints: Community Distress
2004 Immigration and Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles (n=3352)**

Concept	Indicators	Values and Responses	Statistics
Community Distress	Q62_a: How big of a problem was the dealing/using of drugs in your neighborhood of youth?	1= Not a problem 2= Somewhat of a problem 3= Big Problem	69.5% 18.2 12.4
	Q62_b: How big of a problem was gang activity in your neighborhood of youth?	1= Not a problem 2= Somewhat of a problem 3= Big Problem	54.4% 28.0 17.6
	Q62_c: How big of a problem was crime in your neighborhood of youth?	1= Not a problem 2= Somewhat of a problem 3= Big Problem	56.2% 31.4 12.5
	Q201: Have you or has any family member ever been arrested?	0= No 1= Yes	76.6% 23.4
	Q203A: Have you or has any member of your family ever been in reform school, a detention center, jail or prison?	0= No 1= Yes	83.4% 16.6
	Index of Community Distress ¹	Mean (SD) Range (n)	5.0 (2.2) 3-11 (3352)

¹ Index of Community Distress= Q62_a_Drugs+ Q162_b_Gang+ Q62_c_Crime+ Q201_Arrest+ Q203A_Prison.

For most immigrants, drugs were not an issue (69.5%) in their neighborhoods of youth. Only a small group noted that drugs were somewhat of a threat (18.2%) and even smaller group for whom drugs were an apparent problem (12.4%). Gang activity and crime were present but not a major threat. Gang activity was somewhat of a problem (28%) or truly a problem (17.6%) for a plurality; but not a problem for a majority (54.4%). Crime patterns in the neighborhoods of their youth were similar to gang activity. Only a third (31.4%) expressed crime was somewhat of an issue and even fewer (12.5%) affirmed that crime was an issue in their neighborhoods. Contacts with correctional institutions were similarly low. A quarter (23.4%) of the respondents were or had a family member who had been arrested; a fifth (16.6%) actually went to a reform school,

detention center, jail or prison. These relatively lower levels of exposure to community distress were captured in the mean index of community distress score (Mean=5, range of 3 to 11).

Interpersonal Prejudice

Another set of barriers to the American Dream conceptualized in this analysis was prejudice experienced during interpersonal interactions. Understanding if, and by whom, respondents had experienced prejudice can provide clues into how systemic racism was translated to interpersonal relationships. In other words, prejudicial interactions with whites would indicate systemic racism expressed at the hands of the dominant group. Prejudice in the interactions with minorities represented out-groups participating in the systemic racist framework.

**Table 1.D. Racism: Interpersonal Prejudice
2004 Immigration and Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles (n=3440)**

Concept	Dimensions	Indicators	Values and Responses	Statistics	
Interpersonal Prejudice	Overall:	Q198: Within the past year, did you feel as if someone was showing prejudice toward you or was discriminating against you because of your race or ethnicity?	1= No 2= Yes	67.1% 32.6	
	White Prejudice:	Q200_1: The last time this happened, what was the race or ethnicity of the person or persons showing prejudice toward you? _White	1= Not applicable	67.5%	
			2= No	9.9	
			3= Yes	22.6	
	Minority Prejudice:	Q200_2-5: Black/ African American	1= Not applicable	67.5%	
			2= No	28.8	
			3= Yes	3.7	
			Asian/ Pacific Islander	1= Not applicable	67.5%
				2= No	30.1
	Native American	3= Yes	2.4		
1= Not applicable		67.5%			
2= No		32.2			
Latino		3= Yes	.3		
		1= Not applicable	67.5%		
		2= No	27.5		
		3= Yes	5.0		
		Index of Minority Prejudice ¹	Mean (SD) Range (n)	5.4 (2.1) 6-17 (3440)	

¹ Index of Minority Prejudice= Q200_2_Black + Q200_3_Asian/Pacific Islander + Q200_4_Native American + Q200_5_Latino.

As seen in Table 1.D. about two thirds (67.1%) of the sample, had not experienced interpersonal prejudice, but the other third (32.6%) had. For the third that have experienced prejudice, 22.6% had experienced that prejudice from whites. The rest was in their interactions with other minorities; 5% from Latinos, 3.7% from Blacks, 2.4% from Asians, and only .3% from Native Americans. In short, most immigrants had not experienced interpersonal prejudice. But,

when they did, it was mainly in their interactions with whites, the representative of systemic racism.

Bilingualism: A Constraint or Resource?

The language of their origin is an important part of the identity of immigrants, particularly those coming to the United States from non-English speaking countries. But, English fluency is a critical asset in their search for the American Dream. Immigrants who are not fluent in English have only limited opportunities to secure the coveted, well-paying jobs in the mainstream labor market. On the other hand, because the United States is a nation of immigrants being bilingual or even multi-lingual can be an asset rather than a constraint.

Table 1.E. Cultural Resources: Bilingualism
2004 Immigration and Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles (n=3398)

Concept	Dimensions	Indicators	Values and Responses	Statistics
Bilingualism	Other Language Proficiency:	Q185: How well do you <u>speak</u> origin language?	1= Not at all Well	0.6%
			2= Not Well	14.4
			3= Well	34.8
			4= Very Well	50.1
		Q186: How well do you <u>understand</u> origin language?	1= Not at all Well	0.2%
			2= Not Well	5.2
			3= Well	31.3
			4= Very Well	63.3
		Q187: How well do you <u>read</u> origin language?	1= Not at all Well	12.4%
			2= Not Well	24.9
3= Well	26.8			
4= Very Well	35.9			
Q188: How well do you <u>write</u> origin language?	1= Not at all Well	16.9%		
	2= Not Well	31.5		
	3= Well	25.4		
	4= Very Well	26.2		
Index of Other Language Proficiency ¹	Mean (SD)	12.3 (3.1)		
	Range (n)	4-16 (2687)		
Language Growing Up	Q184 Recoded: Which language did you use most while growing up?	Proficient ² :	88.2%	
		Non- Proficient:	11.8	
		1= Other language	55.1%	
		2= English	31.3	
		3= English/ Other language about the same	13.6	
Mono- English/ Bilingual ³	0= Mono- English ⁴	7.4%		
	1=Bilingual ⁵	92.6		

¹ Index of Other Language Proficiency= Recoded185+Recoded186+Recoded187+Recoded188;

² Proficient (in Other Language)= 9 to 16 = Bilingual; Low Proficiency in Other Language= 4 to 8 = Mono- English.

³ Mono- English/ Bilingual= Recoded184 = 3 and DummyOtherLangProficiency=1/ Bilingual_MonoEnglish=1

⁴ Mono-English= Spoke English growing up AND Low Other Language proficiency (Score between 4 to 8 on Other Language Proficiency);

⁵ Bilingual= Spoke Other language growing up BUT Low other language proficiency/Spoke Other lang. growing up AND High other lang. proficiency/Spoke English growing up BUT also high proficiency in other lang./Spoke English and Other lang. growing up AND Low other lang. proficiency/Spoke English and Other lang. growing up AND High Other lang. proficiency.

Many respondents reported that they spoke (50.1%) and comprehended (63.3%) their language of origin very well. Another third could speak and comprehend origin language well (speaking=34.4%; comprehension=31.3%). They were more divided on their reading and comprehension skills in the origin language; a plurality (37.3%) could not read well or well at all. They were similarly divided in writing proficiency. Overall, the respondents were quite proficient in their origin language (Mean = 12.3 on a range of 4-16).

In addition, a little more than half (55.1%) affirmed that they grew up using their languages of origin. Only a third (31.1%) used English, and 13.6% grew up in a bilingual environment. Combining other language proficiency and language used when growing up found an overwhelmingly majority (92.6%) of immigrant respondents to be Bilingual.

Summary

The immigrants in the IIMMLA survey were half- way through their progress towards the American Dream. They had not experienced much prejudice from institutions or interpersonal interactions, yet those who had, received it during their job search or at their work place through most likely interactions with whites. A little less than half of the immigrants had grown up in distressed communities, suggesting that their communities lacked the resources and guidance needed to progress towards the American dream. And with more than a third of immigrants or someone related having been in correctional custody, the “criminal” stigma alone, may provide for more intense barriers socio- economically. An overwhelming majority was bilingual; immigrants had learned and use English as well as their language of origin.

Bivariate Analysis

In the bivariate analyses discussed below the potential relationships between the Achievement of the American Dream and constraints (structural, interpersonal, and cultural) were examined. The correlations can be found in Appendix C.

As might be expected, immigrants with more socio-economic achievements also had accumulated more wealth ($r= 0.41^{***}$). However, of the two structural constraints indicators, only Community Distress ($r=-0.18^{**}$), not Institutional Prejudice, hindered the wealth dimension of the American dream. Neither did interpersonal constraints hamper wealth accumulation. Interestingly, Bilingualism was very likely to impede (-0.04^{**}), rather than benefit, immigrants in their path to the American dream. Further, older immigrants were closer to their dream (0.50^{***}) than the younger cohorts, and immigrant minorities were not (-0.15^{***}). A few other patterns in demographic subgroups who were found to be a greater distance away from the wealth dimension of the American Dream, included: second (vs. 1.5) generations (-0.05^{**}), and those in poorer health ($r= -0.17^{***}$)

As for socio- economic achievements, immigrants who were successful had grown up in community environments that were not as distressed ($r= -0.20^{***}$). Institutional and interpersonal constraints held no importance for socio- economic achievement. However, bilingualism was likely to hinder ($r=-08^{**}$) immigrants in their socio- economic goals, rather than be a helpful tool. Other sub-groups who were not as socioeconomically successful as their relevant counterparts were: men ($r= 0.04^*$), minorities ($r= -0.04^*$), second generation immigrants ($r= -0.07^{***}$), and those in poorer health ($r= -0.17$). Older, than younger, immigrants were socioeconomically ($r= 0.26^{***}$) successful. The stability of these relationships was tested using multivariate analyses.

Multivariate Analyses

The results presented in Table 3 and Figure 1, included a sequential linear regression analysis of the effects of structural (Institutional Prejudice and Community Distress), Interpersonal (Interpersonal Prejudice from both Whites and Minorities), and cultural constraints (Bilingualism) first on immigrant's socio-economic achievement (Model 1) and then on wealth accumulation (Model 2). Taken together, the two models captured the extent to which the immigrants were constrained in their progress, or lack thereof, to the American Dream. Demographics of sex, age, ethnicity, generation, and health, were controlled.

As was expected, socioeconomic achievements were directly connected to wealth accumulation (Beta= 0.24^{***}). In other words, the American Dream included both inter-related dimensions.

But, there were a different set of hurdles in immigrants' paths to the American Dream, depending on whether the dream was defined by socio-economic achievement or wealth accumulation. Community distress, one of the structural constraints, was the only constraint that impeded the progress of immigrants both on the socio-economic (Beta = -0.15^{***}) and wealth accumulations (Beta = -0.10^{***}). That is, immigrants who grew up in neighborhoods that had drugs, gang violence, and crime had a harder time escaping to a better American dream lifestyle. The Daycare provider (Interview #3) opined that housing and the media were the two largest institutions that rally against immigrant minorities. In her experience, the media portrays minorities (immigrants) in a negative way. Ordinary people are just trying to keep their children away from bad communities but they are often unable to find housing in safer neighborhoods. The Daycare provider and Office manager (Interviewees #3 & 2) have also found that immigrants experience prejudice when looking for housing because some landowners prefer to rent to tenants of their (own) ethnicity. This racial bias only intensifies the competition for scarce resources, or in this case, housing. Ultimately such bias negatively impacts the schools their children will attend, the colleges and employment they will consider, and ultimately, their future opportunities for success.

On the other hand, institutional prejudice created direct hurdles for immigrant socioeconomic progress (Beta= -0.10^{***}), but only indirectly for wealth accumulation. When immigrant experienced prejudice at the institutional level they were less likely to be successful socio-economically. Nevertheless, the immediate negative impact that institutions had on immigrant education and jobs also indirectly limited their potential future wealth. The professional interviewees confirmed this statistical finding; in their judgment, even in diverse areas, immigrants are affected by prejudicial experiences in their daily interactions with the common people, as well as political leaders, since it is assumed that immigrants won't meet cultural expectations.

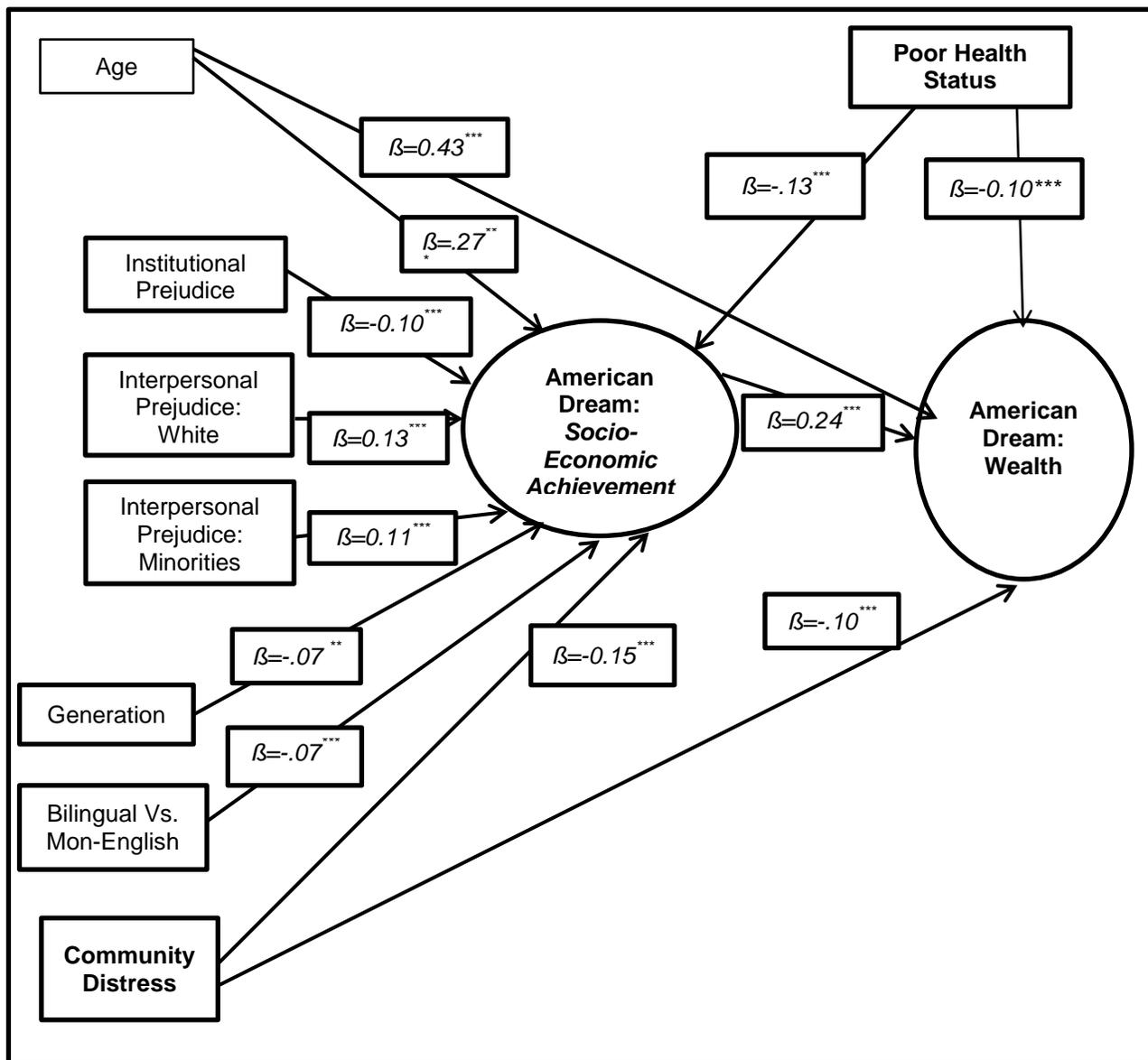
Table 3
Regression Analyses of the Relative Net Effects of Structural and Interpersonal Constraints and Bilingualism on Achievement of the American Dream¹
2004 Immigration and Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles

	<u>American Dream</u>	
	<u>Socio-economic achievements</u>	<u>Wealth</u>
	<u>Beta (β)</u>	<u>Beta (β)</u>
Socioeconomic Achievements	--	0.24 ^{***}
<u>Structural Constraints:</u>		
Community Distress	-0.15 ^{***}	-0.10 ^{***}
Institutional Prejudice	-0.10 ^{***}	-0.04
<u>Interpersonal Constraints:</u>		
Interpersonal Prejudice: Whites	0.13 ^{***}	0.05
Interpersonal Prejudice: Minorities	0.11 ^{***}	0.02
<u>Cultural Capital:</u>		
Bilingual (1) Vs. Mono- English (0)	-0.07 ^{***}	-0.01
<u>Demographic Controls:</u>		
Female (vs. Male)	0.03	0.01
Age	0.27 ^{***}	0.43 ^{***}
Pan-Ethnicity:	0.02	-0.01
Generation	-0.06 ^{**}	0.02
Poor Health Status	-0.13 ^{***}	-0.10 ^{***}
Constant (a)	9.4 ^{***}	-0.003
Adjusted R ²	0.14 ^{***}	0.35 ^{***}
DF 1 & 2	10 & 2406	11 & 2380

^{***} p <= .001; ^{**} p <= .05

- ¹ Index of wealth: Owns home (Q37)+Have savings or checking account (Q174_a)+Have mutual funds, stocks or bonds, 401k retirement plan (174_b); Range= 0-3;
Index of Socio-economic Achievements: Q25_a.Highest Education (1-6) * Q12_1_Current Job-Occupation (1-4); Range = 1-24;
Index of Community Distress: Q62_a_Drugs+ Q162_b_Gang+ Q62_c_Crime+ Q201_Arrest+ Q203A_Prison: 1=Not a problem to 3=A big problem (Range = 3-11);
Index of Institutional Prejudice: Q199_a_Police+ Q199_b_Work+ Q199_c_Housing; Range=3 (none) – 9 (all three sources);
Interpersonal White Prejudice: 1=Prejudice experienced (Q198=1) and from whites (Q200_1); else =0);
Interpersonal Minority Prejudice: If prejudice was experienced, If Q200_2_Black+ Q200_3_Asian/Pacific Islander+ Q200_4_Native American+ Q200_5_Latino; Range= 4(none) – 12(all);
Bilingual/ Mono-English= Bilingual (1) versus Mono-English (0);
Age: Mean= 27.9; Range=20- 40;
Female: 0= Male; 1= Female;
Pan- Ethnicity: 0= White, Non Hispanic; 1= Minorities (Latin American, Asian, Black Non-Hispanic).
Generation: 1=1.5 Generation; 2= 2nd Generation;
Poor Health Status: 1= Excellent; 2= Very Good; 3=Good; 4=Poor.

Figure 1
Empirical Model: Impacts of Structural, Interpersonal, and Cultural Constraints on Achievement of the American Dream¹



¹ Refer to Table 3 for index coding.

The professionals also elaborated on other institutional settings in which prejudice is expressed. A case in point is the federal immigration law and the court system. The seemingly “neutral” assessment process for work authorization process for immigrants contradicts the long and difficult judicial process of getting work authorization; some judges choose, out of prejudice they felt, to focus on the bad factors and often immigrants are pushed towards marginal jobs that are exploitative and lack opportunity (Office Manager, Interviewee #2). In other words, even in institutions obligated to fairness and justice, immigrants are not given a fair chance or opportunity.

The interviewees also reflected on the racialized American society, a society where immigrants of the same superior race are admired and have a more seamless transition that results in faster success (The Attorney's Assistant, Interviewee #6). To the Landscaping Owner (Interviewee #4), "the power structure of the nation, where "the majority of corporation CEOs, Senators, and Representatives are white, is essentially controlled by one race. And the few minorities that are in power are rarely able to make a difference in the opportunity offered." Opportunities open to every single person, whether born or immigrating to the U.S., are pre-determined, and "the ones who decide who gets more or less opportunity are the white men at the top" (Attorney's Assistant, Interviewee #6).

Another prejudicial institution, per the Attorney's Assistant (Interviewee #6), was the police. Comprised of white and non-white officers, the law enforcement is definitely an institution known for racial profiling and prejudice, against immigrants and minorities alike. Similar to the police, retail consumer businesses also practice racial profiling against immigrants, probably because of their erroneous assumption that the immigrants lack the money to afford the product and do not deserve respect and kind customer service (Insurance Agent & Office Manager, Interviewee(s) #5 & 2). In short, federal immigration court and officials, the job market, housing, police, and even businesses are all examples of institutions that have negatively affected immigrants in their efforts of achievement of the American Dream.

It was also evident in Table 3 that immigrants faced not only structural but also cultural constraints. Bilingualism was more of a constraint than a resource in the immigrant pathway to the American Dream. Bilingual immigrants lagged behind the mono-English immigrants in their socio-economic achievements (Beta = -0.07^{***}). But, as with institutional prejudice, bilingualism only had an indirect negative impact on wealth. Five of the six professional interviewees agreed that the largest cause of interpersonal prejudice most likely had to do with the lack of knowledge of the English language. Two of the interviewees have witnessed situations where people do not want to tolerate immigrants they cannot communicate with. The immigrant business owners collectively believed that part of their success came from assimilating to the English language. The Landscaping owner (Interviewee #4) recollected: by learning the language of the country he had unconsciously accepted the American culture as well. Yet, bilingualism, fluency in both English and native languages was also thought to be a useful tool for communicating and acquiring future employment opportunities.

On the other hand, interpersonal prejudice in interactions with whites spurred socio-economic progress (white prejudice Beta = .12^{***}), as if inspiring immigrants work harder. The common belief, according to (Insurance Agent, Interviewee #5), is that "today's immigrants are viewed as enemies, they are Brown people, who speak broken English, and are thought to be untrustworthy", implying that the nation is unwelcoming to immigrant minorities. Whereas white European immigrants arrive unnoticed and each quality is embraced, even their accents." But, rather than being defeated by the prejudicial interactions, immigrants seemed spurred in their search for the American Dream.

Similarly, prejudicial interactions with other minorities were also a motivating force (0.11^{***}) for immigrant socio-economic achievement. Non-white minority immigrants are despised even by other minority immigrants for having different cultural values, making integration hard, and achieving the American Dream even harder (Landscaping Owner, Interviewee #4). Commenting on the absence of direct effects of institutional, interpersonal, or cultural constraints on wealth, the Landscaping Owner noted thusly: even though prejudice from other minority immigrants

may propel some motivation towards immediate success, achieving wealth as part of the American Dream has nothing to do with experiences of social prejudice.

The strongest and most obvious positive predictor of socio-economic (0.27^{***}) and wealth (0.43^{***}) achievement of the American Dream was the respondent's age. The older immigrants were more successful than the younger ones. The interviewees confirmed the age effect because of the driven work ethic of older generations for a better life in the United States. But interviewees also believed that given time, youth will also be equally successful, if they do not "fall prey to" bad habits (Lawyer, Interviewee #1) as was perhaps the case with the second generation immigrants (-0.06^{**}). In the final analyses, the interviewees (Lawyer's Assistant, Insurance Agent, Office Manager, and Daycare Provider) were hopeful that young immigrants, who have the benefit of growing up immersed in the dominant language and culture will be successful. Finally, poor health had negative effects on both the socio-economic (-0.13^{***}) and wealth (-0.10^{***}) accumulation; immigrants who were not healthy could neither accumulate the income nor the wealth needed to attain the American dream.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Empirical Implications

To summarize, immigrants who were successful in education and in the labor force had also accumulated more wealth. That is, one road to accumulating wealth, a dimension of the American Dream, has been to be successful socio-economically.

But, the path to socioeconomic success is strewn with hurdles posed by community distress and institutional prejudice. Immigrants who had grown up in distressed communities, with crime and violence, were found to be the least accomplished in both socio-economic achievement and overall wealth. Immigrants exposed to such negative conditions were less likely to escape them; being surrounded by so many discouraging conditions can only foster the same harmful outcomes. Prejudicial institutions also represented an additional hurdle for immigrants. The police, work place, and housing market were sites of prejudice that stood in the way of immigrant success.

On the contrary, prejudicial interpersonal interactions, spurred, rather than hindered, progress made by immigrants. To the Attorney's Assistant (Interviewee #6), while the combination of culture shock and experiences of prejudice leave many intimidated, the intimidation never seems to deter their motivation to put themselves out there for work. The Lawyer (Interviewee #1) added: the belief that immigrants do not integrate and achieve the American Dream is a racist myth, meant to hinder their process, but instead it only motivates them. Despite the social factors working against immigrant minorities, every single interviewee agreed that the dedication and hard work ethic that immigrants possess, is what gives them resilience, and allows them to achieve the American dream.

All the professional interviewees were hopeful about the future. If, instead of discriminating, people and institutions learned to embrace and support immigrants, the United States would benefit and achieve mutual success. Most importantly, they felt that "there is always going to be prejudice and barriers working against immigrants, but as long as that person wants to achieve, that negativity will only motivate one to success" (Insurance Agent, Interviewee #5). In other words, success comes from within, if it is chosen to be embraced.

On balance, institutions that are prejudicial towards immigrants, tended to create small, but overcome-able, barriers for those seeking success. If immigrants truly wish to achieve the American Dream, institutions working against them will be a couple of small bumps in the road towards wealth. There is already evidence that prejudice expressed by both white and minority immigrants seemed to only motivate immigrants in their immediate socio- economic achievements. But that positive influence was less consequential when it came to wealth accumulation. Perhaps, the drive that immigrants gain when they experience interpersonal prejudice might only be good for short- term success. In order to achieve long term American wealth, immigrants must rely on their internal drive and ambition.

Theoretical Implications

In the final analyses, this research clarified how structural, interpersonal, and cultural constraints hindered immigrant progress toward their American Dream. On the one hand, as predicted by Systemic racism, community distress and institutional prejudice blocked immigrant progress. On the other hand, experiences of interpersonal discrimination at the hands of whites or even other minorities, seemed to motivate them in their pursuit of the American Dream. Perhaps, the Systemic Racism framework failed to envision a society where immigrants, with odds against them, could actually achieve the sought after American Dream. Immigrants are resilient and the negative experiences become more of an asset, rather than a hurdle, in their pursuit of the American Dream.

The fact that immigrants, despite the prejudice and obstacles they faced, continued to strive and achieve the American Dream is captured by the resilience theory (Wang, Zhang, & Zimmerman 2015). Resilience theory is a “strength- based model, rather than a problem- oriented approach”, that attempts to understand why some people are able to successfully adapt and overcome negative life experiences and adversities. Two assets assist immigrants in overcoming the hurdles they encounter. One set of assets signify personal characteristics, such as “competence, coping skills, and self- efficacy” (Wang, Zhang, & Zimmerman 2015:356), which provide at- risk, folk with the mindset need to confront negative conditions. The second set of assets included resources like guidance from mentors and family/community support. Both asset sets help individuals combat adversities through resilient intellect and behavior/interactions, resulting “successful adaptation despite challenging circumstances (Wang, Zhang, & Zimmerman 2015:355). Immigrants in this study who faced prejudice were able to overcome such obstacles with a strong mindset and supportive community and network.

Limitations and Suggestions for the Future

While the study offered valuable insights into the progress immigrants have made towards the American Dream, many unresolved questions still remain. For one, the adjusted R^2 (explained variance) were only 0.14^{***} for the Socio-economic model and 0.35^{***} for the wealth model. One limitation of the study was not being able to fully understand the specifics of the ways in which the constraints stood in the way of immigrants. For example, a fuller portrayal of the contexts and dynamics of prejudicial encounters is warranted. Health restrictions should also be elaborated on by accounting for health and health care history. Oral histories of immigrant experiences, both their successes and struggles, will go a long way to offering a fuller portrayal of immigrants in their search of the American Dream.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

2004 Immigration and Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles (n=3440)

Concepts	Indicators	Values and Responses	Statistics
Demographical Data:	Age:	Mean (SD)	27.9 (6.0)
		Range (n)	20-40 (3440)
	Sex:	0= Male	49.5%
		1= Female	50.5
	Generation:	1= 1.5	47.2%
		2= Second	52.8
	Pan-ethnic:	0= White, Non-Hispanic	8.6%
		1= Minorities	91.4
		Latin American	44.8%
		Asian	54.0
	Poor Health Status:	Black, Non Hispanic)	1.3
		4= Fair, Poor	08.7%
		3= Good	24.6
		2= Very Good	31.2
		1= Excellent	35.5

Appendix B

Letter of Consent and Interview Protocol

Letter of Consent

Dear Interviewee:

I am a Sociology Senior working on my Research Capstone Paper under the direction of Professor Marilyn Fernandez in the Department of Sociology at Santa Clara University. I am conducting my research on immigrant attainment of the American Dream.

You were selected for this interview, because of your knowledge of and experience working with immigrants.

I am requesting your participation, which will involve a 20- minute response to questions explaining immigrant community integration and how that influences their journey towards the attainment of the American Dream. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to choose to not participate or to withdraw from the interview at any time. Pseudonyms will be used in lieu of your name and the name of your organization in the written paper. You will also not be asked (nor recorded) questions about your specific characteristics, such as age, race, sex, and religion.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please call/email me at (408) 930- 5725 or Dr. Fernandez at (408)-554-4432 mfernandez@scu.edu

Sincerely,

Milenna Smith

By signing below you are giving consent to participate in the above study. (If the interviewee was contacted by email or phone, request an electronic message denoting consent).

Signature

Printed Name

Date

If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Committee, through Office of Research Compliance and Integrity at (408) 554-5591.

Interview Schedule for Supplemental Qualitative Interviews

Interview Date and Time: _____

Respondent ID#: 1

1. What is the TYPE Agency/Organization/Association/Institution (**NO NAME**, please) where you learned about (and/or worked) with community integration of immigrants?
2. What is your position in this organization?
3. How long have you been in this position and in this organization?
4. Based on what you know of community integration for immigrants, how difficult and/or easy is it for immigrants to integrate into their communities in the U.S.?
5. In your opinion, what are some reasons that contribute to the success and/or problems with integration?
6. What about specific problematic contributing factors such as:
 - a. Interpersonal Prejudice?
 - b. Institutional Prejudice?
 - c. Do, and if so, how have you observed childhood neighborhoods, bilingualism, or age hinder or benefit integration?
For example:
 - ✓ Does growing up in a negative environment limit opportunities for success?
 - ✓ Does being bilingual benefit your chances of success?
 - ✓ Are younger immigrants more successful than older immigrants?
 - ✓ How about race? Are White European immigrants able to integrate more smoothly than non-white immigrants? Why?
 - ✓ How about men? Do they have an easier time integrating than women? Why?
7. Is there anything else about this issue/topic I should know more about?

Thank you very much for your time. If you wish to see a copy of my final paper, I would be glad to share it with you at the end of the winter quarter. If you have any further questions or comments for me, I can be contacted at (msmith4@scu.edu). Or if you wish to speak to my faculty advisor, Dr. Marilyn Fernandez, she can be reached at mfernandez@scu.edu

Appendix C

Table 2. Correlation (r) Matrix

Achievement of the American Dream, Interpersonal Prejudice: Whites & Minorities, Institutional Prejudice, Age, Sex, and Generation (n=3392-3440)

2004 Immigration and Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
A. Wealth	1.0											
B. Socio-Economic Status	0.41 ^{***}	1.0										
C. Community Distress	-0.18 ^{***}	-0.20 ^{***}	1.0									
D. Institutional Prejudice	-0.03	0.00	0.20 ^{***}	1.0								
E. Interpersonal Prejudice: Whites	-0.00	0.02	0.13 ^{***}	0.77 ^{***}	1.0							
F. Interpersonal Prejudice: Minorities	-0.01	0.03	0.09 ^{***}	0.48 ^{***}	-0.01	1.0						
G. Bilingualism	-0.04 [*]	-0.08 ^{***}	0.11 ^{***}	0.04 [*]	0.05 [*]	-0.00	1.0					
H. Female	0.02	0.04 [*]	-0.12 ^{***}	-0.05 ^{**}	-0.04 [*]	-0.02	0.02	1.0				
I. Age	0.50 ^{***}	0.26 ^{***}	-0.06 ^{**}	-0.04 [*]	-0.04 [*]	-0.02	-0.01	0.00	1.0			
J. Pan- Ethnic	-0.15 ^{***}	-0.04 [*]	0.08 ^{***}	0.09 ^{***}	0.11 ^{***}	-0.01	0.05 [*]	-0.03	-0.12 ^{***}	1.0		
K. Generation	-0.05 ^{**}	-0.07 ^{***}	0.03 [*]	0.03 [*]	0.03 [*]	0.01	-0.07 ^{***}	0.01	-0.15 ^{***}	-0.12 ^{***}	1.0	
L. Poor Health	-0.17 ^{***}	-0.17 ^{***}	0.13 ^{***}	0.05 ^{**}	0.01	0.04 [*]	0.02	-0.01	-0.01	0.08 ^{***}	-0.04 [*]	1.0

*** p <= .001; ** p <= .01; * p <= .05

1. Refer to Table 3 for index coding

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