

# Framing Success: The Asian American Achievement Paradox

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# Pew Research Center (2012)

## “The Rise of Asian Americans”

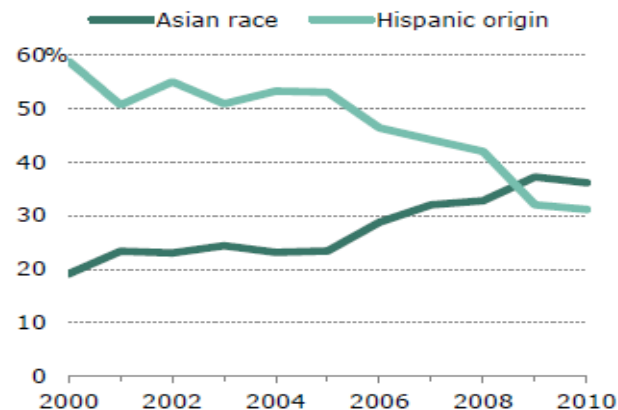


# Pew Research Center (2012)

## “The Rise of Asian Americans”

### Meet the New Immigrants: Asians Overtake Hispanics

% of immigrants, by year of arrival, 2000-2010



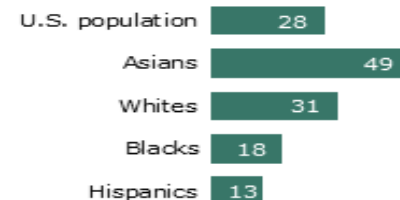
Note: Based on total foreign-born population, including adults and children. Asians include mixed-race Asian population, regardless of Hispanic origin. Hispanics are of any race. The 2010 ACS includes only partial-year arrivals for 2010; arrivals for 2010 adjusted to full-year totals based on analysis of 2005-2009 ACS data on partial-year arrivals.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2010 American Community Survey, Integrated Public Use Microdata Sample (IPUMS) files

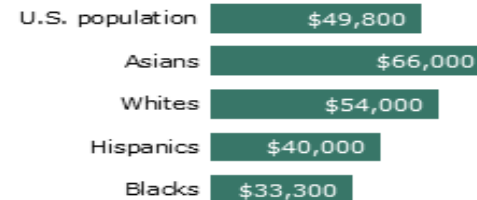
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### Asian Americans Lead Others In Education, Income

% with a bachelor's degree or more,  
among ages 25 and older, 2010



### Median household income, 2010



Note: Asians include mixed-race Asian population, regardless of Hispanic origin. Whites and blacks include only non-Hispanics. Hispanics are of any race. Household income is based on householders ages 18 and older; race and ethnicity are based on those of household head.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2010 American Community Survey, Integrated Public Use Microdata Sample (IPUMS) files

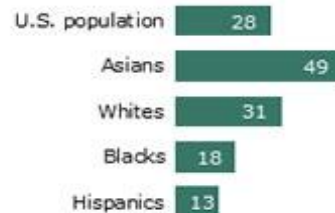
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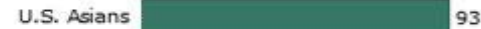
### The Asian-American Work Ethic

*% saying ...*

*"Most people who want to get ahead can  
make it if they're willing to work hard"*



*"Americans from my country of origin group  
are very hardworking"*



*"Thinking about the country as a whole,  
Americans are very hardworking"*

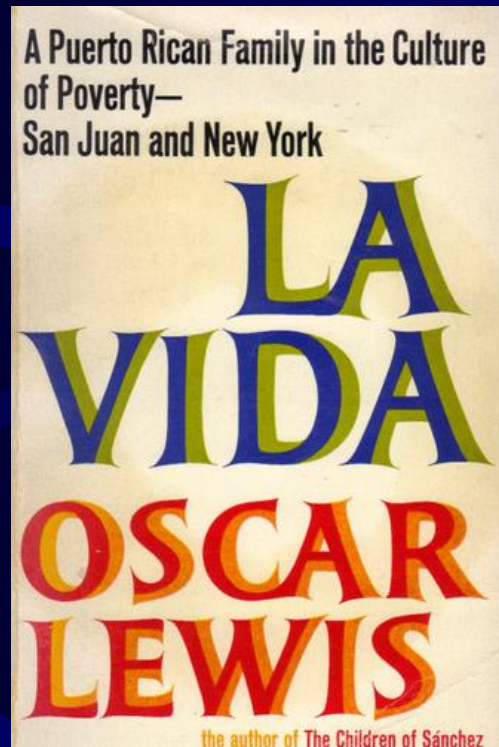


2012 Asian-American Survey, Q12b, 21, 70. Those who did not provide a country of origin were asked about "Asian Americans."

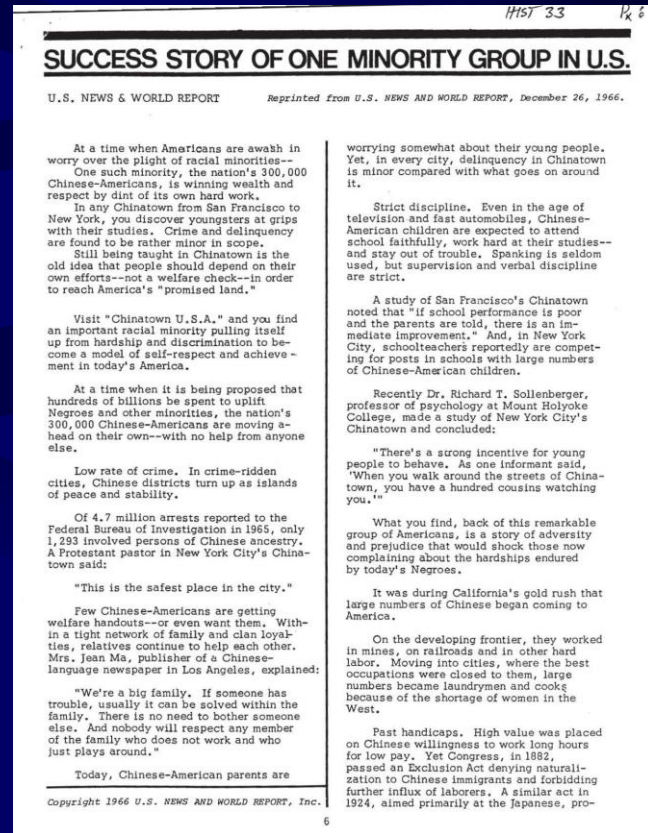
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# 1966

## Culture of Poverty Thesis



## Culture of Success & the Model Minority Antithesis



# Flaws with the “Culture of Success”

## ➤ *Starting points*

## ➤ *Hyper-selectivity* – a dual type of positive selectivity (Lee and Zhou 2014; Zhou and Lee 2014)

1. *a higher percentage of college graduates among immigrants compared to non-migrants from their country of origin*
2. *a higher percentage of college graduates compared to the host country*

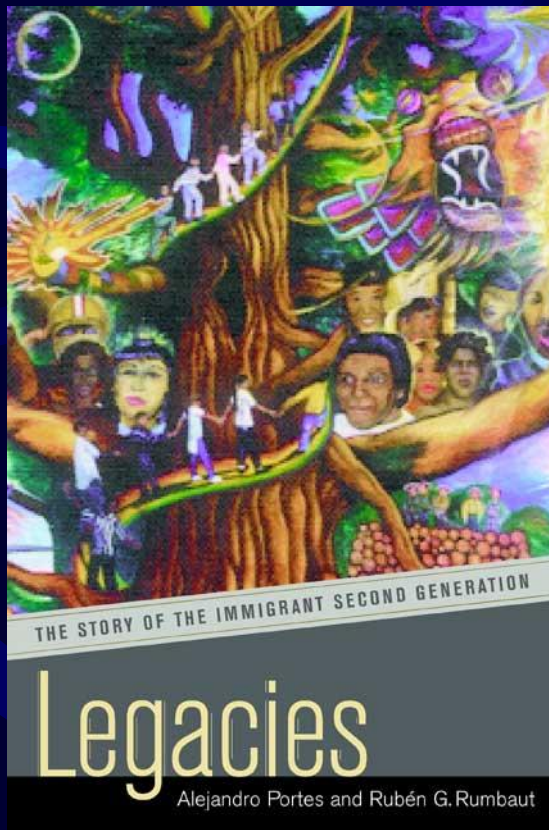
# Growth of Latino and Asian Populations in the United States

|         | 1970 | 2011 | 2050 |
|---------|------|------|------|
| Latinos | 5%   | 16%  | 29%  |
| Asians  | 1%   | 5.5% | 9%   |

# Studies of the Second Generation

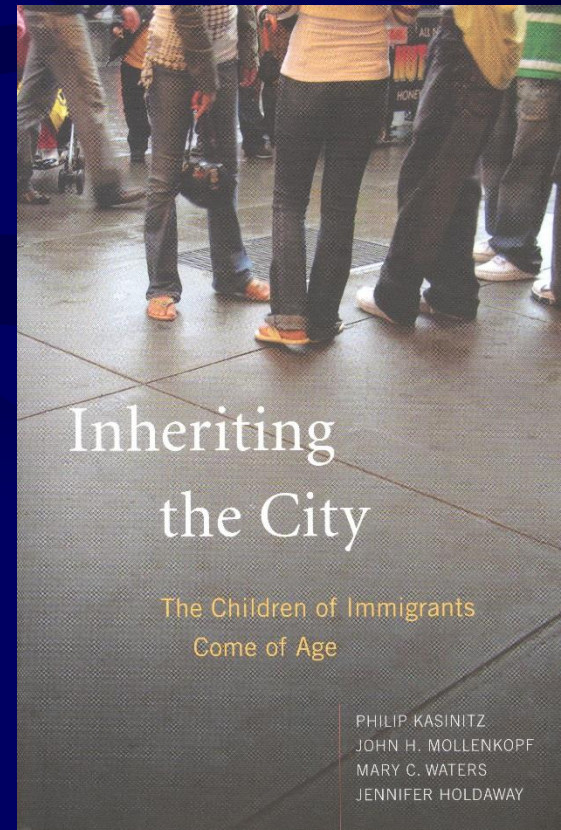
*Legacies* (2001)

Portes and Rumbaut



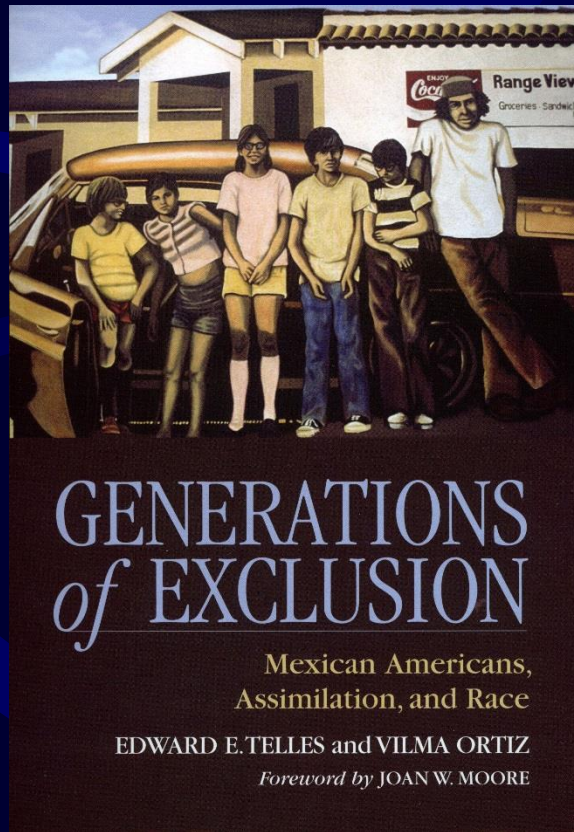
*Inheriting the City* (2009)

Kasinitz et al.



# Studies of the Second Generation

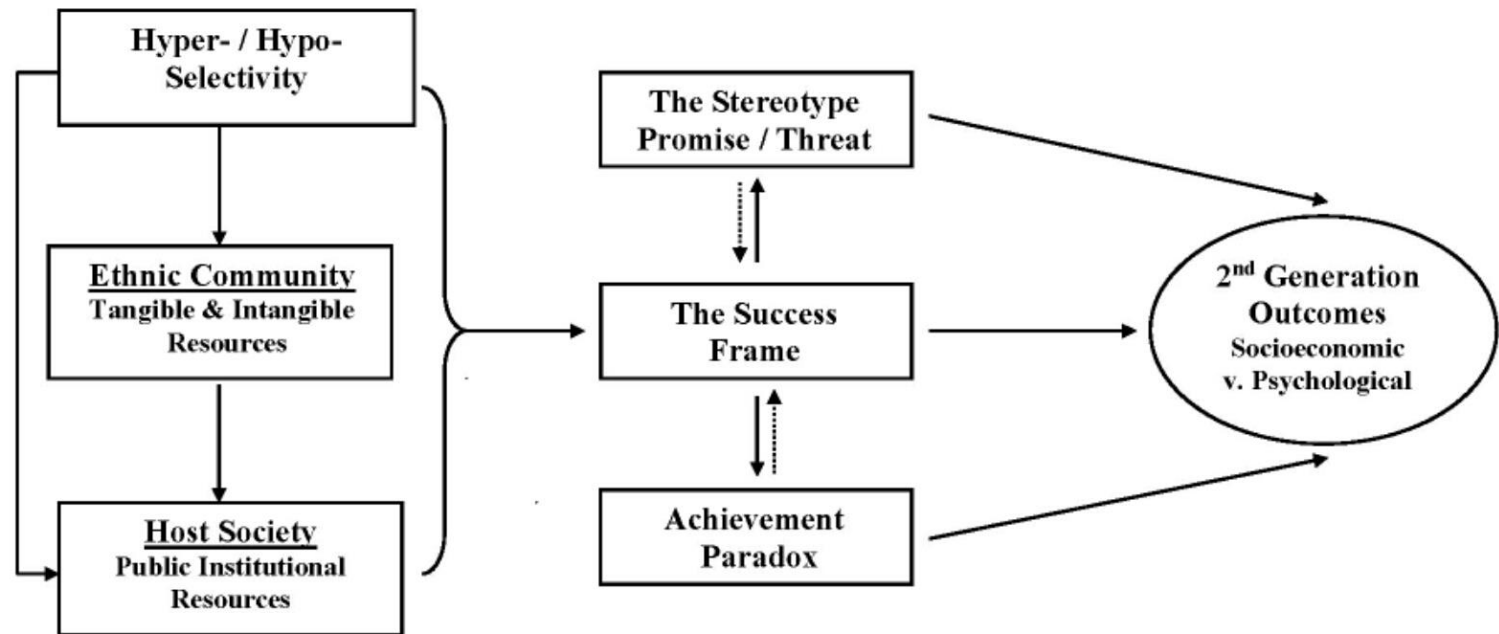
*Generations of Exclusion*  
(2008), Telles and Ortiz



Immigration and  
Intergenerational Mobility  
in Metropolitan Los  
Angeles  
(IIMMLA)

- Lee and Zhou (2015)  
*The Asian American  
Achievement Paradox*
- Bean and Brown (2015)

# How Cultural Frames affect second-generation educational outcomes



# Consequences of *Hyper-* and *Hypo-Selectivity* for the Second Generation

1. Cultural Frames
2. In-group & Out-group Perceptions →  
*“Stereotype Promise”* or *“Stereotype Threat”*
3. Subjective Assessments of Success →  
*“Achievement Paradox”*
4. *“Minority Culture of Mobility”*

# Data

## IIMMLA (Immigrant and Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles)\*

1. Survey of 1.5- and second-generation residents in Los Angeles; N = 4,800
2. In-depth Interviews; N = 162

*\* Funded by the Russell Sage Foundation*

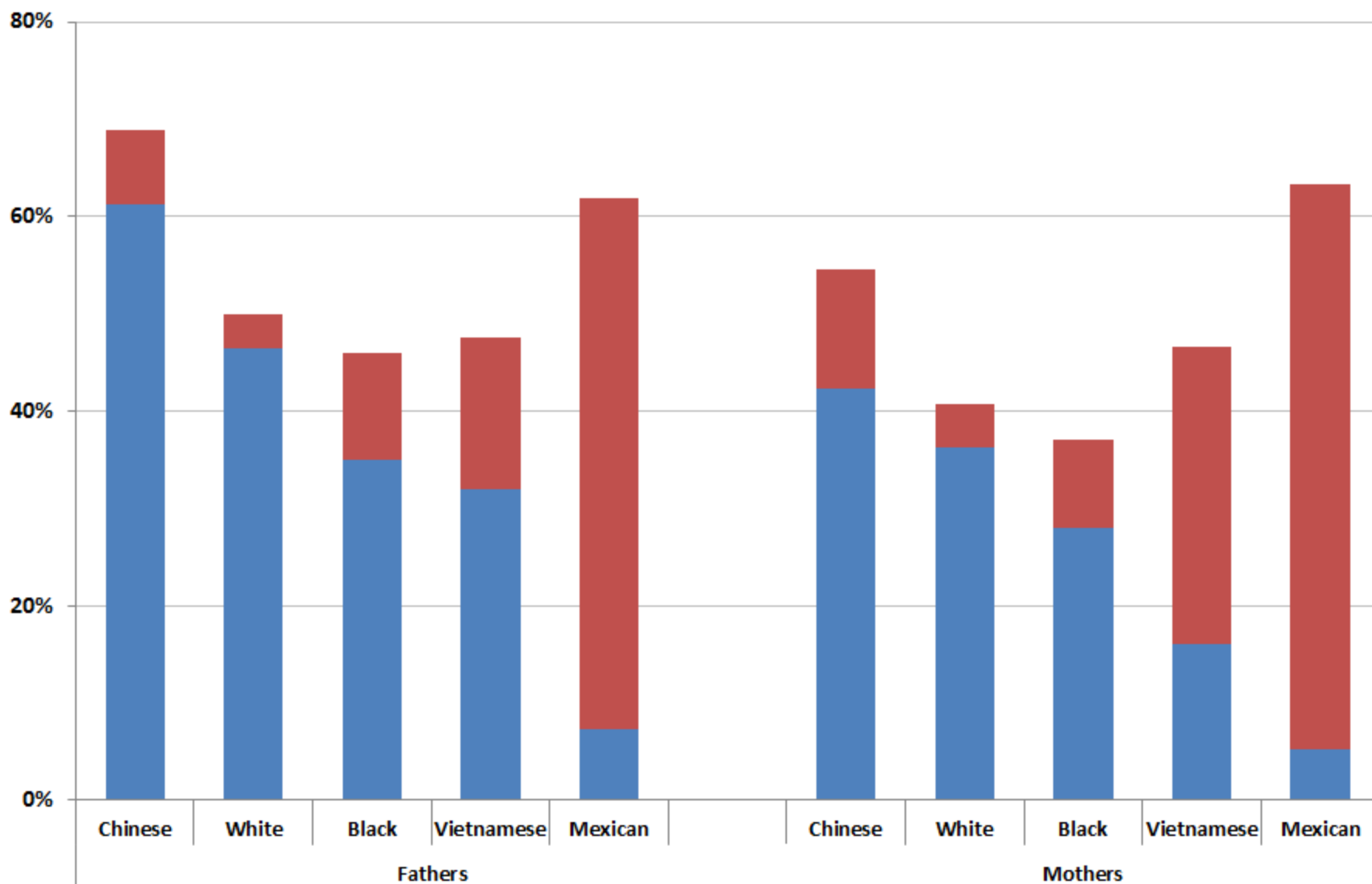
# Data

162 face-to-face, in-depth interviews

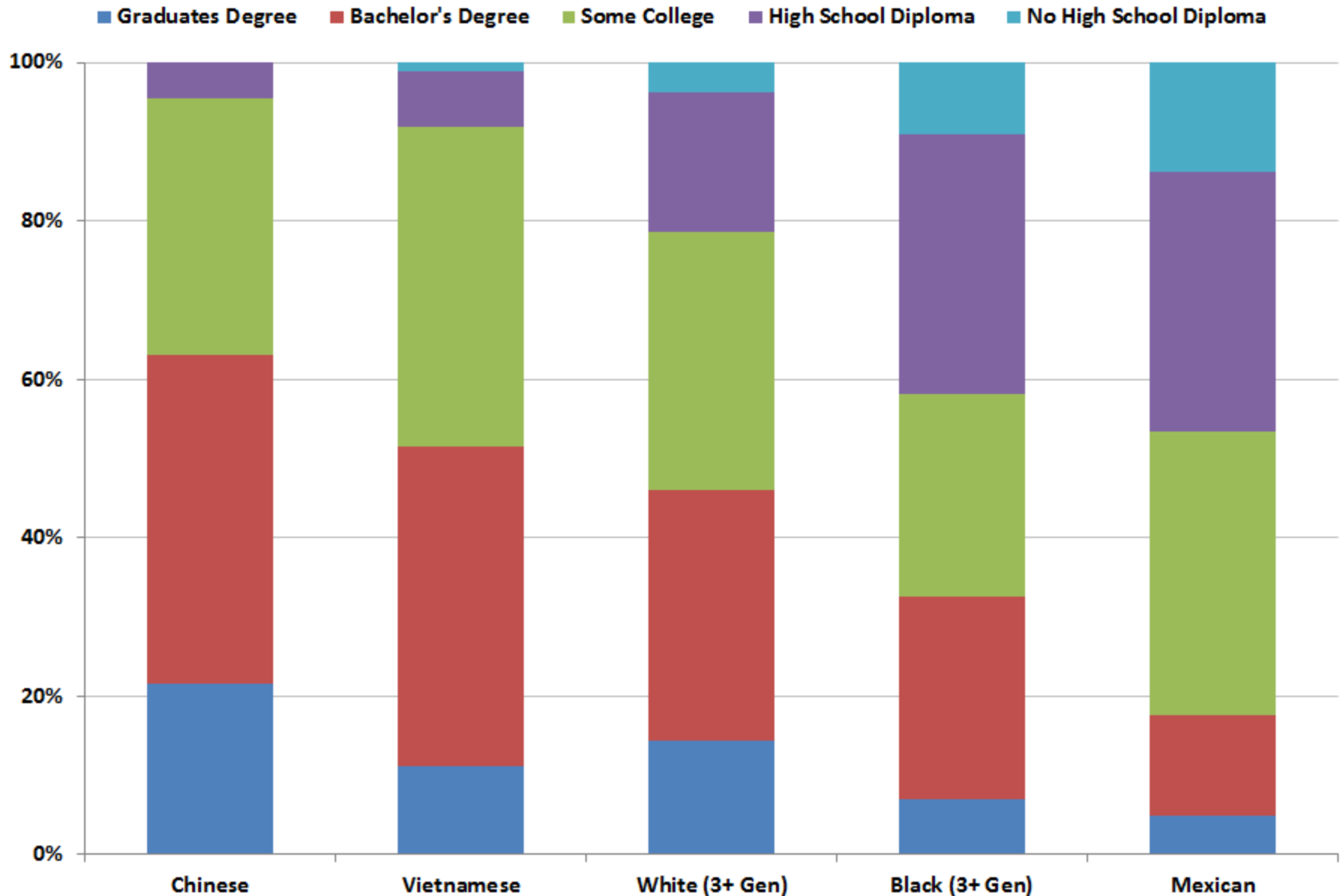
- 1.5 and second-generation Mexicans, Chinese, and Vietnamese young adults in LA (ages 20-40),  $N = 138$
- Native-born Whites and Blacks,  $N = 24$
- Respondents are a random sample of IIMMLA survey respondents

## Parents' Educational Attainment

■ Bachelor's Degree ■ No High School Diploma

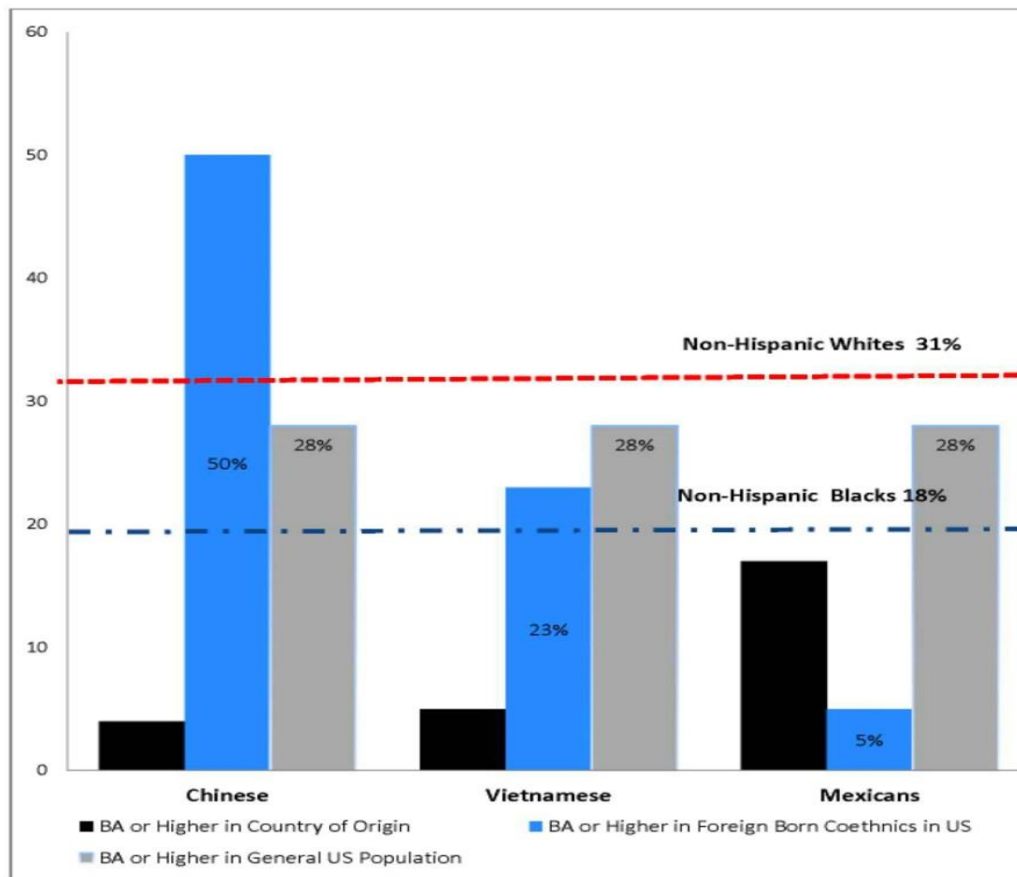


## Educational Attainment among the 1.5 and Second Generation



# Hyper- and Hypo- Selectivity

Percent with a B.A. or higher (persons 25 year or over)



Source: US Census 2010.

# Consequences of *Hyper-Selectivity*

1. Middle-class immigrants import class-specific cultural frames and institutions
  - *“The Success Frame”* (Lee and Zhou 2014)
2. Ethnic institutions – Supplemental Education
  - *Ethnic Capital* (Borjas 1992)
  - *Cross-class Learning* (Lareau and Calarco 2012)
3. Out-group and In-Group perceptions → *“Stereotype Promise”* (Lee 2012)
  - *The promise of being viewed through the lens of a positive stereotype that can enhance performance.*

# Consequences of *Hypo-Selectivity*

1. Drives Out-group perceptions about Mexicans
2. Diversity of Cultural Frames
  - *Small (2004); Harding (2010)*
3. Cultural Heterogeneity (Harding, 2010)
  - *Weaker signal about what frame is best because there is more support for a diversity of frames.*
4. Diversity of “Success Frames”

# Concluding Thoughts

1. Starting points – *Delta* versus *Absolute Sum*
2. Culture matters through frames
3. Hyper-Selectivity
  - *Cultural Frame Formation and Reinforcement*
  - *Out-group and In-group Perceptions*
  - *Stereotype Promise*
4. Minority Culture of Mobility (Neckerman, Carter, and Lee 2002; Vallejo 2012)

# *The Asian American Achievement Paradox*

Forthcoming Summer 2015  
Russell Sage Foundation

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