

Perlmann, Joel

**Working Paper**

## Polish and Italian schooling then, Mexican schooling Now? US ethnic school attainments across the generations of the 20th century

Working Paper, No. 350

**Provided in Cooperation with:**

Levy Economics Institute of Bard College

*Suggested Citation:* Perlmann, Joel (2002) : Polish and Italian schooling then, Mexican schooling Now? US ethnic school attainments across the generations of the 20th century, Working Paper, No. 350, Levy Economics Institute of Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY

This Version is available at:

<https://hdl.handle.net/10419/31481>

**Standard-Nutzungsbedingungen:**

Die Dokumente auf EconStor dürfen zu eigenen wissenschaftlichen Zwecken und zum Privatgebrauch gespeichert und kopiert werden.

Sie dürfen die Dokumente nicht für öffentliche oder kommerzielle Zwecke vervielfältigen, öffentlich ausstellen, öffentlich zugänglich machen, vertreiben oder anderweitig nutzen.

Sofern die Verfasser die Dokumente unter Open-Content-Lizenzen (insbesondere CC-Lizenzen) zur Verfügung gestellt haben sollten, gelten abweichend von diesen Nutzungsbedingungen die in der dort genannten Lizenz gewährten Nutzungsrechte.

**Terms of use:**

*Documents in EconStor may be saved and copied for your personal and scholarly purposes.*

*You are not to copy documents for public or commercial purposes, to exhibit the documents publicly, to make them publicly available on the internet, or to distribute or otherwise use the documents in public.*

*If the documents have been made available under an Open Content Licence (especially Creative Commons Licences), you may exercise further usage rights as specified in the indicated licence.*

---

## Working Paper No. 350

### **Polish and Italian Schooling Then, Mexican Schooling Now? U.S. Ethnic School Attainments across the Generations of the 20th Century**

by  
Joel Perlmann

This work was supported in part by the Russell Sage Foundation.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

A dominant concern regarding the contemporary immigration to the United States involves the children and later descendants of the immigrants: will they manage to improve upon the conditions of their parents and repeat the pattern of earlier waves of immigration, namely, a slow but steady ascent over several generations? Discussion of the past most usefully concerns the last great wave of immigration, roughly 1890-1920, during which southern, central, and eastern Europeans from ethnic stocks that had been little known in the United States before that time, immigrated to a modern, industrial, society in great number. Today there is little difference in socioeconomic position between the descendants of that immigration and the descendants of much earlier arrivals to the United States (Lieberson and Waters 1988). Concern about the offspring of today's immigrants has been expressed most influentially in the theory of segmented assimilation suggested by Alejandro Portes and his colleagues (Portes and Zhou 1993, Portes and Rumbaut 1996). They expect that the offspring of middle-class immigrants will probably assimilate fairly easily, but they warn of the possibility that the children of immigrants entering American society at the bottom will have more trouble than did the children of immigrants who entered at the bottom in past eras. Today's offspring will have more trouble because i) they are non-white and American society is a long way from ignoring such differences; ii) the nature of the economy has changed so that industrial-economy jobs requiring minimal skill (but still an improvement over the parents' jobs) do not exist in great numbers as they did in the past; iii) extended education (necessary for today's better jobs) is out of the reach of immigrant families that enter at the bottom; and finally iv) an alienated, inner-city, non-white, youth culture will appeal to new, lower-class, second-generation youth who encounter blocked mobility.

My colleague, Roger Waldinger, and I have questioned this formulation of segmented assimilation noting that i) race divisions are socially constructed and tended to work against the immigrant stocks of 1890-1920 too; ii) low-skill work is not as scarce as claimed; iii) educational attainment may be adequate for notable upward mobility; iii) concerns about youth culture are hardly new to today's inner-city minorities and in any case depend on the first three concerns for their force (Perlmann and Waldinger 1996, 1997; Waldinger and Perlmann 1998).

In terms of this issue, the Mexican immigration has a special place. Mexicans comprise the largest immigrant group by far, and they are the prime example of a migrant group entering American society at the bottom, without high educational credentials and other economic advantages. One crucial issue, therefore, is the educational attainment of later-generation Mexican-Americans. We have, of course, some evidence on how members of later generations of Mexican-Americans fared in the past. But the past is not the present; the earlier history of the Mexican immigration is not the present-day experience. There are some reasons to worry that present-day conditions may actually be harder for immigrant offspring--besides those already noted, the size and long-term nature of the present immigration wave continues to generate competition for those who came earlier. And there are surely reasons to think that some things have changed for the better: first and foremost in terms of the civil rights of Mexican Americans as well as the fact that the immigration is no longer as heavily rural and agricultural in destination, nor limited to the Southwest of the country.

This paper extends earlier work that argued for careful generational comparisons of school attainment and for close comparisons of Italians and Poles then and Mexicans now (Perlmann 2001a, 2001b), because the Poles and Italians were the largest of the earlier immigrant groups and there is a clear advantage in not conflating the different historical trajectories of different immigrant groups (Portes and Rumbaut 2001, xvii, 312f). Also, Poles and Italians were groups made up of labor migrants, largely of low-skill workers who had to make their way from the bottom of the American class structure.

#### **THE EVIDENCE AND THE LOGIC OF THE ANALYSIS**

Throughout this paper, data is presented on the educational attainment of native-born blacks of native parentage. In the older

data, in particular, the two poles of older-stock blacks and whites provide some measure of the range of American educational attainments. In the recent data, the benchmark of black educational attainment is important for comparative purposes if we take seriously the segmented assimilation theory, which in essence suggests the descendants of labor migrants (most notably the Mexicans) are in danger of assimilating into black America (or some similarly situated socioeconomic status).

This paper relies on two remarkable sources that social scientists have come to take for granted during the course of the past decade. The Integrated Public Use Microdata Samples (IPUMS) for 1940-1970 provide us with 1 percent samples of the U.S. Censuses (2 percent for the 1970 Census). These are the first four decades in which respondents were asked about the highest grade they had attained in school. Also, these are the last four censuses to ask respondents about their parents', as well as their own birthplaces, so that immigrants and second-generation members can be identified.

The second source, the Current Population Survey (CPS), is a monthly survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. I have used the March files covering the four years, 1998-2001. Although national samples from the 2000 Census are not expected to be available until 2003, those samples will not supercede the data used here because of the absence of information on parental birthplaces in that enumeration.<sup>(1)</sup>

Throughout, I have used 10-year birth cohorts to identify individuals in terms of historical period. In the 1998-2001 CPS datasets, individuals are identified by age at the date they were enumerated. For example, the ages involved can be as many as four years greater in the 2001 as in the 1998 CPS. In the 1940-1970 census samples from the IPUMS datasets, I could find the same birth cohort in several samples. For example, the cohort born between 1896 and 1905 was 35-44 years of age in 1940, 45-54 in 1950, 55-64 in 1960 and 65-74 in 1970. I used only the first two available datasets for each cohort (starting when the individuals were at least 25-34 years of age); in this example, data on the 1896-1905 birth cohort from the 1940 and 1950 censuses.<sup>(2)</sup>

The ethnic and generational definitions were constructed in the following way. From the IPUMS 1940-70 datasets, I drew the following selected ethnic groupings. Among the older stock are native whites of native parentage and native blacks of native parentage. Among the immigrant stock are first- and second-generation Poles, Italians, and Mexicans. Also, I distinguished between the second generation and what I have called the 2.5 generation, which here refers to those who had one immigrant parent from Poland, Italy, or Mexico, and one parent born in the United States (of whatever origin); this group is called native-born of mixed parentage. The 2.5 group differs in notable ways from the second generation; the crucial point to recall is that the tables referring to the second generation do not include the 2.5 generation members--second generation members are those with two foreign-born parents (on the significance of the second vs. 2.5 generation in terms of the historical timing of immigration, see Perlmann 2001a).

From the CPS samples, I drew samples of native-born whites and blacks of native parentage who were not of Hispanic origin. Although this definition differs slightly from the one used for the older stock in the IPUMS sample, the change does not affect any of the paper's substantive conclusions. Samples in the recent data were also drawn for Mexicans of different generations. First-generation members were born in Mexico and immigrated to the United States at an age greater than 10. The "1.5 generation" includes those who immigrated to the United States at age 10 or younger; that is, at an age young enough to have probably profited from schooling in the United States. The second-generation proper (listed as "2nd generation" in the tables) are U.S.-born individuals reported to have two parents who were born in Mexico. The second generation of mixed origin (listed as "2ndM gen" in the tables) are U.S.-born individuals with one parent who was born in Mexico and another parent who was not born in Mexico. This other parent might be U.S.-born of Mexican origins, U.S.-born of other origins, or foreign-born from another country (including, of course, other countries in Latin America). The distinction being made between the two types of second-generation members is the one students of ethnic demography often make between native-born of foreign parentage and native-born of mixed parentage.<sup>(3)</sup> The point here is not to study the mixed population, but to isolate a sample of the second generation that actually includes the group that I think theories about the second generation are meant to cover, namely, the native-born child with two Mexican-immigrant parents. At the same time, I want to insist upon the narrowness of that definition and to show just how many "exceptional" cases (the native-born child of one foreign born and one native-born parent) are found at different stages in the history of immigration.<sup>(4)</sup>

## **TIMING AND DURATION OF THE IMMIGRATIONS**

Table 1 shows the proportion of second-generation members of each type--those with two foreign-born parents and those with one foreign-born and one native-born parent--in each of the birth cohorts available for Poles, Italians, and Mexicans. The Polish and Italian immigration was largely a product of the period 1900-15, with many of the others arriving between 1890 and 1900 (Perlmann 2001a). Accordingly, I include second generations born 1896 and after (the earlier cohorts were, as expected, much smaller). The Mexican immigration followed a different historical origin, originating earlier, but rising to relatively large numbers later. I include the Mexican second-generation members from the time in which the numbers are adequate (over 100 in relevant cells).<sup>(5)</sup> Also, there is a crucial difference in the later history of these group migrations. The Polish and Italian immigration was drastically curtailed by World War I, and then by the immigration restriction acts enacted in 1921 and 1924. With the exception of a brief period (less than two years in duration), immigration from these countries

after 1914 was vastly reduced and then virtually eliminated until after World War II. By contrast, Mexican immigration followed an uneven history through the 1920s and later was subject to restrictions of various sorts, but of shorter duration; the Johnson-Reed Act of 1924 did not apply to the Western Hemisphere. As a result, not only the immigration flows, but also the timing of the second-generations and the proportion of second-generation members among Mexican Americans was very different than among Polish and Italian Americans (Panel A of Table 1). It is critical to appreciate this point in considering the Poles and Italians. If the immigration had been quickly winding down after 1915, and if the average adult immigrated between ages 18 and 25, the youngest of these "typical" immigrants was born in 1897 and had reached age 35 in 1932. Thus, second-generation children born between 1936 and 1945 were unlikely to be the children of two immigrants who arrived in the United States as adults. Parents born in 1906-15 (30 years of age in 1936-45), for example, could not have been adult immigrants before immigration was cut off in 1924, let alone by 1915. Some of these parents arrived with the handful that came later, but most likely arrived before 1924, but as children, members of the "1.5" generation. As adults, they were thus likely to have been more familiar with America than adult immigrant arrivals typically were; not coincidentally, they were more likely to marry the native-born. As such, their mixed-origin children were numerous--in the cohort born between 1936 and 1945, for example, the 2.5 generation children (native born of a foreign and a native parent) outnumbered the children of the second generation (native born of two foreign-born parents) nearly 2 to 1. So the second generation members of the latest cohorts of Poles and Italians are anomalous.

The most typical products of the great wave of Polish and Italian immigration were those born between 1896 and 1915, and we can safely extend attention to the next cohort, born 1916-25. Those born in the following cohort (1926-35) should be regarded as transitional, and those born in 1936-45 as atypical of the great wave of European immigration (Perlmann 2001a). These dynamics operate differently in the Mexican population, because the period of immigration is very long, and was especially large in recent decades. In the youngest cohorts, the prevalence of the 2.5 generation drops as the large contemporary immigration results in a large, "true" second generation. Nevertheless, notice that the overall result of these trends: the 2.5 group comprises no less than 40 percent of all native-born children of Mexican immigrants who are young adults today (the 1966-75 birth cohort).<sup>(6)</sup> In most of what follows, I will focus on the "true" second generation members, not the 2.5 group; the educational attainment of the latter group typically lies between that of the second generation and the native whites of native parentage.

## **EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT**

### **Mexicans Now, Mexicans Then**

Consider first the larger historical perspective as it pertains to Mexican-American education. A useful yardstick is the difference between the mean years of schooling that members of an ethnic group--second-generation Italians, Poles, Mexicans, or native-born blacks--received and the mean years of schooling that a benchmark group received--in this case native whites of native parentage (NWNP). Table 2 shows the differences in means during most of the twentieth century.

The major Mexican immigration began after 1910, whereas the major Italian and Polish immigrations began somewhat earlier, so for the first cohort differences are presented only for the European second-generation groups. The older data come from the U. S. censuses of 1940-1970 (the earliest to provide educational attainment, while the latest to identify the second generation); the more recent evidence comes from the CPS for 1998-2001. The two time series are not entirely consistent, but that fact is not relevant to our purposes, because every relevant trend is observable across cohorts within each time series.<sup>(7)</sup>

The crucial point to appreciate is that in the early decades of the century, when there were huge second-generation groups of Italians and Poles, and smaller but significant numbers of second-generation Mexicans, the ethnic disadvantage was strikingly greater for Mexicans than for Italians or Poles, for every cohort and for both sexes. The European groups' educational handicap starts fairly low and drops quickly, actually changing direction in the last cohorts (those born after 1926), again, no doubt the result of the data including large numbers of NWNP from places less favored educationally than the urban north. By contrast, the educational handicap of Mexicans starts off high and drops by a significant proportion over time, but remains high for Mexicans born before World War II. In both respects, the pattern resembles that of blacks.

The educational attainment of Mexican immigrant parents were somewhat lower than those of Italian or Polish parents, and this factor would have affected the children; but this difference is surely the least important reason for the huge difference between the educational handicaps of second-generation Mexican Americans and second-generation Italian or Polish Americans (this point is taken up in the appendix). More important are two other factors. First, Mexicans were concentrated in the rural southwest, where expansion of secondary schooling was slow, while Italians and Poles were concentrated in the urban north, where secondary schooling was booming. Second, discrimination against Mexicans in southwestern schools was much more institutionalized than discrimination against Italians and Poles in the cities of the north. In this respect, the Mexican experience was pretty far along the continuum toward the racial experience suffered by southern blacks (Cortes 1980, 709; Olneck and Lazerson 1980, 313-14).

In the more recent cohorts, captured in the CPS data, the picture, while not likely to engender any euphoria, is much less

grim. Blacks and second-generation Mexican-Americans differ from NWNP (now limited to non-Hispanic NWNP), by 0.87 to 1.35 years of schooling.<sup>(8)</sup> In the very long run, then, there has been improvement. The educational handicap that second-generation Mexican Americans suffer today is notably smaller than it was during earlier periods of Mexican immigration. And this improvement is found today in the context of great immigration, when one might have concerns about stability of immigrant communities. On the other hand, if the starting point was an educational handicap similar to what southern blacks suffered, then even after much improvement there can still be ample cause for concern. Indeed, the most recent cohorts of Mexican Americans lag further behind the NWNP than the second-generation European groups lagged behind the NWNP during much of the period that can be compared. That is, in male cohorts born after 1905 and in female cohorts born after 1915, the gap separating Poles and Italians from the NWNP was smaller than the one separating the NWNP and Mexicans in the 1966-75 birth cohort.<sup>(9)</sup>

### **Educational Attainments: Poles and Italians Then, Mexicans Now**

Differences in means are extremely useful measures; nevertheless, they treat each year of schooling equally, whereas what often matters for educational inequality is completing levels of advanced schooling. In particular, means only opaquely reflect high school dropout rates and college completion rates. I now turn to evidence on these rates, comparing trends "then" (for Italians and Poles) and "now" (for Mexicans).

Of course, educational attainments were much lower in the first third of the 20th century than at the turn of the twenty-first century. One simple comparison can be made by juxtaposing the proportions completing high school then and completing college now (Table 3). In the most recent cohort on which we have information, those people born between 1966 and 1975, one-third of the NWNP completed college (men, 32 percent and women, 34 percent). Now, looking back at high school graduation rates in earlier cohorts, we find a reasonably similar set of proportions for NWNP in the 1896-1905 cohort, born 70 years earlier, with 28 percent of NWNP males and 35 percent of NWNP females graduating from high school. Finally, we can ask: how well were the Poles and Italians doing in comparison to the NWNP in that birth cohort and how well are Mexicans doing in comparison to the NWNP in the most recent birth cohort on which we have evidence? Recall that these are birth cohorts; the earlier birth cohort experienced secondary schooling (or at any rate, reached age 15) during the decade 1911-20 and the latest birth cohort during the decade 1981-90.

It is no surprise that in all three groups, the sons and daughters of immigrants (Italians and Poles then and Mexicans now) lagged behind the sons and daughters of NWNP. Within that punishing context, 15 percent of Italian and 17 percent of Polish men were graduating from high school in the earlier cohort, and 11 percent of the Mexican men are graduation from college today. Although the second-generation group today lags a bit further behind than did the groups then, the NWNP group is a bit further advanced in attainment; thus the ethnic gap between the NWNP and second-generation groups is quite a bit larger today than it was in the early 20th century cohort: 21 vs. 12 percentage points (32 percent for the NWNP vs. 11 percent for Mexicans now and 28 percent for the NWNP vs. 15-17 percent for the Italians and Poles then). Admittedly, the crucial CPS sample of second-generation Mexican-American men is of only moderate size (see Table A2), and the role of sampling variability cannot be ignored. Nevertheless, pending better data, these results suggest a considerable educational gap relative to historical second-generation handicaps, and should be a source for concern and continued attention.

By contrast, Mexican-American women now appear to be faring as well, or even slightly better, than young Polish and Italian women fared then: 13 percent of Mexican women in the latest cohort are completing college, and 10 percent of Polish or Italian women completed high school in the earlier cohort. This gender difference in the Mexican handicap may reflect the pace of transformation in women's roles. That transformation, in other words, is probably farther advanced in Mexican-American communities today than it was in Italian-American or Polish-American communities between 1896 and 1905 due to the wider context of change in both Mexico and the United States during the past three quarters of a century. Put another way, the daughters of Italian and Polish immigrants faced extra hurdles in seeking extended schooling in the early 20th century beyond what was faced by the men then and Mexican-American women face now. Nevertheless, the situation was changing rapidly then. In the next birth cohort (1906-15), Italian and Polish women were, in fact, able to close much of the gap between themselves and men in the same groups.

The comparison of 1896-1905 with 1966-75 birth cohorts seems worthwhile because about the same proportions of the benchmark group were reaching educational thresholds in those years (that is, high school graduation in the earlier and college graduation in the later years). Nevertheless, this comparison also reveals just how tricky numerical "then and now" comparisons can be. In the first place, during the early years of the last century, the birth cohort immediately following 1896-1905 reveals big changes: both the NWNP and the immigrant second-generation children in the 1906-1915 cohort were notably more likely to graduate from high school than had been the case only a decade before. This next cohort reached age 15 between 1921 and 1930, boom years for high school growth in the American urban north. A similar gain in the proportions graduating from college for the next Mexican-American birth cohort (1976-85) over the 1966-1975 cohort seems unlikely. The two birth cohorts compared (1896-1905 and 1966-75) do involve similar proportions crossing a crucial threshold, but that similarity at one moment in time may not imply similar patterns of enrollment in future years. The same point can be seen in Figures 1 and 2, in which high school and college completion rates are plotted for successive cohorts of young Americans. The expansion of American high schools in the early decades of the century was costly for the taxpayers

that supported them, and attendance was costly, in foregone earnings at least, for the families that sent an adolescent to these high schools; in that sense there is a reasonable similarity with college expansion and college attendance today. Nevertheless, to note that costs were involved then and are involved now is not to say that the costs either to the society or the family are the same in the two periods. For this and other reasons the pattern of college enrollment growth may well continue to differ from the earlier pattern of high school enrollment growth.

One hint about the near future can be found in the high school completion rates for a group of young people about five years younger than the youngest cohort we have considered thus far. Until now, many of them have not yet completed their schooling, but because they were 20-24 years of age in 1998-2001, those who were still in school were rarely in high school. We therefore can study high-school completion rates in this very young group. Those completion rates suggest no great shifts from the youngest cohort for which we have complete data (those born in 1966-75). Given the scale of immigration in the relevant years and the concerns about segmented assimilation and second-generation decline, it is perhaps heartening that there is no steep decline in high school completion for that young group. However, given the pattern of steep increase in high school graduation observed among Italian and Polish Americans in the cohort born 1906-15, it is also important to say that (judged by high school completion rates thus far) we will probably not see a parallel steep increase in Mexican American college completion in the 1976-85 birth cohort.

Before leaving these comparisons of high school graduation rates, it is worth stressing how misleading it is to speak of the "Hispanic" or "Mexican" educational levels in the United States today, without taking account of the dramatic differences in the educational attainment of immigrants and natives. For example, it can be calculated from the information in Table A2 that among the "Mexican" males in the youngest CPS cohort (born 1966-75), only 54 percent completed high school, a completion rate far below that of other ethnic or racial groups, including native-born blacks. However, it turns out that over half of these young Mexican males are immigrants who came to this country with most or all of their education already behind them; of these men only 36 percent had completed high school. Among the rest, twice as many, 77 percent, <sup>(10)</sup> had graduated from high school. Before dismissing this simple observation as too obvious to deserve attention, the reader should note that the Department of Education's annual survey of education presents "race and ethnic" educational attainment data in just this way; that is, lumping all Hispanics together without distinguishing native-born from foreign-born. Besides other disservices, such a presentation tends to mask the fact that education of "Mexicans" in the United States today is not the same as it was in 1920. These figures mask generational standing and the dynamics of immigrant groups in favor of race and ethnic origin; a future generation will look back on such presentations in much the same way as we look back on the crude figures for European immigrant "races or peoples" that also ignored generational status, or factors such as class origins, in considering children's school attainments.

## **ETHNICITY, EDUCATION, AND EARNINGS TODAY**

On average, earnings rise with years of schooling completed. If we conclude that the evidence on schooling leaves cause for concern, that concern should be about economic well-being. True, Mexican-American schooling is not as far behind that of NWNP as was the case in the early 20th century, but Mexican Americans are far from equaling NWNP in education. Even in the long perspective, the situation is at best unclear. We have seen that in the past, the NWNP/Italian and NWNP/Pole contrasts in schooling diminished to levels below those of the NWNP/Mexican contrast now, (at least for cohorts of European second-generation men born after 1905 and women born after 1915.) This section makes explicit the link between education and earnings; it relies on the very preliminary 1998-2001 CPS data on the earnings of young adults (born 1966-75). Table 4 shows earnings of men and women in the relevant ethnic groupings. Predictably the higher the level of schooling completed, the greater the earnings for every group at every school level. Mexican-American second-generation members who graduate from college earn roughly 1.6 to 2.4 times more than those who dropped out of high school, even at the young ages shown here. <sup>(11)</sup>

Second-generation Mexicans earnings are well above those of immigrants from Mexico with comparable levels of reported schooling (with most of the latter's schooling, presumably received in Mexico). At the other extreme, second generation earnings lag well behind those of the NWNP and are very similar to those of American blacks (for all full-time workers in each group). Because the analysis here relies on CPS data alone, and the number of second-generation Mexican American sample members is dangerously low, too much should not be made of the differences within each educational category. Nevertheless, one point does seem clear: black college graduates earn much more than Mexican graduates, possibly because more black men continued to post-baccalaureate degrees. Smaller proportions of Mexican-American, second-generation women than men work full time, but those that do seem to be doing better than men, particularly when compared to blacks.

There is another dimension to these earnings outcomes that bears on segmented assimilation concerns (see Table 5). Here I concentrate on the men, since they appear most disadvantaged in the earnings picture presented so far. <sup>(12)</sup> Among Mexican Americans, a high proportion (68 percent) of those who failed to complete high school are working full-time. The comparable proportion is somewhat lower among the NWNP (59 percent) and much lower among blacks (46 percent). One way to think about the Mexican pattern of full-time employment among these dropouts, especially compared to that of blacks, is to recall the past experiences of Italian and Polish young men. Many of these European second-generation members, many of whom came from working-class homes, went to work early rather than rely on an extra year of schooling. They knew (or

at any rate believed) that much more than an extra year of school would have been required to greatly modify their work options

At the same time, they might have felt they had better job contacts for employment that did not require extended education, even if these jobs paid poorly. Operating on this pattern in 1920-45 may have been a risky strategy for young men coming of age, and operating on it today may well be much riskier still. However, it is still likely to pay off more than a pattern of relatively low education followed by low labor force attachment. In a word, the data on Mexican work patterns do not reveal the prevalence of an inner-city black "underclass" pattern to which it has been compared. The thin evidence from CPS samples will not explain the social and economic dynamics that have created these black-Mexican differences, but this evidence should lead us to be cautious about theories that minimize the differences.

If we extended our consideration to those not only working full-time, but to all young men, the difference between black and Mexican American full-time employment patterns show up in earnings. All Mexican-American high school dropouts (full-time workers and others) are earning 35 percent more than all black high school dropouts (\$18,586 vs. \$13,726). Recall that among the smaller group of dropouts who work full time, blacks earn more on average, but because so many more Mexican dropouts are employed full-time compared to black dropouts, Mexicans dropouts overall have a decided advantage.

One way to think about the young men most at risk in these two groups--second-generation Mexicans and native blacks--is to ask about the bottom half to three-fifths in each group as judged by their educational attainment. If we concentrate on the bottom two categories of schooling--high school dropouts and those who receive no more than a high school diploma--we include comparable proportions of each group: the lower 55 percent of young black men and the lower 61 percent of young, Mexican-American men. True, twice as high a proportion (23 percent) of Mexicans are in the very lowest educational category as compared to blacks (11 percent), but a comparison involving the lower half of each group is revealing nonetheless. Indeed, segmented assimilation arguments focus the discussion (sensibly enough) less on high school dropouts than on the need for college education in today's labor market. From that point of view, both educational categories considered here are at risk.

In both of these categories, Mexicans are more likely to be working full time; among high school graduates, Mexican full-time workers also earn notably more than black full-time workers. The combination of these two factors results in a sizeable advantage for Mexican men in the lower two educational categories over comparable blacks. Among these 55 percent of all young black men, earnings average \$20,393; among the comparable 61 percent of all second-generation Mexican men, earnings average \$23,975, an advantage of 18 percent. And this despite the much higher proportion of Mexican dropouts.<sup>(13)</sup> Of course, as noted earlier, the second-generation sample of Mexican men is frustratingly small; by restricting it to the two lower levels of educational attainment, it becomes smaller still. Notice, however, that the same patterns--in terms of the prevalence of full-time employment and income of all in the group--are observed when the 1.5 and 2.5 generations (native-born of mixed parentage) of Mexican American men are compared to blacks. In these 12 comparisons (three Mexican-American groups being compared to blacks, at the two lower educational levels, on two measures), young Mexican men are in more favored positions than blacks in each category.

The point here is not to celebrate the glorious rewards that accrue to Mexican-American high school dropouts. However, we should appreciate that the evidence (and it is still very preliminary evidence) now available suggests that the work and earnings patterns of economically vulnerable Mexican-American young men differ in important ways from the work and earnings patterns of inner-city blacks to whom they have been compared in discussions of future prospects. An alternative paradigm to keep in mind as the future unfolds (for all the changes in the labor market) is the work and earnings pattern of the old European second generation, of working-class Italians and Poles starting out around 1920-45.

## APPENDIX

### Educational Attainment Differences Across Generations

Another way of comparing school attainments over time highlights the extent to which the second generation overcomes the handicaps of the immigrant generation. First, we compare the difference in mean educational attainments of native whites of native parentage (NWNP) and a particular group of immigrants: Poles, Italians, or Mexicans. We then move forward in time one generation; as operationalized here, we move forward in time to the birth cohort that is 30 years younger. We now compare the difference in mean educational attainment between NWNP and the corresponding *second-generation group* of Poles, Italians, or Mexicans. The *ratio* of these two differences in means tell how much of the educational lag in the immigrant generation remained in their children's generation. Thus:

$$\text{Pedgap} = ([Mnwnp - Msecgen]t2) / ([Mnwnp - Mimmig]t1)$$

where

Pedgap = proportion of the ethnic educational attainment gap remaining after a generation

Mnwnp = mean years of schooling for native whites of native parentage

Msecgen = mean years of schooling for a second-generation group (e.g., Polish American)

t2 = the birth cohort of the NWNP and second-generation members

t1 = the birth cohort 30 years earlier (a generation earlier)

Mimmig = mean years of schooling for an immigrant group (e.g., Poles)

Msecgen were presented for t2 in Table 2. Here the same evidence is used as part of the calculation. (See Table A1a for an example.) In the birth cohort for males, 1886-1895, the average native white of native parentage received 8.57 years of schooling (first panel); the average Polish immigrant born in the same birth cohort received 3.66 fewer years of schooling (second panel). By the time of the cohort born a generation later (1916-25), native white of native parentage males were receiving 10.86 years of schooling and *second*-generation, Polish males were receiving nearly as much, only 0.32 of a year less. Thus the proportion of the educational gap found in the first generation that was not erased in the second generation was 0.32/3.66, or a mere 9 percent of the original gap.<sup>(14)</sup> We can use the same approach to study the educational progress of blacks across generations (ignoring the immigrant/second-generation feature of the preceding discussion, of course).

The crucial older historical patterns results are clear from the data for each sex (in panels b and c of Table A1a). They confirm the patterns in Table 2, discussed in the text, and show that the new factor added--the educational starting positions of the immigrant generation--do not explain the difference between the Mexican and European groups in the pre-World War II birth cohorts. Poles and Italians in the crucial immigration period (the first three cohorts shown) start off with a great educational handicap, receiving roughly four years of schooling less than the NWNP in the same birth cohorts. Nevertheless, in all three of the crucial second-generation cohorts (as well as in the later ones shown) the children of European immigrants erase most of the gap between themselves and the older stock whites. Only among the earliest second-generation women does the gap exceed 30 percent, and it drops quickly in succeeding cohorts. Among Mexicans, as among blacks, a far higher proportion of the educational gap remains across the generations of the historical cohorts shown in Table A1a (panels b and c).

Table A1b concentrates on the more recent cohorts, relying on a mixture of IPUMS and CPS data. Among those born since World War II, successive cohorts of Mexican Americans do seem to be erasing more of the parental handicap than before. In the two youngest cohorts, the Mexican situation today is roughly comparable to that of Poles and Italians in the birth cohorts of 1906-15 for men and 1916-25 for women. Also, the Mexican-American pattern in these recent cohorts no longer parallels the patterns of blacks, for which this measure shows less progress.<sup>(15)</sup> If anything, the use of this measure suggests a somewhat more optimistic reading of Mexican educational patterns over time than those in the text. However, as noted earlier (in connection with the means found in Table 2), improvement in mean years of schooling does not translate easily into improvement in crossing degree levels of post-secondary schooling, and (in connection with Table 3), the pattern of historical change (such as for Italian men born after 1906-15) will not necessarily be comparable simply because patterns at one moment in time are comparable.

---

## REFERENCES

Cortes, Carlos E. 1980. "Mexicans." In Stephan Thernstrom, ed. *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press.

Current Population Survey (CPS). 1997. Annual Demographic Survey March Supplement: Source and Accuracy. CPS website: [www.bls.census.gov/cps/ads/1996/ssrcacc.html](http://www.bls.census.gov/cps/ads/1996/ssrcacc.html). [Author: Lloyd Hicks].

Lieberson, Stanley, and Mary C. Waters. 1988. *From Many Strands: Ethnic and Racial Groups in Contemporary America*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Olneck, Michael, and Marvin Lazerson. "Education." In Stephan Thernstrom, ed. *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press.

Perlmann, Joel. 2001a. "Toward a Population History of the Second Generation: Birth Cohorts of Southern-, Central-, and Eastern-European Origins, 1871-1970." Working Paper No. 333. Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y.: The Levy Economics Institute.



-----, 2001b. "Young Mexican-Americans, Blacks, and Native-Parentage Whites in Recent Years: Schooling, Teen Motherhood and Work Status as Indicators of Strengths and Risks." Working Paper No. 335. Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y.: The Levy Economics Institute.

-----, 2002. "Poles and Italians then, Mexicans Now? Immigrant-to-Native Wage Ratios, 1910 and 1940." Working Paper No. 343. Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y.: The Levy Economics Institute.

Perlmann, Joel, and Roger Waldinger. 1996. "The Second Generation and the Children of the Native Born: Comparisons and Refinements." Working Paper No. 174. Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y.: The Levy Economics Institute

-----, 1997. "Second Generation Decline? Children of Immigrants, Past and Present: A Reconsideration." *International Migration Review* 120: 31 (Winter).

Portes, Alejandro, and Ruben Rumbaut. 1996. *Immigrant America* (2nd edition). Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press.

-----, eds. 2001. *Ethnicities: Children of Immigrants in America*. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press.

Portes, Alejandro, and Min Zhou. 1993. "The New Second Generation: Segmented Assimilation and its Variants among Post-1965 Immigrant Youth." *Annals* 530: 74-96.

Waldinger, Roger, and Joel Perlmann. 1998. "Second Generations: Past, Present, Future." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 24: 1.

---

## NOTES

1. The CPS files for March 1994-2001 have been linked by Waldinger and his associates at UCLA; I am using that dataset. I have limited the file to the most recent years, sacrificing sample size to recency of information.

2. I weighted all IPUMS samples by the number of people the case represented in the population (dividing by two for 1970, since two 1 percent samples were used for that year). In the case of the 1940 and 1950 samples, only people falling on the 'sample line' were chosen (they were asked additional questions, including parents' birthplaces). In all tables, all measures (means and percentages) are taken from weighted calculations, and all Ns are for unweighted data (actual N of cases). In the CPS files, a few individuals born in the youngest birth cohort (1966-75) would have been younger than 25 (those born in 1974 and surveyed in 1998 and those born in 1975 and surveyed in 1998 or 1999). I did not include these people, but weighted up the others born in 1974-75 slightly so individuals of each birth year would have the same chance of being included in the sample, while still excluding people younger than 25 at the time they were sampled.

3. The dataset allows me to ascertain the country of birth for the non-Mexican-born parent in the 2ndM gen. group; however I have not used that information here, partly because if the parent had been born in the U.S. I could not determine whether or not he or she was of Mexican "origins." On the meaning of origins, see the text below.

4. The dataset allows the construction of a category for those who were the descendants of earlier Mexican immigrants. Specifically, this category includes a U.S.-born individual who reports two U.S.-born parents, but also reports himself or herself to be Mexican on a separate question that asks "what is your origin or descent?" This origin question is very much like the decennial census ancestry question, and is subject to the same major critiques: it is much more likely than the country-of-birth question to elicit subjective data (for example simplifying origins by excluding some of them), and it does not specify the generational standing of the respondent (the grandchild of an immigrant, for example, or the descendant of a Mexican family that had been living in the Southwest for centuries when the United States wrested the land from Mexico in the 1840s). Most respondents are probably closer to the former situation than to the latter, but we don't know. I use this classification despite the ambiguities in Perlmann 2001; in any case, this paper hardly mentions the relevant category.

5. A word about statistical inference. In this paper, I have not presented standard errors for the results. The data in the IPUMS samples can be treated as random samples, generally with very large cell sizes. Sampling variability will be a minor consideration and can be estimated from cell Ns with textbook formulas. Sampling variability in the CPS data is another matter altogether. The sampling and adjustment procedures that the CPS uses are exceedingly complex. The CPS technical documentation (CPS 1997) gives some general guidelines for calculating the standard errors for particular measures. However, applying these guidelines to particular instances is not straightforward. In general, the calculation involves the

textbook formula (e.g., for the calculation of the standard error of a proportion), and either one or two adjustment ratios that together *inflate* the size of the textbook-calculated standard error. In the situations I checked, the net effect of the adjustments ratios appeared to be between 1.2 and 1.6.

However, whether the necessary adjustments would be more complex still for subpopulations such as young, black males, rather than black males, is not clear from the documentation. Also, the adjustment factors are calculated on the assumption that the researcher is using one March Demographic Supplement, but the methodology in this paper involves use of several March supplements together (thus arriving at the population estimates with a larger total number of sample members than is assumed by the bureau when it provides the adjustment factors). In some contexts, notably for educational trends, the trends observed in the CPS data seem consistent with those in the vastly larger IPUMS samples. Exclusive reliance on the CPS data is especially important in connection with tables 4 and 5; in discussing these tables I call attention to the issue and suggest possible strategies to minimize problems of inference.

6. First-generation intermarriage rates can also affect these proportions.

7. This is not merely a problem of sample size (the disjuncture shows up for blacks and for the huge number of native whites of native parentage, for example in Table 1, panel a; see also Tables A3 and A4). Nor is the problem due to a difference in coding years of education in the two datasets; it is possible to recode the census data using the coding scheme of the CPS, and the gap remain (Table A4). Finally, neither the tendency of older cohorts to acquire more education in later life, nor to exaggerate their (now far-distant) schooling, nor differential mortality by schooling are likely to explain the pattern either (see Tables A3 and A4).

8. And the gaps are smaller now notwithstanding that all groups stay in school for a longer time than was the case then. (See, for example, the means for NWNP in the first column of Table 2.) Thus if the ethnic gaps are expressed as proportions of mean educational levels, those gaps have declined even further than a comparison of absolute differences in mean years of schooling might suggest.

9. This discussion is in terms of birth cohorts. Recall that children born between 1905 and 1915 were reaching high-school age around 1920 and 1930; by then large scale immigration was largely over. Today's second generation is arriving at high school in the midst of massive immigration. The presence of new immigrants could affect the environment of second-generation children in various ways, the most obvious being parental economic well-being (through job competition).

10. The example rests on Table A2, and to make the example clearer I made the calculations using the unweighted Ns shown there.

11. Within four groups: the 2.0 and 2.5 generations of men and women.

12. In earlier, related work (Perlmann 2001b) I explored other young Mexican-American social patterns with the same questions in mind, namely, patterns of unemployment, teen pregnancy, and poverty status.

13. Indeed, Mexicans fall midway between blacks and the NWNP that complete no more than 12 grades of schooling. The NWNP men who completed 12th grade or less earned 12 percent more than Mexicans: an average of \$26,920. However, this comparison is less revealing than the one to blacks, because only 39 percent of the NWNP receive so little schooling, whereas 61 percent of Mexican young men do. Comparing the lowest 61 percent of the NWNP to Mexican men, the advantage of the former would be notably greater. Note that average earnings for the bottom two educational groups taken together are not shown in the table; they can be computed, however, as the weighted average earnings of high school dropouts and high school graduates (using the percentages in the last column).

14. This measure is based on a ratio of differences in means. An alternative measure based on some form of a ratio of ratios could be used instead, for example  $([Mimmig/Mnwnp]t1)$  and  $([Mimmig/Mnwnp]t2)$  instead of the differences between these pairs of means. Similarly, each mean difference could be divided by the standard deviation of education in each cohort before computing the ratio. Given the simple observations to be deduced from the proportions in panels b and c of Table A1a and A1b, any of these methods should prove adequate.

15. Note that black parents start out with higher educational attainments than today's immigrant parents (see the differences in means columns in Table A1b). These smaller parental differences in the measure's denominator for blacks than for Mexicans in turn means that the same absolute difference in their *children's* educational gap behind the NWNP children will imply less generational improvement for blacks than for Mexicans.

---

**Table 1 Poles, Italians, and Mexicans, by Generational Standing in Succeeding Birth Cohort**

**A. Percentage Mixed Origin (Native and Foreign Parentage) among all Second Generation**

<b>Birth Cohort</b>	<b>Poles -----</b>	<b>Italians (IPUMS)</b>	<b>Mexicans -----</b>	<b>(CPS)</b>
1896-05	9	7	26	
1906-15	10	8	29	
1916-25	15	17	25	
1926-35	35	36	35	33
1936-45	66	63	54	50
1946-55				60
1956-65				58
1966-75				40

**B. Mexicans, by Generation and Birth Cohorts in the CPS, 1998-2001**

	Mex = 1	1.5	2	2.5	3+	Total
1926-35	39	0	26	13	22	100
1936-45	48	1	11	11	29	100
1946-55	49	3	6	9	34	100
1956-65	53	5	5	7	30	100
1966-75	53	8	9	6	24	100

Sources: Integrated Public Use Microdata Samples (IPUMS), 1940-1970, and Current Population : (CPS), 1998-2001. The earlier half of each March CPS rotation groups was included for 1998-2001 both halves of the March 2001 groups.

NOTES: In all tables, IPUMS and CPS cases are weighted to reflect the number of people that each sample member represents in the U.S. population at that time. However, sample size Ns refer to the unweighted number of sample members.

**Table 2 Ethnic Differences in Mean Years of Schooling: Second-Generation Poles, Italians, Mexicans, and Blacks Compared to NWNP**

	NWNP: Mean Years of Education		<i>Differences in Mean Years of Education: NWNP vs.</i>					
	IPUMS 1940-70	CPS 1998-01	----- Second-Generation -----					
			Italians	Poles	Mexicans		Blacks	
					IPUMS	CPS	IPUMS	CPS
<b>MEN</b>								
1896-05	9.23		0.83	1.28			3.76	
1906-15	9.98		0.79	0.68	4.79		3.64	
1916-25	10.86		0.33	0.32	3.40		3.03	
1926-35	11.63	12.63	0.15	-0.22	3.40	4.12	2.31	1.97
1936-45	12.39	13.37	-0.05	-0.31	2.26	2.93	1.72	1.65
1946-55		13.93				2.57		1.27
1956-65		13.59				1.60		0.92
1966-75		13.66				1.35		0.87
<b>WOMEN</b>								
1896-05	9.64		1.85	2.05			3.53	
1906-15	10.29		1.54	1.37	5.87		3.20	
1916-25	10.90		0.75	0.68	4.16		2.45	
1926-35	11.47	12.33	0.34	0.02	3.50	3.65	1.59	1.14
1936-45	12.07	12.92	0.31	-0.25	2.44	3.68	1.19	0.82
1946-55		13.69				2.88		0.71
1956-65		13.65				1.62		0.71
1966-75		13.85				1.14		0.87

NOTE: Sample sizes for NWNP cohorts all exceed 7,500 (max. N greater than 230,000). Sample sizes for ethnic groups in the IPUMS vary greatly; none shown involve fewer than 100 cases. IPUMS data are drawn from the 1940-1970 censuses by taking the two youngest available birth cohorts that were in the 25-74 age range at the time of the census.

**Table 3 Proportion Reaching Various Levels of Schooling: Selected Groups and Cohorts**

Sex	School Level	THEN				NOW		
		Cohort (and School Summary)	Groups			Cohort (and School Summary)	Groups	
			NWNP	Second Generation Members: Poles    Italians			NWNP (non-Hispanic)	Mexican Second Generation
MEN	LT HS grad	1896-05	72	85	83	1966-75	7	23
	HS grad		14	8	9		32	38
	Some COL		7	3	3		29	29
	COL grad +		7	4	5		32	11
	Total		100	100	100		100	100
	<b>% HS grad.</b>		<b>28</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>% college grad.</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>11</b>
	LT HS grad	1906-15	61	77	77			
	HS grad		22	13	15			
	Some COL		8	4	3			
	COL grad +		8	7	5			
Total		100	100	100				
<b>% HS grad.</b>		<b>39</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>23</b>				
WOMEN	LT HS grad	1896-05	65	90	90	1966-75	6	16
	HS grad		20	6	7		28	33
	Some COL		9	2	1		32	38
	COL grad +		6	2	1		34	13
	Total		100	100	100		100	100
	<b>% HS grad.</b>		<b>35</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>% college grad.</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>13</b>
	LT HS grad	1906-15	56	78	81			
	HS grad		28	15	15			
	Some COL		10	4	3			
	COL grad +		7	2	2			
Total		100	100	100				
<b>% HS grad.</b>		<b>44</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>19</b>				

Note: 1966-75 cohort taken from the CPS, earlier cohorts from the IPUMS. All distributions based on samples of 500 or greater, *except* second-generation Mexicans, for whom male and female Ns are each over 200.

**Table 4 Earned Income of Young, Full-Time Workers (Born 1966-75), by Educational Attainment, for Selected Ethnic Groups**

Group	Education Level	Men			Women		
		Mean Income	Standard Deviation	N	Mean Income	Standard Deviation	N
Mexicans:							
Adult	LT12	20,333	20,241	905	13,859	6,274	216
Immigrants	HS grad.	22,423	11,952	380	16,835	8,831	114
	HS plus	28,266	19,045	119	20,644	9,440	59
	College grad.	35,693	20,862	44	31,081	15,062	22
	All	22,033	18,686	1448	16,673	9,256	411
1.5 Generation	LT12	22,835	11,916	76	13,208	4,811	20
	HS grad.	28,501	14,416	72	23,032	9,598	61
	HS plus	27,632	17,897	43	25,663	10,706	40
	College grad.	33,157	14,643	18	28,196	7,206	11
	All	26,610	14,727	209	22,730	10,231	132
NB of F Parent	LT12	24,591	11,616	39	22,925	9,717	17
	HS grad.	33,995	34,541	73	20,949	8,946	49
	HS plus	33,385	16,640	58	28,109	12,205	76
	College grad.	39,231	18,706	16	38,220	15,405	23
	All	32,336	24,826	186	27,268	13,049	165
NB of M Parent	LT12	22,029	16,248	20	20,195	12,102	7
	HS grad.	27,159	13,424	43	19,183	7,780	33
	HS plus	33,077	14,617	38	27,541	14,755	51
	College grad.	52,519	21,281	19	43,570	27,767	21
	All	31,515	18,187	120	27,418	18,055	112
Third+ Generation	LT12	22,458	9,554	70	14,002	6,734	40
	HS grad.	29,408	23,593	212	20,662	9,108	146
	hs plus	34,591	18,056	169	25,288	11,296	133
	College grad.	49,313	27,692	70	36,474	31,141	78
	All	32,489	22,292	521	24,353	16,988	397
Non-Mexicans: NWNP	LT12	27,843	30,256	471	18,849	17,306	202
	HS grad.	32,581	19,541	2950	23,765	21,636	1606
	hs plus	38,495	28,864	2789	27,637	18,807	1999
	College grad.	54,253	46,185	3108	39,473	23,485	2497
	All	41,335	34,939	9318	31,191	22,599	6304
NBk of NP	LT12	25,663	35,881	64	21,393	31,054	79
	HS grad.	28,446	21,549	443	19,714	9,500	386
	HS plus	31,922	15,999	336	24,441	12,124	454
	College grad.	45,954	38,603	187	35,661	18,258	236
	All	32,385	26,058	1021	24,928	15,921	1155

SOURCE: 1998-2001 CPS. Includes full-time workers with earned income. Means and standard deviations are calculated from weighted data; Ns are not weighted.

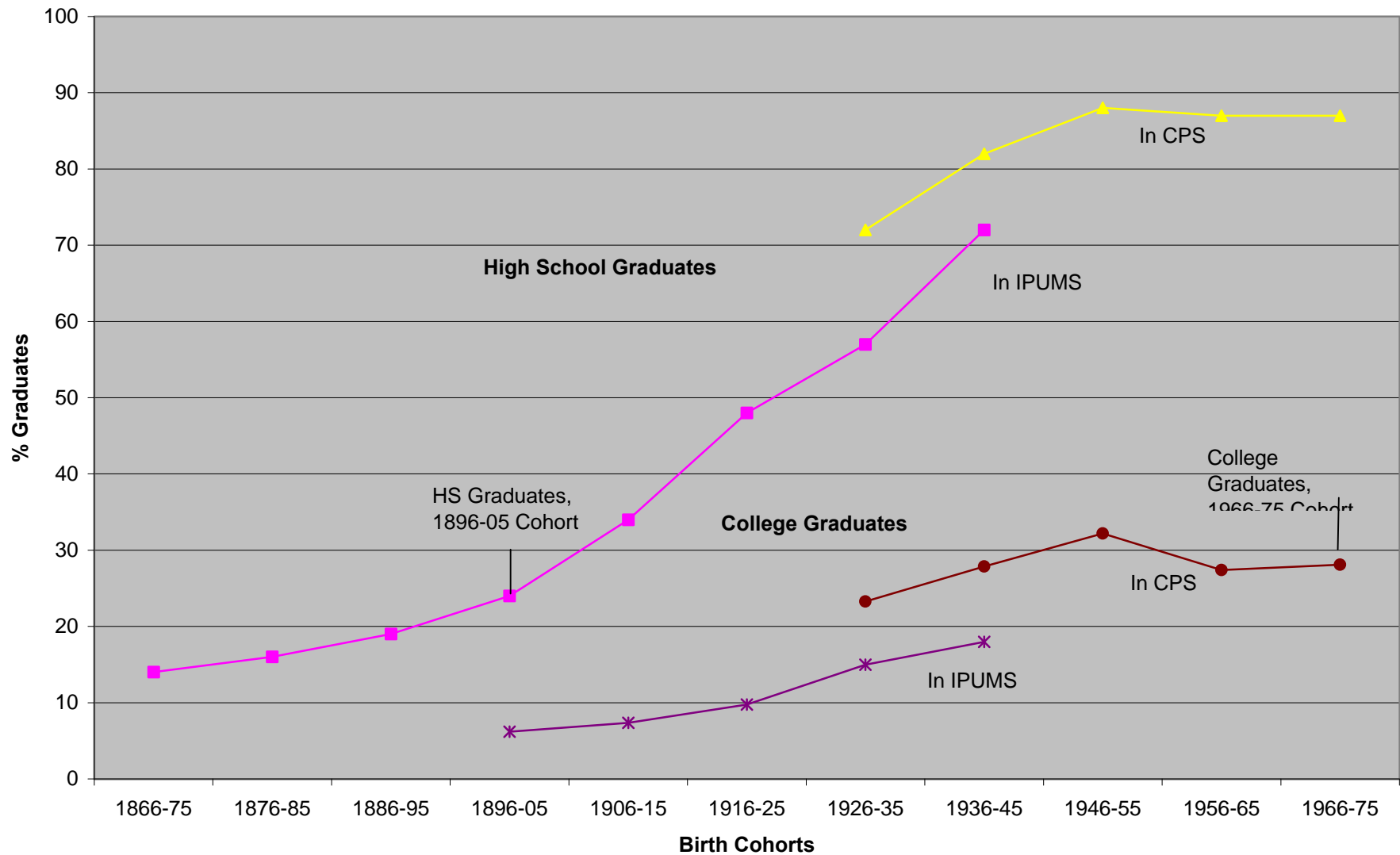
**Table 5 Earned Income of Young Men (Born 1966-75) by Educational Attainment and Work Status for Selected Ethnic Groups**

Group	Education	--- Full-Time Earners Only---		----- All Men * -----		
		Mean Income	Percent FT Earners of All Men	Mean Income	N	Percent of Group at this Education Level
Mexicans:						
Adult	LT12	20,333	74	17,471	1,204	63
Immigrants	HS grad.	22,423	77	20,919	494	25
	HS plus	28,266	76	24,807	150	8
	College grad.	35,693	80	29,301	57	3
	All	22,033	75	19,310	1,905	100
1.5 Generation	LT12	22,835	73	18,699	107	39
	HS grad.	28,501	82	25,107	86	32
	HS plus	27,632	79	25,205	54	20
	College grad.	33,157	71	29,136	26	9
	All	26,610	77	22,980	273	100
NB of F Parent	LT12	24,591	68	18,586	58	23
	HS grad.	33,995	75	27,237	97	38
	HS plus	33,385	86	30,620	70	29
	College grad.	39,231	62	26,559	23	11
	All	32,336	75	26,209	248	100
NB of M Parent	LT12	22,029	63	16,102	34	22
	HS grad.	27,159	81	23,122	57	32
	HS plus	33,077	70	26,901	47	31
	College grad.	52,509	76	46,572	25	15
	All	31,515	72	26,141	163	100
Third+ Generation	LT12	22,458	52	15,527	132	17
	HS grad.	29,408	70	23,486	299	43
	HS plus	34,591	77	29,858	214	29
	College grad.	48,313	82	43,809	90	11
	All	32,489	70	26,106	735	100
Non-Mexicans: NWNP	LT12	27,843	59	19,750	807	7
	HS grad.	32,581	77	28,488	3,816	32
	HS plus	38,495	80	33,815	3,479	29
	College grad.	54,253	83	48,671	3,682	32
	All	41,335	79	35,819	11,784	100
NBk of NP	LT12	25,663	46	13,726	143	11
	HS grad.	28,446	67	21,898	650	45
	HS plus	31,922	72	26,305	446	29
	College grad.	45,954	79	39,904	221	15
	All	32,385	68	25,033	1,460	100

SOURCE: 1998-2001 CPS.

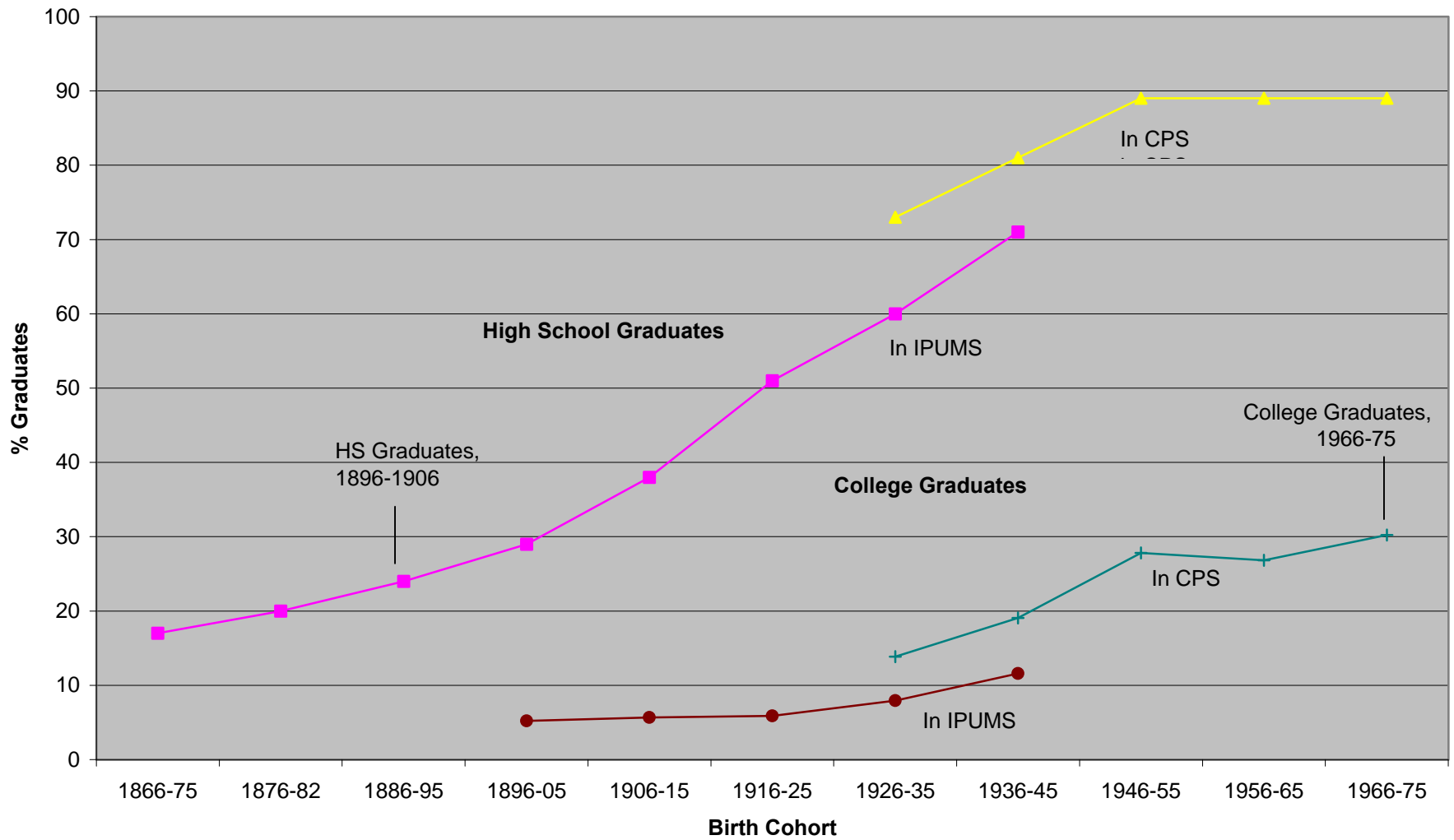
\*Includes all, regardless of whether working full-time. Excludes a small number with negative earned income. Means and percentages from weighted data; Ns are not weighted.

## Percentage High School and College Graduates (U.S. Men)





## Percentage High School and College Graduates (U.S. Women)



**Table A1a**

**Ethnic Differences in Mean Years of Schooling by Generation: Poles, Italians, Mexicans, and Blacks Compared to NWNP over Time**

**a) NWNP: Mean Years of Schooling by Birth Cohort \***

	Men		Women	
	IPUMS 1940-70	CPS 1998-01	IPUMS 1940-70	CPS 1998-01
1866-75	7.55		8.03	
1876-85	7.99		8.46	
1886-95	8.57		9.00	
1896-05	9.23		9.64	
1906-15	9.98		10.29	
1916-25	10.86		10.90	
1926-35	11.63	12.63	11.47	12.33
1936-45	12.39	13.37	12.07	12.92
1946-55		13.93		13.69
1956-65		13.59		13.65
1966-75		13.66		13.85

**b) Four Groups Compared to NWNP: The Ethnic Gap Remaining after a Generation (from the 1940-1970 IPUMS Datasets)**

Birth Cohorts (Second Generation Born 30 Years after First)	Generational Status of Poles, Italians, and Mexicans	Percentage Gap		Percentage Gap		Percentage Gap		Percentage Gap	
		Poles Remaining		Italians Remaining		Mexicans Remaining		Blacks Remaining	
MEN									
1866-75	1st	4.55		4.25				3.93	
1896-05	2nd	1.28	28	0.83	20			3.76	96
1876-85	1st	3.65		3.92		5.85		3.87	
1906-15	2nd	0.68	19	0.79	20	4.79	82	3.64	94
1886-95	1st	3.66		3.79		5.04		3.81	
1916-25	2nd	0.32	9	0.33	9	3.40	67	3.03	80
1896-05	1st	2.30		3.28		5.03		3.76	
1926-35	2nd	-0.22	-10	0.15	5	3.40	68	2.31	61
1906-15	1st	0.89		2.39		4.85		3.64	
1936-45	2nd	-0.31	-35	-0.05	-2	2.26	47	1.72	47

**b (cont.) Four Groups Compared to NWNP: The Ethnic Gap Remaining after a Generation (from the 1940-1970 IPUMS Datasets)**

Birth Cohorts (Second Generation Born 30 yrs. after First)	Generational Status of Poles, Italians and Mexicans	Percentage Gap		Percentage Gap		Percentage Gap		Percentage Gap	
		Poles	Remaining	Italians	Remaining	Mexicans	Remaining	Blacks	Remaining
WOMEN									
1866-75	1st	4.45		4.98				4.62	
1896-05	2nd	2.05	46	1.85	37			3.53	76
1876-85	1st	4.83		5.11		5.31		3.84	
1906-15	2nd	1.37	28	1.54	30	5.87	110	3.20	83
1886-95	1st	5.13		5.08		5.28		3.52	
1916-25	2nd	0.68	13	0.75	15	4.16	79	2.45	70
1896-05	1st	4.25		4.56		5.34		3.53	
1926-35	2nd	0.02	0	0.34	7	3.50	66	1.59	45
1906-15	1st	1.99		3.51		4.65		3.20	
1936-45	2nd	-0.25	-12	0.31	9	2.44	52	1.19	37

NOTES: Sample sizes for NWNP cohorts all exceed 7,500 (max. N greater than 230,000). Sample sizes for ethnic groups in the IPUMS vary greatly; none shown involve fewer than 100 cases; all but 7 involve over 200 cases from the 1940-1970 IPUMS by taking the two youngest available birth cohorts that were 25-74 years of age at the time of the census.

**Table A1b Mexicans and Blacks in More Recent Cohorts Compared to NWNP:  
The Ethnic Gap Remaining after a Generation (from the 1940-1970 IPUMS Datasets and the 1998-2001 CPS)\***

Birth Cohorts (Second Generation Born 30 Years After the First)	Generational Status of Mexicans	Mexicans	% Gap Remaining		Blacks	% Gap Remaining	
			Within Same Datasets	Across Datasets (IPUMS/CPS)		Within Same Datasets	Across Datasets (IPUMS/CPS)
<b>MEN</b>							
1896-1905 IPUMS	1st	5.03			3.76		
1926-35 IPUMS	2nd	3.40	68		2.31	61	
1926-35 CPS	2nd	4.12		82	1.97		52
1906-15 IPUMS	1st	4.85			3.64		
1936-45 IPUMS	2nd	2.26	47		1.72	47	
1936-45 CPS	2nd	2.93		60	1.65		45
1916-25 IPUMS	1st	5.39			3.03		
1946-55 CPS	2nd	2.57		48	1.27		42
1926-35 IPUMS	1st	5.86			2.31		
1926-35 CPS	1st	6.58			1.97		
1956-65 CPS	2nd	1.60	24	27	0.92	47	40
1936-45 IPUMS	1st	4.76			1.72		
1936-45 CPS	1st	6.38			1.65		
1966-75 CPS	2nd	1.35	21	28	0.87	53	50
<b>WOMEN</b>							
1896-1905 IPUMS	1st	5.34			3.53		
1926-35 IPUMS	2nd	3.50	66		1.59	45	
1926-35 CPS	2nd	3.65		68	1.14		32
1906-15 IPUMS	1st	4.65			3.20		
1936-45 IPUMS	2nd	2.44	52		1.19	37	
1936-45 CPS	2nd	3.68		79	0.82		26
1916-25 IPUMS	1st	5.15			2.45		
1946-55 CPS	2nd	2.88		56	0.71		29
1926-35 IPUMS	1st	5.46			1.59		
1926-35 CPS	1st	6.09			1.14		
1956-65 CPS	2nd	1.62	27	30	0.71	62	45
1936-45 IPUMS	1st	4.77			1.19		
1936-45 CPS	1st	6.55			0.82		
1966-75 CPS	2nd	1.14	17	24	0.87	106	73

NOTE: Sample sizes for cells from the IPUMS datasets all exceed 400; those from the CPS all exceed 100 (except second-generation Mexican cohorts for 1936-45, 1946-55, and Mexican second-generation males for 1956-65; these Ns are over 60).

SOURCES: See note to Table 1.

**Table A2 Percentage of Selected Ethnic Groups Completing Various Levels of Schooling: 1966-75 Birth Cohort**

<b>Sex</b>	<b>Ethnic Group</b>	<b>Level of Education</b>	<b>Percent Completing</b>	<b>N</b>
MEN	Mexicans Immigrants	2hsgr	25	1,905
		3hspl	8	
		4coll	3	
		hsgr or more	36	
	1.5 Generation	2hsgr	32	273
		3hspl	20	
		4coll	9	
		hsgr or more	61	
	Second Generation (nbFp)	2hsgr	38	248
		3hspl	29	
		4coll	11	
		hsgr or more	78	
	2.5 Generation (nbMp)	2hsgr	32	165
		3hspl	30	
		4coll	16	
		hsgr or more	78	
	Third Generation	2hsgr	43	735
		3hspl	29	
		4coll	11	
		hsgr or more	83	
	Non-Mexicans NWNP (non-Hispanic)	2hsgr	32	11,810
3hspl		29		
4coll		32		
hsgr or more		93		
Blacks (nbnp)	2hsgr	45	1,460	
	3hspl	29		
	4coll	15		
	hsgr or more	89		

**Table A2 (con't.) Percentage of Selected Ethnic Groups Completing Various Levels of Schooling: 1966-75 Birth Cohort**

<b>Sex</b>	<b>Ethnic Group</b>	<b>Level of Education</b>	<b>Percent Completing</b>	<b>N</b>
WOMEN	Mexicans Immigrants	2hsgr	24	1,609
		3hspl	10	
		4coll	4	
		hsgr or more	38	
	1.5 generation	2hsgr	40	275
		3hspl	25	
		4coll	5	
		hsgr or more	70	
	Second Generation (nbFp)	2hsgr	33	293
		3hspl	38	
		4coll	13	
		hsgr or more	85	
	2.5 Generation (nbMp)	2hsgr	29	229
		3hspl	37	
		4coll	14	
		hsgr or more	80	
	Third Generation+	2hsgr	37	863
		3hspl	31	
		4coll	13	
		hsgr or more	81	
	Non-Mexicans NWNP (non-Hispanic)	2hsgr	28	12,277
		3hspl	32	
		4coll	34	
		hsgr or more	94	
Blacks (nbnp)	2hsgr	35	2,007	
	3hspl	37		
	4coll	16		
	hsgr or more	88		

SOURCE: 1998-2001 CPS

**Table A3 Mean Years of Schooling by Birth Cohorts Found in Successive IPUMS Datasets**

Sex	Cohort	Census	N	Education		
				Mean Years	Standard Deviation	
Men	1866-75	1940	8,608	6.76	3.95	
	1876-85	1940	13,367	7.33	3.90	
	1876-85	1950	8,027	7.04	3.98	
	1886-95	1940	18,417	7.73	3.80	
	1886-95	1950	13,464	7.81	3.94	
	1886-95	1960	33,456	7.38	4.06	
	1896-05	1940	21,410	8.51	3.64	
	1896-05	1950	18,767	8.58	3.82	
	1896-05	1960	54,113	8.47	3.87	
	1896-05	1970	75,687	8.50	3.95	
	1906-15	1940	27,657	9.38	3.51	
	1906-15	1950	24,656	9.49	3.66	
	1906-15	1960	78,398	9.49	3.75	
	1906-15	1970	130,222	9.65	3.76	
	1916-25	1950	29,152	10.34	3.46	
	1916-25	1960	96,747	10.54	3.59	
	1916-25	1970	175,763	10.78	3.57	
	1926-35	1960	96,305	11.13	3.44	
	1926-35	1970	183,985	11.45	3.51	
	1936-45	1970	209,645	12.15	3.13	
	Women	1866-75	1940	8,879	7.30	3.79
		1876-85	1940	13,257	7.77	3.71
		1876-85	1950	8,804	7.63	3.88
		1886-95	1940	17,634	8.15	3.71
1886-95		1950	13,942	8.23	3.87	
1886-95		1960	39,413	8.02	3.89	
1896-05		1940	20,612	8.83	3.53	
1896-05		1950	19,551	8.99	3.69	
1896-05		1960	58,285	8.88	3.72	
1896-05		1970	97,556	9.04	3.75	
1906-15		1940	26,789	9.65	3.27	
1906-15		1950	26,060	9.76	3.43	
1906-15		1960	80,873	9.81	3.43	
1906-15		1970	145,342	10.02	3.45	
1916-25		1950	31,840	10.40	3.11	
1916-25		1960	101,616	10.58	3.05	
1916-25		1970	188,956	10.79	3.06	
1926-35		1960	100,200	11.07	2.80	
1926-35		1970	193,911	11.27	2.87	
1936-45		1970	219,124	11.85	2.68	

Table A4 Crucial Cohorts Compared (Native-Born only in the 1960-90 IPUMS and the 1998-2001 CPS)

Sex	Level of Education	Highest Level or Grade of School Completed		Highest Grade (or Year) of School Completed					
		1998-01 CPS	1990	1980	1970	1960			
Men	1926-35	none	1	1	0	1	1		
		grades 1 - 4	2	2	1	2	3		
		5 - 8	12	11	7	13	19		
		9	4	5	4	5	7		
		10	6	6	4	7	8		
		11	5	4	4	5	7		
		12	37	33	37	34	30		
		some college	18	19	18	14	12		
		college grad. +	15	20	26	20	14		
		1936-45	none	0	1	0	1		
			grades 1 - 4	1	1	0	1		
	5 - 8		7	6	3	6			
	9		3	3	2	4			
	10		4	3	3	5			
	11		4	3	3	5			
	12		43	34	35	37			
	some college		20	24	24	19			
	college grad. +		18	25	28	22			
	Women		1926-35	none	0	1	0	0	0
				grades 1 - 4	1	1	0	1	2
				5 - 8	9	8	5	10	15
				9	4	5	4	5	7
				10	6	6	6	8	9
				11	6	6	5	7	7
		12		50	43	47	44	41	
		some college		16	18	18	13	11	
college grad. +		10		12	16	11	7		
1936-45		none		0	0	0	0		
		grades 1 - 4		0	0	0	1		
		5 - 8	5	4	3	5			
		9	3	3	3	4			
		10	4	5	4	6			
		11	5	5	3	5			
		12	49	40	43	45			
		some college	21	26	22	17			
		college grad. +	13	18	22	16			



NOTES: The education question:

1960-1980 censuses:

Highest grade [1960-80: or year] of school attended; did..... complete the grade?

In 1960 grades shown as:

Elementary school (Grade: 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8)

High school (Year: 1,2,3,4)

College (Year: 1,2,3,4,5,6 or more)

In 1970-80 grades shown as:

Elementary through high school (grade or year)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

College (academic year)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 or more

[in 1970: 6 or more]

In the 1990 census, and the 1998-2001 CPS, the question was:

Highest level of school...has completed or the highest degree...has received

1st, 2nd, 3rd or 4th grade

5th or 6th grade

7th or 8th grade

9th grade

10th grade

11th grade

12th grade or no diploma

High school graduate - High school diploma or equivalent

Some college but no degree

Associate's degree in college - occupational/vocational

Associate's degree in college - academic

Bachelor's degree (e.g., BA, BS, AB)

Master's degree (e.g., MA, MS, MEng, MEd, MSW, MBA)

Professional school degree (e.g.: MD, DDS, DVM, LLB, JD)

Doctorate degree (e.g., PhD, EdD)

[In the 1990 census, grades 5-8 were not subdivided].