

The Pennsylvania State University

The Graduate School

College of Education

**THE ROLE OF SOCIAL TIES OF IMMIGRANT PARENTS IN DETERMINING  
THEIR CHILDREN'S SCHOOL SUCCESS**

A Dissertation in

Education Theory and Policy

and

Comparative and International Education

by

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements  
for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

August 2009

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study examines the impact of intra- and extra-country social ties of immigrant parents on the academic performance of their children as measured in terms of grade point averages (GPA). Intra-country ties are defined in this research as social ties of immigrant parents with their compatriots; while extra-country social ties are formed outside compatriot communities. Social ties are examined in the contexts of parents' workplaces, neighborhoods, and within their socializing patterns. This research also examines whether there is variation across parental countries of origin and across schools with differing compositions of students as regards the relationship between social ties of immigrant parents and their children's GPA. Finally, this study examines whether the parents' social ties affect their children's GPA through their participation in Parent-Teacher Organizations (PTO) or school activities.

Social capital theoretical perspective is used to examine these research questions. Data from the second wave (1995) and parental survey of the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS), Common Core of Data (CCD), and Private School Universe Survey (PSS) for the school year 1995-96 were analyzed for the purposes of this study. This study is based in the cities of San Diego in California and Miami/ Ft. Lauderdale areas in Florida.

Analyses revealed that not all types of intra- and extra-country social ties of parents were equally beneficial for children's GPA. While intra-country ties in parental socializing patterns were associated with higher GPAs for their children, intra-country ties within neighborhoods could be associated with lower GPAs. Furthermore, a mixture

of intra- and extra-country ties in socializing patterns was found to be most helpful for positively impacting children's academic performance. Differences in the relationship between parental social ties and children's GPA were observed across parental countries of origin, as well as across schools with different student body compositions. Parents' socializing ties were found to have less effect on children's GPAs when they attended schools characterized by medium White and low to medium Hispanic students than when they attended schools with a majority of Hispanic students.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Conducting this research and writing the doctoral dissertation has been an extremely positive experience due to the direct and indirect contributions of several individuals. I want to express my heartiest gratitude to my teacher and thesis advisor, Dr. Suet-ling Pong. She patiently guided me throughout this study and was a big support during my initial adjustment at Penn State and my dissertation. I learnt from her not just the intricacies of research, but also several lessons in balancing life, work, and family. I hold her and her family, Dr. David Post and Sara in the highest esteem. I would also like to thank my other dissertation committee members, Dr. Jonna Kulikowich, Dr. Katerina Bodovski, Dr. David Post, and Dr. Leif Jensen for their support and valuable comments on this research. This project started as a semester paper in my former committee member, Dr. Regina Deil-Amen's seminar and she encouraged me to develop this idea further. Some of my initial discussions with her were most valuable for this project. I am also grateful to Dr. Patrick Terenzini and Dr. Kai Schafft who helped me conceptualize my ideas in their seminar on research design. I am also indebted to the faculty and staff members of the department of Education Policy Studies at Penn State. My academic life has been enriched by their support. My fellow students and colleagues in the EDTHP program, especially Dr. Felicia Sanders and Ms. Vivien Chen hold a special place in my heart. Felicia, like a true friend, has been a big support during my pregnancy and later. Vivien had helped in accessing data for this research. I also thank Ms. Arpita Nag Acharrya for helping me with some statistical procedures.

I am grateful to my first teachers - my parents, Dr. Kamalesh Chandra Sil and Mrs. Jharna Sil for imparting me knowledge and life skills to undertake and continue with the herculean task of finishing a Ph.D. My heartfelt thanks to my parents-in-law, Mr. Dipak Kumar Nag and Mrs. Bulbul Nag, who encouraged me throughout the process. My thanks are also due to all other family members and friends without whose support, love, and blessings, I could not have finished this task.

Finally, I recognize my pillar of support, my husband, Dr. Rajiv Nag. He had more confidence in me in finishing this project than I had myself - I certainly doubt if I could have done it without his support and love. Besides, our regular brainstorming sessions helped me better develop and focus on ideas. Our son, Neeladri Nag inspired me to take up this project even before he was born. My pregnancy and subsequent thoughts of being a mother to a second generation immigrant child in a foreign land helped me conceptualize the problem clearly. Neeladri has been a very loving and supportive child who bore all my excesses and meeting of deadlines with least complaints. At times, I was not the perfect mother, but not once did he judge me negatively. I dedicate this thesis to my son, Neeladri. Last, but not the least, I could not have finished this thesis without the support of the Almighty.

## **Chapter I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

A recent report from the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory suggests that when schools, parents, and the community work together to support learning, children tend to do better in schools, stay in them longer, and have a better overall scholastic experience (Skinner, 2003a, 2003b). Research has shown that a strong community of parents can generate social capital for schools (Coleman, 1988) as well as improve children's performance. At the same time, a body of literature has also identified conditions under which parental participation does not necessarily lead to common good for all students, thus highlighting a negative aspect of social capital (Horvat, Weininger, & Lareau, 2003; Lareau, 1987; Lareau & Horvat, 1999; Sil, 2007). These authors have brought forth the issues of race and social class that might interfere with the social capital benefits of parental participation. The picture becomes fuzzier in the case of immigrant parents who, besides their ostensible linguistic and cultural distances from mainstream America, lack information and/or the acuity of navigating through the complex maze of courses that are typically offered to children in US schools (Gershberg, Danenberg, & Sanchez, 2004).

The last two decades have brought about a dramatic rise in the population of immigrants in the United States. There has also been a shift in the countries of origin of immigrants from primarily better-off European nations to the poorer parts of Latin America and Asia (Portes & Rumbaut, 1996). This high rate of immigration has

influenced the composition of school-aged children in American schools. Since the 1980s, immigrants have become the fastest growing and most diverse segment of America's child population. According to the 1990 U.S. Census, 15% of all children in the country were either immigrants or children of immigrants. This census also showed that 59% of Latin-American children and 90% of Asian-American children in the U.S. belonged to first or second generation (Zhou, 1997). By the year 2000, about 22% of all Americans were either immigrants themselves or had immigrant parents, including 75% of all Hispanics and 90% of all Asians in the U.S. (Rumbaut, 2005).

Immigrant children and children of immigrants constitute a considerable proportion of the U.S. public school system, generating a great deal of concern about their educational progress and their ultimate assimilation into the American society. Among this population, foreign born children (first-generation immigrants) and U.S. born children with immigrant parents (second-generation immigrants) are the fastest growing segment (Pong, 2003a; Pong, 2003b).

As Zhou (1997) observes, immigrant children and children of immigrants, unlike their parents, face a peculiar challenge whereby they do not have a root country to which they can return or consider as a point of reference. They are evaluated by the standards of the new host country (America in this case). As a result, understanding their assimilation process is of crucial importance for predicting their future performance in various life roles. Additionally, Rumbaut (2005) observes, the large scale immigration has coincided with a period of economic restructuring and rising inequality in the US. This period has seen a sharp increase in the economic returns to education coupled with a lengthening of post-secondary schooling. Therefore, for economic success in the host

society, it has become crucial to attain post-secondary education. Performance in K-12 schooling is an important determinant of post-secondary education (Kuncel, Crede, & Thomas, 2005).

National level data reveals significant upward mobility in education achievement overall from the immigrant to the second generation, though there are wide variations by national origin, with those of Asian background achieving more than the larger Latin American contingents, and by gender, with females outperforming males (Kao & Thompson, 2003; Rumbaut, 1997; Rumbaut, 2005). A number of explanations have been forwarded to make sense of these variations in performance including explanations depending on cultural and motivational factors, access to social capital, and socio-economic backgrounds.

Studies on social capital have examined home-based, school-based, and community-based social capital's effect over academic performance of immigrant children. Extensive research has been done on home- or family-based social capital, that has examined variables such as parents' expectations and norms, trust between parents and children, number of siblings, presence of an intact family, frequency of parent-child discussions on education matters, monitoring and frequency of parents helping with homework (Goldenberg, Gallimore, Reese, & Garnier, 2001; Goyette & Conchas, 2002a; Goyette & Xie, 1999; Pong, Hao, & Gardner, 2005; Sun, 1998). Relatively less is known, however, about immigrant parents' social ties and their consequent effects. Despite linguistic and cultural challenges, some immigrant parents might proactively engage towards gathering information for the benefit of their children by forming ties with different groups in the host society to better understand the school system in the host

nation. To make matters more challenging, some research has shown that the relations between immigrant parents and their children are likely to be constrained by cultural gaps (Bankston & Zhou, 2002b; Goyette & Conchas, 2002b; Zhou, 1997). Nonetheless, by opting to choose one neighborhood over the other, parents can influence the type of schools that their children can attend. Through their network of social ties, parents can better discern the distinctions between different types of schools as well as programs within schools and the different paths to which they lead (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001).

In this thesis, I examine the effects of the social ties of immigrant parents on the academic performance of their children. Social ties among parents can act as social capital and can assist in shared knowledge of how the school system works. This knowledge is of immense help to immigrant parents whose home country school system could significantly differ from that in the U.S. This information can enable parents to make informed decisions regarding their children's schooling and consequently support their own high aspirations regarding their children's education. Also, social ties among immigrant parents can lead to better pooling of financial and cultural resources in enhancing academic performance of their children (Coleman, 1988).

Extant research has focused primarily on parents' ties with other parents at school. Rarely do educational sociologists investigate parental social networks in settings other than the school, such as the work place and neighborhoods. This research addresses these gaps by looking at different parental ties including workplace and residential neighborhood ties. It also differentiates between parental social ties by country of origin, thereby moving beyond treating immigrant parents as a homogenous group. Specifically,

I examine the impact of two types of social ties of immigrant parents – their intra-country ties and extra-country ties. I define *Intra-country ties* as the social relations of parents within their own compatriot communities. *Extra-country ties* are defined as social relations of parents outside their own immigrant communities. Extra-country ties could be social ties with American White, Black, Hispanic communities or with any other immigrant community.

For the empirical setting, my research compares social ties of various immigrant groups based in the San Diego and Miami/Ft. Lauderdale areas of the U.S. and examines the impact of social ties of these groups on the scholastic performance of their children. I utilize data from the second wave (1995) and the parental survey within the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS), as well as from the Common Core of Data (CCD), and Private School Universe Survey (PSS) for the school year 1995-96 to examine four main research questions. These are, first, how are different types of social ties (namely, intra-country and extra-country ties) of immigrant parents associated with their children's grade point average (GPA)? Second, does the relationship between social ties of immigrant parents and their children's GPA vary across parents' countries of origin? Third, does the relationship between social ties of immigrant parents and their children's GPA vary across schools with different ethnic composition of students? Fourth, do parents' social ties affect their children's GPA through their participation in Parents Teachers Organizations (PTO) or school activities?

This research highlights the importance of appreciating different types of social ties among parents in relation to improving the academic performance of their children. The findings from my study can inform schools about the cultural differences of various

immigrant groups that might equip schools to more effectively reach out to these communities. A major policy implication of the study would be to provide avenues for immigrant parents to organize in order to strengthen their social ties and specifically for immigrant groups for whom such ties are non-existent. Furthermore, by recognizing the absence of strong social ties among parents, schools can actively reach out to parents and encourage them to participate in explicit informational sessions about school programs. This would enable schools to better address and perhaps reduce inequities in the performance of students. These measures can also serve to remove any skepticism on the part of parents and also improve the levels of trust between parents and school authorities. At the same time, school effectiveness can improve by fostering better academic performance on the part of the immigrant children.

This study also informs future research about avoiding the temptation to view the parental body as one homogenous group. Rather, policy makers need to adopt a framework that examines how the intersections of multiple social relationships are constructed to produce equities or inequities (Knight & Oesterreich, 2002). The constructed community of a multi-ethnic society needs to represent the variety, and only then will the social capital aspect of community participation in schools be fully realized, and the schools and students able to reap the benefits of this higher community participation.

On a theoretical front, this thesis can inform research on educational assimilation of children of immigrants. Through studies on parental intra-country and extra-country social ties, this research hopes to look at the extent and type of assimilation that parents demonstrate in the host country, and how their levels and types of assimilation help or



deter their children's academic performance. The level of intra-country and extra-country social ties that the parents form can be represented as a continuum. At one end of the continuum are parents who have exclusive intra-country social ties, with almost no extra-country social ties. On the other side are parents who have exclusive extra-country social ties, without much intra-country social ties. Some parents will have more intra- than extra-country social ties, while other parents may be more tilted towards the other side of the continuum.

Parents who have exclusive intra-country social ties may not have assimilated into the mainstream, and this in turn, may constrict the amount of information they gather about the school system in the host nation. So, even if these parents demonstrate high levels of motivation for their children's academic success, and represent cultural values conducive to achievement, without information about the school system in the U.S., and without much interaction with teachers, their children may suffer academically. On the other side of the continuum, we may have parents who have exclusive extra-country social ties. These parents derive benefit from interacting with a wide array of adults in the host society and may get a variety of information, but without a supportive social network within their own ethnic community, their children may lack the social capital that their ethnicity provides.

As this study is based in the areas of San Diego, California, and Miami/Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, in chapter 2, I examine the peculiarities of these two areas as gateways and then subsequent preferred areas of settlement for different groups of immigrants. I also trace the history of policies relevant to immigrants and the pre- and

post-migration characteristics of specific immigrant groups based in San Diego and Miami.

To study the relationship between social ties of immigrant parents and the academic performance of their children, it is necessary to examine two distinct types of literature, that addressing assimilation of immigrants and the other regarding the theoretical frameworks of social capital. In chapter 3, I present the review of these literatures in four distinct parts. The first deals with literature on educational assimilation and school performance of immigrants in the United States. In the second part, I review a body of literature related to social capital, with a specific focus on social ties. In the third part I link the earlier two parts together and examine research that adopts a social capital approach to explain the academic performance of immigrant children. In the fourth and final section of chapter 3, I conclude the review and identify gaps in existing literature that my research addresses.

In chapter 4, I describe the datasets and variables used in this research. I also present the research questions and develop the main hypotheses of my study. In Chapter 5, I report the results of the data analysis. The descriptive statistics provide information about dependent and independent variables; I also provide a profile of the different immigrant groups in my sample in terms of these variables. In the second part of chapter 5, I present results of hierarchical linear modeling for the analysis.

In the final chapter of this dissertation, I present a summary of the research findings. I speculate about various possible explanations for the study's findings, drawing on the historical perspectives and assimilation behavior of the various immigrant groups. I also suggest possible areas for future research that may contribute to the understanding

of the phenomenon of academic performance of children of immigrants and their ultimate assimilation into the mainstream American society.

## **Chapter II**

### **CONTEXTS OF RECEPTION OF CONTEMPORARY IMMIGRATION AND IMMIGRANT SCHOOLING**

This chapter presents a context for my research. It starts with a brief discussion of the changing demographics of schools accompanying changes in immigration policies over a period of time. In the next section, I describe immigration backgrounds and experiences of immigrant groups based in San Diego and Miami. Specifically, these immigrant groups are Filipinos, Vietnamese, Laotians, and Mexicans in San Diego area, and Cubans and Nicaraguans in the Miami region. As the research data is based in the two areas of San Diego in California and the Miami/Ft. Lauderdale areas in Florida, the final section provides a city context. It examines the peculiarities of these two areas as gateways and subsequent preferred areas of settlement for different groups of immigrants. I conclude this chapter with a summary.

#### Immigration Policies and Changing Demographics of Schools

One of the main contexts of reception for immigrants is provided by the social environment that receives immigrants, including the policies of the host country. Policies can exclude some immigrant groups completely leading them to disadvantaged existence. For other groups, policies can grant legal access to immigrants without providing encouragement for adaptation. A third policy alternative is active encouragement for a particular inflow of immigrants and helping them to resettle, such as the case of refugees from communist countries (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001).

The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 is one of the most important pieces of national legislation that has affected education, as this single piece of legislation has led to massive increase in enrollment of immigrant students. This act also marked a policy shift affecting immigration, as the new selection criteria focused on family reunification and possession of desired occupational skills. This was a shifting point from the earlier McCarran-Walter Act of 1952 that restricted immigration from the Eastern Hemisphere. While family reunification clause benefited low-skilled immigrants, possession of desired occupational skills benefited high-skilled immigrants. The number of immigrants allowed to enter was increased substantially, while allowing entry of immigrants from Eastern Hemisphere for the first time. The 1965 Act had an overwhelming effect of attracting huge number of immigrants from Asia and Latin America (Stewart, 1993, 1994; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001).

Subsequent policies dealing with immigration and refugees also had an impact of increasing the number of legal immigrants to this country. The Refugee Act of 1980 empowered the President to determine the number of refugees to be admitted each year, after consultations with Congress. To take care of the sharp increase in the amount of illegal immigration early 1970s onwards, the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) was signed, through which the federal government acquired a right to impose sanctions on employers who knowingly hired illegal immigrants. At the same time, this act allowed amnesty to certain undocumented aliens, who were mostly Mexicans. The Immigration Act of 1990 increased the number of legal entrants by 40%, and new emphasis was placed on job and occupational skills as a criterion for admission. This act also had a diversity clause meant to increase the number of visas granted to people from

countries for which immigration had been lower than 50,000 over the preceding five years. This clause benefited prospective immigrants from nations in Europe and Africa. As a result of immigration acts post-1965, current immigrants are a much more diverse group than the immigrants in the first half of twentieth century in terms of educational background and skills (Stewart, 1993; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001).

These immigration acts had a lot of impact on the educational scene, in not just increasing the size of the student body in the U.S., but also in changing its demographic composition. A large number of immigrant students were drawn from Latin America and Asia (Portes & Rumbaut, 1996). The current set of immigrant students also represents a diverse range of parental socio-economic status. Immigrant groups from different countries of origin represent different levels of education and skills, which gets reflected in their current socio-economic status in the U.S. Thus, immigrant groups from some countries of origin are more *selected*, in the sense that immigrants from these countries of origin are much higher educated and skilled than their non-migrant counterparts who remain in their home countries (Feliciano, 2005). It needs to be acknowledged, however, that the Immigrant parents' socio-economic status in the host society may not always reflect their status in their country of origin. Some immigrant groups may experience lowering of status once they reach the U.S. Their higher pre-migration educational status, however, can be more important than their current socio-economic status, in affecting their parental aspirations and ultimately educational expectations of the immigrant children (Feliciano, 2006). Therefore, for this research, I examine the history of San Diego and Miami-based immigrant groups, specifically focusing on their pre-

migration and post-migration status. The post-migration status of immigrants is shaped by their contexts of reception in this country to some extent.

### Immigration Selectivity: Country of Origin

Immigration experiences of different groups of immigrants depend to a large extent on the situation in homelands of these immigrants and policies of the host countries. Various factors motivate people to migrate to a foreign land. Some migrate because of economic reasons, others migrate because people from their land have migrated to the host country before them, and also because of their perceptions of better standards of living that they want to achieve in the host nation (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). Immigration, however, involves costs, not just in terms of money, but also emotional costs of leaving family members behind. This can affect the selectivity of the particular immigrant group in the host nations. A comparison of 32 immigrant groups in the U.S (Feliciano, 2005) reveals that nearly all the immigrant groups were more educated than their non-migrant counterparts who remained in the home country. However, the degree of education selectivity was found to vary according to the country of origin and the timing of migration from a particular country. Greater distance from the U.S. tended to improve positive selectivity of the immigrant groups; thus, groups from Asia were more positively selected than those from Latin America. This could be due to the higher economic as well as emotional costs associated with long distance migration (Feliciano, 2005). Furthermore, Feliciano (2005) finds that immigrants from countries that have a higher percentage of people with low level of schooling tend to be more positively selected as these immigrants have higher incentive as well as more resources to

migrate to the U.S. While immigrants may or may not suffer lowering of socio-economic status once they reach the host nation, their pre-migration educational status continues to impact their parental aspirations, ultimately shaping their children's educational expectations (Feliciano, 2006).

Migrations motivated by economic and sociological factors are all planned moves, and potential immigrants plan out their work and social agenda in the host nation. Many times, however, people have to leave without much planning, for instance, when the country is ravaged in war. They might have to seek asylum in new countries, and take status of refugees if they are granted asylum, or just live as illegal immigrants in case asylum is denied. Depending on relationship between U.S. and the country of origin, and the international context at the time, a particular flow of people may be classified as political refugees, such as Cubans, Vietnamese, Cambodians, and Laotians, or as an illegal group of economically motivated immigrants, such as Haitians and Nicaraguans (Portes & Rumbaut, 1996). While, unplanned immigration might be associated with less positively selected immigrants, the pre-migration status of these immigrants can greatly affect their post-migration experiences and status in the host country, as well as their children's educational expectations (Feliciano, 2006). Within this context of educational selectivity, I trace the pre-migration and post-migration characteristics of some of the immigrant groups settled in the areas of San Diego and Miami in affecting the academic performance of their children.

Philippines: Most of the Filipino immigrants to the U.S. are acquainted with English and the American lifestyle, partly owing to their history of being a colony of the U.S for



nearly 50 years. Also, due to their colonial past, U.S. was a natural port of destination for Filipinos. A change in the immigration law in the U.S. in 1965 along with a declaration of the martial law by President Marcos in 1972 increased migration from Philippines to the U.S. dramatically. The recent immigration consisted mainly of the urban middle-class, with a high representation of medical profession such as nurses, physicians, surgeons, and pharmacists. However, Filipino immigrants admitted under family reunification post 1976 had lower socio-economic backgrounds, compared to earlier occupational immigrants. (Agbayani-Siewert & Revilla, 1995). Nevertheless, Filipino immigrants in the U.S. represent higher educational and occupational levels compared to other immigrants, including other Asian immigrants. Furthermore, they are more fluent in English than other Asian groups, which make it easier for them to adapt to the American lifestyle (Agbayani-Siewert & Revilla, 1995; Min, 1995).

Even though recent Filipino immigrants represent high education levels, native born Filipinos are behind other Asian groups, and a little ahead of white Americans, in terms of educational attainment. In case of college enrollment, they are a little higher than white Americans, but significantly lower than other Asian groups. Further, they tend to drop out at a high rate. Formation of youth gangs is another problem. One of the reasons suggested is that Filipino-American youth expect low rewards for their education investments. This perception comes from observations that Filipino immigrants tend to earn less than white Americans despite being much more highly educated. Another explanation suggests that as second generation Filipinos have almost no ties with Philippines, and tend not to speak their parents' dialects, they lose out their traditional cultural values stressing education (Agbayani-Siewert & Revilla, 1995). This

explanation is supported by a study by Espiritu and Wolf (2001) that finds an absence of active cultural socialization in terms of deliberate teaching and practicing of the language, tradition, and history of Philippines in Filipino-American homes.

Filipinos are amongst the more positively selected immigrants in terms of pre-migration education and socio-economic status. This along with their better knowledge of English has led to positive post-migration status for them and their children (Feliciano, 2005, 2006). The higher educational expectation that should naturally follow from such positive pre-migration and post-migration status is, however, tempered by a sense of discrimination amongst the children of Filipino immigrants and a loss of traditional cultural values (Agbayani-Siewert & Revilla, 1995; Espiritu & Wolf, 2001).

Vietnam: Vietnamese did not have much presence in the U.S. prior to 1975, when they entered this country as refugees as a result of the Vietnam War (1945-75). Vietnamese are the largest of refugee groups to have settled in the U.S. since the mid 1970s. Like other immigrants and refugee groups, the first wave consisted of higher educated people belonging to upper socio-economic strata. Second wave of Vietnamese who fled by boat from the end of 1975 to 1998 mainly consisted of refugees lacking education, job skills, and economic resources. As refugees, they were forced out of their homeland without much preparation, and with little control over their final destination. They also suffered from severe trauma of war, as well as emotional distress that they experienced at refugee camps. Since 1990, a substantial proportion of immigration from Vietnam has been on family sponsored immigration (Zhou, 2001).

In terms of socio-economic status, Vietnamese-Americans are far below white Americans and other Asian-Americans. Vietnamese refugees are less educated than other Asian immigrants, and a significant proportion of them are in low-level service and blue-collar jobs. Generous government assistance, however, ensured a basic level of well-being until the refugees became self-sufficient. Still, over a period of a decade or so, Vietnamese refugees have made progress into the American society as their human capital and labor force status improved steadily (Min, 1995; Zhou, 2001).

The first wave of Vietnamese refugees was more positively selected than the subsequent waves. However, better pre-migration status of Vietnamese refugees compared to other low SES immigrants such as, Mexicans has led to their having higher parental aspirations. Higher parental aspirations get further reinforcement within their tightly knit co-ethnic communities. This, despite their lower current socio-economic status has been responsible for the academic progress shown by children of Vietnamese immigrants (Feliciano, 2006).

Laos: Refugee inflow from Laos was also a result of the Vietnam War. Victims of the Communist backlash fled to refugee camps in Thailand. U.S. immigrant officials interviewed refugees in Thai camps and admitted them in large numbers into the U.S. as political migrants during the late 1970s and 1980s (Rumbaut, 1989).

Most Hmong refugees from Laos had low human capital, and a majority of Hmongs arrived in the U.S. illiterate in their native language. They were mainly farmers or former guerilla fighters from rural highlands of northern Laos. They, therefore, assumed the lowest positions in the American class hierarchy and experienced

tremendous economic disadvantages. They, however, made significant economic progress during the 1990s, by entering labor force and ending public assistance. Still, by 2000, Hmongs remained more disadvantaged than African Americans, Native Americans, and Hispanic Americans, as measured by college completion, poverty, and per capita income (Hein, 2006; Rumbaut, 1989). Lower pre-migration status of Laotian refugees, compared to Vietnamese refugees may have been responsible for lower academic performance of children of Laotian immigrants despite comparable socio-economic status of these two groups of immigrants. Furthermore, Laotians have lived in the U.S. for a shorter duration than the Vietnamese.

Mexico: Mexican-Americans are the largest and fastest growing Hispanic subgroup. According to the 1987 Federal Census data, 63% of all Hispanics in the U.S. are of Mexican descent. Historically, they include not only those who have lived in the western territory before the territory became a part of the U.S., but also includes recent immigrants, whose number has been increasing steadily since 1950s. Continuous immigration from Mexico and relatively high fertility rates ensure fast growth of this population in the future as well. Culturally, they are a heterogeneous group. They claim their lineage to Spanish, Mestizo, and various native Indian origin (Suarez-Orozco, 1989). Mexicans are the only group among recent major immigrant nationalities to have a second- and even a third-generation. This is a result of an uninterrupted flow of immigration from Mexico for more than a century. Closeness to U.S. through sharing of a border accounts for lower average human capital of Mexican immigrants compared to other groups (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). On average, adult Mexican immigrants have

only a few years of schooling, limited urban job skills, and little or no knowledge of English (Lopez & Stanton-Salazar, 2001). Still, Mexican immigrants have higher educational status than those who remain in Mexico, representing their positive selectivity. The level of their positive selectivity, however, is low compared to other immigrant groups (Feliciano, 2005).

Furthermore, Mexicans have suffered from a negative context of reception over a period of hundred years (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). There have been several negative consequences of this prolonged adverse context of reception (Lopez & Stanton-Salazar, 2001; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). For instance, adult Mexican immigrants not only receive low earnings, but they even get lower returns for their human capital and knowledge of English, compared to other immigrant groups. Also, Mexican parents in the analysis are significantly more likely to report low bonds of solidarity and low levels of support from their co-ethnics, representing weak community ties that have been a result of their adverse conditions of arrival and settlement. Pre-existing Mexican-American community serves as an important part of the context of reception for new immigrants. Absence of a well-structured community, however, has not helped in the utilization of traditional culture to help their children achieve (Lopez & Stanton-Salazar, 2001; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001).

Cuba: Cubans are the third largest contemporary immigrant ethnic groups in the U.S. They are the most affluent of the Hispanic subgroups, are more concentrated in white-collar jobs, and have the lowest unemployment rates, compared to other Hispanic subgroups (Rumbaut & Portes, 2001; Suarez-Orozco, 1989). Cuban immigration to

Miami started in 1959 in reaction to the Socialist movement of Fidel Castro. It was not a continuous inflow of refugees, but rather spurts or waves of inflow. The first wave (1959-62), also called 'Golden exiles' overwhelmingly consisted of Cuban elites, who brought with themselves high amounts of human capital in terms of education, entrepreneurial experience, and business connections. The second wave (1965-73) mainly consisted of people whose relatives were in the U.S. By then the Cuban economy in Miami was already doing well and along with support from the earlier Cubans, this group also started doing well. Cubans mobilized ethnic resources to build the Cuban enclave economy by raising capital through ethnic networks and hiring Cubans as employees (Alberts, 2005; Perez, 2001). The third wave (1980) was the Mariel boatlift, and consisted of a higher percentage of people belonging to lower socio-economic status and blacks, besides criminals and mental-health patients. U.S. did not give preferential treatment to these refugees, and the already established Cubans started seeing them as a drain on their scarce resources. Furthermore, arrival of refugees from Nicaragua and Haiti around the same time made Marielitos less welcome by both Americans and Cubans. After the Mariel boatlift, migration from Cuba slowed down. In the 1990s, however, conditions in Cuba started deteriorating due to the collapse of USSR. Desperate Cubans left Cuba in boats and rafts. This was called the 'Balsero Crisis' (1994/95). Many of these newcomers were highly educated and motivated to build a better life. They received a better reception from the existent Cuban community compared to the Marielitos. The current U.S. policy is to deport Cubans intercepted in sea but to admit those who manage to reach U.S. shores (Alberts, 2005; Perez, 2001).

Through waves of immigration from Cuba, the human capital component of the community has been declining. Despite this, Cubans continue to maintain an economic edge over other immigrant groups. While generous federal assistance program till the mid-1970s helped, at the household level, it was aided by high labor force participation per family, including participation by females, low fertility, and a high incidence of economically functional three-generation families (Perez, 2001). Cubans were less positively selected in the 1970s than other Latin American immigrants who came later in the 1980s, with the exception of Mexicans and Salvadorans (Feliciano, 2005).

Despite a favorable reception and relatively high levels of family human capital, Cuban-American students in public schools perform significantly worse in terms of GPAs, and have a high tendency to drop out of schools. Portes and Rumbaut (2001) suggest a possible explanation in terms of a change in the contexts of receptions that subsequent waves of Cubans encountered. They went from being one of the most favorably received groups in the American immigration history to becoming one of the least popular. Favorable modes of incorporation benefited children of Cuban exiles who came earlier. The Mariel and post-Mariel refugees had lower human capital in addition to being given an unfavorable reception. This has affected their children's orientation and achievement. Furthermore, existence of Cuban-owned businesses provides a good employment source and therefore, an alternative to schooling to children of Mariel and post-Mariel refugees whose economic conditions might force them to avail of this opportunity more compared to other Cuban children (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001).

Nicaragua: Nicaraguans entered the U.S. in large numbers in search of refuge from their war-torn home country, which was under a communist regime. However, their context of reception was far less welcoming than that accorded to Cubans in the 1960s-70s. In 1980s when Nicaraguan immigrants started entering the U.S., the general national atmosphere was far more restrictive towards immigrants than it had been for Cubans who had entered earlier. The U.S. government too was far less welcoming toward Nicaraguans than it had been for Cubans. While Cuba was a central piece in the cold war in 1960s, after two decades the significance of communist regime in Nicaragua had decreased. To make matters worse, the 1980 Mariel boatlift from Cuba had made attitudes towards immigration far more ambivalent. Furthermore, Nicaraguans entered the country within a short time span of 10 years, in contrast to 40 years of Cuban immigration. This made them more visible, accounting for a more negative reaction to their arrival. Through 1985, only about 10% Nicaraguan applicants were granted political asylum and the rest were declared illegal aliens, not entitled to refugee assistance, resettlement aid, welfare, or government loans (Fernandez-Kelly & Curran, 2001; Portes & Stepick, 1993; Suarez-Orozco & Paez, 2002).

Hostile attitude of the U.S. government towards permanent Nicaraguan resettlement diverted Nicaragua's resources and focus, which led to weak efforts towards building a community of their own. They became illegal aliens and lost a collective voice and leadership. Without endorsement for their motives, they had little motivation to form a cohesive community. (Fernandez-Kelly & Curran, 2001; Suarez-Orozco & Paez, 2002).



Nicaraguan immigrants were more positively selected than most Latin American and even Asian immigrants, including Filipinos (Feliciano, 2005). Many of the immigrants had come from big cities and were familiar with urban living. A number of them had middle-class bearing, a fair complexion, and good education, and in their country they were working as professionals. However, uncertain legal status limited their economic and educational prospects in the U.S. Without much occupational prospects and without community-backed support, many of them accepted menial jobs. Their children grew up with limited resources and in relative isolation from mainstream institutions. Monthly income of Nicaraguan parents was the lowest among all immigrant groups in southern Florida, which is in ironical contrast to their human capital endowment. Furthermore, they received little support from local and federal institutions. Lack of resources, limited linguistic ability, and constant threats of deportation undermined their capacity as parents to retain authority over, and demand compliance from their children (Fernandez-Kelly & Curran, 2001). Presence of a highly select co-ethnic community is important for maintaining a collective identity of being a high status group (Feliciano, 2006). Absence of such a community for Nicaraguans failed to reinforce higher parental aspirations associated with the high pre-migration status of Nicaraguan immigrants.

In conclusion, the pre-migration status of immigrants from various countries of origin affects the educational outcome of their children, by not only affecting selectivity of their particular immigrant group, but also by affecting their educational expectations in the host nation. The immigrant groups considered in this research are specifically based in the cities of San Diego in California and Miami in Florida. The next section provides a

context of these two cities that represent important gateways and subsequent preferred areas of settlement for the immigrant groups studied in this research.

### Immigrant Gateways: San Diego and Miami

The cities of San Diego in California and Miami in Florida represent areas most heavily affected by the post-1965 immigration. These areas also serve as gateways and subsequent preferred areas of settlement for different groups of immigrants. San Diego is one of the main points of entry and place of settlement for a large inflow of immigrants from Mexico, besides receiving large number of Salvadorans and Guatemalans. It is also a city preferred by immigrants from Asia, such as Filipinos, Vietnamese, Cambodians, and Laotians, and to a lesser extent, Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans. Miami, on the other hand, receives immigrants mainly from the Caribbean, such as Cuba, Haiti, Dominican Republic, and Jamaica, as well as from Central American countries such as Nicaragua, and South American countries, such as Colombia, Venezuela, and Brazil (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001).

In spite of similarities of serving as gateways for various immigrants, these two cities represent tremendous diversity in socio-economic origins. While the proportion of immigrants occupied in professional and managerial occupations in southern Florida compares well with the national averages, for San Diego, the figure is much lower. The unemployment rate is also higher in the Californian town, while the self-employment rates are low compared to Miami. Besides, the San Diego defense sector, especially the military aerospace industry experienced growth and turned into a high-skilled sector; low-skilled immigrants were not suited for this job market. However, despite the

educational and occupational disadvantages of California parents, the family income levels in both the areas are similar. To some extent, this is a result of government assistance programs benefiting the South-East Asian refugees (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Waldinger & Lee, 2001).

Nearly half of the Miami area's population was foreign born in 1990, compared to only 21% of San Diego's, and only 8% for the U.S. as a whole. Moreover, Hispanics, mainly of Cuban and Caribbean origins, constitute about half of the immigrant population, compared to only 20% in San Diego, composed mainly of Mexicans (Rumbaut & Portes, 2001).

Immigrant population of San Diego comprises mainly of Vietnamese, Filipinos, Laotians, and Mexicans. San Diego has been a major resettlement area for Vietnamese refugees since 1975. One of the reasons for this was the location of Camp Pendleton, which was one of the four military camps to which the 1975 refugees were evacuated from Vietnam. The Vietnamese initially settled in a neighborhood called Linda Vista, which was later referred to as Little Vietnam. Later, the more resourceful Vietnamese moved north to Mira Mesa, and further north to Rancho Penasquitos, but still more migration during the 1980s managed to give rise to a Vietnamese enclave (Zhou, 2001). San Diego also received large number of Cambodian and Laotian refugees fleeing from communist rules. They were more likely to be rural peasants and some were absorbed in the low-skill job market in San Diego (Martinez, Lee, & Nielsen, 2004).

San Diego represents the third largest U.S. destination for contemporary Filipinos. Due to the colonial history of Philippines, there has been a regular inflow of Filipinos into the U.S. The initial Filipino immigrants to San Diego constituted mainly laborers.

They lived and worked in downtown hotels and restaurants, and had a vibrant community. San Diego, being the site of the largest U.S. naval base station, was a major area of settlement for Filipino navy men and their families since the early 1900s. The navy presence is prominent to this day. The Filipino community in San Diego received a major boost in terms of number following the passage of the 1965 immigration act. Many post-1965 Filipinos that came to San Diego were, however, professionals, a large number of them being nurses. The arrival of the new group made class divisions in the Filipino community apparent (Espiritu & Wolf, 2001).

San Diego was once a part of Mexico, and is still in the Mexico border. As a result, it always had a Mexican origin population that increased and decreased in size, in response to changes in the Federal policies towards immigration. The great depression led to increased anti-Mexican views that led to deportation of Mexicans, both native and foreign born. Post World War II, Mexican migrants returned in large numbers to work in farms, and also to re-establish ties with relatives. As the need for farm workers reduced, they moved to cities in search of jobs (Gutierrez, 1995). The San Diego-Tijuana border is recognized as the busiest international border in the world. Because of its proximity to Mexico, San Diego has never seen a favorable context of reception for Mexicans from the white population (Lopez & Stanton-Salazar, 2001).

Miami has a huge population of Cubans and Nicaraguans. In Miami, the Cubans dominate Hispanics, and Asian groups are minimal. In Miami, not only are the Latinos the demographic majority, but they also enjoy considerable economic and political power. The Miami-Dade County contains the largest concentration of Cubans in the U.S. Beginning in 1980s, Nicaraguans, first fleeing the Sandinista regime and then the Contra-

war against the Sandinistas, made Miami the largest Nicaraguan settlement in the U.S. In the 1990s, Colombians fleeing drug wars also settled down in Miami. Miami also had a significant influx of black immigrants, originally from the Bahamas, and later from Haiti (Stepick, Grenier, Castro, & Dunn, 2003)

The Cuban population of Miami lives in various neighborhoods. Little Havana in Miami is the economic and social core of the Cuban community, and is the main port of entry for new arrivals from Cuba. Coral Gables is an upscale neighborhood characterized by a strong presence of multi-national companies; it has attracted economically mobile Cubans. Cubans also form more than half of the population of Hialeah in Miami, which is a major manufacturing centre dominated by Hispanics. Many of these Cubans have migrated only in the last few years (Alberts, 2005).

Professional and business people from Nicaragua constituted the first wave of migration from the country, and mainly clustered in the western suburb of Sweetwater in Miami. The final wave, constituting mainly urban blue collar workers settled in the poorest sections of Little Havana, creating a second Nicaraguan neighborhood. Despite its name, East Little Havana is now mostly an area where Nicaraguans and other Central Americans have settled, and it is much more poor and deteriorated than Sweetwater (Portes & Stepick, 1993)

Huge influx of immigrants has had its impact on the school system in these two cities. The Dade County Unified School district of Miami is the largest school district in Florida, and the fourth largest in the country. It draws students from the larger metropolitan Miami-Dade area. This district is also the largest minority public school system in the country, with 60% of its students being of Hispanic origin, 28% African

American, and less than 3% non-white of other minorities (Dadeschools, 2007; Rumbaut & Portes, 2001). The Miami-Dade County School Board is dominated by foreign-born Latinos, especially Cubans (Stepick et al., 2003).

San Diego is the sixth largest city in the nation. The San Diego Unified School district is the second largest in California, and is the nation's eighth largest. The student population is extremely diverse, representing more than 15 ethnic groups and over 60 languages and dialects (SDUSD, 2007). San Diego County, however, is served by other school districts as well, such as Poway Unified School district, San Marcos Unified School district, Sweetwater Union High School district, Grossmont Union High School district, and San Dieguito Union High school district (SDCOE, 2007).

### Summary and Conclusion

The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 had an overwhelming effect of increasing immigration from Asian and Latin American countries. Furthermore, for the first time, this act represented a selection criteria based on desired occupational skills and family reunification instead of national origins system of earlier acts governing immigration. This act also had a massive effect on the schooling system of America, in not just increasing the volume of students, but also changing the demographic composition of the student body. Subsequent acts dealing with immigration and refugees also increased the number of students in American schools. These acts were the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA), the Refugee Act of 1980, and the Immigration Act of 1990.

School districts of certain states such as California and Florida were in the forefront of receiving large volumes of immigrants. In fact, San Diego and Miami represent areas most heavily affected by the post-1965 immigration. San Diego is a major gateway and preferred area of settlement for Mexicans, Filipinos, Vietnamese, and Laotians. Miami, on the other hand, mainly receives immigrants from Cuba and Nicaragua (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Immigrants often tend to work and reside in ethnic enclaves, such as Little Havana in Miami. Socio-economic status, often carried over from the home country, however, plays a role in determining areas of residence for immigrants. Even though, Little Havana is the economic and social core of the Cuban community in Miami and is the main port of entry for new immigrants, Coral Gables attracts Cubans belonging to higher socio-economic status, while the neighborhood of Hialeah has a large establishment of Cubans who have migrated in the last few years (Alberts, 2005). Similarly, Nicaraguans in Miami have formed two neighborhoods. While Sweetwater caters to the upper strata, East Little Havana is a settlement for the poorer section (Portes & Stepick, 1993). In San Diego, as well, Mexican and Vietnamese refugees have moved to impoverished areas or places settled by older ethnic minorities including African Americans, in the southeast part of the city. As their economic status improved, however, many have moved to suburbs (Martinez et al., 2004).

Immigrants from different countries of origin have brought with themselves different homeland experiences, languages, and human capital endowments. Economically motivated immigrants have moved to this country with a hope to improve their socio-economic status and to provide a better education and opportunity structure to their children. Refugees, on the other hand, did not have an opportunity to plan their

immigration. But they too struggle to improve their lot and opportunity structure in the new land. Policy context that receives these immigrants is not the same for all these groups, however. Some refugee groups such as Southeast Asians and Cubans have received favorable contexts of reception, while a huge proportion of Mexicans, and Nicaraguans live under constant threat of deportation from this country.

Immigrants also represent different levels of positive selectivity. Most immigrant groups tend to be positively selected; however, physical distance of their country of origin and level of schooling in the country of origin often affects the degree of selectivity of a particular immigrant group. Immigrants from Latin American countries tend to be less positively selected than those from Asian countries. Pre-migration status of immigrants might affect their collective identity as a high status group irrespective of their current socio-economic status in the host nation. This, in turn affects their parental aspirations and children's educational expectations. Presence of a highly select co-ethnic community serves to reinforce a collective identity of being a high status group (Feliciano, 2005, 2006).

Difference in contexts of reception, however, can affect the community building patterns of immigrants groups. Cubans and Southeast Asian refugees have formed tight communities that besides providing their children with high levels of social resources also provide checks against family disruptions such as divorce. On the other hand, in the absence of sympathy for their common cause and a subsequent loss of collective voice, Mexican and Nicaraguan parents receive little support from their co-nationals. Thus, the low human capital endowments of Mexicans are not compensated by community networks, as in the case of the Southeast Asian immigrants. Nicaraguans, on the other



hand, fail to reap the benefits of being a highly select group because of the absence of strong co-ethnic communities. Even though Filipinos are a highly select group, they might not form tight community networks like Southeast Asian immigrants due to their higher education levels, better socio-economic status, and lack of cultural homogeneity. Lack of such networks does not help in passing tradition of high academic performance to the second generation. Furthermore, second-generation Filipinos do not perceive a high return to education as they do not see their parents getting income commensurate with their human capital endowments. This has led to lower educational performance amongst second-generation Filipinos, not commensurate with the high educational and socio-economic backgrounds of their parents.

Difference in context of reception has also affected assimilation patterns for these different groups of immigrants. For instance, even though Southeast Asian refugees have low human capital endowments, their favorable context of reception has helped their children do relatively well in schools. Similarly, Cubans enjoy relatively high earnings compared to their educational credentials. On the other hand, Mexicans, and Nicaraguans experience a significant loss in their monthly earnings, even after controlling for their education, knowledge of English, and occupation (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001).

In the next chapter, I review different models of assimilation and educational performance of immigrants. Besides, I review literature on social ties of parents yielding social capital for their children. Review of these literatures can help in better understanding whether social ties can affect different assimilation patterns that immigrants studied in this research display.

### **Chapter III**

#### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

This chapter reviews literature with regard to the academic performance of immigrant students, especially with respect to social-capital-based explanations. This review is divided into four parts. I start with a review of the literature on educational assimilation and school performance of immigrant children in the United States. This literature provides a framework for the use of parental social ties examined in this research. Through studies on parental social ties, this research examines the extent and types of assimilation that parents demonstrate in the host country, and the extent to which their levels and types of assimilation may help or deter their children's academic performance.

As the study uses a theoretical framework of social capital, the second part of this chapter reviews a body of literature related to social capital. Recent years have seen a broadening of the concept of social capital to incorporate ideas of social ties. I examine the original ideas of social capital as well as the recent changes. This literature is useful in examining the effects of social ties of immigrant parents.

The third part of this chapter links the earlier two parts, and examines literature that adopts a social capital approach to explain the academic performance of immigrant children. Finally, I examine literature that looks into social ties of immigrant parents in enabling their involvement in schools. The chapter concludes with a summary of the review and a statement of a gap in the literature that this research proposes to address.

## Educational Assimilation of Immigrants

The concept of assimilation concerns discussions on how immigrants adjust in a new society. Often assimilation is given a connotation of social integration into the dominant society. As a result, frequently, immigrants and refugees having the greatest potential for cultural compatibility in terms of English language fluency, high level skills and better education have been considered as having better chances of assimilation. Ultimately, immigrants who interact more with the American society become similar to Americans in a variety of ways and become assimilated (Roberts & Starr, 1989). Often this kind of conceptualization gives a negative connotation to the term of assimilation, as immigrants are seen as lacking certain skills, or cultural and social outlook.

Rumbaut (1997) attempts in integrating the concept, and removing the ambiguities associated with the term “assimilation”. He cautions against the use of concept of assimilation as a mere process of mechanical adjustments, or as a synonym for coerced Americanization. Assimilation need not have the connotations of the lost past of immigrants, coercion, loss, conflicts of loyalties, or surrender. Furthermore, assimilation need not be looked at as a homogenizing process guided by a deficit model, of immigrants overcoming deficits in language and culture, and becoming Americanized. Rather, assimilation is seen as a process of discovery for the immigrants, who came to the U.S., bringing with them a dual frame of reference. Assimilation is re-conceptualized as a dynamic process involving the inventiveness of human agency, driven by necessity and circumstances, and is not a mere reflection of immigrants simply preferring conformity and taking the path of least resistance.

In this research, I follow a definition of assimilation proposed by Alba and Nee (1997) whereby assimilation is defined as the decline and ultimate disappearance of social, economic, and political differences between immigrants and the native population of the host country, to the extent that ethnic distinctions associated with jobs and social status becomes less relevant. When I apply this definition to educational assimilation for this research, it refers to a disappearance of GPA gap between different immigrant groups and between the immigrants and the native population.

In the following sub-section, I discuss various models that explain the process of assimilation of immigrants. Assimilation has various dimensions, such as educational assimilation, cultural assimilation, economic assimilation, and spatial assimilation. The focus of this research is on educational assimilation.

#### Models of assimilation:

Several explanations have been put forth for explaining the assimilation process of immigrants. Over the years emphasis on various causal factors has changed. One reason for this could be the different modes of assimilation that different immigrant groups have exhibited. In her review study (Schmid, 2001) on major factors contributing to the uneven educational achievement of the new second generation from Latin American and Asian countries, Schmid(2001) distinguishes between “external factors”, such as economic oppression, racial/ ethnic status, and group reception, and “intrinsic factors”, such as human and social capital, family structure, community organization, and cultural and linguistic patterns. A socioeconomic analysis looks at the extent to which family background accounts for the differences in the academic achievement among

students from various second generation immigrant groups. Both the status attainment research and human capital theory posit that parent's socioeconomic status (education, wealth, high status jobs, and intact families) has positive impact on children's achievement. Empirical evidence suggests similarity between immigrant and native children in this regard (Alba, Massey, & Rumbaut, 1999; Portes & MacLeod, 1996).

One of the initial models based on *socio-economic and socio-cultural status* is the "straight-line assimilation model" (Gordon, 1965; Park, 1928, 1950). According to this model, immigrant children are at a disadvantage compared to U.S- born children due to factors such as poverty, low levels of parental education, lack of English proficiency, and acculturation stress. As they become more Americanized by assimilating into America's mainstream, they overcome their cultural and socioeconomic disadvantage. Therefore, one would expect to find better academic performance for subsequent generations of immigrants, as they become more Americanized. Furthermore, this model predicts similar patterns of assimilation, regardless of the immigrants' countries of origin and their social class.

Subsequent theories of assimilation (discussed below) have tried to remove the negative connotations of ethnocentrism and deficits associated with the word "assimilation" by laying emphasis on the cultural strengths of immigrants and differential modes of assimilation that different ethnic groups adopt. Alba and Nee (2003), however, demonstrate the validity of the straight-line assimilation model even for recent immigrants. Their model, based on longitudinal data, however, redefines the mainstream as a composite culture and beliefs, instead of looking at it as just the culture of the dominant white group. Instead of looking at assimilation as a mechanical process of

immigrants blending into the melting pot of the dominant culture, the revised classic or straight-line assimilation model looks at the process as being dynamic, whereby changes take place on both sides of the ethnic boundary. Opportunities in occupational and educational structures are changing and becoming more favorable providing immigrants with greater motives for assimilation. The new theory, however, acknowledges the role of socio-economic status in different modes of assimilation.

Difference in socio-economic status can explain to some extent the high dropout rates among Latinos, particularly Mexican students, and the better academic performance of Asian students (Kao & Tienda, 1995; Warren, 1996). However, socio-economic status alone does not account for all the variations in academic performance. *A socio-cultural perspective* tries to explain differences in school performances through differences in the cultures of different national origins, in relation to the context of its reception in the host country. Ogbu's typology of ethnic and immigrant minorities explains difference in the academic performance of voluntary minorities (immigrants) and involuntary minorities (such as African Americans and Mexican Americans) on the basis of the differences in their cultural models. According to Ogbu (1991), the cultural models of these two groups differ in some key elements. First, they differ with respect to the frame of reference for comparing present status with future possibilities. While immigrant communities can tell their children that situations, in spite of racial discrimination, are much better in the U.S. than in their home country, non-immigrant minorities do not possess this dual frame of reference. Second, immigrants possess a folk theory of getting ahead, especially through education. On the other hand, non-immigrants perceive a glass ceiling in opportunities because of their long history of racial discrimination. Third, the two groups may also

differ in the adoption of a cultural frame of reference for judging appropriate behavior and affirming group membership or solidarity. For non-immigrants, because of racial discrimination, a reactive culture might be considered a sign of loyalty to the group. Last, difference arises on the basis of an assessment of the extent to which one may trust members of the dominant group and the institutions they control, such as schools. Non-immigrant minorities are less likely to trust these. Thus, Ogbu's typology differentiates between immigrant and non-immigrant minorities. However, the underlying assumption seems to be that all immigrant populations do well in academics, compared to the involuntary minorities. It fails to specifically look at different groups within the immigrant population and explain the differences in their academic performance. It also fails to differentiate generational differences within the same ethnic group.

Another socio-culture- based explanation is put forth by Kao and Tienda (1995) based on parental expectations. They put forward a hypothesis of immigrant optimism, whereby parent's nativity is more influential in determining children's school success. Second generation immigrants are best positioned for academic success, compared to their foreign-born or native peers. While foreign-born youth have language disadvantages, the second generation has the advantage of English proficiency. They also have immigrant parents who are optimistic about their children's chances of upward mobility, and through their encouragement, they reinforce educational success. However, this hypothesis might explain the success of only some immigrant groups.

Indeed, an umbrella model for explaining the performance of various immigrant groups in this country is hard to conceive, precisely because of differences in socio-economic conditions and contexts of reception experienced by different immigrant

groups in the host nation. An alternative model, the “segmented assimilation model” presented by Portes and Zhou (1993) precisely addresses this, and explains how and why new immigrants and their children may follow different paths of incorporation into the American society. They suggest that current immigrants face a very different situation now, compared to earlier immigrants, in terms of racial background and the structure of economic opportunities. Immigrants of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century were descendants of European immigrants and were uniformly white. Such an advantage does not exist for the black, Asian, and Latino children of today’s immigrants. The structure of economic opportunities has also changed, following a rapid process of national deindustrialization and global industrial restructuring. A result of these two realities faced by immigrants is that the outcomes within and between contemporary immigrant streams may vary.

The model suggests three outcomes – upward assimilation, downward assimilation, and selective assimilation. Some immigrant groups that possess high levels of human capital and receive a favorable reception in the host country may integrate into the white middle-class through upward socio-economic mobility. Upward assimilation into the white middle-class was an option for the earlier immigrants of Italian, Irish, and other European origins who had the advantage of their skin color. Their skin color, even if it might have been of a slightly darker hue, reduced a major barrier to entry into the White American mainstream. Assimilation in part involved leaving behind their immigrant culture and embracing American ways. Second-generation children of this background are likely to do well in school, given the dreams and aspirations of their immigrant parents who are driven by a motive of succeeding in the foreign land.



Other groups with fewer resources may not be able to provide favorable educational and socio-economic opportunities to their children. These children may be exposed to adolescent culture of inner-city schools and communities, which discourages education and aspirations for social mobility. This might lead to assimilation into the underclass or downward assimilation. According to Portes and Zhou (1993), downward assimilation can be seen in the case of Mexicans. Mexican's primary loyalty is to their in-group, where to act white is regarded as a disloyalty. The second generation has seen their parents confined to menial jobs and are increasingly aware of discrimination against them by the white mainstream. They readily join a reactive subculture as a means of protecting their sense of self-worth. Participation in this subculture leads to serious barriers to their chances of upward mobility, because school achievement is perceived as antithetical to ethnic solidarity. As a result, their academic performance is poor, and they are perceived by their teachers as irresponsible, disrespectful, mistrusting, apathetic, and less motivated.

Some groups might adopt limited assimilation, whereby immigrant parents encourage their children's educational success, but limit their full acculturation into the American society, by laying stress on the community's traditional cultural values and tight solidarity. This is the process of selective assimilation. Selective assimilation can be seen in the case of Punjabi Sikh community in California who came to U.S. as farm laborers (Portes & Zhou, 1993). Despite racial discrimination, children of this group have performed better academically than the majority Anglo students. Their parents pressurize them to stick to their own traditional values and advise them against becoming "Americanized". They are told to abide by school rules, learn useful skills, including full

proficiency in English, and ignore racist remarks, and avoid fights. They have the advantage of not being in the inner city or in close proximity to any native-born minority who could provide an alternative model of adaptation to white-majority discrimination. Furthermore, this community has been able to make considerable economic progress while maintaining a tightly-knit ethnic community.

Within the framework of the segmented assimilation model, Portes and Rumbaut (2001) indicate that it is not just the immigrants' individual features and human capital, such as their age, education, occupational skills, wealth, and knowledge of English that determine their pattern of assimilation into the three subgroups discussed above. The social environment that receives these immigrants, including policies of the host government, attitudes of native population, and the presence and size of a co-ethnic population also has a significant impact. Immigrants do not necessarily confront a fair playing field as far as their education and work experiences are concerned. Responses of the host government could be that of exclusion, passive acceptance, or active encouragement. When enforced in the form of policies, exclusion could force immigrants into a disadvantaged existence. Passive acceptance could grant immigrants legal access to the country without any additional effort on the part of authorities to facilitate their adaptation. Most economically motivated immigrants to the U.S. in the recent years have faced this alternative. A third alternative of active government support and assistance has been granted only to a selected refugee flow mainly from communist countries. These immigrants are provided with resources and support that do not exist for other immigrants. Such encouragement provides possibility for rapid upward mobility to

refugees who already have high levels of human capital, while it improves economic conditions for those from modest backgrounds.

A second contextual factor that affects newcomer immigrants' adaptation in the host society is how the native population receives them. More similar the new minorities are, in terms of physical appearance, class background, language, and religion to the society's mainstream, more favorable their reception, and more rapid their integration. Race is an overwhelming criterion, over other factors such as class origin or knowledge of English. Non-white immigrants face greater obstacles in getting integrated to the mainstream, and may receive lower returns for their education and work experience (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001).

A third contextual factor is provided by the immigrant community's compatriots. Some immigrants have the advantage of an existing community of co-nationals, which makes adaptation easier for them by providing assistance in terms of finding jobs and fulfilling immediate living needs, such as housing, places to shop, and schools for children. However, not all immigrant communities are equal in terms of amount of information and resources. For instance, if the earlier immigrant community is mainly composed of working class individuals, it can adversely affect the newcomer's chances of socio-economic mobility. In contrast, the newcomers who join more privileged ethnic communities can translate their educational and occupational skills into high economic returns (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001).

Several empirical studies have been conducted to test the applicability of these models and hypotheses that try to explain immigrant assimilation process. In the next sub-section, I discuss some of these studies.

### Empirical investigation of the models of assimilation:

Various studies have examined the extent of educational assimilation of immigrant groups by studying school performance of different generations of particular ethnic groups. Using the Adolescent Health Survey, Pong (2003a) analyzes 14 groups of adolescent students belonging to different national origins and representing different generational status. She finds no support for the straight line assimilation model. Rather an opposite pattern of generational decline is found among Asian students, especially Chinese and South-Asian Indians. Adolescent optimism accounts for high performance among immigrant Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese students. While the study finds no indication of a consistent upward assimilation for any group, generational decline is observed among Asians, but not among Hispanics.

Pong, Hao, and Gardner (2005) use Adolescent Health survey data to do a comparative study of three generations of Asian, Hispanic, and White students, using their grade point average (GPA) as the dependent variable. This study finds that both Hispanic and Asian origin students show generational decline in academic performance, but while for Asians, the decline occurs between the second and third generations, for Hispanics, it occurs earlier, between the first and second generations. Thus, the immigrant optimism hypothesis is only partially supported.

Landale, Oropesa, and Llanes (1998) test the appropriateness of different assimilation models among Mexican origin youth, and find that foreign-born Mexican youth are more likely to drop out of school than their native-born counterparts. It also finds that there is an increase in the dropout rate from the second generation to the third and subsequent generations of Mexicans, thus supporting immigrant optimism. Besides,

this study suggests that youth residing in central city are more likely to drop out of school than others. This result supports segmented assimilation. Another study (Rumberger & Larson, 1998) on the school success of Mexican-American students finds that English-dominant Mexican-American students are generally less successful in school, compared to bilingual students. This is interesting given the fact that the English-dominant group comes from relatively higher social class backgrounds than their bilingual fluent English proficient (FEP) counterparts. The bilingual status of FEP students appears to be an indicator of cultural, rather than social class advantage. According to the authors, this socio-cultural characteristic provides identity roots to these students that in turn help them to do well in school. This study lends its support for selective assimilation, as children who retain their socio-cultural roots perform better than children who acculturate more rapidly.

Hirschman (2002) analyzes 1990 U.S. population census data on educational enrollment of 15- to 17-year old immigrants, and finds partial support for both segmented assimilation and immigrant optimism hypothesis. His study reveals that most immigrant population groups, especially Asian immigrants, are more likely, than native-born Americans, to be enrolled in high school, regardless of their duration of residence in the U.S. This supports immigrant optimism. For immigrants from the Hispanic Caribbean region such as Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic, he finds below-average rates of high school enrollment that do not change with longer duration in the country. This finding supports downward assimilation of the segmented assimilation model.

Waters (1999) adopts a socio-cultural perspective in her study to conclude that institutional racism in schools, racially segregated and disinvested neighborhoods, and

discrimination by employers lead to the formation of oppositional identities among second generation youth (Waters, 1999). In another study (Waters, 1996), she explores ethnic and racial identities of second-generation black immigrants in New York city. Her study suggests that the type of segmented assimilation among the second generation of these immigrants vary within ethnic groups as well as between them. Thus, while some Jamaican-Americans experience downward assimilation, others maintaining strong ethnic ties achieve socio-economic success.

Zhou and Bankston (1998), using socio-cultural perspective, argue that ethnic-immigrant children who remain close to their families' culture do better than those who acculturate more rapidly. Gibson (1998) finds support for accommodation without assimilation in her study on the academic success of U.S.-born Punjabi children. These children do well in schools in spite of their parents' modest backgrounds. These studies lend support to selective assimilation of the segmented assimilation model.

Studies examined in this section have found support for immigrant optimism, as well as segmented assimilation model. They also bring out an interesting interplay of social relations between various actors (such as students, parents, schools, and community) in determining school success of students. For instance, some studies (Gibson, 1998; Hirschman, 2002; Kao & Thompson, 2003; Pong et al., 2005; Waters, 1996; Zhou & Bankston, 1998) identify parental factors in improving school success of students. Others (Hirschman, 2002; Landale et al., 1998; Waters, 1999) have found evidence for community factors in having an impact. Interplay of these relationships can be better understood by adopting a theoretical framework of social capital. Social capital inheres in a variety of social relations, and can provide resources for better school

performance of immigrant students. In the next section, I provide a theoretical background of the social capital theory, how the concept of social capital has emerged over the years, and how it has been incorporated in educational research.

### From Social Ties to Social Capital

The concept of social capital, emerging from one's social ties, has been used quite frequently in recent years to study and explain children's educational achievement. As Portes (2000) observes, social capital is one of the most successful conceptual exports from sociology to other social sciences. Even though the term social capital has been in existence since 1920s, the concept owes its theoretical and conceptual development to French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu and American sociologist James Coleman (Dika & Singh, 2002; Portes, 2000). Though both Bourdieu and Coleman examine benefits that accrue to individuals or families by virtue of their social ties with others, their conceptualization of the construct of social capital varies to some extent. The difference lies in the emphasis that the two theorists place. Bourdieu looks at social capital as being instrumental to providing members of a group access to their collectively owned capital. Building up of this relationship need not be intentional; it might just inhere from being part of a habitat – a number of people interested in the same issue (Bourdieu, 1985). Coleman, on the other hand, looks at social capital as existing in relationships among persons, relationships conceived of as rational calculations of self-interested agents (Coleman, 1988). Both, however, agree that social relationships can give individuals access to crucial resources, not otherwise available, despite ample amounts of human or financial capital.

Bourdieu, whose conceptualization is grounded in theories of social reproduction and symbolic power looks at the network of relationships as a product of investment strategies, individual or collective, consciously or unconsciously, aimed at establishing or reproducing social relationships that are directly usable in the short or long term. Therefore, social capital has a symbolic power that the dominant class invests to maintain and reproduce group solidarity and to preserve the group's dominant position. Furthermore, to protect the group's social capital, access to its membership is closely monitored. Social capital, according to Bourdieu, cannot be acquired without economic or cultural capital.

Coleman's ideas, however, are grounded in functionalist theories, whereby individuals are rational actors who deliberately seek social capital. He sees a link between social capital in aiding human capital formation. Furthermore, according to Coleman, for the acquisition of social capital, one need not depend on the presence of economic and/or cultural capital. Thus, his formulation of the concept does not depend on social class, and contrary to Bourdieu's conceptualization of social capital as a tool of social reproduction, Coleman looks at it as positive social control (Bourdieu, 1985; Coleman, 1988; Dika & Singh, 2002; Portes, 1998).

Coleman identifies three forms of social capital. One is based on obligations, expectations and trustworthiness of structures, where a benefit accrued by the first actor on the second builds up an obligation for the second actor to return the favor of the first actor, and simultaneously builds up an expectation on the part of the first actor for the same (Coleman, 1988; Kao, 2004). In a school environment, this kind of social capital can be observed within organizations of parents where parents have strong links with one



another, forming a cohesive group, and also when parents and teachers share trust that can benefit the school (Bryk & Schneider, 2002).

A second form of social capital that Coleman identifies is information channels, that is the use of social relations to access information which otherwise could be quite costly. Strong relationships between parents and schools can provide this kind of social capital, as they can effectively share information about students, and act in the best interests of students. Within parent groups, parents can share information about the effectiveness of various teachers (Coleman, 1988; Kao, 2004).

A third form of social capital is norms and effective sanction. Coleman emphasizes use of some social norms, either internalized or rewarded that can enhance certain actions. Effective partnerships between parents and teachers can help in the successful operation of this type of social capital to reduce deviant behavior amongst students (Coleman, 1988; Kao, 2004).

While acknowledging importance of all types of social relations and social structures in facilitating social capital, Coleman identifies two most important characteristics of social structure that facilitate social capital. One is the closure of social networks that involves a number of ties between actors, which makes norms and sanctions effective. Coleman gives an example of intergenerational closure where close ties between parents ensure effective monitoring of children across families. Another form of social structure is the appropriable social organizations that by forming networks can later help the members in various ways. In this context, Coleman uses the concept of multiplex relations conceptualized by Gluckman (1967), where people are related in more

than one context. This multiplex relation can help in the use of resources of one relationship for use in others. Parents and teachers can be related in more than one context, thus allowing the resources of one relationship to be appropriated for use in others.

To summarize, Coleman's conceptualization lays emphasis on strong social ties within a group that helps to form cohesive group norms among actors in a network. These dense networks within a family pass values, norms, and expectations to children, while at the same time help in successful monitoring that make the observance of norms and sanctions effective. All these factors can help children in their academic success and ultimately to become successful adults.

Works of both Bourdieu and Coleman are linked with educational achievement and attainment. The Bourdieuan approach to social capital has been used to explain unequal academic achievements and reproduction of social relationships (Horvat et al., 2003; Lareau, 1987; Lareau & Horvat, 1999). Coleman's conceptualization, on the other hand, is more functional in its approach. He indicates that, regardless of social class, higher amount of social capital in the form of inter-generational closure, presence of two parents in home, higher parental educational expectations, parent-school communication, parent-child communication, and lower number of siblings are related to lower dropout rates. Thus, he uses the concept of social capital to explain educational inequality based on the absence or lower amount of one or more of the above forms of social capital, without directly linking any of those with social class. However, as Horvat et al. (2003) indicate, Coleman's conceptualization of intergenerational closure as an educationally relevant social capital is primarily a middle-class phenomenon. For working-class and

poor families, closure is mainly organized along kinship lines that may not provide relevant benefits with regard to communications with school personnel.

Furthermore, some studies observe that at times strong intergenerational networks may restrict individual freedom that has obvious negative implications on innovativeness, privacy and autonomy (Portes, 1998; Portes & Sensenbrenner, 1993). Morgan and Sorensen (1999) bring out negative effects of close networks that can become suffocating communities in which excessive monitoring represses creativity and exceptional achievement, and lead to loss of autonomy and redundant information. Based on National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS:88) data, they conclude that schools in which students are closely tied produce more learning, while schools around which parents are closely tied produce less learning.

Portes(2000) cautions against the misuse of the concept of social capital in research as a proxy for the socio-economic status of families, English proficiency of children, and their length of residence in the country. He uses NELS data to study social capital effects on immigrant children's academic attainment. While initial results on the relationship between closure of parental networks and academic achievement measured by grade point average (GPA) show strong support for social capital, when controls for student's age and sex, parental socioeconomic status, knowledge of English, and length of U.S. residence are introduced, the effects of social capital drop, and become insignificant, either in terms of statistical reliability, or in substantive importance.

Despite two strong theoretical conceptualization of social capital by Bourdieu and Coleman, the concept of social capital is subject to controversies. According to some

authors (Fuller & Hannum, 2002; Portes, 2000; Schaub & Baker, 2002), this concept has been used and even misused to indicate and to measure a variety of relationships, precisely due to a lack of clarity of definitions of social capital. Thus, Coleman's definition of social capital as the resources inherent in the structure of relationships leads to circular reasoning as the sources of social capital in the form of relationships are often indistinguishable from the benefits they bring about. Furthermore, other authors criticize this conceptualization for ignoring intersections of race, class, and gender in schools and society (Dika & Singh, 2002; Furstenberg, 2005; Horvat et al., 2003; Morrow, 1999; Portes & Landolt, 1996).

Additionally, the concept of social capital, when conceptualized to the societal level, creates terminological ambiguity. The benefits of social capital available to individuals and groups as Coleman and Bourdieu initially conceptualized, was extended to entire communities and even nations by Robert Putnam (1993; 1995; 2000). As Kelly (2002) observes, in this schema, the accomplishments of successful societies can be explained by the presence of successful norms and values, thus liable to tautological reasoning. Many studies have, in a similar manner, equated social capital with norms and values, information network, and even to culture. Thus, the concept of social capital has been vulnerable to terminological ambiguity, and has been often operationalized by variables that might just indicate family structure or socioeconomic background, with little indication about relationship dynamics and the quality of resources accessed.

Recent years have seen further developments in the concept of social capital to make it more theoretically rigorous and broadly oriented (Burt, 2001; Lin, 1982, 1999a, 1999b; Lin, Ensel, & Vaughn, 1981; Lin, Vaughn, & Ensel, 1981; Portes, 1998;

Woolcock, 1998). Lin has tried to incorporate ideas of social ties and network with social capital theory. According to Lin, social resources are accessible through ones direct and indirect ties. Ties are looked at for their instrumental value of giving access to information for access to opportunities and choices otherwise not available. Thus, ties in an instrumental sense can act as social capital for individuals who possess them. While crediting Coleman and Bourdieu with associating closure as being an essential component for the conceptualization of social capital, Lin proposes that requirement for network density or closure for the utility of social capital is neither necessary nor realistic. According to Lin, denser networks and closure are advantageous for maintaining or preserving resources. Thus, Bourdieu's formulation of social capital indicates the requirement of closure so that resources can be preserved and reproduced. Similarly, in Coleman's formulation, closure is required for assuring norms, safety, and security for children within a community. However, for searching and obtaining resources not currently possessed, i.e. for instrumental purposes, accessing and extending bridges in networks is more useful (Lin, 1999a, 1999b; Lin, Ensel et al., 1981). According to the theory of social resources proposed by Lin (Lin, 1982), access to and use of social resources (resources embedded in social networks) can lead to better socio-economic status. More extensive are the networks, better the social resources that can be accessed and mobilized.

Although Lin's work is mainly concerned with access to occupational information for improving ones status, social resources in the school context can be seen in the form of information about availability of courses, quality of schools and teachers, and other intricacies of the American school system that immigrants to this country may be

unaware of. This necessitates a more comprehensive view of social capital that, while acknowledging closure within a particular group, also incorporates ideas of building bridges across groups for accessing information for instrumental purposes of aiding ones child's academic performance.

Social ties have been differentiated on the basis of their strengths. Granovetter (1973) defines strength of a tie in terms of the amount of time, emotional intensity, intimacy, and the reciprocal services that characterize the ties. His main premise is that weak ties allow people to move in circles different from their own, thus helping in making connections with parts of social circles not directly accessible to them. Weak ties thus tend to form bridges that connect individuals to other social circles, and provide access to information not available in their own circle. They play a role in enabling social cohesion to the extent that interracial ties can be more effective in bridging social distance. On the other hand, strong ties, breeding local cohesion, can lead to overall fragmentation. On a similar note, Liu and Besser (2003) suggest that social capital can lead to exclusive ties and loyalty within a small group that can be counterproductive to realization of common good of the larger community.

Another proponent of social network, Ronald Burt (1992) has brought forth the concept of "structural hole" or a gap between individuals with complementary resources or information. According to Burt, irrespective of whether a relationship is strong or weak, it generates information benefits when it is a bridge over a structural hole. Morgan and Sorensen (1999) use the concept of structural holes to explain greater learning that takes place in public schools that do not have closely tied networks of parents.

According to their study, for acquisition of information about opportunities for academic

success, close friends and parents of friends are structurally redundant. Rather, access to information outside a student's peer network is enhanced by ties that a student's parents build with others, independent of the student's peer network. Therefore, a student benefits from structural holes in the network of parents that surround their schools as well as from forming strong and supportive ties with their school mates. Burt (2001), on a similar note proposes that the complete story of school success is about closure in terms of adult supervision, combined with the structural hole argument that enables parents to acquire resources to support their children.

Applying ideas of weak and strong ties to a study by Horvat et al. (2003), it is interesting to note that ties forged between middle-class parents at their children's schools and other organized activities are often weak ties, while kin-based ties that working class parents exhibit are often strong ties. However, middle class parents with their weak ties with other parents, educators, and professionals are able to get instrumental benefits for their children that working class parents are unable to acquire.

In this study I examine social ties that people from different immigrant groups form. Accordingly, I consider literature incorporating ideas of ties in communities, ethnicities and races. Chung and Fischer (1999) apply the concept of weak and strong ties to ethnicities. They refer to ethnic homogeneity of strong ties as a preponderance of co-ethnics among a person's close relationships. Their review of literature suggests that as a person's strong ties exert important influence over that person's behavior, one can expect that more ethnic one's strong ties are, more ethnic one's behavior would be in terms of relative consumption of ethnic products and services. On the other hand, weak

ties can provide important information to the immigrant about products and services that the host society has to offer.

A study by Emerson, Kimbro, and Yancey (2002) on multiracial social ties bring forth the importance of concepts of “bonding capital” and “bridging capital” suggested by Putnam (2000) . Some social ties can act as bonding capital as they bond people together around a common interest resulting in shared interests and support, while other ties act as bridging capital that serve to share information and ease relations between groups.

According to Emerson et al. (2002), multiracial ties are important because they incorporate both bonding as well as bridging capital by including not just ties between individuals, but also the ties of each person’s varied social groups. Thus, they promote cooperation, generate reciprocity norms, reduce forms of segregation, and increase life opportunities.

With regard to attaining social capital through social ties, a study by Frank and Yasumoto (1998) conclude that actors connected through dense social ties within cohesive subgroups are more likely to pursue social capital through enforceable trust, but outside of subgroup boundaries, where it is difficult to enforce trust, actors rely on reciprocity to pursue social capital. Therefore, within a particular community, one can expect dense social ties making the enforcement of trust possible, whereas for inter-community ties, reciprocity transactions can be more useful for pursuing social capital.

However, not all social ties lead to the formation of social capital, an ethnographic study of Salvadoran immigrants reveals. According to Menjivar (2000), without resources to maintain reciprocal exchanges, social ties do not necessarily build



social capital. This inability to build capital extends to both weak and strong ties. Among the strong ties of family, lack of money prevents reciprocity, and can cut off emotional support. On the other hand, among acquaintances, useful information is scarce. Salvadorans face difficulty in forming any form of community. Social capital for them can be negative in the sense that new arrivals may expect assistance that earlier migrants cannot provide. Furthermore, Menjivar brings forth the fluidity of networks. Networks are not necessarily permanently weak or strong. Salvadorans could rely on people only some of the time, and no one for everything. She finds that for the Salvadoran immigrants, inflicted with poverty and adverse context of reception, ties are specialized, with some people providing information and social support.

Woolcock (1998) discusses forms of social capital that exist in intra- and extra-community ties. Woolcock distinguishes between intra-community ties and extra-community ties. He calls the former “integration” and the latter “linkages”. He brings out the importance of both types of ties. Too much intra-community ties without much extra-community ties can result in negative consequences, such as favoritism. On the other hand, high levels of linkages without corresponding amount of integration, as associated with urban settings and modernization, can lead to an absence of a stable community base and normlessness. Without a stable community base, individuals can lose out on guidance, support, and identity. Low levels of both kinds of ties can lead to individualism, where narrow self-interest guides all motives. High levels of both kinds of ties, however, can lead to better social opportunities.

In spite of recent developments in the concept of social capital discussed above, application of the concept of social capital in educational research has been guided

mainly by Coleman's ideas of intergenerational closure, parent-child, and parent-school interactions. Exceptions are Bankston and Zhou (2002a), Horvat et al. (2003), Kim and Schneider (2005), Stanton-Salazar (1997), and Stanton-Salazar and Dornbusch (1995b). In the next sub-section I review literature specifically dealing with the application of social capital to educational research.

### Application of Social Capital in Educational Research

The use of the concept of social capital in education has been under a barrage of criticism as well as being seen as yet another panacea to social and economic problems. Nevertheless, the concept of social capital is still popular among education researchers and policymakers, as revealed by the amount of research being done on the relationship between social capital and educational performance (Dika & Singh, 2002).

An increasing number of journal articles have been devoted to the concept of social capital as an important variable for explaining educational performance. A critical synthesis on the applications of social capital in educational literature by Dika and Singh (2002) looks at the usage of social capital as an explanatory variable in educational research. They investigate journal articles, book chapters, conference papers, and electronic publications between 1986 and 2001 that either identify social capital as an explanatory variable (primary studies), or are critiques and reviews of the concept of social capital (secondary studies). Their review shows changes in methodology, outcome variables, conceptualization, and the operationalization of social capital in educational research over the years 1986 to 2001.

The focus of the initial years (1990-95) was on either educational outcomes or social capital. The focus of the research in social capital in 1996-98 was primarily on within- and between-family social capital explaining educational measures such as GPA, achievement test scores, dropping out, years of schooling, and college enrollment. In the recent years (1999-2001), educational aspiration has emerged as an educational outcome. The outcome variables operationalizing educational performance of students in most of the studies have been in the form of Grade Point Average (GPA), achievement test scores in math, science, and reading, dropout rates prior to grade 10 or 12, high school graduation, college enrollment, years of schooling, time on homework, educational aspirations etc. Some behavioral indicators such as social isolation and violence in schools and truancy have been examined as well.

Studies by Stanton-Salazar and his colleagues provide an interesting perspective of treating social capital as an outcome variable, unlike most studies that look at academic performance as a dependent variable. These studies look at the social ties between minority youth and institutional agents. One of their studies (Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995a) investigates the factors that lead to the formation of social support network by adolescents, and concludes that highly bilingual students may have an advantage over working class, or English-dominant students in gaining access to adult social capital. Furthermore, students with higher grades and higher status expectations will generally have greater social capital. Grades, expectations, language traits are indicators of persistent motivation to remain engaged in the schooling process. These indicators heighten the chances of development of supportive and instrumental relations with non-familial institutional agents. Another study (Stanton-Salazar, 1997) investigates

the relationship between youth and institutional agents, such as teachers and counselors, which is essential for the social development and empowerment of minority youth. As Dika and Singh (2002) note, this approach by Stanton-Salazar and colleagues raises questions about the directionality of the relationship between social capital and educational performance in cross-sectional studies.

Educational research also includes studies of ties between different agents. Most of the studies look at within-family social capital and parent-school ties measured by family structure (Teachman, Paasch, & Carver, 1996; Valenzuela & Dornbusch, 1994), parental educational expectation and aspirations (Hao & Bonstead-Bruns, 1998; Israel, Beaulieu, & Hartless, 2001; Kao, 2002), and communication between parents and children (Crosnoe, 2004; Hao & Bonstead-Bruns, 1998; Ho Sui-Chu & Willms, 1996; Israel et al., 2001; Parcel & Dufur, 2001; Pong, 1998a; Roscigno & Ainsworth-Darnell, 1999; Smith-Maddox, 1999; Sun, 1999), home cultural capital (Kalmijn & Kraaykamp, 1996; Roscigno & Ainsworth-Darnell, 1999), communication with school (Lareau & Horvat, 1999; Pribesh & Downey, 1999; Yan, 1999), participation in school activities (McNeal, 1999; Parcel & Dufur, 2001; Pong, 1998a; Pribesh & Downey, 1999; Qian & Blair, 1999), intergenerational closure (Carbonaro, 1998; Morgan & Sorensen, 1999; Pong, 1998a; Pribesh & Downey, 1999; Sun, 1999), and monitoring school work (Israel et al., 2001; McNeal, 1999; White & Glick, 2000).

Some studies, including some cited above, have also looked at community ties operationalized by the number of residential moves and involvement of parents and students in religious and other organizations e.g., Bankston and Zhou (2002b), Hofferth, Boisjoly, and Duncan (1998). Others have looked at within-school social capital in terms

of peer association of students, student-teacher bonding, teacher perceptions, ties of students with institutional agents, such as teachers and counselors, type of school, and school environment (Cartland et al., 2003; Crosnoe, Cavanagh, & Elder, 2003; Goyette & Conchas, 2002b; Parcel & Dufur, 2001; Pribesh & Downey, 1999; Stanton-Salazar, 1997; Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995a).

Different outcomes are observed, depending on how social ties are affected by socio-economic status. Lareau (1987), Lareau and Horvat (1999) and Horvat, Weininger, and Lareau (2003) investigate school's differential treatment of the social and cultural capital of different families, based on class and race. These ethnographic studies indicate that there are important class-specific differences in the parental networks that in turn affect parents' capacity to effectively intervene in school matters. Middle-class families enter networks consisting of parents of other children in the same school, and they are engaged in informal contacts with educators and other professionals. Thus, middle-class parents are better equipped to intervene in school matters for the benefit of their children. On the other hand, working-class and poor families with kin-based social networks and lesser resources at their disposal are clearly at a disadvantage.

Studies discussed in this section examine effects of various forms of social capital on academic performance of students. This research specifically uses academic performance of immigrant children as the dependent variable. In the next section, therefore, I review literature on the effects of social capital on school performance of immigrant children.

## Social Capital and the Academic Performance of Immigrant Children

This section reviews literature on social capital based explanations of the school performance of immigrant students. Changing demographics in the U.S., as a result of a surge of immigrants, has led to a rising concern about school performance of their children in the public school system. Researchers have examined roles of various factors, such as socio-economic status, parental expectations, aspirations, parenting styles, school factors and community factors in determining the school success of immigrant children. Studies have made use of both quantitative as well as qualitative methods. A review by Kao and Thompson (2003) identify several potential factors responsible for differences in test scores, grades, educational aspirations, tracking and course taking in high school, educational attainment, high school dropout and completion, college transition, and college completion. They find that for most of these dependent variables, academic performance of Asians is better than that for Whites. Performance of whites, in turn is better than that of Native-Americans, Hispanics, and blacks. Variables explaining these ethnic differences are parental socio-economic status, quality of schools, peers, neighbors, social capital of particular ethnic groups, cultural beliefs, and formation of an oppositional identity. Immigrant youth are found to be more persevering even when they have low parental socio-economic status and low amounts of social capital.

The present study concentrates on family and community social capital. Therefore, I have divided this section into two sub-sections. The first sub-section deals with literature on the effects of family social capital on academic performance of immigrant children. The second sub-section looks at community level social capital.

### Family social capital:

Family social capital is considered an important factor in most of the studies cited. It is operationalized using variables such as parents' expectations and norms, trust between parents and children, number of siblings, intact family, frequency of parent-child discussions on education matters, monitoring and frequency of parents helping with homework.

Pong, Hao, and Gardner (2005), in their comparative study of three generations of Asian, Hispanic, and White students, use parenting styles and social capital as the major explanatory variables. They find that the first- and second-generation Asians and Hispanics generally display "authoritarian" parenting, with high demand from, and low responsiveness towards children. This style of parenting, however, is not found to be associated with high academic performance. Analysis of social capital indicators in this study reveals that parent-child communication about school matters is beneficial for a child's school performance, while communication about social events is not. However, expectations and trust, as measures of social capital, were found to be the most important factors for better school performance. Thus, the study brings forth importance of not just the frequency of parent-child interaction, but also the content of such interactions.

Sun's (1998) study explores factors that lead to better academic performance amongst East Asians. Using National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS:88) data, he finds that families of East Asian origins invest more aggressively in financial, human, and within-family social capital than families from other racial groups, even after social and demographic controls are taken into consideration. However, East Asian parents consistently invest less in outside-family social capital, even though such investment also

promotes performance. Outside-family social capital in this study consists of such variables as the number of other parents known, frequencies of moves, involvement in Parent Teacher Associations and voluntary work, membership in organizations, and parental contacts with school.

Goyette and Xie (1999) posit that high parental expectations play an important role in determining educational expectations of Asian-American youth, which in turn affects academic ability amongst this group. The positive effects of high parental expectations, however, could be tempered by lack of financial resources, as qualitative studies by Louie reveal. These studies (Louie, 2001, 2004) and a review by Sil and Pong (2006) on college access of second generation Chinese Americans show that while parents of all social class backgrounds value higher education, their social class affects strategies and investments that they adopt. Thus, parental expectations not matched by resources to support these expectations do not lead to better future opportunities. This study also brings out the inconsistency of the myth of projecting all Asians as model minorities.

Latino immigrants are found in most studies to be lower academic performers than Asian-American groups. Goldenberg, Gallimore, Reese, and Garnier (2001) investigate whether Latino children's educational attainment is driven by parents' aspirations and expectations, or whether it is the other way round. A mixed method approach is used to study immigrant Latino parents' expectations and aspirations about their mostly U.S. born children's future educational attainment. Immigrant pessimism suggests that immigrant Latino parents would develop lower aspirations and expectations for their children's educational attainment, not because they believe their children have



limited potential, but because of discrimination and limited job opportunities that they experience in the U.S. The study, on the contrary, finds that Latino immigrant parents have high aspirations, and that they want their children to pursue formal schooling beyond high school. Furthermore, time in the U.S. did not lead to more negative attitudes toward schools and school's instrumental value. However, although aspirations are high and largely invariant, educational expectations are found to be influenced by how well their children did in school. Another interesting finding of this study is that children's achievement in elementary schools is not constrained by parental aspirations and expectations. Thus, the study suggests that policy makers should not automatically assume that a factor responsible for low performance of Latino children is their parents' low educational aspirations. Rather, interventions should be directly aimed at improving teaching and learning in schools. Educators should also make an increased effort to reach out to Latino parents.

To summarize, most studies discussed in this section recognize better academic performance of Asian American immigrants compared to Latin-Americans. Various factors are outlined to explain these differences. Socio-economic status is one of the factors. Higher proportions of Asian-Americans have better socio-economic status than Hispanics (Kao & Thompson, 2003). However, given socio-economic status, Asians are found to invest more financially to their children's education than Hispanics. Greater financial investment is in terms of amount of money saved for child's future education as a percentage of family annual income (Sun, 1998). Aspirations are high for most parental groups, but expectations are guided by their children's performance.

While parental or within-family social capital is found to be important for a child's academic performance, Stanton-Salazar and his colleagues bring forth the importance of outside-family social capital, namely, ties with important institutional agents. Their qualitative works on urban, low income, immigrant Mexican-origin youths reveal that formation of social ties is crucial for adolescents to foster self-esteem, a locus of control, and a positive ethnic group identity within a context of a dominant culture that typically stereotypes and debases cultural, linguistic, and phenotypic features of minority groups (Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995b; Stanton-Salazar & Spina, 2003; Stanton-Salazar & Urso, 2000). Some studies (Bankston & Zhou, 2002b; Goyette & Conchas, 2002b; Zhou, 1997) suggest that relations between immigrant parents and children growing up in the US are often strained by cultural gaps. These studies acknowledge weak social networks amongst immigrant parents and look at alternative sources of social capital for immigrant children, such as religious institutions and networks between student and teachers.

Stanton-Salazar and Spina (2003) identify seven categories of individuals who can provide support. These are parents, school personnel, older siblings, extended family members, family friends, community- or university based informal mentors, and role models. Thus, both within-family as well as outside-family social capital are important for children's formation of self-esteem and a positive identity, which in turn can have positive effects on their academic performance. In the next sub-section, I review literature dealing with the social context of community affecting the academic performance of immigrant groups.

### Community level social capital:

The present research examines social ties of immigrant parents in their communities and how these ties can affect academic performance of their children. Community is a broad concept. For this review, I only look at neighborhoods and places of work of immigrant parents as constituting an effective community for them. In either of these social contexts, immigrant parents form relationships with other individuals, who can be parents themselves, or could simply be professionals. These relationships, nevertheless, can be significant sources of information about the American school system for immigrant parents. As discussed in the section on segmented assimilation, newcomer immigrants' community of own compatriots in terms of ethnic neighborhoods represent the most immediate context of reception. Such communities of co-ethnics can greatly cushion impacts of a foreign culture, while providing helpful information regarding finding jobs, housing, places to shop, and schools for children (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001).

Immigrants' context and point of entry shapes their perceptions and opportunity in the new land. Some fresh immigrants settle initially in co-ethnic neighborhoods, while middle-class immigrants bypass these neighborhoods and instead settle in suburbs. Neighborhoods shape the lives of immigrant children to the extent that the degree of racial segregation has important consequences. Newcomer immigrants of color who settle in predominantly minority neighborhoods may have virtually no direct contact with middle-class white Americans. This will have effect on the kind of English that their children are exposed to, kind of jobs their networks give access to, and the quality of schools that they attend. Neighborhood poverty can have further impacts on these children. At the same time, when communities in the neighborhood are cohesive, and

when adults within the community form intergenerational closure to monitor children's activities, children tend to do well in schools. Middle-class immigrants, on the other hand, may be able to join more integrated and affluent communities. The community that middle-class immigrant children are exposed to can be very different from communities experienced by those who settle among immigrants or among native-born racial and ethnic minorities. These children are more likely to enroll in integrated and relatively more affluent schools, which produce better results for their students (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001).

Alba, Logan, and Crowder (1997) define ethnic neighborhoods as areas where an immigrant group is concentrated, along with an ethnic institutional infrastructure, such as stores selling ethnic products. Various studies have used the terms ethnic enclaves, neighborhoods, and communities interchangeably. Often ethnic enclaves have been equated with ghettos of immigrant communities. Alejandro Portes refrains from using the connotation of ghettos for ethnic enclaves. Portes and Jensen (1989) define an ethnic enclave as a concentration of ethnic enterprises in a physical space, generally a metropolitan area. Further, they argue that defining enclaves as residential agglomerations might lead to complications. Additionally, their study proclaims that enclaves are not ghettos, but rather ethnic enterprises can be avenues for economic mobility. In fact, enclaves organized along ethnic lines attract fresh waves of immigrants who provide the previous groups with first choice of their labor.

Ethnic neighborhoods are dominant in American cities. Segregation by race and ethnicity often creates neighborhoods that insulate co-ethnic people from others. These neighborhoods provide social contacts, economic opportunities, and help in fostering a

set of cultural attitudes. Thus, they can be a source of financial and personal support, information and guidance (Borjas, 1995; Cardak & McDonald, 2004).

Several factors can contribute to an unequal distribution of groups across space. It might be affected by mobility decisions, that might in turn be influenced by socio-economic differences, housing market information and perceptions, discrimination in real estate and housing, financing institutions, public policy decisions, and people's preference for living with co-ethnic groups, or aversion to other groups (Iceland, 2004). Ethnic immigrants with less human capital may be less able to adapt or assimilate to the new culture of the host society. A study (Toussaint-Comeau & Rhine, 2004) on Hispanic immigrants finds that these immigrants choose to live in Hispanic enclaves based on characteristics such as recent migration, less English fluency, less education, and lower income. These results match with that obtained by Funkhouser & Ramos (1993). In their study, they find that an immigrant's location choice depends on his/her human capital characteristics. Immigrants who choose to live in enclaves tend to have less education, shorter periods of residency in the U.S., less general experience in the destination country, and lower English proficiency.

The spatial assimilation model developed by Massey (1985) provides an explanation for the persistence of ethnic clusters in inner cities over time. According to this theory, spatial assimilation follows cultural and economic assimilation. Ethnic clusters of immigrants are more likely to be inhabited by recent arrivals with fewer economic resources. In these clusters, immigrants are linguistically isolated and face housing overcrowding and poor quality housing. The theory looks at ethnic clusters as transitory sites, and predicts that immigrants will leave ethnic clusters as soon as they

attain cultural and economic assimilation. As a generation of immigrants assimilates, the ethnic cluster loses its importance and becomes populated by the next immigrant group and so on.

Pamuk (2004) however, posits that the spatial assimilation model may not apply for post-1965 immigrants. New immigrants are now spatially clustered in ways that may not support theoretical models developed for earlier waves of immigrants. His empirical study on the ethnic clustering of Chinese, Mexicans, and Filipinos in San Francisco's neighborhoods in 2000 using the Geographic Information Systems reveals new and different clustering patterns. His analysis is based on a residential definition of ethnic enclaves. He distinguishes between ethnic enclaves and ethnic communities. Ethnic enclaves, according to Pamuk (2004), are in predominantly low income areas where immigrants have settled by necessity as a result of discrimination or affordability of housing. On the other hand, ethnic communities are relatively affluent areas where the immigrants have settled by choice due to the attraction of the area's ethnic infrastructure and institutions, or a desire to be close to co-ethnic networks. Even though the distinction is blurred, ethnic enclaves have a connotation of segregation. His analysis reveals that in contrast to the spatial assimilation theory, affluent Chinese homeowners are found clustered in ethnic community neighborhoods of their own groups. Thus, this would indicate that ethnic segregation in terms of co-ethnic neighborhoods exist irrespective of socio-economic status of the immigrant groups. Another study (Sermons, 2000) based in San Francisco metropolitan area finds that Asian households tend to avoid black neighbors, while black households tend to avoid Hispanic neighbors, and that white households tend to avoid Asian neighbors.

Iceland (2004) uses census data from metropolitan areas and their constituent neighborhoods nationwide over the years 1980-2000 to conclude that while segregation is declining, there has been little change, or even slight increase in Hispanic and Asian segregation. Among both Hispanics and Asians, growth in their population was associated with increasing segregation. It might be that continued high levels of immigration cause increasing segregation, even if the second and subsequent generations are spreading outward into more integrated communities. Thus, as Jones (2003) reflects, residential segregation of ethnic groups in U.S. cities is a reality despite some evidence for the economic advancement and suburbanization of urban-bound immigrants in the United States.

A body of literature focuses on academic performance of students, based on their neighborhood. Researchers are guided by a theoretical framework by Jencks and Mayer (1990a; 1990b) for an examination of neighborhood effects on individuals. Pong and Hao (2006) study the effects of neighborhoods on school performance of adolescent children of immigrants using the framework proposed by Jencks and Mayer (1990). They use the base year survey of the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, and focus on the neighborhood effects for eight ethnic groups – three Latino, three Asian, non-Hispanic whites, and non-Hispanic blacks. They find that the neighborhood conditions are poorer for all the immigrant groups than those for natives. However, neighborhood factors have greater influence on children of immigrants than they have on natives' children. The neighborhood SES, represented by college education and professional and managerial job positions, has a positive impact on GPA among children of immigrants. School performance of immigrants' children is found to be more

responsive to neighborhood SES than that of the natives' children. Compared to natives' children, academic achievement of immigrants' children depends more on successful neighborhood adults, and less on immigrant parents' resources. Natives' children are less affected by the greater presence of foreign born or limited English proficiency (LEP) individuals, even though it is found to be negatively associated with the GPA of immigrants' children. Thus, when useful resources exist in an immigrant community such as high SES role models, social ties within the community can have a positive effect on immigrant children's schooling. But if language deficiencies are prevalent, social relationships can, in fact, reinforce such deficiencies. Similar results are obtained by Cardak and McDonald (2004) in a study on immigrant groups based in Australia. Their study suggests positive ethnic neighborhood effects for high school completion and university enrolment for some immigrant groups in Australia, especially for the first- and second-generation Asian immigrants. The study concludes that it is not just the size of the ethnic network but the quality of the network that is important. Quality is measured in this study in terms of concentration of university degree holders in that ethnic group and region.

A qualitative study by Hanna (2003) examines factors leading to poor school performance of children of immigrant families residing at an immigrant working-class neighborhood in Maryland. This study also emphasizes quality of neighborhoods, and finds that an absence of successful adult role models, due to lack of education and skills, can negatively affect children's perception of their neighborhood. This, in turn, can affect their academic performance.



Thus, a wide literature acknowledges presence of isolated ethnic communities, and concludes that better the quality of these communities in terms of successful adult role models, better is children's academic performance. However, limited English proficiency of immigrant adults is found to be negatively associated with academic performance.

This section has examined social capital originating from family and community relations surrounding children. Bankston, Caldas, and Zhou (1997) and Bankston (2004) suggest that family and community relations are specific to immigrant groups. They have put forward the notion of ethnicity as social capital. Bankston (2004), however, cautions that the normative relations between immigrants and their children are not necessarily ethnic properties brought from homeland, but rather are results of deprivation and challenges in the host society. According to Bankston (2004), Vietnamese-American students perform better academically because of a conducive environment provided by bounded social networks promoting cultural values of respect for elders, cooperation, and acceptance of authority. These cultural values, however, are resultants of pressures of the new host country, in relation to life in their former country. These idealized values, embodied in tight family and community relations, promote ideas of upward mobility.

Bankston (2004) further cautions that strong ethnic ties that provide better academic success, can also act as a liability for the youths in the immigrant community, by resulting in social discrimination and estrangement from peers. The tight, controlling social networks can fail to produce psychological well-being for children, and may strain relations between immigrant parents and their American-born children.

The extent to which new immigrants in their roles as parents form family and community relations in order to ensure success for their children in the institutional context of public schools can be viewed as another manifestation of their assimilation process in the new social context. The next section discusses studies and reviews on how immigrant parents learn the ropes of the educational system in the U.S. through various processes including their formation of social ties.

### Social Ties of Immigrant Parents and their School Involvement

In 1998, proposition 227 (English language education for immigrant children) was successfully voted into law that led to dismantling of the bilingual programs in California. The proposition had a clause for attaining waivers for children whose parents wanted bilingual education. However, a study of Latino immigrant parents (Baltodano, 2004) at three schools in the Los Angeles area found that neither school teachers nor the districts had informed parents about their rights to attain waivers. In fact, most parents did not know about the proposition or its impact on their children, because dispersal of such information was completely at the disposal of the school. Parents even complained that schools and districts are able to do this to Latino communities because they lack a lot of information. As a result, these parents were unable to take right decisions for their children. In situations where Latino immigrant parents were better informed, however, they often opted to sign waivers, though they faced difficulties and confusion in the process. Using group dialogues, open-ended questionnaires, individual interviews with parents, and discussions with bilingual teachers, this study finds that parents who are able to organize themselves and actively participate in the school life with bilingual teachers,

seem to have a better understanding of bilingual education and why it represents a better option for their children.

Often, culturally it becomes hard for new immigrant parents to conceive roles of active parental school involvement. Their limited English ability and subsequent lack of communication with children's teachers only makes it harder. They might rely on their social networks to make sense of the differential outcomes in the American school system and to obtain information about the schooling process. The present research studies the relationship between parental social ties and children's academic performance and also examines whether parental involvement in schools affect this relationship. I have divided this section into two parts. The first part deals with the literature on immigrant parents' involvement in their children's schooling, while the next part reviews literature on the use of parental social ties as potential source for gathering information on school involvement.

#### Immigrant Parents' School Involvement:

Research has established that strong academic outcomes in middle and high school students are associated with communication between parents and school personnel about child's schooling and future plans (Epstein & Sanders, 2002). A literature review (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005) suggests that parents' decision about becoming involved in children's schooling depends on various factors. These are their role construction for involvement, their sense of efficacy in helping their children in schools, perception of invitation to involvement (from school, teachers, and students), presence of skills, knowledge, time, and energy, and school responsiveness to parents' availability of skills,

knowledge, time, and energy. In this context, it is important to note that immigrant parents face more barriers to school involvement than native parents (Turney & Kao, 2009). School involvement strategies commonly expected from native parents, such as volunteering and participating in school events may not represent the most common source of involvement in schools for immigrant parents, as these strategies require time and resources that a number of economically driven immigrants may lack (Perez Carreon, Drake, & Barton, 2005). Furthermore, language issues might prevent an otherwise active parent in participating in children's school activities and PTOs (Kao & Rutherford, 2007; Rumberger, 1987; Turney & Kao, 2009). Time spent in U.S. is also found to be positively related to parental involvement at schools (Turney & Kao, 2009). Most schools outside the U.S. do not have a culture that promotes or requires parents to actively participate in classrooms or schools (Kao & Rutherford, 2007). This might affect the role construction of being an involved parent for most immigrant parents. Subsequently, first-generation immigrant parents are less likely than native born White parents to participate in activities in their children's schools (Turney & Kao, 2009). A study on Latino immigrant parents (Shah, 2009) finds that role construction of being an involved parent may be more important than family demographics of Latino parents such as, education, poverty, immigration, and linguistic issues. This study finds that higher Latino representation within the school, especially in decision making positions can have positive effect on parental beliefs that their involvement can help their children's academic performance, and can ultimately increase their participation in PTA meetings, volunteering, and school governance structures.

Nevertheless, despite language and other barriers, some immigrant parents adopt various strategies for being involved in schools so that they can increase their knowledge of the cultural world of the school and also to have a significant influence on it. The strategies they adopt include serving the classroom as a helper, participating in school events, offering daily assistance with children's homework, and having daily conversations with children about school (Perez Carreon et al., 2005). Volunteering at schools is found to improve communication between parents and teachers. While parents understand what teachers experience, teachers know that parents care and are willing to help. Besides, parents get access to information about child development and other issues (Sanders, 1996). More common forms of involvement for most immigrant parents include daily school related conversations with children, helping children with homework, and motivating them through their own stories. For immigrant parents with limited formal education, however, their own insecurity about helping their children might prevent their active school participation (Ada, 1988). A study using San Diego based CILS data finds that in spite of their lack of knowledge about intricacies of the education system, most Mexican immigrant parents speak to their children about schoolwork and the importance of studying (Lopez & Stanton-Salazar, 2001). Furthermore, in absence of active school involvement, immigrant parents often rely on their own networks to gather information about their children's schooling.

#### Parental Social Ties as Information Networks:

Immigrant parents often report that a primary motivation for leaving their own country was to have better opportunities for their children. When they arrive in the U.S.,

however, pressures of acquiring language skills, accreditation, and supporting the family financially both in the U.S. and back home, soon make them realize how formidable the task of adapting in the new society is. Many parents experience lowering of social status, and do not get the same returns for their education. Many immigrants then begin to focus sharply on their children's education as a key to a better future (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001).

Even though most immigrant parents have high aspirations for their children, not all families possess the necessary resources to ensure those. According to Portes and Rumbaut (2001), these resources are of two kinds – those that provide access to economic goods and job opportunities, and those that reinforce parental normative control. Parents with high levels of human capital and income enjoy access to greater information about the opportunities and barriers in the new environment, while also getting access to strategic goods such as a home in the suburbs, private school education, and trips to home country to reinforce family ties. In addition, if these families have both parents, their children can get access to greater economic resources and greater adult attention and guidance, in addition to access to extended networks that these two adults make possible. Presence of co-ethnic communities is a second key resource. Social capital provided through ethnic networks help in enforcing norms against divorce and marital disruption, thus preserving intact families along with directly reinforcing parental authority. In the foreign land, parental normative control is constantly under challenge from exposure to media-driven consumption aspirations, new lifestyles, and native peer influences. In well-integrated communities, even if co-ethnics are not very highly educated and wealthy, parents' support for each others' goals in guiding their children

would reduce threat of downward assimilation for their children (Martinez et al., 2004; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001).

Not all immigrant groups however, are fortunate enough to have strong community networks. Co-ethnic immigrant communities that have little internal solidarity, low integration into the local labor market, and are relatively poor, may not be able to assist the new immigrants (Portes & Stepick, 1993). As the situation of Nicaraguan immigrant parents reveals in chapter 2, they do not have a cohesive community because of their uncertain legal status, limited economic and educational alternatives, and non-endorsement of their collective self-definition. Absence of these co-ethnic ties undermine capacity of parents to retain authority over, and to demand compliance from their children (Fernandez-Kelly & Curran, 2001).

In well-integrated co-ethnic communities, through knowledge circulating in the immigrant networks, newcomer parents are able to understand the differences between the types of schools, the types of educational programs within the schools, and the different paths they lead to. Some parents in better financial situations take decisions to move to better school districts, while others worry about making sure that their children will take the right courses that will ensure seats in good colleges. Parents soon realize that they cannot fully trust the education system in the U.S. because it produces vastly different results (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). Acquiring all this information requires active effort on part of these immigrant parents through formation of ties with different groups in the new society. Social ties could be formed within the co-ethnic communities as well as outside immediate communities.

A study (Kim & Schneider, 2005) that examines the effects of social capital in the transition to post-secondary education, emphasize that extra-group ties can act as social capital, through which parents can effectively gather resources and information for their adolescent children, enabling them to make informed choices about colleges. This study also tries to find whether bilingual status of parents is helpful in providing access to information about admission in selective colleges. The authors find that while for minority students, having bilingual parents had no significant impact on four-year college enrollment, white bilingual parents had more opportunities to successfully use their bilingual abilities to build social ties with the predominantly white mainstream that helped their children in college selectivity. Thus, this study brings out the importance of race in forging extra-group ties.

Parent information network is considered crucial for adolescent development because of the shared information that these networks provide (Yan & Lin, 2005). While some studies (Martinez et al., 2004; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001) bring forth importance of co-ethnic ties in helping in the access to information about schools and other resources important for the children, the study by Kim and Schneider (2005) brings out the importance of ties with people outside the co-ethnic network. Whatever source is adopted for collection of information, interpersonal networking amongst parents is considered important for access to this information. Sheldon's (2002) study reports that parents with access to more social capital in terms of the size of their social network with parents with children in the same school as well as with other adults are more likely to be involved in their children's schooling. A large network provides parents with both a larger amount and variety of capital to which the



parents have access to. Furthermore, the type of network also determines the type of involvement. While networks with other parents with children in the same school predicts parental involvement at school, networks with other adults (relatives, educators, and/ or with parents with children in other schools) predicts parental involvement at home (Sheldon, 2002). A study on how Latino parents gather information about college access for their children finds that usually well-informed parents are the ones who are adept in interpersonal networking. They use effective strategies for engaging teachers, counselors, and college representatives in search for information (Tornatzky, Cutler, & Lee, 2002). Nevertheless, when immigrant parents themselves are not actively involved in schools, their children can still get access to social resources through weak ties that their parents form with other parents (Dufur, Parcel, & Mckune, 2008).

Social ties of parents, nevertheless, can produce differential social capital for students belonging to different racial backgrounds. A study specifically comparing social capital available to immigrant Asian and Hispanic students, with that for native Black and White students (Kao & Rutherford, 2007) finds that while social capital measured in terms of parent-school involvement and intergenerational closure positively influences student outcomes, immigrant students possess less social capital than their native born counterparts. Besides, immigrant and minority students receive differential returns to their social capital. Thus, while Black students benefit more from the same amount of parent-school involvement as Whites, Asian students benefit less than Whites. On the other hand, Asians have higher returns from inter-generational closure than Whites, whereas Black students' returns were lower.

Parental involvement in school activities in the form of attending PTO meetings and parent-teacher conferences has been found to be positively associated with children's school performance across age group of 5-17 years (Baker, 1987). However, a study comparing the relationship between parents' school involvement in the form of participation in PTOs and attendance in school programs and 12<sup>th</sup> grade Mathematics achievement for White, Hispanic, Asian, and African American students finds that such positive relationship exists only for White American students (Yan & Lin, 2005).

In conclusion, while parental involvement in schools is found to be positively associated with children's academic performance, immigrant parents face more barriers to involvement than native born parents. In the face of this, immigrant parents' social networks can help in providing them with crucial information about school resources that may benefit their children. In addition to parents' networks, schools too can play an important role in helping parents stay involved in their children's schooling. In fact, schools are found to be the most important determinant in increasing active participation of parents. Schools can take steps to enhance parents' role construction and sense of efficacy for helping children learn, provide an inviting environment for parents, and adapt their involvement strategies in accordance with parents' skills, availability of time and energy (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). Schools that actively involve parents expect parents to be involved in their children's education not just by showing up at school functions and volunteering at school activities, but also to be involved in course selection, interpretation of test information, and other college access related activities, such as college visits (Wimberly & Noeth, 2004).

While schools' policies on parent involvement can help, schools' student body composition itself can have an effect on children's academic performance. Composition of students' body of a school can vary by race and socio-economic status. Furthermore, a school's sector, i.e., whether the school is a private or public school can also have effects on student outcomes. This is discussed more in the next section.

### Effects of School Composition

Studies indicate a negative relation between the socio-economic status of public schools and achievement, to the extent that this effect is found to be larger than the individual student's SES background. The school SES status is also found to have similar impacts on advantaged and disadvantaged students and on Whites and Blacks (Caldas & Bankston, 1997; Rumberger & Palardy, 1999). While socio-economic composition of public schools measured in terms of participation in federal free/ reduced price lunch program seems to have a negative effect on academic achievement, schoolmates' family social status, in terms for their educational and occupational status can also have a substantial impact on achievement. Thus, a Louisiana based study (Caldas & Bankston, 1997) finds that attending a school where classmates are from higher SES backgrounds has a significant positive effect on achievement, independent of one's own SES and race. A possible reason for such pattern is the high correlation between poor SES schools and high minority concentration that in any case has a negative relationship with achievement. The authors suggest, however, that this result could be specific to Louisiana because of its racially discriminatory education history. A national level study (Ryabov & Van Hook, 2007) specifically examining academic

performance of Latino students finds that the effect of school socioeconomic status varies by immigrant generational status of the Latino students. School SES has a positive effect on GPA only for foreign born Latinos, but not for other Latino children.

National level studies using NELS (Lleras, 2008; Rumberger & Palardy, 1999) suggest that high poverty compositional effects of schools on student achievement can be explained in terms of teacher expectations, the amount of homework that students do, the number of rigorous courses that students take, and students' feelings about safety. Rumberger and Palardy (1999) find a substantial impact of how a school is organized and operated, as schools that serve affluent population are found to be organized and operated differently than schools that serve low SES students, irrespective of whether a school is private or public, large or small.

Research also reveals a correlation between low SES school composition and greater presence children from single parent families. School composition in terms of family structure affects academic performance, even after controlling for school SES. A Louisiana-based study (Bankston & Caldas, 1998; Caldas & Bankston, 1999) and a study using NELS data (Pong, 1998) find that a high concentration of one parent families is associated with lower academic performance in schools. Both students from one-parent families and those from two-parent families were inclined to perform worse in schools that had a high concentration of single parent families. Bankston and Caldas (1998) could not explain this relationship either by race or poverty as the relationship persisted in spite of these factors. In fact, they find that the compositional effect of family structure is a more important factor compared to that of racial mix or socio-economic mix of the student body as far as academic performance of schools is concerned.

Furthermore, the negative effects of large concentration of African Americans in schools can largely be attributed to large concentration of single-parent families in these schools (Bankston & Caldas, 1998). The authors speculate that preponderance of single-parent families in schools might provide lower social capital to children in the form of socializing opportunities, supervision, and social control, besides offering lower levels of parental involvement in schools. Pong's (1998) study finds evidence of a role being played by economic resources as well as school-based social capital in the form of parental involvement in explaining the relationship between a high percentage of children coming from single-parent families and academic performance in schools. However, these factors could not completely explain away the effect. Pong (1998) and Caldas and Bankton (1999) speculate that additionally, schools with high concentration of single parent families might fail to attract and retain good teachers and other school personnel. Pong (1998) also finds that parental social ties in such schools can be immensely helpful for children's academic performance.

Some studies find that high concentration of minority students in schools is positively associated with academic outcomes for minority students. A Texas based study (Frost, 2007) finds that presence of higher proportion of minority students raises students' goal to complete four years college, which supports the self-esteem hypothesis that minority students enjoy better academic self-image, leading to higher educational goals when they attend schools that have preponderance of minority students. Nevertheless, this study also finds that greater concentration of parents with college degrees, partly reflecting socio-economic status, is related to higher educational expectations in the school context. A NELS based study (Goldsmith, 2004) also finds

support for higher educational and occupational expectations amongst Black and Latino students when they attend segregated minority schools or mixed schools, especially the ones that also employ minority teachers.

A study using Add Health data (Ryabov & Van Hook, 2007), finds that school minority composition has a negative effect on GPA only for foreign born Latino students. These authors speculate that a possible reason could be that high percent minority schools attended by first generation Latino students belong to families that speak language other than English. This is particularly problematic because most of the instruction in schools is in English. Furthermore, they find that the negative effect of school minority composition on GPA for first generation Latino youth is offset somewhat by higher levels of family-level social capital, measured in terms of parents' educational expectation, limit setting, and supervision. Usually, schools with high minority concentrations have characteristics that are associated with low student outcome. These characteristics are large class sizes, low SES of students, residence of students in neighborhoods with less number of educated adults etc. However, within minority composition, there can be differences in outcomes depending on whether the schools have high proportion of Latinos or Blacks (Goldsmith, 2003). A NELS-based study distinguishing between proportion Latino and proportion Black in school composition finds positive relationship between Latino concentration and test scores of Latino students in all subjects (Goldsmith, 2003). This relationship holds true across less and more acculturated Latinos. A possible reason suggested is higher concentration of immigrant parents who are more optimistic about their children's chances of being successful, as well as a possibility that Latino identity finds more support in Latino concentrated schools.

Furthermore, typically, Latinos in Latino dominated schools are less likely to complain of discrimination than those in White dominated schools (Goldsmith, 2003).

Callahan, Wilkinson, and Muller's (2008) study also find an impact of placement of Latino, specifically Mexican students in English as Second Language (ESL) courses as determining their academic performance. They find that immigrants placed in ESL classes in high immigrant concentration schools do better academically than their non-ESL counterparts, and those in low immigrant concentration schools do worse relative to non-ESL takers. This might be because in low immigrant concentration schools, ESL placement may reduce chances of students' enrolling in high level math and science coursework.

In any case, public school socio-economic and racial composition, especially increased presence of Black students has led to Whites and Latinos selecting private schools over public schools when the public school districts have predominantly minority Black composition (Fairlie, 2002; Fairlie & Resch, 2002; Saporito & Sohoni, 2006). This is a particularly unfortunate trend as a study based in Louisiana (Bankston & Caldas, 2000) finds that lower percentage of White students in a public school tends to lower the individual test scores of that school district. The authors point out that a possible reason for this could be that lower percentage of White students might lower parental involvement and parental advocacy demanding better education to be provided by the school system. Conversely, presence of White students in a school district can benefit all students, whether Whites or minorities because of better parental advocacy. Other studies (Pong, 1998b) also find that children whose own parents do not actively

participate in schools can benefit by attending schools that have other parents as active participants.

Studies have examined the positive effects of private schools, which can be religiously oriented Catholic or Lutheran schools, or secular private schools. According to Coleman and Hoffer (1987), private schools have closer and more supportive parental ties that in turn lead to better private school performance compared to public schools. On the other hand, Bryk and colleagues (Bryk, Holland, Lee, & Carriedo, 1984; Bryk, Lee, & Holland, 1993) attribute the private, specifically, Catholic school effect to the social and academic organizations of these schools, based on communities with shared values, academic concentration on core subjects, and distinctive forms of school governance. These researchers suggest that disadvantaged students can greatly benefit from attending Catholic schools precisely because of these reasons. Morgan's (2001) study supports this view that children from disadvantaged family background situations, such as Black and Hispanic students from low SES families are likely to benefit more by attending Catholic schools. Besides the better parental ties argument, children from such backgrounds are more likely to put in more effort than their relatively advantaged peers because of their knowledge of genuine financial sacrifice made by their parents. Such students are also likely to benefit from attendance in Catholic schools because given their financial backgrounds; they would not have been able to afford to live in public school districts with the best public schools (Morgan, 2001).

Some analyses suggest that the private school effect can mainly be attributed to the better family backgrounds of the students (Duncan & Sandy, 2007; Lubienski, Crane, & Lubienski, 2008; Lubienski & Lubienski, 2006) and also to a lesser extent to school



characteristics (Duncan & Sandy, 2007), and therefore, simply placing public school students in private schools will not remove the test score gaps. Thus, these studies attribute private school advantage to the school demographics and quality of children that attend these schools, in terms of more educated parents, greater access to libraries, fathers most likely to be professionals, mothers less likely to work full-time, and fewer siblings.

A more recent study (Louie & Holdaway, 2009) specifically examining factors that lead to new immigrants sending their children to Catholic schools in the New York area finds that ignorance and fear about the deficiencies of the public school system often motivates new immigrants. Many new immigrants, however, are unable to financially support Catholic school education for their children till the high school level.

Nevertheless, analysis of this data finds that the overall effect of Catholic schools is positive for all groups, whether immigrants or native born, in terms of educational attainment as also with avoiding early pregnancy for girls and troubles with police for boys.

In essence, the socio-economic, family structure, and racial composition of public schools can affect academic performance of all students attending those schools, irrespective of their individual family SES, family structure, and race. Immigrant students, because of the financial background of their families, are more prone to attending low SES, minority concentrated schools that might prove to be disadvantageous for them. Ignorance and fear about the deficiencies of the public school system may drive some immigrant parents to send their children to Catholic and other private schools, in spite of their own financial hardships. Most of the recent research, however, indicates that private schools are more successful in terms of academic performance compared to

public schools due to better family backgrounds of students and to school characteristics. Nevertheless, private, especially, Catholic schools based on communities with shared values can promote better parental ties and involvement, ensuring better academic outcome for most of their students.

### Summary and Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined literature primarily in two broad fields – assimilation of immigrants, and the theoretical framework of social capital. I started with a discussion of different models of assimilation. Examination of these models as well as literature on the empirical investigation of these models, it becomes clear that the paths of assimilation for different immigrant groups are seldom the same. Children of some immigrant groups experience better academic outcomes whether due of optimism of their immigrant parents (Kao & Tienda, 1995) or because of better resources, and avoidance of residence in inner cities (Portes & Zhou, 1993). Many, though not all children of other immigrant groups, such as Mexicans, Nicaraguans, and Haitians, however, follow a path of downward assimilation through their joining of a reactive subculture (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Portes & Zhou, 1993). The definition and scope of assimilation itself has gone through changes to the extent that it is seen as a dynamic process involving active human agency of new immigrants, driven by necessity and circumstances, and not just a mere process of merging into the American mainstream. The mainstream itself has been redefined as a composite culture and beliefs, instead of being seen as just the culture of the dominant white group (Alba & Nee, 2003; Rumbaut, 1997).

Empirical studies on assimilation of new immigrant groups bring forth an interesting interplay of social relations between various actors (students, parents, schools, and communities) that necessitate the adoption of a theoretical framework of social capital. Social capital inheres in a variety of social relations, and can provide resources for better school performance of immigrant students. I began the review of literature on social capital by examining the two main streams of thoughts in social capital by Pierre Bourdieu and James Coleman. Both have been phenomenal in conceptualizing the idea of social capital, although their conceptualizations differ in terms of the emphasis that the two theorists have laid. Bourdieu has looked at social capital in being instrumental to providing members of a group access to the collectively owned capital (Bourdieu, 1973, 1985). His approach has been used in educational research to explain unequal academic achievements and reproduction of social relationships based on social class (Horvat et al., 2003; Lareau, 1987; Lareau & Horvat, 1999). Coleman's conceptualization, on the other hand, is more functional in its approach. His approach has been used to explain educational inequality based on the absence or lower amount of social capital in terms of intergenerational closure, two parent families, higher parental educational expectations, parent-school and parent-child communications. These are not directly linked with social class (Coleman, 1988).

Recent years have seen further developments in the concept of social capital to make it more theoretically rigorous and broadly oriented (Lin, 1982, 1999a, 1999b; Lin, Ensel et al., 1981; Lin, Vaughn et al., 1981; Portes, 1998; Woolcock, 1998). Lin incorporates ideas of social ties and network with the social capital theory. Ties in an instrumental sense can act as social capital for individuals who possess them. He

suggests that while dense networks and closure help in preserving collective resources, for accessing resources not currently possessed, extending networks beyond close community networks is more useful. In fact, Burt (2001) proposes that the complete story of school success is about closure in terms of adult supervision, combined with the social ties argument that enables parents to acquire resources to support their children.

A review of literature on social capital, however, indicates that in spite of broadening of the concept of social capital in the recent past, application of the concept of social capital in educational research has been mainly guided by Coleman's ideas of intergenerational closure, parent-child, and parent-school interactions. The ideas of instrumental purposes of social ties however have not been incorporated in educational research, except for a few exceptions like Horvat et al. (2003), Kim et al. (2005), and Stanton-Salazar (1997). Furthermore, while existing social ties literature is focused on the access to occupational information to improve ones social status, less is known about how social ties are used by immigrant parents to access information about the intricacies of the American school system for the success of their children.

Next, I examined literature on school performance of immigrant students and its relationship with social capital. A wide body of literature acknowledge the importance of within-family, outside- family, and community social capital for better academic performance of immigrant children (Goldenberg et al., 2001; Hanna, 2003; Pong & Hao, 2007; Pong et al., 2005; Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995a; Sun, 1998). This review also specifically examines the social capital of immigrant parents in terms of their ties within their own ethnic and outside their ethnic groups. One of the main reasons for immigration to the U.S. is to ensure better future for children. However, immigrant

parents soon realize that it is not an easy proposition, especially in the light of their constant struggle to adapt in the new social schema. This further strengthens their belief in the ability of education to ensure a better place in the society for their children. To that extent, some immigrant parents are proactive in collecting information by forming social ties with others, irrespective of their language deficiencies. While some studies (Martinez et al., 2004; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001) bring forth the importance of co-ethnic ties in helping with the access to information about schools and other resources important for the children, a study by Kim and Schneider (2005) brings out the importance of ties with people outside the co-ethnic network. However, the current body of research does not examine how different types of social ties across different ethnicities for the newcomer immigrants can affect academic indicators such as the grade point average of their children.

Parents are part of a larger community, but due to language problems, place of residence, place of work, or due to a lack of cultural capital, immigrant parents belonging to certain ethnic groups might be unable to, or hesitant of mingling with the larger community. They might feel more comfortable mixing with people of their own community. On the other hand, there might be immigrant parents who might find it more comfortable to mingle with ethnic groups other than their own. For instance, in Menjivar's (2000) study, Salvadoran women are reluctant to form ties with unrelated males from own communities to avoid gossips. Rather, they form ties with women of other ethnicities. This greater social access provides them with greater resources.

Parents lacking support of community ties and consequent lack of social capital, however, do not enjoy a cushion of support and an inflow of information about the new

host society, and may often depend on their children for this information leading to situations of role reversals (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). However, it is necessary to examine as well whether parents forming social ties with other groups can compensate for the lack of community ties and whether parents who have a balance of ties within their own community and outside their community are in a better position in helping their children through the rigors of the high school years. The next chapter provides the methodical framework for examining these questions.

## **Chapter IV**

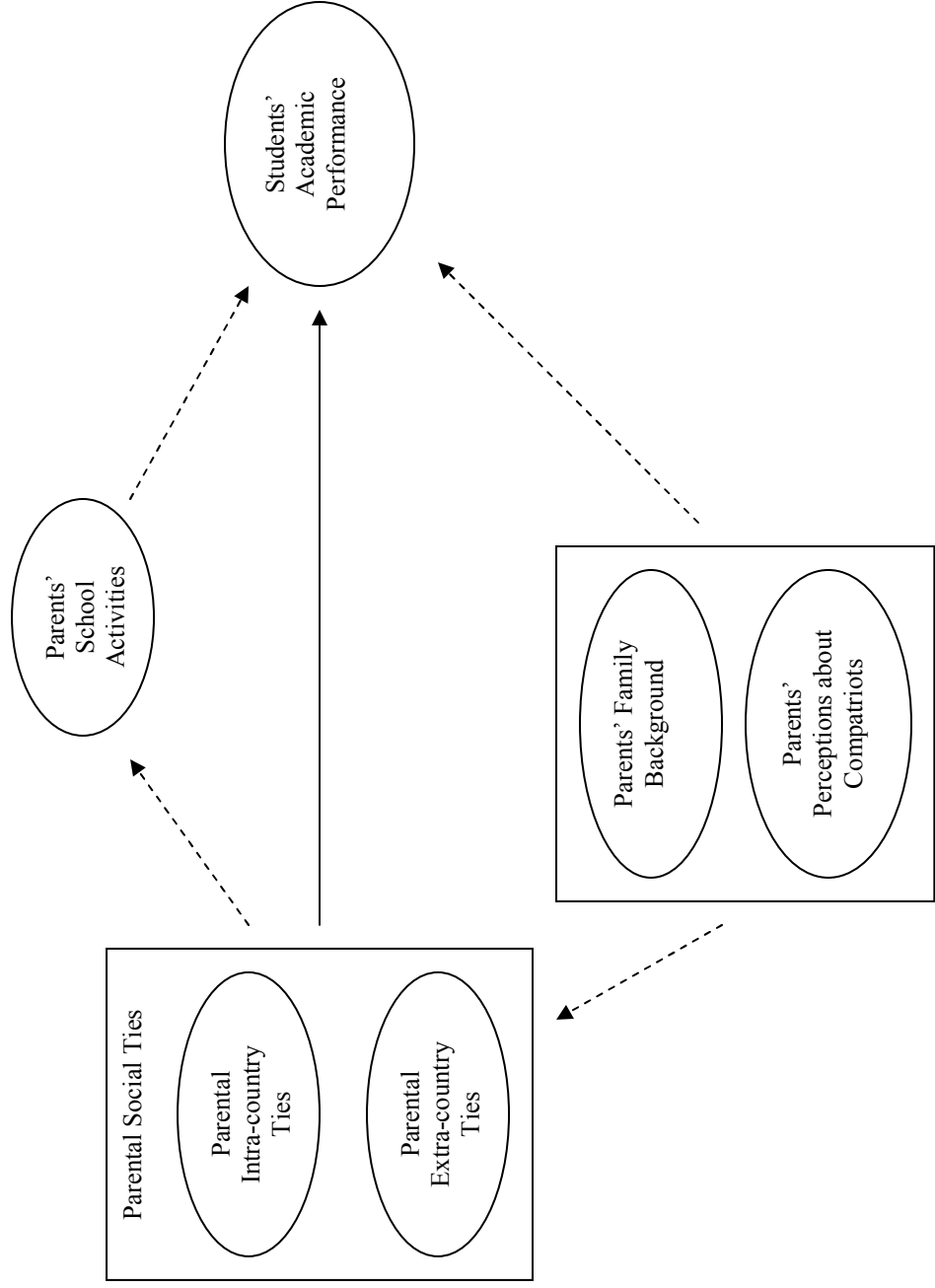
### **DATA, VARIABLES, AND ANALYTICAL METHODS**

This chapter introduces the data and methods that are used in this study. It presents the conceptual framework guiding this research followed by the research questions and hypotheses. Finally, the data and analytic methods are presented that are used for answering the research questions, and to test the hypotheses.

#### Research Questions and Hypotheses

This research expands current discussions on the effectiveness of social ties of immigrant parents, within and outside their compatriot networks, in affecting the academic performance of their children in the host society. Figure 4.1 depicts the operating mechanisms that undergird the relationship between parental social ties and academic performance of children. It also highlights the relationships between the theoretical constructs that are operationalized by variables, which are discussed later in this chapter.

Figure 4.1.  
 Conceptual Framework Illustrating the Relationship between Parental Social Ties and Students' Academic Performance.





The conceptual framework reflects three relationship paths studied in this research:

1. Relationship between Parental Social Ties and Children's Academic Outcome:

This study considers two types of social ties of parents – parental intra-country ties and parental extra-country ties. Intra-country ties are defined in this research as social ties of parents within their compatriot communities. Extra-country ties are defined as social ties of parents outside their own compatriot communities. These could be social ties with the American White, Black, Hispanic communities, or with any other immigrant community. The study makes provisions for separately studying parental social ties at workplaces, neighborhoods, and in their socializing preferences, to examine the effects of each of these dimensions of parental social capital on their children's academic performance. Academic performance of students is measured in this study by their grade point average (GPA).

2. Explaining the above Relationship by Parents' School Activities: This research

explores a potential mechanism through which parental social ties affect their children's GPA, i.e., through their participation in Parent -Teacher Organizations (PTO)/ school activities.

3. Control for Potential Endogeneity: The study recognizes a possibility that parents'

education, income, knowledge of English, citizenship status, and their perceptions about their fellow compatriots can affect the formation of social ties of parents. At the same time, these factors can also independently affect students' academic performance, thus leading to a situation of endogeneity. To avoid this problem, a set of analyses examines whether these factors affect parental social ties, while the

main set of analyses examining the relationship between parental social ties and students' academic performance controls for these factors.

To assess the process whereby immigrant parents form social ties that might help their children perform better academically in the new society, this research tries to answer:

1. How are different types of social ties, namely, intra-country and extra-country social ties of immigrant parents associated with their children's grade point average (GPA)?
2. Does the relationship between social ties of immigrant parents and their children's GPA vary across parental countries of origin?
3. Does the relationship between social ties of immigrant parents and their children's GPA vary across schools with different compositions of students?
4. Do parents' social ties affect their children's GPA through their participation in Parents Teachers Organizations (PTO) or other school activities?

I test the following hypotheses in this research:

1. *How are different types of social ties, namely, intra-country and extra-country ties of immigrant parents associated with their children's GPA?*

Some studies (Martinez et al., 2004; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001) emphasize the importance of co-ethnic ties of immigrant parents in helping access to information about schools and other resources important for their children. Besides, studies (Bankston, 2004; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001) also indicate that strong co-ethnic ties can provide checks against family disruptions through divorce, as well as provide effective monitoring of children, thus helping them to do better in school. Another study (Kim & Schneider, 2005) brings forth the importance of ties with people outside co-ethnic networks.

I hypothesize that students whose parents have exclusive intra- or extra-country social ties will have lower academic outcomes, compared to students whose parents have a balance between intra- and extra-country ties. One can expect that presence of intra-country ties of parents might provide children with a positive support base and monitoring system (Bankston, 2004; Coleman, 1988), while presence of extra-country ties might provide parents with requisite information about the new host society, enabling them to make informed choices (Kim & Schneider, 2005). That said, I also propose that immigrant parents who are completely absorbed into their compatriot networks are in a better position to gather information, compared to parents having exclusive extra-country social ties, because some people within the compatriot network might have formed information bridges outside that network (Burt, 2001). These bridges help in the flow of information from outside into the compatriot network. Furthermore, compatriot networks also provide a support base and monitoring system for the children of the community, besides providing social capital in the form of their ethnicity (Bankston, 2004; Coleman, 1988). On the other hand, presence of exclusive extra-country ties might provide parents

with ample information about the host society, but also might leave their children with little social capital in the shape of ethnicity, support base, and monitoring system. This could be harmful for their children in the long run. Therefore, I hypothesize that children whose immigrant parents have exclusive intra-country social ties perform better academically than children whose immigrant parents have exclusive extra-country social ties.

2. *Does the relationship between social ties of immigrant parents and their children's GPA vary across parental countries of origin?*

Review of the histories of immigration and the contexts of receptions for different ethnic immigrant groups in chapter 2 indicates that their past and present contexts determine their tendencies to form social ties in the American society (Feliciano, 2005, 2006; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Therefore, I hypothesize that parental countries of origin affect the relationship between social ties of immigrant parents and their children's GPA. Immigrant groups that have historically and culturally formed strong co-ethnic ties and those that enjoy a positive context of reception in the U.S. will be in a better position to have compatriot networks, and this will impact their children's GPA positively.

3. *Does the relationship between social ties of immigrant parents and their children's GPA vary across schools with different compositions of students?*

Some studies (Horvat et al., 2003; Lareau, 1987; Lareau & Horvat, 1999; Sil, 2007) indicate that schools with a dominant and organized group of white, middle-class parents

can effectively turn the school resources in the favor of their own children, and to the detriment of others. Schools with a more diverse student body might enjoy more power in determining the distribution of school resources. Also, a large number of a single ethnic minority group of parents might or might not be able to turn the school resources in favor of their children, depending on whether their social ties help them to be more organized in order to have a strong collective voice (Shah, 2009). I hypothesize that the relationship between social ties of immigrant parents and their children's GPA will vary across schools with different composition of students. Strong compatriot networks across socializing patterns, work places, and neighborhoods are more helpful in schools that have more students belonging to one ethnic group. Strong compatriot networks among a Latino group, for instance, might be more useful when a child from that community attends a school, where the community has a substantial presence, compared to a White majority school (Goldsmith, 2003).

*4. Do parents' social ties affect their children's GPA through their participation in Parents Teachers Organizations (PTO) or other school activities?*

While previous research (Kao & Rutherford, 2007; Yan & Lin, 2005) has failed to find any link between parental involvement in schools and school performance for immigrant children, this research specifically examines whether parental involvement in schools affect the relationship between parental social ties and children's academic performance. Too many linkages within the compatriot networks, as well as lack of knowledge of English, might reduce parents' effective participation in PTOs and school activities, and this in turn might lower the GPA performance of their children. On the

other hand, I hypothesize that parents who socialize exclusively with non-compatriots, who have mixed socializing patterns, those who live in non-compatriot neighborhoods, and those who have good knowledge of English may be in a better position to participate in school activities and PTOs and their children might do better in school.

### Data

This study utilizes data from the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS), conducted by the Center for Migration and Development. Hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) is adopted in this research, with students constituting the first and school-level variables constituting the second level. Information indicating the ethnic composition of schools is derived from the Common Core of Data (CCD) and the Private School Universe Survey (PSS) for the school year 1995-96.

The student-level variables are taken from the first follow-up survey and parental survey of the CILS dataset. CILS surveys have been jointly directed by Alejandro Portes, Princeton University and Ruben G. Rumbaut, Michigan State University. CILS is a longitudinal study designed to study the adaptation process of the immigrant second generation. The immigrant second generation is defined by the dataset as U.S.-born children with at least one foreign-born parent, or children born abroad but brought at an early age to the United States (C.I.L.S. , 2006).

The use of CILS dataset is suitable for my research. First, CILS provides a rich survey of children of immigrants and their parents. I was able to obtain information about my outcome variable, GPA. Second, the parental survey is especially useful, because it

has specific questions about their social capital and their interactions with different groups in the American society. This is especially useful, as my research is concerned with social ties that immigrant parents form in this country. Third, the selection of schools in the dataset is helpful, as it helps me to examine whether parental social ties are more helpful in school that have more of one ethnic group, compared to those that have diverse student bodies. The CILS dataset has included schools of both the types of composition of student body. To include schools with diverse student bodies in the Miami region, for instance, where most of the schools have large representations of one ethnic group, the CILS dataset has included schools from the nearby Broward County in Ft. Lauderdale. Fourth, the first follow-up survey of second generation children and the parental survey were done in the same year, allowing for concurrence of the predictor and outcome variables. This also explains my using only the first follow-up survey for this research. Even though a longitudinal study using both the initial and first follow-up surveys would have provided an adaptation pattern of student outcomes, absence of a parental survey concurrent with the first student survey precludes this possibility. Fifth, the CILS dataset allows comparison of the predictor and outcome variables for a number of different ethnic immigrant groups in the two cities of San Diego and Miami.

The school-level variables are taken from the Common Core of Data (CCD)<sup>1</sup> and the Private School Universe Survey (PSS)<sup>2</sup>. The CCD surveys consist of data submitted annually to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) by the state education agencies (SEAs) of the country. The CCD for 1995-96 provides information about the name, address, and phone number of schools, and descriptive information about students

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<sup>1</sup> <http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pss/>

and staff (NCES, 2007). This data is used to determine ethnic composition of the schools covered in the CILS dataset. Even though the first student survey of the CILS dataset includes information about the ethnic compositions of schools, the first follow-up survey that has been used in this research, does not provide such information. As the schools represented in the first follow-up survey are different from the ones in the first student survey, I find it suitable to use the CCD and the PSS dataset to retrieve information about composition of the student body.

### CILS Study Sampling Design

The CILS study is a longitudinal study with three waves of data collection. The first survey was conducted in 1992 with large samples of mostly second generation children attending 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grades in 49 public and private schools in the metropolitan areas of Miami/Ft. Lauderdale in Florida and San Diego in California. Students ranged in age from 13 to 17 with a mean age of 14. This survey was conducted mostly via self-administered questionnaires in schools. The total sample size for the original survey was 5,262. Parents of the respondents came from 77 different nationalities. To qualify for the survey, the student had to be U.S. born or should have lived in the U.S. for at least 5 years, with at least one foreign born parent. This corresponds with an operational definition of second generation as native born children of foreign parents or foreign born children who came to the U.S. before adolescence. About half of the respondents were native born of foreign parentage and the other half were born abroad and brought to the U.S. at an early age. The sample was evenly divided by sex and by grade in school (C.I.L.S, 2006; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001).



The cities of Miami and San Diego were selected because these two areas were heavily affected by the new immigration, and also because they serve as entry points for different groups of immigrants. The sample reflects the most sizable immigrant nationalities in the respective survey areas such as Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, and West Indians in Miami/Ft. Lauderdale and Mexicans, Filipinos, Vietnamese, Laotians, and Cambodians in San Diego. Fifty four percent of the interviews were conducted in Miami/Ft. Lauderdale and 46% in San Diego. The sample represents 49 schools in the two areas. The sample was designed to include schools in areas of heavy concentration of immigrants as well as schools where native-born predominated so that the school contexts can be studied. San Diego school district was sufficiently diverse to include both the types of schools. Most schools in the Miami school district, however, had large proportions of first and second generation students. For the sake of diversity, therefore, the sample was broadened to include schools in Ft. Lauderdale (Broward County School district), where students with native parentage dominate. Furthermore, two well developed bilingual private schools in Miami mainly catering to children of former Cuban exiles were included (C.I.L.S, 2006; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001).

The first follow-up survey was conducted three years later, corresponding to the time in which the original respondents were about to graduate from high school. Some original respondents who had abandoned their schooling were also surveyed. In a few cases, students who had returned to their countries of origin were located and interviewed by telephone. This survey retrieved 4,288 respondents or 81.5 percent of the original sample. Statistical tests indicated that this follow-up was not seriously biased with respect to the original survey, although there was some overrepresentation of children

from higher-status families. The proportions represented by different nationalities in both the surveys are very similar (C.I.L.S, 2006; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001).

A parental interview survey was conducted along with the first follow-up survey in 1995. Due to costs, only half of the total universe of parents could be targeted for this survey. However, parents were selected on a random basis, but with differential probabilities for each national group to ensure sufficient representation of smaller nationalities. The national origins of the parents closely resemble, in proportional terms, those of the student sample. The parental interviews were conducted face-to-face and mostly at home. Since many immigrant parents did not understand English, the questionnaire was translated and administered in six different foreign languages. In total, 2,442 parents or 46 percent of the original student sample were interviewed. Analysis indicated that the majority of the interviewed parents had been in the country for a considerable period of time, averaging 21.6 years, and most had become U.S. citizens. (C.I.L.S, , 2006; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001).

#### CCD Sampling Design

The CCD non-fiscal surveys are conducted annually and submitted to NCES by the state education agencies (SEAs) in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and the Department of Defense. These data are used to produce general-purpose publications and specialized reports. CCD collects information about public schools, whereby the public school universe includes all settings in which free public education is provided to children by a public agency. Public School Universe data

includes NCES and state identification numbers, name and ID number of the agency that operates the school, name, address, and phone number of school, school type (regular, special education, vocational education, and alternative), locale code (seven categories from urban to rural), number of students by grade and un-graded, number of students eligible for free lunch, and number of students by five race/ethnic categories. The purpose of the CCD non-fiscal surveys is to provide a listing of all schools and agencies that provide free public elementary and secondary education in the U.S. and its outlying areas, along with basic descriptive statistical information on each unit listed (NCES, 1995).

Officials in each state education agency provide information to the NCES. The CCD accepts the judgment of the SEA respondent unless there is a clear conflict or unacceptable inconsistency. For instance, in situations where a student is served by two schools at the same time (a regular and a vocational school), a judgment has to be made as to where the student should be counted. Typically, such judgment is left to the SEA official who reports the data. The CCD coverage of traditional public schools and school districts is virtually 100% (NCES, 1995).

In the 1995-96 CCD Public Elementary and Secondary School Universe Survey, there were 88,981 records, one for each public elementary and secondary school in the 50 states, District of Columbia, five outlying areas, and the Department of Defense dependent schools outside the U.S. Of these, 82,763 were regular elementary and secondary schools, 2,016 were special education schools, 949 were vocational/technical schools, and 3,253 were other/alternative schools (NCES, 1995).

### PSS Sampling Design

PSS is data pertaining to private schools collected by NCES every two years starting from the year 1989-90. This survey consists of all private schools in the U.S. that meets the NCES definition of not being supported primarily by public funds. Additionally, these schools provide instruction for one or more of grades K-12 or comparable un-graded levels, and have one or more teachers. Organizations or institutions that provide support for home schooling without offering classroom instruction for students are not included (NCES, 2008).

The PSS is a single survey that is completed by administrative personnel in private schools providing information on religious orientation, level and size of school, length of school year and school day, total enrollment (K-12), number of high school graduates, number of teachers employed, program emphasis, ethnic composition of the schools, existence and type of kindergarten program (NCES, 2008).

### Study Sample

For the hierarchical linear modeling used for this analysis, I use data from the first follow-up of CILS conducted in 1995 that includes a parental survey, and the CCD 95-96 and PSS 95-96 datasets. The CILS student-level data and the school-level data (a combination of the CCD and PSS datasets) are merged to form a final dataset. The effective datasets of CILS, CCD, and PSS used for the analysis are described below. The merged dataset that is finally used as the study sample is also described.

For the present study, I use data of students who were still in high school during the follow-up survey in 1995, and whose parents were interviewed in the parental survey

of CILS. My sample size has 2228 students. The following students are dropped from the first follow-up sample:

- i. 1964 students' parents were not interviewed <sup>3</sup>, and
- ii. 96 students who were either high school graduates or college students, or in vocational schools, or in correctional institutions

As this study focuses on high schools in San Diego in California and Miami/ Ft. Lauderdale in Florida, I only include high schools in these areas in my study sample from the CCD dataset. Of the total sample size of 89,988 schools, my effective sample size from the CCD data is eighty eight<sup>4</sup>. Similarly for the PSS dataset, of the total sample size of 28,622 schools, my effective sample size reduces to ten<sup>5</sup>.

The relevant information for these 10 private schools were added to the effective CCD dataset to get a combined school dataset (J=98). The combined school dataset is merged with the first follow-up of CILS to obtain a sample size of 2228 students. Out of

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<sup>3</sup> It is important to note that during the interview it is not necessary that the biological parent answered the questions. A frequency distribution of the parent/ guardian who answered the interview reveals that 60% of the parents are mothers, 37% fathers, and the rest are step-father, step-mother, uncle, aunt, grandfather, grandmother, older sister, other female relative, or male-guardian. A vast majority of the respondent biological parents have remained married to the child's other biological parent, thus representing a stable and settled adult population (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001).

<sup>4</sup> The remainder is omitted because of the following:

- i. 79,266 schools were not in California or Florida.
- ii. 9878 schools were not in the school districts of San Diego or Miami/ Ft. Lauderdale
- iii. 659 schools were vocational or elementary or middle schools/ school districts.
- iv. 98 schools in the CCD dataset were not included in the CILS dataset.

<sup>5</sup> The remainder is omitted because of the following:

- i. 23,192 schools were not in California or Florida.
- ii. 3465 schools were not in the San Diego or Miami/Ft. Lauderdale.
- iii. 1955 schools in the PSS dataset were not included in the CILS dataset.

this, 75 cases do not have information about school ethnic composition. These cases are dropped besides dropping 2 cases of third generation immigrants, i.e., both the parents of these two children were born in the U.S. The final dataset only constitutes of children with at least one parent born in a country different from the U.S. As a result of dropping these cases, the sample size for schools reduces to 80. Another round of reduction in the sample is carried out because of the presence of 32 schools that have less than 5 students per school surveyed, which makes it difficult to carry out hierarchical linear modeling analyses (Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002). The school sample reduces from 80 to 48 (40% reduction), although the student sample, as a result of this reduction, drops from 2151 to 2092 (2.2% reduction).

The final sample for this study includes only second generation immigrant students in the cities of San Diego and Miami, who were still in high school during the follow-up survey in 1995, and whose parents were interviewed in the parental survey of CILS. Furthermore, for these students, school ethnic compositions were available for the year 1995, and these schools had five or more students surveyed for the dataset. Using these criteria, the final sample size is 2092 students (N) in 48 schools (J). The following section provides some of the summary statistics of the sample groups before and after sample restriction.

Table 4.1 shows the frequencies of the major ethnic groups before and after sample restriction, as a result of merging, and also dropping some schools because of the absence of ethnic compositions for them. N=2228 refers to the sample size obtained after

dropping cases for whom parents were not interviewed, and those who had completed their high school. N=2092 refers to the study sample size.

Table 4.1: Frequencies of major ethnic groups before and after sample restriction

Countries of origin of parents	N=2228		N=2092	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Philippines	354	15.89	335	16.01
Cuba	321	14.41	306	14.63
Mexico	318	14.27	293	14.01
Vietnam	240	10.77	232	11.09
Nicaragua	178	7.99	168	8.03
Laos	176	7.90	166	7.93
Others	641	28.77	592	28.30

As the table above indicates, the sample restriction has led to some loss of cases for some of the main ethnic groups, while gains for some others, in percentage terms. These changes, however, are not significant. Table 4.2 below provides a comparison of means and standard deviations of GPA of students belonging to major immigrant groups, before and after sample restriction. The comparison does not indicate significant change in the means of GPAs for any immigrant group.

Table 4.2: Comparison of means and standard deviations of GPA of students belonging to major immigrant groups (defined by parent's country of origin) before and after sample restriction

Country of parent's birth	N=2228			N=2092		
	N	Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.
Philippines	354	2.98	.79	335	2.97	.79
Cuba	316	2.40	.89	303	2.43	.88
Mexico	318	2.36	.84	293	2.37	.83
Vietnam	240	3.08	.92	232	3.10	.91
Nicaragua	177	2.35	.90	167	2.35	.90
Laos	176	2.82	.85	166	2.82	.86
Other	630	2.58	.94	581	2.60	.94

Note: S.D.: Standard Deviation, N: Number of observations

## Variables in the Study

To answer the research questions described in this chapter, I use, derive, and recode variables from the survey questions addressed to immigrant parents in the parent survey of the CILS study. Also, some school-level variables are derived from CCD and PSS variables indicating ethnic compositions in the schools. The outcome, predictor, and control variables are described below along with a description of treatment of their missing values. Their codes and descriptive statistics are presented in table 5.1 of the next chapter.

### Outcome variable:

The academic performance of the second generation immigrant students is the main outcome variable of interest and it has been operationalized by their grade point average.

***GPA, 1995:*** This variable is the grade point average of the student after weighing for honors and advanced placement (AP) courses. This was collected from school records in the year 1995, when students in the sample were either in grades eleventh or twelfth of senior high school. It is a continuous variable ranging from zero to five<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> I rely on GPA scores as an indicator of academic outcomes of children as test scores were not available for the follow up survey of CILS. Even though GPA is affected by teacher's perceptions about students, and by variations in the types of academic and non-academic courses taken by the students in different high schools, it is important to note two things about this dataset. First, the GPAs reported here are weighted for honors and advanced placement courses, and second, these are not self-reported by students but are rather collected from school records. GPAs have been found to be important predictors of students' performance at other levels of education, and for important life outcomes, besides providing a summary of student learning (Kuncel et al., 2005). Furthermore, GPA is a good and sensitive measure for catching the variability in student outcome because it captures students' actual performance, their effort and motivation, as well as teachers' evaluations.



### Student level Predictor Variables:

At the student level, parental social ties is the predictor variable of primary interest in this study. The independent variables described below are derived from some of the questions that were asked during the parental interview. The parents were interviewed in the same time frame as the second wave of student survey in 1995.

***Parents working in compatriot units:*** This variable describes the intra- country social ties at the places of employment of the parents. This is a dichotomous variable with the value of 1 denoting presence of intra-country social ties at places of work. In other words, a value of 1 indicates that the parent works in a place where either the parent's co-workers, or managers, or owners of the workplace belong to the same country of origin as the parent. This variable is constructed using several interview variables from the original parent survey of CILS. As the entire sample of parents interviewed included both working and non-working parents, first a variable defining non-working parent is created. Interview variable p34 (parent's present working situation) is used to create this variable. A parent is coded as non-working if s/he was not employed full-time or part time at the time of the survey. Thus, non-working parents include situations where they are unemployed and looking for work, unemployed and not looking for work, attending school full- or part-time, retired, disabled, keeping house or others.

Next, a variable is created to define intra-country ties at places of work for the working parents. Interview variables p39, p41, and p43 determine the countries of origin of the employers, managers, and co-workers respectively, in case they are foreign-born.

Intra-country ties (intra $wk=1$ ) is determined by matching the countries of origin indicated by variables p39, p41, and p43 with that of the country of parent's birth (interview variable p6). This group is compared with working parents who work in units that do not have co-workers, managers, or owners from the same country of origin as that of the parent. The missing value of this variable is recoded as 0.

***Socializing patterns of parents:*** Three variables tap the socializing patterns of parents.

They are constructed based on the interview question p92 that asks parents about their socializing preferences. Following are the options presented to the parents:

p92a: parent socializes with compatriots

p92b: parent socializes with other foreigners

p92c: parent socializes with white Americans

p92d: parent socializes with black Americans

p92e: parent socializes with Hispanics

p92f: parent socializes with Asians

p92g: parent socializes with mixed groups

Socializing with compatriots only: An answer of yes to p92a, along with answers of no to all other parts of p92 is given a value of 1 (intraso1=1), and is taken as an indication of exclusive socializing with compatriots.

Mixed socializing: An answer of yes to p92a, along with at least one yes to any of other parts of p92 is given a value of 1 (intraso2=1), and is taken as an indication of mixed socializing patterns with both compatriots and non-compatriots.

Both these socializing variables are compared with a group of people who socialize exclusively outside the compatriot group. In other words, people who socialize exclusively with their compatriots and those who socialize both with compatriots and non-compatriots are compared with those who socialize with non-compatriots only. Those who do not answer these questions or who answer no to all the parts of the question are treated as missing. The missing value of this variable is recoded as 0.

***Parents residing in compatriot neighborhoods:*** This variable is constructed from the interview variable p93a that asks parents whether most neighbors are compatriots. An answer of yes to this question is given a value of 1 (intranbr=1), and is taken as an indication of residence in compatriot neighborhood. This group is compared with people who report living in neighborhoods where most of the neighbors are not compatriots. The missing value of this variable is recoded as 0.

***Parent's country of origin:*** This variable is constructed from the survey question asking parents about their country of birth (p6). Children are classified as having Filipino, Cuban, Mexican, Vietnamese, Nicaraguan, Laotian, or parents belonging to other countries of origin. These represent the major countries of origin of parents in the two cities, in terms of their frequency in the total sample (see table 4.1). Dichotomous variables identify each country of origin of immigrant parents. There are no missing values.

***Parents belonging to a PTO:*** A survey question in the parent questionnaire asks parents whether they belong to any Parents Teachers Organization. This is a dichotomous variable with a value of 1 indicating parents' belonging to a PTO. The missing value of this variable was recoded as 0.

***Parents attending meetings of a PTO:*** A survey question asks parents whether they attend meetings of a PTO. An answer of yes is given the value of 1 for this dichotomous variable. Missing value of this variable was recoded as 0.

***Parents volunteering at children's school:*** This is a dichotomous variable, whereby a value of 1 is given for an answer of "yes" to parents' ever working as a volunteer at child's school. For this as well, missing values was recoded as 0.

School level Predictor Variables:

***Medium White schools:*** First, a variable is constructed defining percentage of white students using CCD and PSS variables reporting number of white, non-Hispanic students (CCD variable white95 and PSS variable white) and total of all ethnic groups (CCD variable toteth95 and PSS variable totenroll). As a quarter of schools in my sample have more than 40% of White students, I define schools that have more than 40% White students as medium White schools<sup>7</sup>. Using this criterion, 12 out of 48 schools in my sample are medium White schools, four of which are in Miami and eight are in San

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<sup>7</sup> I was unable to consider White majority schools as a relevant variable because in the CILS dataset, there is an over-sampling of schools that have second generation immigrant students. Therefore, a nationally representative definition of White majority schools might yield very less number of schools in my sample. Instead, I consider schools that have medium percentage of Whites ( $\geq 40\%$ ) with low-medium percentage of Hispanics and Blacks.

Diego. There are no missing values for this variable as only those schools were included in the sample that have provided information about their ethnic compositions.

***Hispanic majority schools:*** A variable is constructed defining percentage of Hispanic students using CCD and PSS variables reporting number of Hispanic students (CCD variable hisp95 and PSS variable Hispanic) and total of all ethnic groups. Using the same criteria that I use to define schools having medium percentage of white students, I define schools that have more than 60% of Hispanic students as Hispanic majority schools. Using this criterion, 12 out of 48 schools in the sample are Hispanic majority schools, ten of which are in Miami and two are in San Diego.

Schools that have medium percentage of White students, and those that have high percentage of Hispanic students are mutually exclusive groups. In other words, either the schools in my sample are medium White schools or they are Hispanic majority schools, or they do not belong to either of those two categories. These *schools with other compositions* do not have a clear majority of any specific racial group and this group forms the reference group to which the earlier two compositions of schools are compared.

It needs to be acknowledged that the manner in which the school composition variables have been defined in this research is different from the conventional definition, whereby effects of a percentage increase in the population of Whites and Hispanics in the school composition on students' outcome is studied. For this particular study, however, such a definition is not suitable as I want to specifically examine the effects of parental social ties in schools with different compositions. Therefore, the concept of a unit increase in percentage of minorities is not helpful in this context.

### Control Variables:

This study takes into account a variety of variables at both the levels that might explain student performance and constitute alternative hypotheses. The student-level control variables are as follows:

***Gender:*** This is a dichotomous variable with Male=1 indicating that the student is male.

***Parent's highest education level:*** Parents report their highest education level (interview variable p31). Their answers are coded into eleven major categories as reported in table 5.1 of the next chapter. The missing values are given an imputed value of the average education level of all parents.

***Parent's family's total annual income in the past year:*** Parents report their family's total annual income in the past year (interview variable p56). These answers are coded into fifteen categories, as reported in table 5.1. The missing values are given an imputed value of the average annual income of all parents.

***Parent's knowledge of English:*** This is a constructed variable (CILS constructed variable c20) that takes an average of parent's report on how well they speak (interview variable p28a), understand (p28b), read (p28c), and write (p28d) English. All these interview variables have four categories coded 1 to 4, with 1= not at all, 2= a little, 3= well, and 4= very well. The constructed variable is a continuous variable having 13 categories (1, 1.25, 1.5, 1.75, ..., 4). Missing values are given an imputed value of the average knowledge of English of all parents.

***Parent's perception about their compatriots being supportive:*** Interview variable p103 asks parents whether they think that people from their country are very supportive of each other. An answer of “true” is coded as 1, and an answer of “false” is coded as 0. The missing values are recoded as 0.

***Parent's perception about their compatriots' economic success in the U.S.:*** Interview variable p104 asks parents whether they think that people from their country have not been economically successful in the U.S. An answer of “true” is coded as 1 and an answer of “false” is coded as 0. The missing values are recoded as 0.

***Parent's preference for buying from stores owned by compatriots:*** Interview variable p105 asks parents whether they prefer to buy in stores owned by people from their own country. An answer of “true” is coded as 1 and an answer of “false” is coded as 0. The missing values are recoded as 0.

***Parent's preference on borrowing from compatriots:*** Interview variable p106 asks parents whether they would prefer to borrow from people from own country if they needed a loan. An answer of “true” is coded as 1 and an answer of “false” is coded as 0. The missing values are recoded as 0.

Following are the school level control variables:

***Free lunch eligibility of a school:*** A variable is constructed to define percentage of students eligible for free lunch (constructed variable pclunch) from CCD variables

reporting number of students eligible to participate in the free lunch program (CCD variable fle95) and total number of students (CCD variable toteth95). Three categories of school are then created namely, high percentage of students eligible for free lunch (constructed variable hilunch), medium percentage of students eligible for free lunch (medlunch), and low percentage of students eligible for free lunch (lolunch) by dividing the sample into three parts with 33% of schools in each category. Using this criterion, in Miami, out of 27 total schools in my sample, 14 are low lunch schools, 12 are medium lunch schools, and there is only 1 high lunch school. On the other hand, in San Diego, out of a total of 21 schools in my sample, 2 are low lunch schools, 5 are medium lunch schools, and 14 are high lunch schools. In the analysis, high and medium lunch schools are compared with low lunch schools. There are no missing values for this variable. There are two private schools in the study sample. As they do not have free lunch programs, for them pclunch is coded as 0.

**Sector:** This variable defines whether the school is a public or a private school. There are only two private schools in this sample that are coded as 1, with the reference group being public schools. There are no missing values for this variable.

### Methods

Based on the conceptual framework presented in figure 4.1, the main analysis tries to answer the five research questions that examine the relationship between social ties of parents and their children's GPA. Additionally, this research also examines factors that affect the formation of social ties.



It is important to note that control variables taken into account in the main HLM analysis are examined separately in another set of analyses as factors affecting the formation of social ties of parents. This exercise partly reduces the problem of unobserved heterogeneity, which is a problem commonly encountered in cross-sectional analyses. Thus, parents' education, income, knowledge of English, and perceptions about compatriots can themselves affect formation of social ties of parents. Ignoring this can lead to biased results and wrong inferences. For an analysis determining factors affecting parents' working in compatriot work units and their residence in compatriot neighborhoods, binary logistic regression is used, because the outcome variables are dichotomous social ties variables. Logistic regression does not assume a linear relationship between the dependent and independent variables and the dependent variable does not need to be normally distributed. For an analysis determining parents' socializing patterns, multinomial regression models are estimated as there are more than two categories of socializing behavior of parents. The independent variables in both these analyses are parent's income, education level, knowledge of English, U.S. citizenship status, and their perceptions about compatriots.

For examining the relationship between parental social ties and GPA, hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) is used, with students as the first and schools as the second level units. HLM is considered a better method compared to ordinary least squares (OLS) regression for addressing these research questions as HLM takes account of correlations of residuals within schools. As students are more likely to be similar within schools, assumption of independence is violated in OLS regressions. Furthermore, HLM can easily incorporate random factors that may be present at various levels of data hierarchy

(Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002). For instance, in the analysis presented in this research, all the social ties variables are random factors because parents of students in a school may have different levels of those ties. Even if we assume that parents within a school are likely to have similar social ties and therefore these ties are fixed for a particular school, the effects of ties in the overall model will still be a random effect because schools with different composition of students may have varied levels of social ties of parents. As an illustration, schools with more Hispanic population may have more parents socializing exclusively with compatriots and more parents living in compatriot neighborhoods, compared to medium white schools and schools with other composition.

The unconditional model is examined first to determine whether between-school variability exists. For answering the first research question on whether different types of social ties of immigrant parents affect their children's GPA, model 2 contains variables denoting parental social ties and student's gender. This is the baseline model. In model 3, a block of control variable indicating parents' family background is added that includes parents' income level, highest education level, knowledge of English, and U.S. citizenship status. In model 4, two sets of control variables constituting immigrant parent's family background, and practices towards and perceptions about people from their own country of origin are present, in addition to gender. In this model, the parental social ties variables are absent. In the final model, both these sets of control variables are added to the base model. The effects of interaction between different parental social ties on their children's GPA are also examined, such as what might be the effect of parents working in compatriot units and exclusively socializing with compatriots.

The general model for addressing the first research question is specified below.

*Student level equation:*

$$(\text{GPA})_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j}(\text{Social ties variables})_{ij} + \beta_{2j}(\text{Control variables})_{ij} + r_{ij}$$

*School level equation:*

$$\beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + u_{0j}$$

$$\beta_{ij} = \gamma_{i0}, \quad i=1,2$$

In this analysis, student  $i$  is nested within school  $j$ . The  $\beta$ s are the student-level coefficients, while the  $\gamma$ s are the school-level coefficients.  $\beta_{1j}$  represents coefficients of the social ties variables that are of prime interest, while  $\beta_{2j}$  represents coefficients of the control variables.  $r_{ij}$  and  $u_{ij}$  are the residuals that are assumed to be normally distributed.

The second research question examines whether the relationship between social ties of immigrant parents and their children's GPA varies across parents' countries of origin. For this, I start with the last model of the first research question. Model 1 for this research question includes only the significant control variables from the last model of the first research question. In model 2, a block of variables indicating countries of origin of immigrant parents is added. In subsequent models, interaction terms of countries of origin of immigrant parents and their social ties are added. Thus, these models examine, as an illustration, the effect of Nicaraguan parents working in compatriot units on their children's GPA. The general model for addressing the second research question is specified below.

*Student level equation:*

$$(\text{GPA})_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j}(\text{Social ties variables})_{ij} + \beta_{2j}(\text{Parent's country of origin})_{ij} + \beta_{3j}(\text{Control variables})_{ij} + \beta_{4j}(\text{Parent's country of origin} * \text{Social ties variables})_{ij} + r_{ij}$$

*School level equation:*

$$\beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + u_{0j}$$

$$\beta_{ij} = \gamma_{i0}, \quad i=1\dots4$$

The third research question examines if the relationship between social ties of immigrant parents and their children's GPA vary across schools with different compositions of students. For answering this research question, medium White and Hispanic majority schools are compared with other schools that do not have a clear majority of any specific racial group. For school-level, besides having medium White and Hispanic majority schools as variables of primary interest, impacts of control variables, such as percentage of students eligible for free lunch, and private schools are examined. The general model for the student-level equation is same as that for the first research question, but the school-level equations are changed to incorporate school-level independent and control variables. Thus,

*Student level equation:*

$$(\text{GPA})_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j}(\text{Social ties variables})_{ij} + \beta_{2j}(\text{Control variables})_{ij} + r_{ij}$$

*School level equation:*

$$\beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01}(\text{Medium White schools}) + \gamma_{02}(\text{Hispanic majority schools}) + \gamma_{03}(\text{Control variables}) + u_{0j}$$

$$\beta_{1j} = \gamma_{10} + \gamma_{11}(\text{Medium White schools}) + \gamma_{12}(\text{Hispanic majority schools}) + \gamma_{13}(\text{Control variables})$$

The student-level variables are all group-mean-centered in order to produce within-school slope estimates. Group-mean-centered scores are uncorrelated with level 2 variables, thus allowing the regression coefficients to be pure estimates of level 1

relationship between dependent and independent variables. According to Enders and Tofghi (2007), when a level-1 predictor is of substantive interest, as in the present analysis, group-mean-centering of level-1 variables is more appropriate. The school-level variables are left un-centered.

For analysis of whether social ties of parents affect GPA through affecting parents' participation in PTOs/ school activities (research questions 4), the effects of these sets of variables are examined, first in the absence of social ties variables, and then in the presence of social ties variables to ascertain whether parental participation variables indeed explain the mechanism of how parental social ties affect their children's GPA. HLM is used for answering this research question. Thus, model 1 for this research question is a reduced version of the last model of research question 1. Model 2 includes a block of variables denoting parents' participation in PTOs/ school activities without the presence of parental social ties variables. Model 3 adds the parental social ties variables to model 2.

For all my analyses, I use 0.01, 0.05, and 0.1 levels of significance to decide whether the dependent variables have significant association with the independent variables. The statistical analyses are run using HLM6.0 for the main analysis and Stata8 for the logistic and multinomial analyses. The next chapter presents the results of these analyses.

## **Chapter V**

### **RESULTS**

This chapter presents the results of quantitative analyses of the data introduced in the previous chapter. First, a set of descriptive analyses present the profile of the major immigrant groups and their social ties, in order to provide a context to this research. This is followed by the results of the correlation analyses of my dependent, independent, and control variables. As this research is mainly concerned with parental social ties, this chapter further proceeds with an examination of factors determining these ties. Last, it presents the results multi-level model analyses in determining the association between parental social ties and children's GPA.

#### Descriptive Statistics

In table 5.1 below, I present the codes, means, standard deviations, and numbers of observation for the dependent, independent, and control variables. These variables have been described in detail in the previous chapter. Parental social ties are examined in work units, socializing patterns, and neighborhoods. About 67% of parents are employed, either part-time or full-time, out of which 17% work in compatriot work units. A large percentage (60%) of parents socializes exclusively with compatriots, while only 7% socialize with both compatriots and non-compatriots. The remainder (33%) socializes exclusively outside the compatriot groups. About 30% of immigrant parents in this sample live in compatriot neighborhoods.

Table 5.1: Descriptive Statistics of Dependent, Independent, and Control variables.

Variables	Name	Range	Mean	S.D.	N
<b>Dependent Variables</b>					
Grade Point Average	GPA	0 to 5	2.66	.92	2077
<b>Independent Variables: Student-level</b>					
<b><i>Parental Intra-country and Extra-country Ties</i></b>					
Parents working in compatriot units	intraawk	1=parents work in compatriot units 0=absence of intra-country ties for working parents	.17	.38	1913
Non-working parents	nowk	1= non-working parents 0= working parents	.33	.47	2072
Parent socializing exclusively with compatriots	IntraSolo	1= socializing: compatriots only 0= socializing: non-compatriots only	.60	.49	2082
Parents socializing with compatriots and non-compatriots	IntraSolo2	1=socializing: mixed 0= socializing: non-compatriots only	.07	.25	2082
Parents residing in compatriot neighborhoods	IntraNeighbor	1= most neighbors are compatriots 0= most neighbors are not compatriots	.30	.46	2087
<b><i>Countries of Origin of Parents</i></b>					
Filipino parents	Fili	1= Filipino parents 0= parents belonging to other countries of origin	.16	.37	2092
Cuban parents	Cuba	1= Cuban parents 0= parents belonging to other countries of origin	.15	.35	2092
Mexican parents	Mex	1= Mexican parents 0= parents belonging to other countries of origin	.14	.35	2092
Vietnamese parents	Viet	1= Vietnamese parents 0= parents belonging to other countries of origin	.11	.31	2092
Nicaraguan parents	Nica	1= Nicaraguan parents 0= parents belonging to other countries of origin	.08	.27	2092

Laotian parents	Lao	countries of origin 1= Laotian parents 0= parents belonging to other countries of origin	.08	.27	2092
<b><i>Parents' Participation in PTOs/ School Activities</i></b>					
Parents belonging to a Parents Teachers Organization (PTO)	Pbelong	1=Yes 0=No	0.44	0.50	2074
Parents attend meetings of PTOs	Pattend	1=Yes 0=No	0.79	0.41	2082
Parents volunteer at child's school	Pvolun	1=Yes 0=No	0.40	0.49	2076
<u>Control Variables: Student-level</u>					
<b><i>Gender of the student</i></b>					
Parents' highest education level	Male	1= student is male 0= student is female	0.50	0.50	2092
	Pedu	0= no schooling 1= 8 <sup>th</sup> grade or less 2=beyond 8 <sup>th</sup> grade but not HS graduate 3=high school graduate 4=>1 year voc./trade/business school 5= 1-2 years voc./trade/business school 6= 2 years plus voc./trade/business school 7=>2 years of college 8= 2 or more years of college 9= finished 4 or 5 year college program 10= master's degree or equivalent 11= Ph.D., M.D., or other advanced degree	4.86	3.23	2086
Parent's annual family income	Pinc	1= none 2= less than 1000 3= 1000-2999 4= 3000-4999 5= 5000-7499 6= 7500-9999	9.41	2.39	1993





Medium % eligible for free lunch	Medlunch	1= schools with 27-44% students eligible for free lunch 0= schools with <27% students eligible for free lunch	0.35	0.48	48
Private schools	Sector	1= private school 0= public school	0.04	0.20	48

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Note: N: Number of observations, S.D: Standard Deviation

Filipinos are the largest group of parents (16%) in this sample, followed by Cubans (15%), Mexicans (14%), Vietnamese (11%), Nicaraguans (8%), and Laotians (8%). These immigrant groups are compared with parents from other countries of origin (28%). I take into account two sets of individual-level control variables, besides student's gender. The first constitutes parents' family background, i.e., socio-economic status, knowledge of English, and U.S. citizenship status; and the second constitutes parents' perceptions about compatriots. On average, parents have attained close to one to two years of vocational or trade or business school. The average annual family income for this sample, in 1995 is between \$20,000 and \$ 35,000. As described in the previous chapter, parent's knowledge of English is a constructed variable that takes into account their ability to read, write, understand, and speak English. Table 5.1 indicates that the immigrant parent's knowledge of English is between "a little" and "well". About 77% of parents think that their compatriots are very supportive. Approximately 22% of immigrant parents buy from stores owned by compatriots, while 24% of parents prefer to borrow from compatriots, in times of need. Almost 29% of parents think that their compatriots have not been economically successful in the host nation.

The main variable of interest at the school-level is the ethnic composition of schools. As noted in the previous chapter, this is a constructed variable. About 25% of my total sample is medium White schools, with 40% or more White students. About 25% of the schools are Hispanic majority schools, with 60% or more Hispanic students. These two sets are mutually exclusive, and are compared with the remainder 50% schools, that do not have a clear majority of any particular racial group. These remainder schools are termed as schools with "other compositions". More details of these school

types are given on pages 143-144 and Table 5.10. Three school-level control variables are considered. Approximately 31% of schools have high percentage of students eligible for free lunch; while 35% has medium percentage eligibility for free lunch. These two mutually exclusive groups are compared with 34% of schools that have low percentage of students eligible for free lunch. About 4% of schools in this sample are private schools, which are compared with the remainder, i.e., public schools.

Table 5.2 presents the mean GPA of students, parental SES (income and education), and knowledge of English, by parents' social ties. While GPA is the primary outcome variable for this analysis, parent's income, highest education level, and their knowledge of English are the main control variables considered. Contrary to expectations, immigrant parents working in compatriot work units have significantly higher mean income and knowledge of English than those who work in non-compatriot units. However, mean GPA of their children is significantly lower than that of parents working in non-compatriot units. Parents socializing only with compatriots and those socializing with compatriots and non-compatriots tend to have significantly lower income and education than those who maintain socializing ties with non-compatriots only. However, the mean GPA of the two groups socializing with compatriots, either exclusively, or along with non-compatriots, is significantly higher. Also, children of parents displaying mixed socializing patterns tend to have higher mean GPA than those whose parents have exclusive socializing with compatriots only. As for the neighborhood ties, the mean parental income, education, and knowledge of English are significantly lower for parents living in compatriot neighborhoods compared to those

living in non-compatriot neighborhoods. However, interestingly, GPA is not significantly different for children residing in these two types of neighborhoods.

Table 5.2: Mean GPA of Students and Mean of Parents' Income, Education, and Knowledge of English by Parental Social Ties

Parental social ties	Child's GPA	Parents'		
		Income	education	knowledge of English
Compatriot work units	2.59 (.92)	9.58 (2.22)	4.83 (3.05)	2.86 (.86)
Non-compatriot work units	2.67 (.92)	9.31 (2.43)	4.80 (3.26)	2.80 (1.01)
Socializing: compatriots only	2.68 (.92)	9.18 (2.38)	4.28 (3.20)	2.58 (.97)
Socializing: mixed	2.93 (.89)	9.45 (2.35)	5.31 (3.39)	3.10 (.89)
Socializing: non-compatriots	2.55 (.90)	9.88 (2.32)	5.88 (3.00)	3.22 (.85)
Compatriot neighborhoods	2.62 (.88)	9.18 (2.37)	4.44 (3.28)	2.73 (1.04)
Non-compatriot neighborhoods	2.67 (.93)	9.51 (2.40)	5.04 (3.19)	2.86 (.95)

Note: Standard deviations in parentheses  
 Range GPA: 0-5  
 Parents' income: 1-15  
 Parents' education: 0-11  
 Parents' knowledge of English: 1-4

Table 5.3 presents the mean GPA of students, and mean income, education, and knowledge of English of immigrant parents, by parents' countries of origin. It reveals that while Filipino parents have the highest income and education levels amongst the major immigrant groups in this sample, this does not translate into the highest mean GPAs for their children. Filipino children have significantly lower GPAs than

Vietnamese children, even though Vietnamese parents have significantly lower income and education levels than Filipino parents. Discrepancy is also revealed in the comparison of Mexican and Laotian parents. Laotian parents have significantly lower education than Mexican parents, but their income is significantly higher than Mexican parents. Also, Laotian children have significantly higher GPAs than Mexican children. Laotians might have higher income due to their refugee status. Both Mexicans and Laotians are mainly located in San Diego. For the two Miami-based immigrant groups, Cubans and Nicaraguans as well, we notice discrepancies in income and education. Cubans have significantly lower education than Nicaraguans, but they earn significantly higher income than Nicaraguans. Their children's GPAs, however, are not significantly different from each other.

Table 5.3: Mean GPA of Students and Mean of Parent’s Income, Education, and Knowledge of English for major Immigrant groups

Country of origin Of parents	Child’s GPA	Parent’s		
		income	education	knowledge of English
Philippines	2.97 (.79)	10.98 (1.52)	7.38 (2.32)	3.61 (.49)
Cuba	2.43 (.88)	10.07 (2.55)	5.46 (2.76)	3.06 (.89)
Mexico	2.37 (.83)	8.15 (2.14)	2.64 (2.29)	2.40 (.84)
Vietnam	3.10 (.91)	8.71 (2.05)	3.08 (2.68)	2.32 (.69)
Nicaragua	2.35 (.90)	9.35 (2.12)	6.64 (2.88)	2.65 (.82)
Laos	2.83 (.86)	9.00 (1.88)	2.38 (2.63)	1.88 (.78)
Others	2.60 (.94)	9.25 (2.61)	5.11 (3.17)	2.96 (1.05)
Full sample	2.66 (.92)	9.41 (2.39)	4.86 (3.23)	2.82 (.98)

Note: Standard deviations in parentheses  
 Range GPA: 0-5  
 Parents’s income: 1-15  
 Parents’ education: 0-11  
 Parents’ knowledge of English: 1-4

Table 5.4 shows parent’s practices towards and perceptions about compatriots, by parents’ social ties. Parents’ practices towards and perceptions about compatriots constitutes the second set of control variables at the individual-level. Parents working in compatriot units are significantly more likely to think that compatriots are supportive, compared to parents working in non-compatriot units. Also, parents working in

compatriot units are significantly less likely to think that compatriots have not been economically successful in the U.S. In other words, their tendencies to work in compatriot work units are linked with their optimistic attitude about the economic success of their compatriots.

With regards to socializing ties, parents who socialize only with compatriots and those who socialize with compatriots and non-compatriots are significantly more likely to see their compatriots as supportive, compared to parents who socialize exclusively with non-compatriots. Parents who socialize only with non-compatriots are also less likely to buy and borrow from compatriots, compared to the groups that socialize with compatriots, either completely or partially. Parents with mixed socializing patterns are significantly less likely to borrow from compatriots, compared to parents who socialize only with compatriots. Interestingly, parents socializing only with non-compatriots are significantly less likely, than those with other socializing patterns, to think that compatriots have not been economically successful in the U.S. Also, a significantly higher percentage of parents with exclusive socializing with compatriots think that compatriots have not been economically successful in the U.S., compared to those who have mixed socializing ties. Thus, a comparison of columns 1 and 4 of this table reveal that even though parents, who have exclusive socializing ties with non-compatriots are more likely to think that compatriots have been economically successful in the U.S., they feel that compatriots are not supportive enough.

A comparison of parents living in compatriot neighborhoods with those living in non-compatriot neighborhoods reveal that a significantly lower percentage of parents



living in non-compatriot neighborhoods think that compatriots are supportive. Also, a significantly lower percentage of parents living in non-compatriot neighborhoods buy and borrow from compatriots.

Table 5.4: Parent's Practices towards and Perceptions about Compatriots by Parental Social Ties

Parents' social ties	Parent's practices and perceptions			
	Parents think that Compatriots are supportive	Parents buy from stores owned by compatriots	Parents prefer to borrow from compatriots	Parents think that compatriots have not been economically successful in the U.S.
Compatriot work units	0.81 (.39)	0.20 (.40)	0.24 (.43)	0.21 (.41)
Non-compatriot work units	0.77 (.42)	0.23 (.42)	0.25 (.43)	0.32 (.47)
Socializing: compatriots only	0.83 (.38)	0.27 (.44)	0.31 (.46)	0.34 (.47)
Socializing: mixed	0.81 (.39)	0.26 (.44)	0.19 (.39)	0.30 (.46)
Socializing: non-compatriots	0.65 (.48)	0.13 (.34)	0.12 (.33)	0.20 (.40)
Compatriot neighborhoods	0.86 (.35)	0.30 (.46)	0.34 (.48)	0.31 (.46)
Non-compatriot neighborhoods	0.73 (.44)	0.19 (.39)	0.20 (.40)	0.29 (.45)

Note: Standard deviations in parentheses

Table 5.5 shows parent's practices towards and perceptions about compatriots, for parents belonging to major immigrant groups. A high percentage (nearly or above 90%) of Filipino, Cuban, Vietnamese, and Laotian parents think that compatriots are supportive, compared to 77% for the entire sample. However, a low percentage of Nicaraguan (44%) and Mexican parents (58%) think that compatriots are supportive. A high percentage of Vietnamese parents (60%) buy from stores owned by compatriots, though this percentage is not that high for any other major immigrant groups. Vietnamese and Mexican parents show a high tendency to borrow from compatriots at times of need, but Filipinos, Cubans, and Laotians are least likely to do the same. A high percentage of Laotian parents (83%) think that compatriots have not been economically successful in the U.S., while only 3% of Cuban and 6% of Filipino parents think likewise.

Table 5.5: Parent's Practices towards and Perceptions about Compatriots for Parents belonging to major Countries of Origin

Country of origin	Parent's practices and perceptions			
	Parents think that Compatriots are supportive	Parents buy from stores owned by compatriots	Parents prefer to borrow from compatriots	Parents think that compatriots have not been economically successful in the U.S.
Philippines	0.90 (.29)	0.25 (.43)	0.13 (.33)	0.06 (.24)
Cuba	0.94 (.24)	0.11 (.31)	0.17 (.37)	0.03 (.16)
Mexico	0.58 (.49)	0.16 (.36)	0.36 (.48)	0.46 (.50)
Vietnam	0.89 (.31)	0.60 (.49)	0.44 (.50)	0.45 (.50)
Nicaragua	0.44 (.50)	0.21 (.41)	0.29 (.46)	0.33 (.47)
Laos	0.89 (.31)	0.13 (.34)	0.17 (.37)	0.83 (.37)
Full sample	0.77 (.42)	0.22 (.42)	0.24 (.43)	0.29 (.46)

Note: Standard deviations in parentheses

To provide a city context to the major immigrant groups, Table 5.6 presents a distribution of major immigrant group, by cities. Almost the entire sample of Filipinos, Mexicans, Vietnamese, and Laotians are based in San Diego, while Cubans and Nicaraguans are mainly based in Miami/ Ft. Lauderdale areas.

Table 5.6: Countries of Origin of Parents of major Immigrant groups by the Locations of Interviews

Country of parent's birth	Location of parental interview		
	Miami/Ft.Lauderdale	San Diego	Total
Philippines	1	334	335
Cuba	304	2	306
Mexico	8	285	293
Vietnam	1	231	232
Nicaragua	165	3	168
Laos	0	166	166
Others	406	186	592
Full sample	885	1207	2092

Table 5.7 shows the U.S. citizenship status for parents belonging to major immigrant groups. Citizenship status is another family background control variable used in the multi-level analyses. The Filipino community has the highest percentage of U.S. citizens, followed by Cubans and Vietnamese, while the Nicaraguan community has the lowest percentage of U.S. citizens, followed by Laotians. Lower citizenship amongst Nicaraguans and Mexicans are reflective of U.S. policies of deportation and prevention of their settlement in this country. Higher percentage of citizenship amongst Cubans and Vietnamese, on the other hand, suggest benevolent policies towards their settlement in the U.S., as refugees. Surprisingly, lower rates of citizenship amongst Laotians, in spite of their similarity with Vietnamese in terms of refugee status, might be reflective of their more recent arrival in the U.S., compared to Vietnamese and Cubans. Higher citizenship

rates amongst Filipinos might indicate favorable U.S. policies towards the post-1965 immigrants with high levels of education and skills.

Table 5.7: Parent’s U.S. Citizenship status for Parents belonging to major Immigrant groups

Country of origin of parents	Percentage of U.S. citizens	N
Philippines	85.97	335
Cuba	68.95	306
Mexico	22.52	293
Vietnam	57.33	232
Nicaragua	14.88	168
Laos	19.28	166
Full sample	51.12	2091

Note: N refers to the respective sample sizes of the immigrant groups

In table 5.8, I present percentage distribution of different social ties of parents, by major immigrant groups. For the major immigrant groups, the percentage of parents working in compatriot units varies. For the entire sample, only 17 % of parents work in compatriot units; for Cuban parents, it can be as high as nearly 40%; for Laotians, it is a mere 6%. Residence in compatriot neighborhoods also varies by parent’s countries of origin. For the whole sample, about 30% of parents live in compatriot neighborhoods; this percentage is highest for Filipino parents (54%), followed by Cubans (46%), Mexicans (43%), and Laotians (32%), and a lower percentage of Nicaraguan parents (8%) live in compatriot neighborhoods. Regarding socializing patterns, a high percentage of Laotian parents socialize exclusively with compatriots (89.7%), compared to only 49% for Nicaraguan parents. Nicaraguan parents are equally likely to socialize exclusively outside compatriot groups (49%). Laotian parents, on the other hand, are least likely to socialize outside compatriot groups (1.21%). Filipino parents show the

highest percentage for socializing with both compatriots and non-compatriots (14.85%), while Nicaraguans display the lowest percentage (1.19%).

Table 5.8: Percentage distribution of Social Ties for Parents belonging to major Immigrant groups

Country of origin	compatriot work	compatriot	Socializing			
			Units (%)	neighborhoods (%)	compatriots only (%)	mixed (%)
Philippines	20.57	54.05	57.88	14.85	26.67	
Cuba	39.77	46.08	72.55	2.29	24.84	
Mexico	23.13	43.34	61.43	8.19	28.33	
Vietnam	16.35	13.79	87.93	6.47	5.60	
Nicaragua	12.26	8.33	48.81	1.19	48.81	
Laos	6.10	31.71	89.70	9.09	1.21	
Others	6.32	13.37	39.29	5.61	53.23	
Full sample	17.20	29.95	60.42	6.96	31.56	

Note: The three socializing patterns are mutually exclusive groups, and approximately add up to 100.



With regard to the school context, schools with three different ethnic compositions are considered. These are medium White schools, Hispanic majority schools, and schools with other compositions. Public and private schools are considered as control variables. Schools with three different levels of eligibility for free lunch are also considered as control variables. Table 5.9 shows the average GPAs and racial percentages of students for each school type. Immigrant children attending medium White schools have significantly higher mean GPA than those attending Hispanic majority schools and schools with other compositions. In fact, immigrant children attending Hispanic majority schools have significantly lower mean GPA than those attending the other two types of schools. Furthermore, children attending private schools have significantly higher mean GPA than those attending public schools. Interestingly, in this sample, children attending schools with high eligibility for free lunch have significantly higher mean GPA than those attending schools with medium and low eligibility for free lunch.

Even though it might seem that schools with other compositions have a high Black population, closer examination reveals that this type of school does not have a clear majority of any one racial group. Thus, in such schools, Whites can range from 0.5% to 38%; Hispanics can range from 6% to 59%; Blacks can range from 7% to 92%; while Asians can range from 0 to 54%. Private schools in this dataset have an overwhelmingly Hispanic composition. It is interesting to observe that Asians are largely represented in schools with high percentage of children eligible for free lunch, compared to schools with medium and low eligibility for free lunch.

Table 5.9: Average GPA and Racial Percentages for each School Type (N=2077)

School type	Mean GPA	Racial Percentage			
		% Whites	% Hispanics	% Blacks	% Asians
Medium White schools	2.84	51.13	21.62	14.26	12.41
Hispanic majority schools	2.42	10.31	78.81	9.04	1.73
Other composition	2.73	18.45	29.31	38.94	12.93
Public schools	2.65	25.54	37.28	26.38	10.43
Private schools	2.87	2.59	96.82	0.35	0.24
High % eligible for free lunch	2.75	23.13	34.38	23.71	18.11
Medium % eligible for free lunch	2.65	19.95	37.76	34.19	7.83
Low % eligible for free lunch	2.51	30.87	46.94	17.34	4.71

Note: The racial percentages for each row approximately add up to 100

In table 5.10, I have further explored the percentage break-up of major immigrant groups in different types of schools. Thus, among the 334 second generation students surveyed in medium White schools, Mexicans (25%) constitute the largest immigrant group, followed by Filipinos (20%). Cubans (41%) are the largest immigrant group attending Hispanic majority schools, followed by Nicaraguans (21%). Schools with other compositions are composed mainly of Filipinos (23%), followed by Vietnamese (16%), Mexicans (13%), and Laotians (11%). Furthermore, Asians (Filipinos, Vietnamese, and Laotians) in this sample are largely represented in schools with high percentage of students eligible for free lunch, compared to schools with medium and low eligibility for free lunch. On the other hand, a high percentage of Cubans and Nicaraguans are represented in schools with medium and low percentage eligible for free lunch. We also observe that the private schools in this sample have an overwhelmingly Cuban composition.

Table 5.10: Composition of different Schools by major Immigrant groups

Country of origin Of Parents	School Types							
	Medium White schools N=334	Hispanic majority schools N=619	Other composition N=1139	Private N=84	Public N=2008	High N=749	Medium N=871	Low N= 472
Philippines	20.36	0.81	23.00	0	16.68	22.96	18.60	0.02
Cuba	1.80	40.87	4.13	95.24	11.25	0.13	12.97	40.68
Mexico	25.45	10.02	12.82	0	14.59	27.50	8.95	1.91
Vietnam	12.87	1.13	15.98	0	11.55	17.62	10.91	1.06
Nicaragua	1.20	20.68	3.16	0	8.37	0.40	13.32	10.38
Laos	11.08	0.65	10.97	0	8.27	14.69	6.43	0
Others	27.24	25.85	29.94	4.76	29.28	16.69	28.82	45.76
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Note: N refers to number of immigrant students surveyed in schools with different compositions  
Columns for each school type approximately add up to 100%

### Results of Correlation Analyses

This section presents the results of correlation analyses between the dependent, independent, and control variables. Table 5.11 shows the correlations between the GPA of students, parental social ties, parents' family backgrounds, and countries of origin of parents. The correlations in the table are low to moderate in size. Children of parents socializing with both compatriots and non-compatriots tend to have higher GPA. Having Cuban, Mexican, or Nicaraguan parents is significantly and negatively correlated with the GPA of students. There are moderate to high positive and significant correlations amongst the family background variables, i.e., parents' income, education, knowledge of English, and U.S. citizenship status. Parents with poorer family background status tend to socialize only with compatriots, and to reside in compatriot neighborhoods.

Filipino parents are likely to have higher income, education, knowledge of English, and U.S. citizenship status. Cuban parents are moderately positively and significantly correlated with working in compatriot units, and they are likely to have high income, education, knowledge of English, and U.S. citizenship status. Mexican parents exhibit disadvantaged family background situations, and their children tend to have low GPAs. Vietnamese and Laotian parents too represent poorer family background situations, but are mildly and positively correlated with student's GPA. Nicaraguan parents tend to have high levels of education, but are interestingly correlated with low income, knowledge of English, and citizenship status. Their children tend to have low GPA.

Table 5.11: Bivariate Correlations between GPA of Students, Parent's Social Ties, their Family Backgrounds, and Countries of Origin

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. GPA	-									
2. Patriot work units	-.03	-								
3. Socializing: compatriots only	.03	.12**	-							
4. Socializing: mixed	.08**	-.01	-.34**	-						
5. Socializing: non-compatriots only	-.07**	-.11**	-.84**	-.19**	-					
6. Patriot neighborhoods	-.02	.10**	.21**	.04#	-.25**	-				
7. Parent's income	.15**	.04#	-.12**	.00	.13**	-.06**	-			
8. Parent's education	.12**	.00	-.22**	.04#	.21**	-.08**	.52**	-		
9. Parent's knowledge of English	.07**	.02	-.30**	.08**	.27**	-.06**	.48**	.62**	-	
10. Parent's U.S. citizenship	.13**	.02	-.11**	.03	.09**	-.02	.36**	.37**	.53**	-
11. Filipino parents	.14**	.04#	-.02	.13**	-.04*	.23**	.28**	.34**	.36**	.30**
12. Cuban parents	-.10**	.24**	.10**	-.07**	-.06**	.15**	.11**	.08**	.10**	.15**
13. Mexican parents	-.13**	.06**	.01	.02	-.02	.12**	-.21**	-.28**	-.17**	-.23**
14. Vietnamese parents	.17**	-.01	.20**	-.01	-.20**	-.12**	-.11**	-.19**	-.18**	.04*
15. Nicaraguan parents	-.10**	-.04#	-.07**	-.07**	.11**	-.14**	-.01	.16**	-.05*	-.21**
16. Laotian parents	.05*	-.09**	.17**	.02	-.19**	.01	-.05*	-.22**	-.28**	-.19**

Note: \*\*p<=0.01, \*p<=0.05, #p<=0.1

Table 5.12 shows the correlations between parent's family backgrounds, their practices towards, and perceptions about compatriots, and their countries of origin. Parents having higher levels of income and U.S. citizenship status are likely to perceive their compatriots as supportive. Thus, greater resources in terms of income and U.S. citizenship are crucial for making immigrants resourceful towards fellow compatriots. Parents with worse family background variables are more likely to buy or borrow from compatriots. Lower income, education, knowledge of English, and foreign citizenship status may restrict immigrant parents' ability to borrow from banks, making them more dependent on compatriots. This is confirmed in the correlation results for different immigrant groups. Filipino and Cuban parents are positively correlated with family background variables, and are also less likely to borrow from compatriots. On the other hand, Mexican, Vietnamese, and Nicaraguan parents tend to have lower income, but are more likely to borrow from compatriots. An exception is the group of Laotian parents. Parents from better-off family backgrounds are less likely to perceive their compatriots as economically not successful in the U.S.

For parents belonging to major countries of origin, we observe that Mexican and Nicaraguan parents are less likely to perceive their compatriots as supportive. The groups that have negative correlations with family background variables, namely Mexicans, Vietnamese, Nicaraguan, and Laotians, are also the ones who think that compatriots have not been economically successful in the U.S. This correlation has the largest size for Laotian parents, who seem to have a particularly pessimistic attitude towards the economic success of fellow compatriots. Their positive correlation for

perception that compatriots are supportive is also very small in size. These factors may partly explain a discrepancy that we observed previously in this table, that in spite of lower income, Laotians do not prefer to borrow from compatriots. This pessimistic attitude towards compatriots is surprising, because as observed previously in table 5.3, Laotian parents have higher mean income than Vietnamese and Mexican parents. This pessimistic attitude might be reflective of their high levels of dependencies on government doles for survival in the host nation.

Table 5.12: Bivariate Correlations between Parents' Family Backgrounds, their Practices towards and Perceptions about Compatriots, and their Countries of Origin

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Parent's income	-							
2. Parent's education	.52**	-						
3. Parent's knowledge of English	.48**	.62**	-					
4. Parent's U.S. citizenship	.36**	.37**	.53**	-				
5. Parents think that compatriots are supportive	.07**	-.01	.00	.09**	-			
6. Parents buy from stores owned by compatriots	-.13**	-.15**	-.19**	-.09**	.11**	-		
7. Parents prefer to borrow from compatriots	-.25**	-.24**	-.30**	-.22**	.10**	.54**	-	
8. Parents think that compatriots have not been economically successful in the U.S.	-.29**	-.32**	-.36**	-.25**	-.03	.19	.25**	-
9. Filipino parents	.28**	.34**	.36**	.30**	.13**	.02	-.11**	-.22**
10. Cuban parents	.11**	.08**	.10**	.15**	.17**	-.11**	-.07**	-.26**
11. Mexican parents	-.21**	-.28**	-.17**	-.23**	-.20**	-.06**	.11**	.15**
12. Vietnamese parents	-.11**	-.19**	-.18**	.04*	.10**	.30**	.17**	.11**
13. Nicaraguan parents	-.01	.16**	-.05*	-.21**	-.23**	-.01	.03	.02
14. Laotian parents	-.05*	-.22**	-.28**	-.19**	.08**	-.06**	-.05*	.34**

Note: \*\*p<=0.01, \*p<=0.05, #p<=0.1



Table 5.13 shows the results of correlation analyses between the GPA of students, parents' social ties, their family backgrounds, and attendance of their children in schools with different compositions. Children in medium White schools and in schools with other compositions are more likely to score higher GPA, while children in hispanic majority schools are likely to score lower GPA. As expected, children in private schools are likely to have higher GPAs, it is surprising to observe that in this dataset, students in schools with high eligibility for free lunch are likely to have higher GPA. This has been explored further later in this chapter.

Parents of children attending Hispanic majority public and private schools are likely to work in compatriot units. In this context, it must be noted that all the private schools in this dataset are Hispanic-majority schools, more specifically, Cuban-majority (see Table 5.9). Parents socializing only with compatriots tend to send their children to schools with high eligibility for free lunch and also to private schools. Children living in compatriot neighborhoods tend to attend schools with high free lunch eligibility. By contrast, children with better family backgrounds are likely to attend medium white, Hispanic majority, and private schools, and are less likely to attend schools with other compositions and those with high eligibility for free lunch.

Table 5.13: Bivariate Correlations between GPA of Students, Parent's Social Ties, Family Backgrounds, and Attendance of Children in Schools with different Compositions

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. GPA	-									
2. Patriot work units	-.03	-								
3. Socializing: compatriot only	.03	.12**	-							
4. Socializing: mixed	.08**	-.01	-.34**	-						
5. Socializing: non compatriots only	-.07**	-.11**	-.84**	-.19**	-					
6. Patriot neighborhoods	-.02	.10**	.21**	.04#	-.25**	-				
7. Parent's income	.15**	.04#	-.12**	.00	.13**	-.06**	-			
8. Parent's education	.12**	.00	-.22**	.04#	.21**	-.08**	.52**	-		
9. Parent's knowledge of English	.07**	.02	-.30**	.08**	.27**	-.06**	.48**	.62**	-	
10. Parent's U.S. citizenship	.13**	.02	-.11**	.03	.09**	-.02	.36**	.37**	.53**	-
11. medium white school	.09**	-.05*	-.02	.09**	-.01	-.05*	.09**	.04#	.07**	.06**
12. hispanic majority school	-.17**	.13**	-.01	-.11**	.08**	-.02	.02	.11**	.01	-.04#
13. School with other composition	.09**	-.09**	.03	.04#	-.06**	.05*	-.09**	-.14**	-.07**	-.01
14. High %age eligible for free lunch	.08**	-.00	.17**	.04#	-.20**	.22**	-.19**	-.30**	-.28**	-.13**
15. Private schools	.05*	.13**	.12**	-.04#	-.10**	.13**	.19**	.14**	.11**	.18**

Note: \*\*p<=0.01, \*p<=0.05, #p<=0.1

An examination of correlations between school ethnic compositions, eligibility for free lunch, and private schools in table 5.14 reveals that schools with high eligibility for free lunch have a positive correlation with schools with “other compositions”. Recall that schools with “other compositions” is a heterogeneous group of schools that do not represent clear majority for any single ethnic group. Furthermore, the city of Miami tends to have lesser number of schools with high eligibility for free lunch. Cubans and Nicaraguans in this dataset are overwhelmingly based in the city of Miami (see table 5.6). This partly explains the negative correlations between these parental countries of origin and attendance of schools with high eligibility for free lunch in table 5.13. Another interesting observation in this table is the high positive correlation between private schools and hispanic majority schools that concurs with descriptive statistics for schools in table 5.9. In this sample, unlike national samples, private schools are Hispanic-majority schools.

Table 5.14: Bivariate Correlations between School Ethnic Compositions, Eligibility for Free Lunch, and Private Schools (J=48)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Medium white schools	-					
2. Hispanic majority schools	-.33*	-				
3. Schools with other compositions	-.58**	-.58**	-			
4. High % eligible for free lunch	-.18	-.18	.31*	-		
5. Private schools	-.12	.36*	-.20	-.14	-	
6. Miami	-.27#	.31*	-.04	-.67**	.18	-

Note: \*\*p<=0.01, \*<=0.05, #<=0.1, J refers to the number of schools

Table 5.15 examines the relationship between parental social ties and parents' participation in Parents Teachers Organizations (PTO)/ school activities. Parents from disadvantaged family backgrounds are less likely to belong to, or attend meetings of a PTO, or to volunteer at child's school. Therefore, at lower SES levels, and more importantly, at lower levels of knowledge of English, immigrant parents might feel uncomfortable communicating with teachers, and participating in school activities. Rather, they might feel more comfortable collecting necessary information about schools from their compatriots. Indeed, it is found that parents' belonging to a PTO and volunteering at child's school is negatively correlated with their socializing with compatriots only. On the other hand, parents with privileged family background situations are more likely to socialize only with non-compatriots (see table 5.11), and are also more likely to participate in PTOs and to volunteer at school.

Table 5.15: Bivariate Correlations between Parents' Participation in PTOs/ School Activities, their Family Backgrounds, and Social Ties.

Variables	Parents'									
	Education	Income	Knowledge Of English	U.S. citizenship Status	working at patriot units	socializing: patriot only	socializing: mixed ties	non-compatriots only	residence: patriot neighborhoods	residence: compatriot neighborhoods
Parents belonging to a PTO	.25**	.24**	.31**	.23**	.02	-.11**	.02	.11**	-.00	-.00
Parents attending meetings of PTO	.06**	.05*	.08**	.02	.01	-.03	-.00	.04*	-.01	-.01
Parents volunteering at child's school	.26**	.21**	.30**	.20**	.00	-.14**	.02	.14**	.01	.01

Note: \*\*p<=0.01, \*p<=0.05, #p<=0.1

### Determinants of Parental Social Ties

Logistic and multinomial regression analyses are carried out to examine factors that lead to the formation of three kinds of parental social ties. These are social ties at (1) work places, (2) socializing preferences, and (3) neighborhoods. These social ties could be determined by parent's income, education level, knowledge of English, U.S. citizenship status, and their practices towards, and perceptions about their compatriots. In the analyses, missing values of the independent variables have been taken into account as separate dummy variables. However, the number of missing values for parents' citizenship status and education level are just 1 and 6, respectively. These missing dummy variables, being so few in number, were dropped (Long, Freese, & LP, 2006). As a result of dropping a few observations that have missing values for citizenship status and parent's education levels, the number of observations that are reported in the tables for these analyses are lower than the number of observations for the respective dependent variables reported previously in table 5.1. Results of these analyses are presented in tables 5.16 and 5.17.

The social ties variables at work places and neighborhoods, considered for a set of analysis shown in table 5.16, have dichotomous outcomes, and therefore, logistic regression is used. Working in compatriot work units are not affected by most variables of family backgrounds, and practices and perceptions about compatriots. However, it is found that immigrant parents who think that their compatriots have not been economically successful in the U.S. are less likely to work in compatriot units (coefficient is -0.594). Put differently, those who work in compatriot units tend to think

that compatriots have been economically successful in the U.S. Parents residing in compatriot neighborhoods are more likely to think that their compatriots are supportive (coefficient is 0.727), and are likely to borrow from compatriots (coefficient is 0.478). However, residence in compatriot neighborhoods is negatively associate with parents' education level (coefficient is -0.041), suggesting that the less educated parents are more likely to live with compatriots than are the more educated.

Table 5.16: Logistic Regression Models for predicting Working in Compatriot Work Units and Residence in Compatriot Neighborhoods

Variables	compatriot work units (ref: non-compatriot work units)	compatriot neighborhoods (ref: non-compatriot neighborhoods)
<u>Parent's family background</u>		
Parent's education	-0.034	-0.041*
Parent's income	0.048	-0.021
Parent's knowledge of English	-0.027	0.006
Parent is a citizen of U.S.	0.062	0.095
<u>Parent's practices towards and perceptions about compatriots</u>		
Parents think that compatriots are supportive	0.200	0.727**
Parents buy from stores owned by compatriots	-0.183	0.199
Parents prefer to borrow from compatriots	0.175	0.478**
Parents think that compatriots have not been economically successful in the U.S.	-0.594**	-0.147
Intercept	-1.756**	-1.246**
Chi-square	37.41**	130.65**
N	1909	2080

Note: \*\*p<=0.01, \*<=0.05, #<=0.1. Missing data dummies were also included in all models

Table 5.17 presents the results of multinomial regression model predicting parents' socializing behavior. Exclusive socializing with non-compatriots is the reference group. When parents perceive that compatriots are supportive, they are more likely to socialize only with compatriots (coefficient is 0.965), or at least with compatriots and non-compatriots (0.791), rather than socializing only with non-

compatriots. Less educated parents and those with lower knowledge of English tend to socialize with compatriots only. It is surprising to observe that parents who have U.S. citizenship status are more likely to socialize only with compatriots. It could be that U.S. citizenship amongst established immigrants groups is considered a valuable resource for newcomer compatriots, and they tend to socialize only with their compatriots. On the other hand, immigrant groups like Mexicans and Nicaraguans, who have low percentage of U.S. citizens (see table 5.7), cannot provide useful resources to fellow compatriots, and hence they display lower levels of exclusive socializing with compatriots (table 5.8). Parents, who tend to buy from stores owned by compatriots, are more likely to socialize with both compatriots and non-compatriots.

Table 5.17: Multinomial Regression Model for predicting Socializing Patterns

Variables	socializing: compatriots only (ref: socializing: non-compatriots only)	mixed socializing
<u>Parent's family background</u>		
Parent's education	-0.043*	-0.041
Parent's income	0.027	-0.047
Parent's knowledge of English	-0.716**	-0.021
Parent is a citizen of U.S.	0.355**	0.142
<u>Parent's practices towards and perceptions about compatriots</u>		
Parents think that compatriots are supportive	0.965**	0.791**
Parents buy from stores owned by compatriots	0.251	0.638*
Parents prefer to borrow from compatriots	0.594**	0.007
Parents think that compatriots have not been economically successful in the U.S.	0.214	0.422#
Intercept	1.702**	-1.737**

Note: \*\*p<=0.01, \*<=0.05, #<=0.1. Missing data dummies were also included in all models  
Total N= 2092  
Chi-square = 497.13\*\*  
Reference category for the equation is socializing: non-compatriots only



It needs to be noted that all the determinants of parental social ties examined in this section are used as control variables in the multi-level analyses to partially reduce the problem of unobserved heterogeneity, which is a problem commonly encountered in cross-sectional analyses.

### Parental Social Ties and GPA – Results of Multi-level Analyses

For examining the relationship between parental social ties and GPA, I use hierarchical linear modeling (HLM), with students as the first level, and schools as the second level units. All four research questions are examined using HLM. The first research question explores the effects of parental social ties on children's GPA. For this question, only the student level variables are taken into account. The results of the analysis are presented in table 5.18. Next, the results for the second research question are presented in table 5.19. This examines whether the relationship between parental social ties and children's GPA varies across parental countries of origin. The third research question brings in the school context, and examines whether the relationship between parental social ties and children's GPA varies across schools with different compositions of students. For this analysis, variables at both the student and school levels are considered. The results of this analysis are presented in tables 5.20 and 5.21. Finally, the last research question is presented in table 5.22. This examines a potential mechanism through which parental social ties affect their children's GPA.

#### Parental Intra- and Extra-Country Social Ties and Children's GPA:

The unconditional model is examined first. In this model, the outcome, GPA is not conditional on any explanatory variable. The result of this analysis is presented in model 1 of table 5.18. The overall mean GPA is 2.59, and there is significant variation between schools. The between-school variance,  $\tau_{00}$  is 0.091, while the within-school

variance,  $\sigma^2$  is 0.766, i.e., the intra-class correlation<sup>8</sup> is 0.1062. This indicates that about 10.62% of the variance in GPA lies between schools. Even though it is only a small percentage, it is significant. On the other hand, nearly 89.38% of the variation is accounted within schools.

Model 2 contains students' gender and the independent variables of interest, parental social ties. This is the baseline model for the first research question. All the variables have been group-mean-centered in order to estimate within-school slopes. As can be seen, children whose parents socialize with compatriots and non-compatriots (i.e., mixed socializing), fare significantly better in GPA, compared to children whose parents socialize only outside compatriot groups. This can be seen by the 0.160 coefficient for this variable, which is statistically significant at the 0.05 level. The effect size<sup>9</sup> is moderate, about 17.39% of the standard deviation of GPA. Residence in compatriot neighborhoods is found to be negatively associated with children's GPA (coefficient is -0.174), significant at 0.01 level. This is about 18.91% of the standard deviation of GPA.

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<sup>8</sup> Intra-class correlation,  $\rho = \tau_{00}/(\tau_{00} + \sigma^2)$ . This shows the proportion of total outcome variance that exists between schools

<sup>9</sup> Effect size = (coefficient of independent variable/ standard deviation of dependent variable) x 100

Table 5.18: Effects of Social Ties of Parents on Children's GPA

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Intercept	2.594**	2.593**	2.592**	2.593**	2.592**
Male student		-0.423**	-0.427**	-0.424**	-0.427**
<u>Ties that parents form</u>					
Socializing: compatriots only		0.052	0.095*		0.089*
Socializing: mixed		0.160*	0.164*		0.160*
(ref: socializing: non-compatriots only)					
Compatriot Neighborhood		-0.174**	-0.160**		-0.160**
Compatriot work units		-0.091	-0.043		-0.046
<u>Parent's family background</u>					
Parent's education			0.034**	0.032**	0.034**
Parent's income			0.032**	0.027**	0.029**
Parent is a citizen of U.S.			0.100*	0.074#	0.084*
<u>Parent's practices towards and perceptions about compatriots</u>					
Parents think that compatriots are supportive				0.070	0.068
Parents buy from stores owned by compatriots				0.062	0.063
Parents prefer to borrow from compatriots				-0.107#	-0.094
Parents think that compatriots have not been economically successful in the U.S.				-0.029	-0.035
<u>Variance components</u>					
Between schools, $\tau_{00}$	0.091**	0.093**	0.094**	0.094**	0.094**
Within schools, $\sigma^2$	0.766	0.719	0.700	0.707	0.700
N	2077	2077	2077	2077	2077

Note: \*\*p<=0.01, \*p<=0.05, #p<=0.1, Missing data dummies were also included in all models

The third model adds parents' family background variables to the baseline model. Note that parents' knowledge of English was initially considered for the analysis, alongside their education, income, and U.S. citizenship status. Parent's knowledge of English, by itself is significantly associated with children's GPA, but it loses its significance in the presence of parent's education and income. This might be due to the strong correlation between this variable and parent's income and education, as noted previously in table 5.11. As a result, parent's knowledge of English was removed from this analysis, and only three family background variables were considered. As seen in Model 3 of table 5.20, all these three family background variables are positively and significantly associated with children's GPA. Controlling for family background variables, we observe that the disadvantage of living in compatriot neighborhoods decreases (from -0.174 in Model 2 to -0.160 in Model 3), implying that family background partly explains the disadvantage of living in compatriot neighborhoods. However, such disadvantage is still significant at the 0.01 level. We observe too, that the advantage of mixed socializing with compatriots and non-compatriots, compared to exclusive socializing with non-compatriots, increases (coefficient is 0.164; 17.83% of S.D. of GPA), when family background is controlled. Furthermore, while exclusive socializing with compatriots is not significantly associated with children's GPA in Model 2, controlling for family background variables, we find that this socializing pattern is positively and significantly associated with children's GPA, compared to parents' exclusively socializing with non-compatriots. Put differently, in disadvantaged family background situations, parents tend to socialize entirely with compatriots, but the benefit

from this socializing is counter-balanced by their low income and education. Thus, we do not see any significant effect of exclusive socializing, until we compare students of similar social class backgrounds. The benefits are larger, however, when these parents adopt mixed socializing patterns (coefficient is 0.164), than when they adopt exclusive socializing with compatriots (coefficient is 0.095).

Model 4 has two sets of control variables, in addition to gender. Except for parents' education and income, none of the other parent-level control variables are significantly associated with GPA. Model 5 contains parental social ties variables, in addition to their family background, and their practices towards, and perceptions about compatriots. In the presence of family background variables, we observe a significant positive association between GPA and parents' exclusively socializing with compatriots, which is similar to Model 3.

I also analyzed the interaction effects among parental ties variables on children's GPA. For instance, what might be the effect on children's GPA, of parents living in compatriot neighborhoods and only socializing with compatriots? However, all the interaction terms are insignificant. These analyses are not presented.

In summary, when gender and family background are controlled, parental social ties in terms of exclusive socializing and mixed socializing with compatriots and non-compatriots, are positively associated with children's GPA, compared to parents' socializing exclusively with non-compatriots. Benefits from mixed socializing, however, are larger than that from exclusive socializing with compatriots. Also, residence in compatriot neighborhoods is negatively associated with children's GPA. These results are further summarized below in the form of figures 5.1 and 5.2 that present predicted

values of GPA. Regarding variance components, the level 1 variance,  $\sigma^2$  reduces from 0.766 in the unconditional model (Model 1) to 0.700 in Models 3 and 5, i.e., a reduction by 8.62%.

For illustrative purposes, I calculate the predicted GPA scores for average female students, by socializing ties of their parents and by residence in different types of neighborhoods, holding all the student-level variables at their group means. These predicted GPA scores are presented in Figure 5.1. Mixed socializing by parents, with both compatriots and non-compatriots, is linked with higher GPA scores for children of immigrants, followed by socializing with compatriots only. Exclusive socializing with non-compatriots is associated with the lowest GPA.

Figure 5.1: Predicted GPA Scores for average Girls by Socializing Ties of Parents

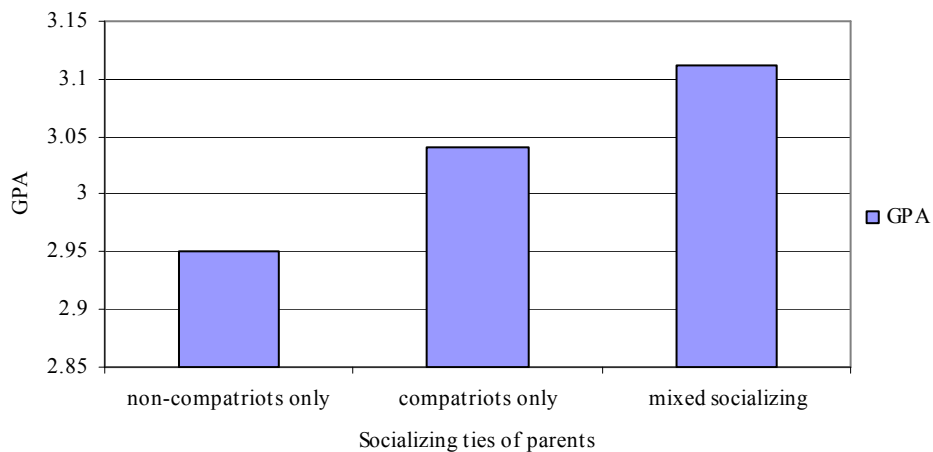
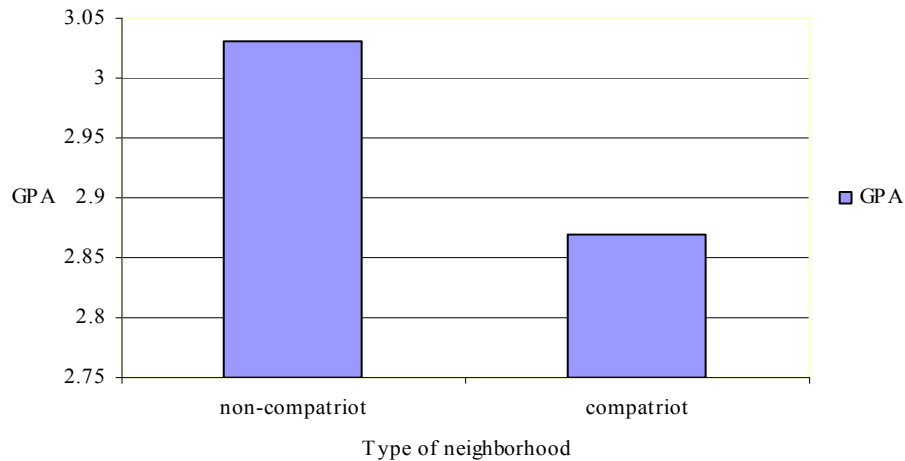


Figure 5.2 presents GPA scores for female students by residence, either in places where most of the neighbors are compatriots, or in places where most of the neighbors

are non-compatriots. Residence in non-compatriot neighborhoods is associated with higher GPA scores.

Figure 5.2: Predicted GPA Scores for average Girls by Residence in different types of Neighborhoods



### Parental Countries of Origin

Table 5.19 presents the HLM results for the second research question examining whether the relationship between social ties of immigrant parents and their children's GPA varies across parental countries of origin. It builds on the last research question. Model 1 for this table is the same as Model 3 of table 5.18. Model 2 and the subsequent models bring in parents' countries of origin and their interaction with social ties of parents. In Model 2, we observe that when we take into account parental social ties, child's gender, and their family background, having Mexican parents is negatively and significantly associated with a child's GPA (coefficient is -0.466), while having Vietnamese parents is positively and significantly associated with GPA (coefficient is



0.189). In other words, irrespective of parents' social ties and family backgrounds, having Mexican parents is unfavorable, while having Vietnamese parents is advantageous for children's GPA. GPA does not significantly differ for children of Filipino, Cuban, Nicaraguan, Laotian, or other backgrounds. The model also shows that controlling for parents' countries of origin and their family backgrounds, there is no difference in the GPAs of children, whether parents work or do not work in compatriot units. There is also no difference in GPA between children, whose parents socialize exclusively with compatriots, and those whose parents socialize exclusively with non-compatriots. However, GPA is higher for children when their parents engage in mixed socializing (coefficient is 0.134), rather than socializing only with non-compatriots. Furthermore, GPA of children is lower when parents choose to reside in compatriot neighborhoods (coefficient of -0.091), compared to their residing in neighborhoods where most of the neighbors are not compatriots, other things being equal.

Table 5.19: Effects of Social Ties of Parents on their Children's GPA for Parents belonging to different Countries of Origin

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Intercept	2.592**	2.592**	2.592**	2.592**	2.592**	2.592**
Male student	-0.427**	-0.422**	-0.418**	-0.426**	-0.421**	-0.420**
<u>Ties that parents form</u>						
Socializing: compatriots only	0.095*	0.049	0.050	0.049	0.043	0.044
Socializing: Mixed	0.164*	0.134#	0.134#	0.134#	0.137#	0.137#
(ref: socializing: non-compatriots only)						
Compatriot Neighborhood	-0.160**	-0.091*	-0.089*	-0.132*	-0.064	-0.100#
Compatriot work units	-0.043	-0.021	0.008	-0.020	-0.022	0.009
<u>Parent's family background</u>						
Parent's education	0.034**	0.033**	0.032**	0.032**	0.032**	0.031**
Parent's income	0.032**	0.031**	0.031**	0.031**	0.030**	0.030**
Parent is a citizen of U.S.	0.100*	0.042	0.044	0.042	0.043	0.044
<u>Countries of origin of parents</u>						
Filipino parents		-0.114	-0.117	-0.184#	-0.114	-0.175#
Cuban parents		-0.129	-0.137#	-0.115	-0.136#	-0.131
Mexican parents		-0.466**	-0.470**	-0.458**	-0.472**	-0.469**
Vietnamese parents		0.189*	0.185*	0.180*	0.198*	0.186*
Nicaraguan parents		-0.092	-0.044	-0.089	-0.091	-0.041
Laotian parents		-0.053	-0.054	-0.054	0.030	0.016
<u>Interaction between parent's countries of origin and their ties</u>						
Nicaraguan parents working in compatriot units			-0.440*			-0.438*
Filipino parents living in compatriot neighborhoods				0.183#		0.148
Laotian parents living in compatriot neighborhoods					-0.266#	-0.227
<u>Variance components</u>						
Between schools, $\tau_{00}$	0.094**	0.096**	0.096**	0.096**	0.096**	0.096**
Within schools, $\sigma^2$	0.700	0.679	0.678	0.679	0.679	0.677
N	2077	2077	2077	2077	2077	2077

Note: \*\* p<=.01, \*p<=.05, #p<=.1. Missing data dummies were also included in all models

Subsequent models introduce interaction terms between parents' countries of origin and their social ties. In Table 5.19, I have only reported significant results. Model 3 shows the effects on GPA of an interaction between parents working in compatriot units and their Nicaraguan origin. Even though no disadvantage is associated with having Nicaraguan parents per se, having Nicaraguan parents who work in compatriot units is related to children's low GPA (coefficient is  $-0.044 - 0.440 = -0.484$ ). Descriptive analyses of Nicaraguan parents working in compatriot units reveal that only 19 out of 168 Nicaraguan parents work in compatriot units. These parents are not significantly different from other Nicaraguan parents in terms of education, income, and knowledge of English (see Appendix table A.1). Only 3 out of 19 Nicaraguan parents, who work in compatriot units, are citizens. Two of these parents are managers or proprietors. Thus, most of Nicaraguan parents who work in compatriot units might do so because they do not have legal documents. These parents are likely to be exploited in these work units, which might be harmful for their children's GPA.

Model 4 introduces an interaction term for Filipino parents living in compatriot neighborhoods. It is important to note that even though in general, living in compatriot neighborhoods is negatively associated with children's GPA, for Filipino parents, such residence is advantageous (coefficient is 0.183). Descriptive analyses reveal that Filipino parents living in compatriot neighborhoods are not significantly different from other Filipino parents in terms of income, education, and knowledge of English (see Appendix Table A.1). Thus, while living in compatriot neighborhoods might not provide ample advantage in terms of higher parental income, or knowledge of English, compared to

Filipinos not living in compatriot neighborhoods; it might provide Filipino children with better cultural values and community social capital. Filipinos still have higher income, education, and knowledge of English, compared to other immigrant groups in this sample (see table 5.3). Thus, residence in compatriot neighborhoods yields greater benefits to their children because of their consolidated socio-economic and cultural wealth, including their middle-class values.

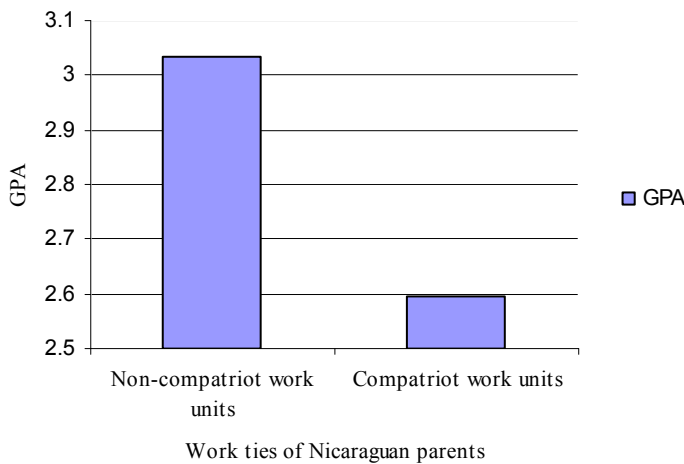
Model 5 introduces an interaction term for Laotian parents living in compatriot neighborhoods, and finds that consistent with the general results, for Laotians, living in compatriot neighborhoods is harmful for their children's GPA (coefficient is -0.266), even though having Laotian parents per se is not significantly associated with GPA. Descriptive analyses reveal that Laotians, who live in compatriot neighborhoods, have significantly lower parental income, education, and knowledge of English, than the full Laotian sample (see Appendix Table A.1). In Model 6, I keep all the three interaction terms of parental countries of origin and social ties that were found to be significant at least at the 0.1 level. Only Nicaraguan parents' working in compatriot units retains its significance. The results of these analyses are further summarized in figure 5.3 below.

Looking at the variance components, we find that introducing parental countries of origin in model 2 reduces within-school variance,  $\sigma^2$  from 0.700 to 0.679, which is just a reduction of 3%. Thus, parental countries of origin partially explain a small amount of GPA gaps. Introduction of interaction terms of social ties with countries of origin, however, do not reduce the within-school variance.

For the second research question, I have predicted the GPA scores from Model 6 in Table 5.19. For this prediction, student level variables are held at their group means.

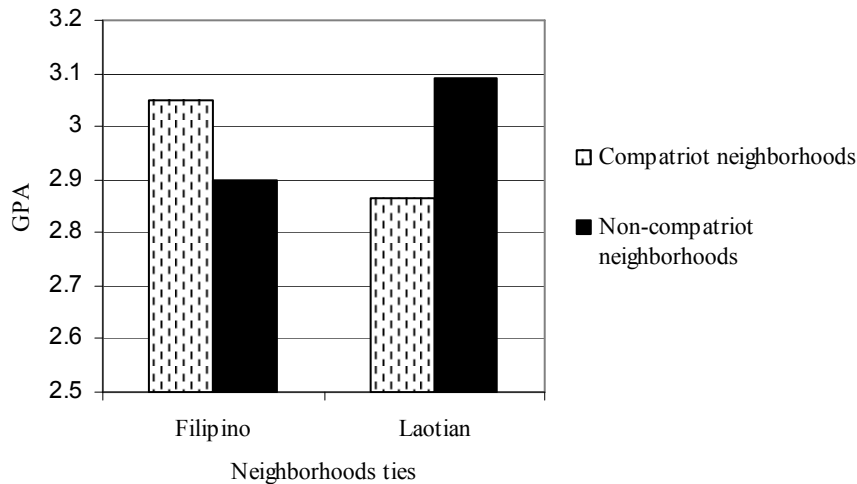
Figure 5.3 illustrates the GPA gaps for female Nicaraguan students, when their parents work in compatriot units and otherwise. GPA for Nicaraguan girls is significantly higher when their parents do not work in compatriot units.

Figure 5.3: Predicted GPA for Female Nicaraguan Students by Parents' Work Ties



Using the same model, Figure 5.4 illustrates GPA gaps for female Filipino and Laotian students, when they live in compatriot neighborhoods, and otherwise. Keeping other variables constant at their means, Laotian children are predicted to have higher GPA scores than Filipinos, when both the immigrant groups reside in non-compatriot neighborhoods. However, comparison between Filipino and Laotian children living in compatriot neighborhoods reveal that such residence has highly beneficial effects for Filipino children, while having harmful effects for Laotian children. Nevertheless, the GPA gaps for each of these immigrant groups are not significant according to Model 6 of Table 5.19.

Figure 5.4: Predicted GPA for Filipino and Laotian Female Students by Neighborhood Residence



### The School Context

Table 5.20 presents the results for the third research question, examining whether the relationship between parental social ties and children’s GPA varies across schools with different composition of students. Models 1 and 2 include the school contextual variables only for the intercept, i.e., the school mean GPA. Model 1 is the same as Model 3 of Table 5.18, except for the school contexts that have been brought in. It shows that GPA is not significantly different whether a child attends Hispanic majority school, or schools with other compositions, but students gain 0.228 points in GPA if they attend a medium white school instead of schools with other compositions. Medium white schools represent significantly higher parental income, compared to Hispanic majority schools and schools with other compositions. Parents in medium white schools also have significantly higher levels of education, compared to parents sending their children to

schools with other compositions. There is not significant difference in the education levels between parents sending their children to medium white schools, and those who send their children to Hispanic majority schools. Model 2 indicates that after controlling for private schools, attending a Hispanic majority school is associated with lower GPA (coefficient is -0.235), while attending a medium White school continues to be beneficial for students' GPA (coefficient is 0.223), compared to attending schools with other compositions. Interestingly, however, Hispanic majority schools represent higher parental income and education levels, compared to schools with other compositions. Yet, children in these schools score lower GPA than in schools with other compositions. As per expectations, private schools represent significantly higher parental income and education levels, compared to parents in public schools. Thus, private school students score higher average GPA than public school students (coefficient is 0.541).

Table 5.20: Predicting GPA for Children when they attend Schools with different Compositions.

Fixed effect	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
<u>Student-level Equation</u>							
Intercept	2.579**	2.586**	2.586**	2.586**	2.586**	2.586**	2.586**
Male student	-0.427**	-0.427**	-0.428**	-0.428**	-0.426**	-0.425**	-0.426**
<u>Ties that parents form</u>							
Socializing: compatriots only	0.095*	0.095*	0.166**	0.168**	0.093*	0.090*	0.095*
Socializing: mixed	0.164*	0.164*	0.200*	0.205*	0.129	0.155#	0.165*
<u>(ref: socializing: non-compatriots only)</u>							
Compatriot Neighborhood	-0.160**	-0.160**	-0.158*	-0.160**	-0.161**	-0.026	-0.186*
Compatriot work unit	-0.043	-0.043	-0.040	-0.040	-0.041	-0.049	-0.042
<u>Parents' family background</u>							
Parent's education	0.034**	0.034**	0.035**	0.035**	0.035**	0.034**	0.034**
Parent's income	0.032**	0.032**	0.032**	0.033**	0.033**	0.032**	0.033**
Parent is a citizen of U.S.	0.100*	0.100*	0.103*	0.103*	0.102*	0.099*	0.101*
<u>School-level Equations</u>							
School mean							
Medium White Schools	0.228#	0.223#	0.223#	0.223#	0.223#	0.223#	0.223#
Hispanic majority Schools	-0.126	-0.235*	-0.235*	-0.235*	-0.235*	-0.235*	-0.235*
<u>(ref: schools with other composition)</u>							
Private (ref: Public)		0.541*	0.541*	0.541*	0.541*	0.541*	0.541*
<u>Slope of socializing with compatriots only</u>							
Medium White Schools		0.001	0.001	0.001			
Hispanic majority Schools		-0.209*	-0.209*	-0.238*			
Private (ref: Public)				0.448			
<u>Slope of socializing with mixed groups</u>							
Medium White Schools					-0.035		
Hispanic majority Schools					0.527*		
Private (ref: Public)					-1.141#		
<u>Slope of compatriot neighborhood</u>							
High % eligible for free lunch						-0.224#	
Medium % eligible for free lunch						-0.080	
Private (ref: Public)							0.544**
<u>Variance components</u>							
Between schools, $\tau_{00}$	0.081**	0.067**	0.067**	0.067**	0.067**	0.067**	0.067**
Within schools, $\sigma^2$	0.701	0.701	0.700	0.700	0.700	0.701	0.699
N	2077	2077	2077	2077	2077	2077	2077

Note: \*\*p<.01, \*p<.05, #p<.1. Missing data dummies were also included in all models



As this research aims to examine whether the relationship between parental social ties and GPA varies across different school compositions, Models 3 and 4 introduce cross-level interactions of school compositions and exclusive socializing of parents with compatriots. Model 3 indicates that exclusive socializing with compatriots (coefficient is 0.166) is beneficial for children's GPA, compared to parents' exclusive socializing outside compatriot groups. Cross-level interaction of socializing variables with school compositions is my primary interest for this analysis. We observe that, when parents socialize exclusively with compatriots, children tend to score lower GPA when they attend Hispanic majority schools (coefficient is  $0.166 - 0.209 = -0.043$ ), compared to their attending schools with other compositions.

Model 4 adds an interaction term for parents of private school students engaging in exclusive socializing with compatriots. Controlling for private schools in Model 4, we observe that, as in the previous model, parents' exclusive socializing with compatriots continues to be harmful for their children, when children attend Hispanic majority schools (coefficient is  $0.168 - 0.238 = -0.07$ ). In other words, presence of private schools does not change anything. Model 5 shows that parents' mixed socializing is favorable for children's GPA, when they attend Hispanic majority schools (coefficient is  $0.129 + 0.527 = 0.656$ ), instead of schools with other compositions. Parents' mixed socializing is harmful for children's GPA, when children attend private schools (coefficient is  $0.129 - 1.141 = -1.012$ ); however, the interaction effect is only marginally significant.

In Model 6 we observe that the comparative disadvantage on GPA, of living in compatriot neighborhoods is slightly larger among children attending schools with a high percentage of students eligible for free lunch, compared to attending schools with low

eligibility for free lunch. Again, note that it is marginally significant. Model 7 shows that the negative effect of residence in compatriot neighborhoods is compensated, when children attend private schools (coefficient is  $-0.186+0.544= 0.358$ ). A positive coefficient on the private school slope indicates that the GPA gap between children, who live in compatriot neighborhoods, and those who live in non-compatriot neighborhoods, will become smaller when the child attends private schools. The results of these analyses are further summarized and illustrated in figures 5.5 to 5.7 below.

Table 5.21 extends the discussion on the third research question, by specifically focusing on the countries of origin of parents, when their children attend schools with different compositions. Only significant results of the analyses are reported here. Models 2 and 3 of this table indicate that the negative effect on GPA, of Cuban parents socializing with compatriots only, is compensated, when their children attend medium white schools. Model 4 indicates that attending private schools is beneficial, in terms of GPA, for Cubans living in compatriot neighborhoods, (coefficient is  $-0.146+0.055+0.445= 0.354$ ).

We can find the proportion of variance explained by comparing the between-school variance for Model 1 of Table 5.20 ( $\tau_{00} = 0.081$ ), with that for the unconditional model or Model 3 of table 5.18 ( $\tau_{00} = 0.094$ ). The proportion of variance explained<sup>10</sup> is 0.1383. In other words, almost 14% of the variation among schools in mean GPA can be explained by school ethnic compositions only. When we compare between-school variance for Model 2 of table 5.20 with that for Model 3 of table 5.18, we can find the proportion of variance explained by school ethnic compositions and sector (private or

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<sup>10</sup>  $\rho = (\tau_{00} \text{ of old model} - \tau_{00} \text{ of new model}) / \tau_{00} \text{ of the old model}$

public sector) of the schools. It is about 0.2872, indicating that about 29% of variations among schools in mean GPA can be explained by school ethnic compositions and sector (private or public sector) of the schools together.

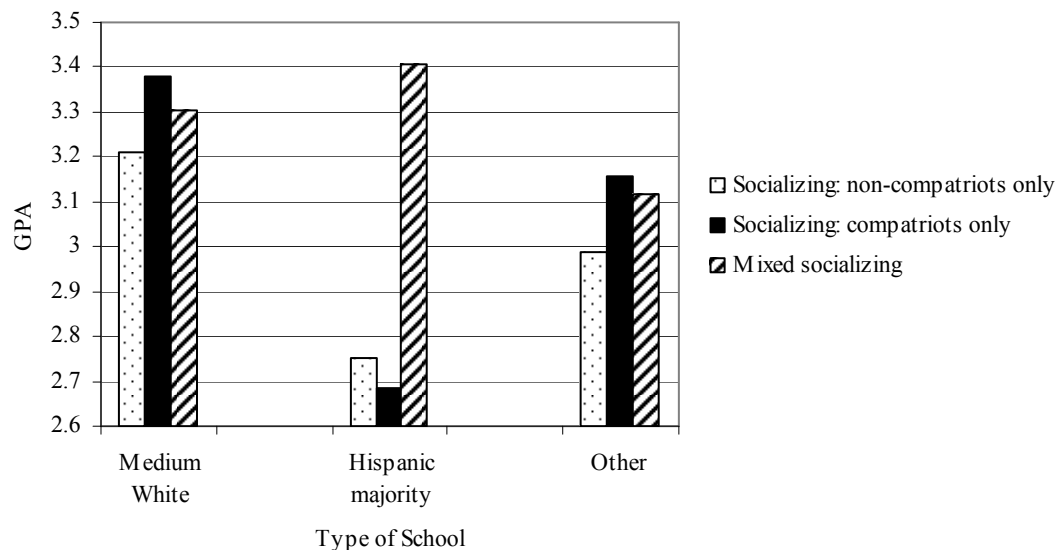
Table 5.21: Predicting GPA for Children for different Countries of Origin when they attend Schools with different Compositions.

Fixed effect	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
<u>Student-level Equation</u>				
Intercept	2.584**	2.584**	2.584**	2.584**
Male student	-0.422**	-0.423**	-0.423**	-0.421**
<u>Ties that parents form</u>				
Socializing: compatriots only	0.049	0.050	0.051	0.050
Socializing: mixed	0.134#	0.134#	0.138#	0.133#
(ref: socializing: non-compatriots only)				
Compatriot Neighborhood	-0.091*	-0.089*	-0.090*	-0.125*
Compatriot work unit	-0.021	-0.024	-0.023	-0.021
<u>Parents' family background</u>				
Parent's education	0.033**	0.033**	0.032**	0.032**
Parent's income	0.031**	0.030**	0.031**	0.031**
Parent is a citizen of U.S.	0.042	0.042	0.042	0.043
<u>Countries of origin of parents</u>				
Filipino parents	-0.114	-0.114	-0.113	-0.104
Cuban parents	-0.129	-0.125	-0.108	-0.146#
Mexican parents	-0.466**	-0.466**	-0.465**	-0.462**
Vietnamese parents	0.189*	0.189*	0.189*	0.184*
Nicaraguan parents	-0.092	-0.091	-0.096	-0.092
Laotian parents	-0.053	-0.053	-0.054	-0.053
<u>Interaction between parent's countries of origin and their ties</u>				
Cuban parents socializing				
With compatriots only		-0.173	-0.190	
Cuban parents living in				
Compatriot neighborhoods				0.055
<u>School-level Equations</u>				
School mean				
Medium White Schools	0.224#	0.224#	0.224#	0.224#
Hispanic majority Schools	-0.232#	-0.232#	-0.232#	-0.232#
(ref: schools with other composition)				
Private (ref: Public)	0.541*	0.541*	0.541*	0.541*
Slope of Cubans' socializing with compatriots only				
Medium White Schools		0.793#	0.792#	
Hispanic majority Schools		0.188	0.153	
Private (ref: Public)			0.369	
Slope of Cubans residing in compatriot neighborhood				
Private (ref: Public)				0.445*
<u>Variance components</u>				
Between schools, $\tau_{00}$	0.069**	0.069**	0.069**	0.069**
Within schools, $\sigma^2$	0.680	0.680	0.680	0.679
N	2077	2077	2077	2077

Note: \*\*p<=.01, \*p<=.05, #p<=.1. Missing data dummies were also included in all model

Figures 5.5, 5.6, and 5.7 further illustrate the results for the third research question. Figures 5.5 and 5.6 are based on Model 4, and figure 5.7 is based on Model 7 of Table 5.20. A goal of this research is to examine how the relationship between parental social ties and children’s GPA vary by difference in ethnic compositions in the schools attended. The predicted GPA scores for this are shown in figure 5.5 for average female students, holding all the student-level variables at their sample means. Exclusive socializing with non-compatriots is related to lower GPA in medium white schools, and in schools with other compositions. This result is consistent with the outcome of my first research question. In these two types of schools, exclusive socializing with compatriots leads to higher GPA than mixed socializing. These differences are not significant, however. Furthermore, interestingly, for children attending Hispanic majority schools, it is beneficial for their GPAs, when their parents socialize with both compatriots and others.

Figure 5.5: Predicted GPA scores for Students by Parents’ Socializing Patterns, when they attend Schools with different Compositions

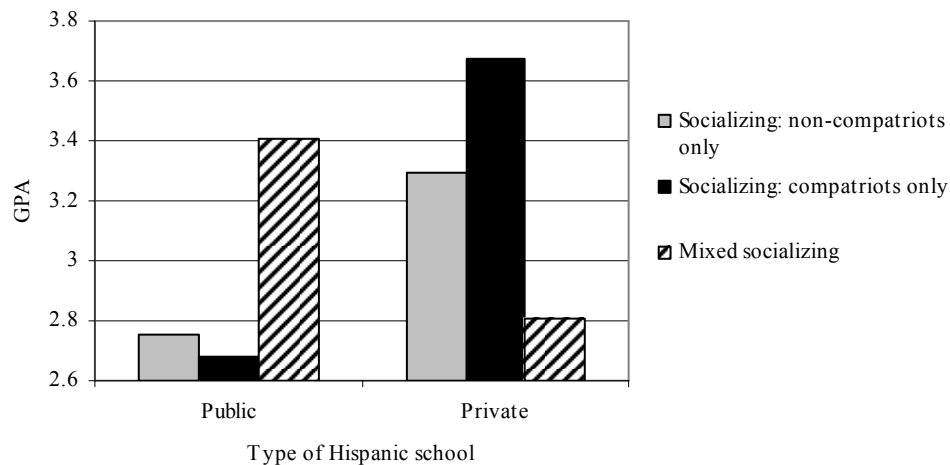


Demographics of parents whose children attend Hispanic majority schools reveal that only 15 (2.43%) children have parents with mixed socializing ties, while a larger percentage (59.5%, N=368) have exclusive socializing ties with compatriots. The remainder (37.1%, N=229) of students' parents has socializing ties with non-compatriots only. Mean education of parents with mixed socializing ties is not significantly different from parents who socialize exclusively with compatriots (Appendix Table A.2). Mean education of parents with exclusive ties with non-compatriots, however, is significantly higher than those with mixed ties and exclusive ties with compatriots. The three groups of parents are not significantly different in terms of income. Thus, demographic analysis rules out any role played by better socio-economic status of parents displaying mixed socializing patterns. Even though it was not directly explored in this research, mixed socializing ties might provide the necessary bridging networks with parents outside own compatriot groups, for the benefit of their children. On the other hand, just socializing with compatriots may leave these parents without important information, which might in fact be harmful for their children in the long run.

Figures 5.6 below presents the predicted GPA scores for students attending private or public schools, by their parents' socializing patterns. As all the private schools in this dataset are Hispanic-majority schools, they are compared only with public schools that have Hispanic majority population. Figure 5.6 shows that when a child attends a public school with medium to high Hispanic population, parents' mixed socializing is most helpful for their GPA. This result is the same as that illustrated in figure 5.5. However, interestingly, when a child attends a private school, mixed socializing is least associated with high GPA. Rather, socializing with compatriots only is related to high

GPA, followed by exclusive socializing with non-compatriots. As all the private schools in this dataset are Cuban majority schools, the positive association between exclusive socializing with compatriots and children’s GPA might be explained by the presence of strong social networks among Cubans that might aid their children’s academic performance.

Figure 5.6: Predicted GPA scores for Girls attending different types of Hispanic-majority Schools by the Parents’ Socializing Patterns



With regard to private schools, demographic analyses reveal that only 2.38% of parents with children in private schools have mixed socializing ties. About 88% of parents socialize exclusively with compatriots, while 9.52% of parents socialize exclusively with non-compatriots. Parents with mixed socializing ties have significantly higher income and education levels than those with other types of socializing (Appendix Table A.2). Thus, it is perplexing to find that in a private Hispanic-majority school, in spite of higher socio-economic status, mixed socializing ties are not associated with higher GPA. Rather, children whose parents have exclusive socializing ties with

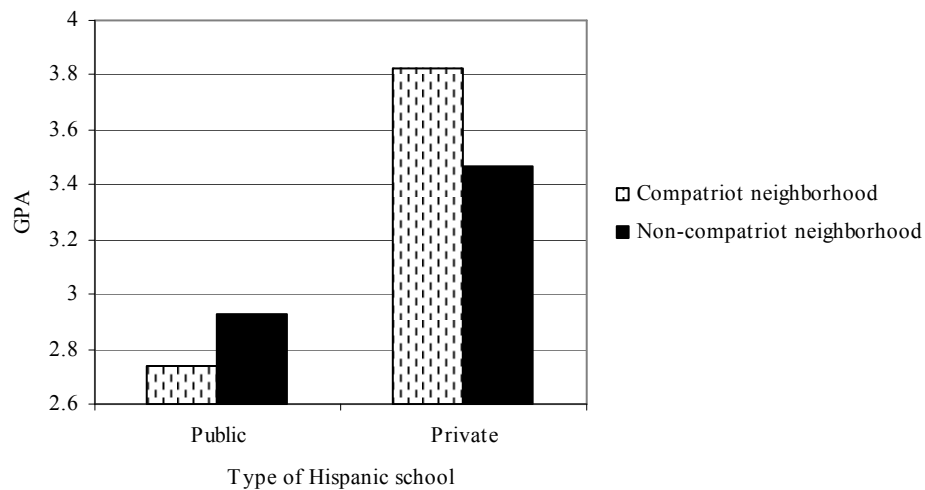
compatriots do best in terms of GPA, even though they belong to the lowest socio-economic strata amongst the three groups compared. This clearly brings out the significance of the school factor. Even though this is beyond the scope of this research, one might speculate that private schools, with a majority of one ethnic group, in this case Cubans, are able to provide a platform for the development of social ties amongst parents belonging to that ethnic group. This, in turn, might help their children do better in that school. While this might explain better academic performance in private schools, of children with parents socializing only with compatriots, it is not clear why mixed socializing ties are associated with worse GPAs, than those with exclusive ties with non-compatriots.

Figure 5.7 below illustrates how GPA scores of students vary by attendance of public or private Hispanic-majority schools, when they reside in different types of neighborhoods. These scores are predicted for female students whose parents exclusively socialize with compatriots, while holding the other student variables at their sample means. Consistent with results shown in figure 5.2, residence in non-compatriot neighborhoods is associated with higher GPA, when the child attends a public school. The negative effects of residence in compatriot neighborhoods can be compensated however, when the child attends a private school. Further demographic analyses reveal that 28.7% of children attending Hispanic majority public schools live in compatriot neighborhoods. Parental education of this group is significantly lower than the group that lives in non-compatriot neighborhoods, though there is not significant difference in the mean income of these two groups (Appendix Table A.4). The mean parental income and education for private school students living in compatriot neighborhoods is significantly



lower than those living in non-compatriot neighborhoods. Therefore, it will be wrong to conclude that, universally, children who live in compatriot neighborhoods do worse because their parents have low mean income and education. In spite of significantly lower income and education levels, children in compatriot neighborhoods attending private schools have higher GPA, compared to children living in non-compatriot neighborhoods. About 59.5% of children attending private schools in this dataset reside in compatriot neighborhoods. Recall that a high percentage of private school students are of Cuban origin. Strong social networks amongst Cubans might compensate for the low mean income and education of the parents living in these neighborhoods.

Figure 5.7: Predicted GPA scores for Girls attending different types of Hispanic-majority School, by their Neighborhood Ties



### Mechanism of Parental Ties affecting GPA

This sub-section explores the mechanism through which parental social ties affect their children's GPA. Variables constituting parents' participation in Parents Teachers

Organizations (PTO) and volunteering in school are examined. Table 5.22 shows the results of this analysis. Model 1 of this table is the same as Model 3 of table 5.18 representing the first research question. Model 2 examines the effects of parents' participation in PTOs and school activities, in the presence of family background variables. None of the parental participation variables are found to be significantly related to children's GPA. Model 3 adds the social ties variables to Model 2 to examine whether parental participation in PTOs and school activities explain the relationship between parents' social ties and children's GPA. While the parental participation variables continue to be non-significant, their presence also do not significantly alter the effects of social ties on GPA. It can, therefore be concluded that parental social ties do not affect their children's GPA, through affecting their participation in PTOs and school activities.

One of the reasons for this observed behavior could be that this sample deals with high school students, and parental participation might not have as much effect for high school students, as it does for students in lower grades. Thus, with or without parental social ties, parental participation variables are not significantly related with GPA.

Table 5.22: Parental Participation in PTOs/ School activities in Predicting GPA in the presence of Parents' Social Ties

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Intercept	2.592**	2.592**	2.592**
Male student	-0.427**	-0.420**	-0.422**
<u>Ties that parents form</u>			
Socializing: compatriots only	0.095*		0.104*
Socializing: Mixed	0.164*		0.165*
(ref: socializing: non-compatriots only)			
Compatriot Neighborhood	-0.160**		-0.163**
Compatriot work units	-0.043		-0.042
<u>Parent's family background</u>			
Parent's education	0.034**	0.030**	0.033**
Parent's income	0.032**	0.030**	0.032**
Parent is a citizen of U.S.	0.100*	0.084*	0.093*
<u>Parents' participation in PTOs/school activities</u>			
Parents belonging to a Parent Teacher Organization		0.032	0.040
Parents attending meetings of PTOs		-0.022	-0.028
Parents volunteering at child's school		0.035	0.048
<u>Variance components</u>			
Between schools, $\tau_{00}$	0.094**	0.094**	0.095**
Within schools, $\sigma^2$	0.700	0.705	0.698
N	2077	2077	2077

Note: \*\* p<=.01, \*p<=.05, #p<=.1. Missing data dummies were also included in all models

## **Chapter VI**

### **DISCUSSION**

In this study, I examine the impacts of immigrant parents' intra- and extra-country social ties on their children's GPA. Intra-country ties are defined in this research as social ties of immigrant parents with their compatriots; while extra-country social ties are formed outside compatriot communities. Social ties are examined in the contexts of parents' workplaces, neighborhoods, and within their socializing patterns. This research also examines whether there is variation across parental countries of origin and across schools with differing compositions of students as regards the relationship between social ties of immigrant parents and their children's GPA.

Data from the second wave (1995) and parental survey of the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS), Common Core of Data (CCD), and Private School Universe Survey (PSS) for the school year 1995-96 were analyzed for the purposes of this study. This study is based in the cities of San Diego in California and Miami/ Ft. Lauderdale areas in Florida.

The following summarizes the findings of this study and links the most important results with the literature review and theoretical considerations presented in chapter 3. It also presents theoretical and policy implications of this study, followed by acknowledged limitations and corresponding recommendations for further research.

## Summary of the Main Results

### Research Question One:

*How are different types of social ties, specifically intra-country and extra-country social ties of immigrant parents, associated with their children's GPAs?*

Three types of intra- and extra-country social ties of immigrant parents are identified and examined. First, social ties at work places are indicated by parents either working in units with compatriots or in units where employers, managers or co-workers do not emanate from the same country of origin as the immigrant parent. Second, social ties within parents' socializing patterns are compared between those who socialize exclusively with compatriots, those who have mixed socializing, and those who have exclusive socializing with non-compatriots. Third, neighborhood ties are measured by parents' residence in compatriot neighborhoods or in those where most of the co-residents are not compatriots.

Analyses revealed that when family background variables are not controlled, children scored higher GPAs if their parents socialized with both compatriots and non-compatriots, but scored lower when parents choose to live in compatriot neighborhoods. Alternatively, comparing students with similar social class backgrounds by controlling for family background variables revealed that, in addition to the aforementioned effects of mixed socializing and residence in compatriot neighborhoods, parents' exclusive socializing with compatriots was associated with high GPAs for their children. In situations characterized by disadvantaged family backgrounds, parents tended to socialize entirely with compatriots, but this benefit was counter-balanced by their low income and education. Controlling for income and education, this benefit to the children's GPA,

associated with parents' exclusive socializing with compatriots, became apparent. At the same time, and again when family background variables were controlled, any benefits for GPAs of socializing with both compatriots and non-compatriots were higher than the benefits of socializing only with compatriots.

Thus, while some forms of intra-country ties (parents' socializing with compatriots) were found to be associated with high GPAs for children, other types of intra-country ties, (residence in compatriot neighborhoods) were associated with low children's GPAs. In other words, as long as immigrant parents choose to socialize with their compatriots, i.e., maintain intra-country ties with them in the form of socializing, this was beneficial for their children's GPA. But their decision to reside in the same neighborhoods as their compatriots, i.e., maintaining intra-country ties in neighborhoods, could be harmful for their children's GPA. Thus, it follows, that not all types of intra-country ties among immigrant parents are beneficial for their children's academic performance. Regarding socializing patterns, while any form of socializing with compatriots, whether completely or partially, was beneficial for children's GPA, a mix of intra- and extra-country ties, i.e., mixed socializing, was found to be most beneficial for children's academic performance. On the other hand, regarding residence patterns, clearly extra-country ties in the form of residence in neighborhoods where most of the residents are not compatriots, were found to be favorable for children's GPA. This statement needs to be qualified, however, by mentioning that parents with lower SES tended to reside in compatriot neighborhoods. Therefore, SES played a crucial role in the disadvantage associated with forming intra-country ties in neighborhoods.

In conclusion, association with either extreme of intra- or extra-country social ties by immigrant parents was not beneficial for their children's GPAs. Rather, a healthy balance between the two types of ties is deemed best. Such a balance can be maintained by residing in non-compatriot dominant neighborhoods, while at the same time keeping open options to socialize with compatriots.

Research Question Two:

*Does the relationship between social ties of immigrant parents and their children's GPA vary across parental countries of origin?*

I studied immigrant parents from six countries of origin in the cities of San Diego and Miami. These are, in order of the sample size, Filipinos, Cubans, Mexicans, Vietnamese, Nicaraguans, and Laotians. Parents from these six countries of origin were compared with a heterogeneous group of "others". In the context of this study, I found that, irrespective of parents' social ties and family backgrounds, Mexican children tended to have low GPAs while Vietnamese children tended to have high GPAs when compared to children from other immigrant backgrounds. However, there was no significant difference evident in the GPAs of Filipino, Cuban, Nicaraguan, or Laotian children or of children from other immigrant backgrounds.

Furthermore, irrespective of parents' countries of origin and their family backgrounds, there was no significant difference in the GPAs of children whether parents worked in compatriot or non-compatriot work units. There was also no difference in children's GPAs when their parents socialized exclusively with compatriots, or with non-compatriots. However, consistent with the results of the first research question, parents'

mixed socializing patterns provided an edge to immigrant children in terms of their GPAs while residence in compatriot neighborhoods was associated with lowering their GPA.

I also found that even though no disadvantage was associated with having Nicaraguan parents per se, Nicaraguan children in this study, whose parents worked in compatriot work units, tended to have lower GPAs. Analyses revealed that Nicaraguan parents working in compatriot units were not significantly different from the entire Nicaraguan sample in terms of income and knowledge of English. There were a large number of foreign citizens, however, amongst these parents who worked in compatriot work units. It could be speculated that lack of legal documentation could make these parents more vulnerable to exploitation, which in turn, would be likely to be harmful to their children's GPA.

Regarding neighborhood ties, I found that, consistent with the results of the first research question, living in compatriot neighborhoods was unfavorable for the GPA of Laotian children. However, Filipino children living in compatriot neighborhoods were an exception in this study as they tended to score higher GPAs. Children of the remaining immigrant groups were not significantly different in terms of GPAs, whether they lived in compatriot or non-compatriot neighborhoods. Laotians living in compatriot neighborhoods tended to have significantly lower parental income, education, and knowledge of English, compared to the entire Laotian sample, and this might account for the lower GPA associated with Laotian children living in compatriot neighborhoods. Filipinos living in compatriot neighborhoods, however, were not significantly different from the entire Filipino sample in terms of parental income, education, and knowledge of English. Still, Filipinos had higher income, education, and knowledge of English when



compared to other immigrant groups in this sample. Therefore, when they lived in compatriot neighborhoods, their consolidated socio-economic and cultural wealth, including their middle-class values, might have yielded greater benefits for their children.

In conclusion, while this study did not find any significant difference in GPAs associated with differential socializing patterns for parents belonging to diverse countries of origin, intra-country ties at work places were found to be unfavorable for the GPAs of Nicaraguan children. Intra-country ties at neighborhoods, while harmful for Laotian children's GPAs were found to be beneficial for the GPAs of Filipino children. Therefore, specific immigrant groups might have their own internal dynamics with regard to the relationship between the social ties of parents and their children's GPAs. In spite of the broad conclusions drawn in general for all immigrant groups in the first research question of this study, conclusions for particular immigrant groups may differ, depending on the family backgrounds and the context of their reception into the host nation. This is further explored in the next section.

### Research Question Three:

*Does the relationship between social ties of immigrant parents and their children's GPA vary across schools with different compositions of students?*

Three categories of school composition were considered for answering this research question. These are schools that had a medium percentage of White students, schools with a high percentage of Hispanic students, compared with a heterogeneous group of schools having other compositions. These three types of schools were considered because one of the goals of this research is to study whether school ethnic

composition might have a role to play in strengthening or weakening the effects of parents' social ties on their children's GPA. For instance, would parents' mixed socializing with compatriots and non-compatriots still be beneficial for their children's GPA, as revealed in the results of the first research question, irrespective of whether the child attended medium white, or Hispanic majority schools, or schools with other compositions? I also conducted comparisons between private and public schools and between schools with high, medium, and low eligibility for free lunch, thus reflecting the predominant SES for those student bodies.

Analyses revealed that irrespective of the kind of parents' social ties, children tended to gain in terms of GPA when they attended medium white schools instead of schools with other compositions. Children attending private schools tended to score higher GPAs, compared to children attending public schools. The SES of parents had a role to play in explaining these tendencies. In this study, mean parental income and education in medium white schools were found to be significantly higher than in other schools. Nevertheless, Hispanic majority schools represented significantly higher parental income and education than that available in schools with other compositions. Private school parents had significantly higher income and education than public school parents.

Specifically, children of parents who socialized only with compatriots tended to score lower GPAs when they attended Hispanic majority schools instead of schools with other compositions. Thus, the benefits associated with exclusive socializing with compatriots, as revealed in the results of the first research question, disappeared when the child attended a Hispanic majority school. GPAs of children whose parents socialized

exclusively with compatriots were not significantly different in medium white schools and schools with other compositions. Children of parents who socialized only with compatriots tended to score higher GPAs when they attended medium white schools or schools with other compositions. In other words, the benefits of parents' exclusive socializing with compatriots were realized when children attended medium white schools or schools with other compositions, rather than their attending Hispanic majority schools.

When parents socialized with both compatriots and non-compatriots (i.e., mixed socializing), there were definite benefits in terms of their children's GPA evident in Hispanic majority schools, but not in schools with other compositions. Children of parents displaying mixed socializing patterns did not score significantly different GPAs whether they attended medium white schools or schools with other compositions. Therefore, in terms of GPA, benefits from parents' mixed socializing behavior, as revealed in the results of the first research question, were even higher when the child attended a Hispanic majority school. Interestingly, children in private schools tended to lose in terms of GPA when their parents socialized with both compatriots and non-compatriots.

Regarding neighborhood ties, I found that the negative effects associated with residence in compatriot neighborhoods, as revealed in the results of the first research question, were compensated when parents sent their children to private schools<sup>11</sup>. Thus, the GPA gap between children living in compatriot neighborhoods and those living in non-compatriot neighborhoods became smaller when the child attended a private school.

Specific analyses for different immigrant groups revealed that, for Cubans living in compatriot neighborhoods, attending private schools was beneficial in terms of their

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<sup>11</sup> Private schools in this dataset were Hispanic-majority schools

GPA scores. Also, when Cuban parents socialized with compatriots only, their children tended to gain in terms of GPA when they attended medium white schools. I did not find significant differences in the GPAs for other immigrant groups dependant on the type of schools they attended.

In conclusion, school composition matters in strengthening or weakening the effects of parental social ties on children's GPAs. Medium white schools and schools with other compositions did not significantly alter the benefits associated with parents' exclusive socializing with compatriots, or their mixed socializing with compatriots and non-compatriots. Hispanic majority schools, in contrast, were apt to lower the benefits for GPA associated with parents' exclusive socializing with compatriots while these same schools tended to increase the gains in GPA associated with parents' mixed socializing. Private school attendance, on the other hand, was more apt to lower the benefits for GPA associated with parents' mixed socializing. Also, the disadvantage in GPA associated with residence in compatriot neighborhoods was compensated when the child attended a private school.

#### Research Questions Four:

*Do parents' social ties affect their children's GPA through their participation in PTO or other school activities?*

Analyses revealed that parental social ties did not affect their children's GPAs through parents' participation in PTOs and other school activities. There could be other means by which a balance between intra- and extra-country social ties could improve children's GPAs, such as better monitoring of children, pooling of resources, and

gathering of information about the U.S. school system. Nevertheless, these factors could not be examined due to the lack of survey questions in this study specifically directed towards collection of this information.

### Interpretation of the Main Findings

This study is cross-sectional in nature; therefore, it is important to acknowledge that the results of this study are associative in nature, and that causal inferences cannot be supported solely by these results. Nevertheless, within this limitation, certain patterns can be observed. These are summarized and discussed below. In the interpretations, I explore and speculate possible reasons for the observed results, as well as link these results with previous research.

#### Socializing Patterns:

Even though a very small percentage (7%) of parents in this dataset exercised mixed socializing with both compatriots and non-compatriots, this type of socializing was associated with the highest mean GPA. A more common pattern was socializing with compatriots only (60%) and children of parents exercising this form of socializing also tended to have higher GPAs, compared to children of parents socializing only with non-compatriots. This benefit is especially apparent in disadvantaged family background situations. Still, the gain in GPA, from this kind of socializing was lower than the GPA gain when parents socialized with both compatriots and non-compatriots. Children of parents socializing exclusively with non-compatriots were found to have the lowest GPAs. These results are consistent with my hypotheses that students whose parents have exclusive intra- or extra-country ties are likely to have lower academic outcomes

compared to students whose parents have a balance between intra- and extra-country ties, and that children whose immigrant parents have exclusive intra-country ties are likely to perform better academically than children whose immigrant parents have exclusive extra-country ties.

Even though this study could not explore the reasons for the pattern observed above, one can expect that presence of intra-country ties in socializing patterns of parents might provide children with a positive support base and monitoring system (Bankston, 2004; Coleman, 1988), while presence of extra-country ties might provide parents with requisite information about the new host society, enabling them to make informed choices (Kim & Schneider, 2005).

Presence of intra-country ties exclusively in their socializing patterns may, however, make immigrant parents more dependent on their children for information about the host society. Therefore, instead of the information flowing from parents to children, it might flow from children to parents, leading to situations of role reversal. This is especially likely to hold true when children are at high school levels (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Previous research (Bankston & Zhou, 2002a; Goyette & Conchas, 2002a; Zhou, 1997) has suggested that the relations between immigrant parents and children who have grown up in the U.S. are often strained by cultural gaps. This might reduce parents' normative control over their children. Also, due to their poor knowledge of English, parents may become more dependent on their children for information.

Still, one could speculate that some people within the compatriot network might have formed information bridges outside that network (Burt, 2001). These bridges or weak ties, help in the flow of information from outside into the compatriot network

(Chung & Fischer, 1999). Information flowing in, coupled with the advantages of positive support bases and monitoring systems associated with socializing with compatriots only, can reduce the disruptive effects of role reversals and cultural gaps between parents and children. Therefore, even though children in this study whose parents socialized only with compatriots tended to have lower GPAs than those with mixed socializing ties, they still had higher mean GPAs than those whose parents socialized only with non-compatriots.

Presence of extra-country ties only in the socializing patterns of parents might provide parents with ample information about the host society, but also might leave their children with little social capital in the shape of ethnicity, support base, and monitoring system. This could be harmful for their children in the long run. Relating to the literature on social ties presented in chapter 3, it would seem that both the “bonding capital” that bonds people around a common interest, and the “bridging capital” that helps people share information are important for immigrants (Emerson et al., 2002; Putnam, 2000).

There were differences amongst the study’s main immigrant groups in terms of their socializing patterns. Filipinos had the highest percent (15%) of parents socializing with both compatriots and non-compatriots while Nicaraguans had the lowest percentage (1%). Also observed from descriptive analyses was the fact that the combined percentages of parents demonstrating beneficial forms of socializing (with compatriots only and with both compatriots and non-compatriots), were the highest for Laotians (99%) and Vietnamese (95%). Children of these two groups also tested amongst the highest mean GPAs despite comparatively lower levels of parental income, education, and knowledge of English. On the other hand, Nicaraguans had the highest percentage

(49%) of parents displaying extra-country socializing ties and their children were amongst the lowest mean GPAs.

From the descriptive analyses, I concur with Menjivar's (2000) conclusion that, without resources, social ties do not necessarily build social capital. According to Portes and Rumbaut (2001), there are two types of resources that are important for immigrant parents. These are, first, access to economic goods and job opportunities, and second, resources that reinforce parental normative control such as presence of a co-ethnic network. Lack of economic resources might reduce the opportunities for building a supportive community base, thus even lowering the resources that reinforce parental normative control. Furthermore, co-ethnic immigrant communities that have little internal solidarity and are relatively poor, may not be able to assist new immigrants (Portes & Stepick, 1993). Using this framework of availability of resources in helping or deterring the formation of beneficial social ties and subsequently building social capital, I present three types of situations, whereby parental social ties may, or may not build social capital for immigrant communities.

First, in the case of this study's Mexicans and Nicaraguans, lack of resources in terms of income, education, and U.S. citizenship status, might have dissipated their efforts in building a cohesive community. Parents from these communities might not have considered forming social ties with their own compatriots as yielding any form of social capital for themselves or for their children. Lack of resources might reduce a sense of community amongst compatriots, and could cut off emotional support. Being in low-status jobs might also reduce the amount of information available. I observed that for Mexicans, about 28% of the parents socialized with non-compatriots only. This might



have been because of a lack of social capital that these parents received from forming ties with compatriots. Descriptive analyses confirmed that a comparatively low percentage of Mexican parents thought that compatriots were supportive. Similarly, for Nicaraguans, despite being highly selected compared to other groups, lack of documentation and a constant fear of deportation dissipated their energy into worrying about their family's future in the host nation, rather than building a cohesive and supportive community (Fernandez-Kelly & Curran, 2001; Suarez-Orozco & Paez, 2002). Lack of a supportive community, low job status and resulting limited resources, combined with low knowledge of English, have led to Nicaraguan parents exercising lower authority over their children (Fernandez-Kelly & Curran, 2001).

Second, in the case of Vietnamese and Laotian parents, in spite of lower levels of resources in terms of income, education, and knowledge of English, these parents created social capital for their children by forming cohesive ties amongst themselves that provide a supportive network for themselves and their children. Thus, though Vietnamese and Laotian parents had even lower mean parental income, education, and knowledge of English, compared to Nicaraguans, their children placed amongst the highest mean GPAs in the given sample. Their limited family background situations have been observed in previous literature as well (Hein, 2006; Min, 1995; Rumbaut, 1989; Zhou, 2001). Despite such low levels of resources, they exhibited the highest percentages of beneficial socializing patterns in terms of socializing with compatriots only and mixed socializing with compatriots and non-compatriots. Both the communities also had a high percentage of parents who felt that compatriots were supportive. For Vietnamese parents, these socializing patterns have helped in maintaining strong ethnic ties within their compatriot

communities, promoting and retaining positive cultural values conducive to high academic performance (Bankston, 2004). Thus, these communities use their social ties to convert their consolidated social and cultural resources into social capital, in spite of very low levels of financial resources, and in the process ensure parental normative control. At the same time, it is important to acknowledge as well the possibility of the “model minority student” stereotype playing a biased role in improving the GPAs of Vietnamese and Laotian children.

Third, availability of better resources in terms of income, education, knowledge of English, and U.S. citizenship status, might have motivated some immigrant groups, such as Filipinos and Cubans, to take advantage of these consolidated resources by maintaining ties amongst people of their own community, thus deriving social capital from such ties. At the same time, better knowledge of English, also provides them with an opportunity for forming linkages with other groups in the American society, enabling them to convert these social ties into social capital as well, for their children. Filipinos and Cubans were represented in the economically stronger and highly selected communities in terms of family background variables. However, comparatively among these two communities, Filipinos displayed higher levels of the most beneficial form of socializing i.e., mixed socializing. Even though this research did not demonstrate significant results for interaction effects of socializing ties with Filipino or Cuban origin, it is noteworthy that comparatively, Filipino children had higher mean GPAs within these two groups. Nevertheless, both the Filipino and Cuban communities appeared to be using their social ties as social capital for their children.

To summarize, mixed socializing ties of parents were found to be best for the academic performance for immigrant children, as these offer both bridging and bonding capital. Social ties are used in an instrumental sense, acting as social capital for people who possess the beneficial forms of social ties (Lin, 1999a; Woolcock, 1998). Exclusive socializing with compatriots only also works well, as it provides immigrant parents with better normative control over their children, while at the same time helping in consolidating community cultural capital. These ties also act as cushions against negative outside cultural influences (Bankston et al., 1997).

#### Neighborhood Residence:

In this research, I found that immigrant children living in compatriot neighborhoods tended to have lower GPAs, compared to children living in non-compatriot neighborhoods. In this dataset, about 30% of immigrant parents lived in compatriot neighborhoods. From descriptive analysis, it was observed that the mean parental income, education, and knowledge of English in compatriot neighborhoods were significantly more limited than in non-compatriot neighborhoods. However, even after controlling for these family background variables, it was found that residence in compatriot neighborhoods was associated with lower GPAs.

As noted in chapter 3, neighborhoods represent the most immediate context of reception for newcomer immigrants, and these can provide important sources for information regarding jobs, housing, places to shop, and schools for children (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). However, residence in segregated minority neighborhoods may offer no direct contact with middle-class white Americans and might affect the kind of English

immigrant children are exposed to, types of jobs these networks give access to, and the quality of schools that children attend, in addition to the obvious effects associated with neighborhood poverty (Hanna, 2003; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). These factors together might account for the lower GPAs associated with residence in such neighborhoods. Indeed, the observed significantly lower GPAs for Laotian children residing in compatriot neighborhoods could be due to these factors. Descriptive analyses revealed that Laotians living in compatriot neighborhoods (32% of the Laotians in this sample) were characterized by significantly lower parental income, education, knowledge of English, and U.S. citizenship status, compared to the entire Laotian sample.

Compatriot neighborhoods, however, need not always have a negative connotation. More economically advantaged immigrants, and more importantly, highly select groups such as Filipinos and Cubans, might form ethnic communities in relatively better-off areas where they settle by choice to take advantage of the area's ethnic infrastructure and institutions. Furthermore, such a cohesive compatriot community of compatriot neighborhoods offers intergenerational closure to monitor children's activities (Pamuk, 2004; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). Residence in economically better-off compatriot neighborhoods need not lead to lower GPAs for children as was evident in the case of Filipinos living in compatriot neighborhoods. As noted in chapter 5, the mean income of Filipinos living in compatriot neighborhoods was significantly lower than that of Filipinos living in non-compatriot neighborhoods. Thus, residence in compatriot neighborhoods does not provide Filipinos with higher access to economic resources. Yet their children scored significantly higher GPAs than other immigrants. While living in compatriot neighborhoods might not provide ample advantage in terms of

higher parental income or knowledge of English, it might provide Filipino children with better cultural values and access to community social capital. Note that Filipinos in this dataset had higher income, education, and knowledge of English than other immigrant groups in this sample. Thus, their consolidated socio-economic and cultural wealth was more advantageous for their children when they lived in compatriot neighborhoods. Furthermore, middle-class values associated with beneficial family backgrounds might also have played a role. Such might be the case for Cubans as well, as their descriptive analyses revealed that the mean GPA of Cuban children living in compatriot neighborhoods was significantly higher than the mean GPA for Cuban children living in non-compatriot neighborhoods. However, multi-level analyses failed to reveal significant results for an interaction effect of Cuban origin and residence in compatriot neighborhoods. These findings concur with Pong and Hao's (2007) and Cardak and McDonald's (2004) studies, that in the presence of high SES and educated role models, social ties within such neighborhoods can have a positive effect on immigrant children's schooling. Even though mean income and education of Filipino and Cuban parents living in their respective compatriot neighborhoods was not significantly higher than for those living in non-compatriot neighborhoods, these two communities represented the most affluent immigrant communities in this dataset in terms of parental income, education, knowledge of English, and U.S. citizenship status.

In conclusion, residence within compatriot neighborhoods can be detrimental for children's academic performance if these neighborhoods are devoid of positive adult role models. However, compatriot neighborhoods with high SES can actually be highly

beneficial for the children of its residents by providing access to positive adult role models as well as serving to consolidate positive cultural values of that community.

#### Social Ties at Places of Work:

Work areas can provide immigrant parents opportunities for forming social ties with other productive adults who may be parents themselves or could simply be professionals. These relationships, nevertheless, can give immigrant parents access to information about the American school system. This research, however, was unable to discern any significant effect from working in compatriot work units on children's GPAs for the entire sample. Nonetheless, I found that Nicaraguan children whose parents work in compatriot work units scored significantly lower GPAs than children with parents working in non-compatriot work units. In effect, these social ties at work places for Nicaraguan parents did not build social capital for their children.

#### School Effects:

This research shows that medium white schools and schools with other compositions did not significantly alter the benefits associated with parents' exclusive socializing with compatriots, or their mixed socializing with compatriots and non-compatriots. Therefore, parental socializing ties seemed to have no effect on children's GPAs when they attended medium white schools or schools with other compositions.

Attendance at Hispanic majority schools, however, affected the relationship between parental social ties and children's GPAs. Compared to other schools, Hispanic majority schools conferred clear benefits in terms of GPA gaps to children whose parents

experienced mixed socializing with both compatriots and others. However, at the same time, Hispanic majority schools tended to lower the benefits for GPA of children whose parents displayed exclusive socializing with compatriots. It is possible that mixed socializing in Hispanic majority schools, provided parents with useful information about the school system in the U.S. This also brings forth the issue of effectiveness of schools. It could be speculated that medium white schools and schools with other compositions were more effective in disbursing information to all parents, to the extent that parental social ties were less important in affecting children's GPA. On the other hand, it could be that parents in Hispanic majority schools were more dependent on their own social ties to access this information.

With respect to private schools, I found that parents' mixed socializing with compatriots and non-compatriots predicted the lowest GPAs. In my sample, unlike national samples, private schools were Hispanic majority schools. Thus, the private school effects reported in this study cannot be generalized to the population of private schools.

Another interesting result that emerged in this research with respect to private schools is that the negative effects of residence in compatriot neighborhoods could be largely compensated when parents sent their children to private schools. However, from the descriptive analyses, it was clear that the private schools in this dataset had more than 90% attendance of Cuban students. For Cuban students, descriptive analyses revealed that the mean GPA of Cubans living in compatriot neighborhoods was significantly higher than that of Cubans living in non-compatriot neighborhoods. This was true, irrespective of whether these children attended private or public schools. The private

school effect observed in this research might thus be merely a reflection of the Cuban neighborhood effect. Therefore, once again, the private school effect reported here may not hold true for the entire population of private schools in the U.S.

### Immigrant Assimilation:

As noted in chapter 1, this research aims to examine the extent of assimilation for different groups of immigrants into the host society by examining their levels of intra- and extra-country ties. Recall that a proposition of this research was that higher levels of intra-country ties amongst immigrants would indicate lower levels of assimilation, while higher levels of extra-country ties would indicate higher levels of assimilation. Most of the immigrants were expected to lie somewhere within this continuum, with some exhibiting higher levels of intra- and lower levels of extra-country ties, and others exhibiting higher levels of extra- and lower levels of intra-country ties. With this idea in mind, I explored the interaction effects of each pair of ties, such as the effect of socializing exclusively with compatriots and living in compatriot neighborhoods. However, I failed to find significant results for these interaction effects and they have not been reported in my results. The issue of extent of assimilation remains unanswered in this research. Nevertheless, within socializing ties we did observe that parents' mixed socializing, indicating some degrees of assimilation into the host society was better for children's GPAs than socializing with compatriots only. On the other hand, complete assimilation, indicated by socializing with non-compatriots only, yielded the worst results in terms of the children's GPAs.



This research also supports Portes and Rumbaut's (2001) contention that it is not only the immigrants' individual characteristics, such as their age, education, occupational skills, wealth, and knowledge of English, that determine their patterns of assimilation, whether upward or downward, or selective assimilation as recognized by the segmented assimilation theory. In spite of low human and economic capital, supportive governmental assistance has helped immigrants with refugee status such as Cubans, Vietnamese, and Laotians, form supportive communities that have aided their socializing and subsequent assimilation process. On the other hand, Mexicans and Nicaraguans have faced not only exclusionary policies from the host nation, but also ambivalent attitudes from the native population, leading to their lack of formation of supportive within-community networks and consequently aiding in their downward assimilation.

### Discussion and Implications

The last two decades have seen a dramatic rise in the population of immigrants in the United States. Immigration to a new society involves incurring many expenses, leaving loved ones, and often learning a new language and culture (Portes & Rumbaut, 1996). Many parents experience lowering of their social status and their education does not derive the same returns as the education of natives. In the face of these set-backs, many immigrants begin to focus on their children's education as a key to a better future (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). Acquiring information about how the school system in the host society works is important for those immigrant parents wishing to ensure academic success for their children. This requires active effort on the part of

immigrant parents through the formation of social ties with different groups in the new society. Social ties could be formed within and outside compatriot communities.

This study explored the relationships between social ties of immigrant parents and their children's GPAs. One of the findings of this research was that while parents' intra-country ties in the form of decision to reside in compatriot neighborhoods might be harmful for children's academic performance, their intra-country ties in the form of socializing exclusively with compatriots was beneficial. It was also favorable for children's GPAs when immigrant parents socialized with both compatriots and others. Thus, this research revealed the importance of both the concepts of "closure" and "bridging capital", within the broad literature of social capital and social ties, indicating its theoretical implications. It incorporates recent changes that broaden the conceptualization of social capital to include the concept of social ties. Although, the existing literature regarding social-ties is focused primarily on the access to occupational information that improves one's social status, this study is one of the first that applies this concept to children's educational achievement. Social ties emerge in this research as important determinants for children's academic performance in the host nation and for their instrumental values of giving access to information to parents, not otherwise available.

Furthermore, this research illuminates the current discussions regarding a strong community of parents generating social capital for schools and children. This line of research is extended in three ways. First, it looks beyond racial/ethnic differences in parental social relations to examine social ties by parents' nativity. Race, ethnicity, and social class have been found to interfere with the social capital aspect of parental

participation (Horvat et al., 2003; Lareau, 1987; Lareau & Horvat, 1999). However, less was known about immigrant parents' social ties. Second, previous research on parental community focused primarily on parents' networks with other parents at school. This research looks further into different types of parental social ties as defined by location, such as the work place or the residential neighborhoods, and by their socializing preferences, irrespective of networks confined within schools. Third, this research incorporates immigrant children's diversity by taking account of their parents' countries of origin.

This study brings out the importance of different types of social ties between parents in improving the academic performance of their children. This research has established that neither do all immigrant parents from different countries of origin display similar kinds of social ties, nor do similar kinds of social ties for parents from different countries of origin, act equally in affecting their children's GPA. Thus, compared with children living in non-compatriot neighborhoods, residence in compatriot neighborhoods proved to be beneficial for Filipino children's GPA but harmful for Laotian children's GPA. For children from other countries of origin, it produced no significantly different results. At the classroom level, this research informs teachers to be more sensitive towards immigrant children's particular country of origin, instead of simply categorizing them into broad groupings such as "Asians" or "Hispanics". While Asians tend to be more positively selected than Hispanics, within these broad groups, the levels of positive selection might differ, which in turn might affect the educational performance of children of these immigrants.

Another policy implication of this study is for schools to provide platforms for immigrant parents to meet and strengthen their social ties. Alternatively, in the absence of strong social ties among parents, schools should actively reach out to parents, give them information about school programs, and encourage them to participate in school events. These measures will promote trust between parents and school authorities and at the same time reduce any negative effects from parental social ties on their children's GPAs. Also, the school's effectiveness will improve because immigrant children will perform better. For instance, in this research we observed that in medium white schools and in schools with other compositions there was less difference in the GPAs of immigrant children based on their parents' social ties, while in schools with high percentage of Hispanic students, there were significant differences in the GPAs of children when scrutinized by their parents' socializing patterns.

Specifically, a Parent Outreach study conducted by PALMS (Postsecondary Access to Latino Middle-Grades Students) found that better parent-school involvement requires schools to learn about the local community and recruit people who can act as linguistic and cultural liaisons. Learning about the local community requires knowledge about countries of origin of parents, where parents work, and what challenges they and their children face. Furthermore, schools can tap into community resources by identifying individuals who are bilingual and well-acquainted with the local education system, and who can act as a trustworthy bridge between parents and school personnel. Besides, parents need to be equipped with advocacy skills that would ensure that parents have requisite information about course choices, so that they could use it to advocate for their children's education (Clark & Dorris, 2006).

This study informs future research about not viewing the parental body as one homogenous group. Rather, policy makers need to adopt a framework that examines how the intersections of multiple social relationships are constructed to produce equities or inequities (Knight & Oesterreich, 2002). The constructed community of a multi-ethnic society needs to represent the variety, and only then will the social capital aspect of community participation in schools be fully realized, and the schools and students will be able to reap the benefits of this higher community participation.

### Limitations of the Study

This study has some important limitations that should be taken into account. First and foremost, the sample size of this data is small, making it hard to draw statistically significant conclusions for many questions. Both the sample sizes of students and schools are low for this study, which has a possibility of affecting the degrees of freedom when a number of independent variables are considered. In fact, none of the interaction effect variables for the parental social ties are found to be statistically significant. This has restricted my analysis of the levels of assimilation for different immigrant groups. Also, within this sample size restriction, the possibility of further analyses for different countries of origin is limited.

Second, the cross-sectional design of this study is a major limitation. As such, the results of this study are fundamentally associative and cannot support causal inferences. The CILS dataset by itself is longitudinal, but because this particular study relies primarily on a parents' questionnaire, which was carried out in the second phase of the CILS study, this study could not utilize the rich information collected in the first phase.

In the same vein, because the second phase only collected data on the GPAs of the students, I had to keep GPA as the only outcome variable. The first phase of the CILS dataset had more options, such as GPA and standardized test scores.

A major limitation with my analysis is the use of a heterogeneous group called “others” as a comparison group for the major countries of origin. The reason for this is that this dataset is based in two entirely different cities, and there is no single immigrant group that is common across the two cities. Even though Mexicans are the only immigrant group that has presence in both the cities, the number of Mexicans is much lower in Miami than in San Diego. Furthermore, Mexicans are a heterogeneous group, as noted in chapter 3. Therefore, context and family backgrounds of Mexicans settled in the two cities might be very different. Hence, they could not be used as the reference group. Having said that, using others as a reference group is consistent with prior research that has used CILS data (Portes & Hao, 1998; Portes & MacLeod, 1996).

Similarly, for schools’ ethnic composition, medium white and Hispanic majority schools have been compared with a heterogeneous group called “schools with other compositions”. As shown in chapter 5, some of these schools are black majority schools, others have a high percentage of Asian students, and still others have a more diverse population.

On a similar note, as the second wave survey of the CILS dataset does not provide information about the ethnic composition of students in the schools, I have used data from the CCD and PSS for the same. Instead of using broad ethnic compositions in terms of Whites, Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians, this study could have benefited from data providing information about specific groups, such as Cubans, Filipinos, and other

immigrant groups. This would have made the effects of school composition clearer, by indicating whether greater presence of a particular ethnic group in a school helps students of that school perform better.

Also, within the school-level data, there are inconsistencies in the relationship between GPAs and schools with low eligibility for free lunch, which is usually taken as a proxy for higher SES for that student body. Normally, one would expect this relationship to be positive, but for this dataset, this relationship was found to be negative. Further analyses revealed that this inconsistency was due to the differences in the two cities. Immigrants in San Diego were served by schools that had a high percentage of students eligible for free lunch compared to Miami, and yet, the GPA scores in San Diego were significantly higher than in Miami. In spite of identifying the cities' uniqueness as being the cause of the inconsistencies, I was unable to carry out separate analyses for the two cities due to sample restrictions.

Even though this study tried to examine the ways in which parental social ties affect children's GPAs, this analysis was restricted by the nature and scope of the survey questions. Only one mechanism explaining the relationship between social ties and GPAs could be examined, namely, parents' participation in PTOs and school activities. However, it failed to yield satisfactory and convincing answers in this research. And while this study speculates that a better balance between intra- and extra-country ties can lead to better monitoring of children, pooling of resources, and gathering of information about the school system in U.S., these factors could not be examined, because of the absence of such questions in the parental survey. Thus, while the study explores whether intra- and extra-country social ties of immigrant parents affect their children's academic

performance, a detailed qualitative study would be more suitable for examining the mechanism of this relationship. Also, this study does not indicate why differences exist in the relationship between social ties and academic performance for parents belonging to different immigrant groups.

Additionally, though the models used in this research have tried to operationalize the concepts of intra- and extra-country networks to represent parental social ties, the variables used to operationalize these constructs might not be adequate. For instance, some immigrant groups may have ethnic organizations in the cities with the intent to encourage intermingling of people belonging to these groups. These organizations or any other platform for building social ties, in addition to places of work and friend circles, can be a great source of information for parents. Such information could not be used in this research to operationalize the variables.

#### Directions for Future Research

This study is cross-sectional in nature, whereby causal inferences could not be drawn regarding the relationship between parental social ties and GPAs of children. Therefore, an extension of this study could involve collection and analysis of longitudinal data, in which variables describing parental social ties are given at the first wave, and information about the outcome variables is given in the second. It would also be helpful to examine outcome variables like standardized test scores and drop-out rates of students, in addition to GPAs and larger sample size would help as well.

Second, further city-wise research would be more helpful in understanding the dynamics of one particular city, especially a city that is an important immigrant gateway



or the preferred area of settlement for large groups of immigrants. It could also be found whether the city itself has an impact on how immigrants assimilate and whether it helps their children perform better in school. For instance, this study finds that a larger percentage of schools serving immigrant students in San Diego have high percentages of students eligible for free lunch compared to Miami, and yet, these schools produce higher mean GPAs, than schools in Miami. Thus, the concepts of high poverty schools may be different in the two cities and it would be more helpful to look at one city at a time. Also, as identified under limitations, I had to use “others” as a comparative group for the six major countries of origin in this study. Rather, for one particular city, one can compare different groups of immigrants within that city.

A major focus for further research would be to identify the factors that mediate the relationship between parental social ties and children’s academic performance. It would be interesting to find whether a balance between intra- and extra-country socializing ties indeed helps in better monitoring of children, pooling of resources, and gathering of information, or whether some additional factors are also helping. On a similar note, it would be interesting to explore why differences exist between immigrant groups in their relationship between parental social ties and children’s academic performance.

Parental social ties is a complex concept and better variables could be designed to study this concept. Better measures to operationalize the concepts of intra- and extra-country ties could be explored. Also, more platforms for forming such ties could be identified and taken into account as an extension of this research.

There is also a need to understand the school-level difference in explaining the relationship between parental social ties and GPAs. The potential findings of such research could further illuminate why differences exist for schools with different ethnic compositions. This would be immensely helpful in making schools more effective in serving immigrant populations.

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## APPENDIX

Table A.1: Comparison of Family Background Variables for Parents belonging to different Immigrant Groups

Parents' Country of Origin and Social Ties	Education	Parents' Income	Knowledge of English
Nicaraguan parents	6.64	9.35	2.65
Nicaraguan parents working in compatriot units	6.26	9.47	2.67
Filipino parents	7.36	10.88	3.60
Filipino parents living in compatriot neighborhoods	7.44	10.78	3.62
Laotian parents	2.38	9.01	1.88
Laotian parents living in compatriot neighborhoods	1.58	8.25	1.71

Table A.2: Comparison of SES by Parents' Socializing Patterns when Children attend different types of Hispanic-majority Schools

Socializing Patterns	Type of Hispanic majority school			
	Public Schools (N=619)		Private Schools (N=84)	
	Education	Income	Education	Income
Socializing: Compatriots only	5.23	9.37	6.96	11.41
Socializing: Mixed	4.20	8.87	9.50	14.50
Socializing: Non-compatriots only	5.85	9.77	8.00	13.37

Table A.3: Comparison of SES by Residence in Neighborhoods when Children attend different types of Hispanic majority Schools

Residence	Type of Hispanic majority school			
	Public Schools (N=619)		Private Schools (N=84)	
	Education	Income	Education	Income
Compatriot neighborhoods	4.72	9.40	6.54	11.17
Non-compatriot neighborhoods	5.72	9.56	7.97	12.57

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