

Study looks at U.S. immigrant assimilation

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While most adult children of U.S. immigrants experience upward economic and social mobility, a new study finds many do not, due to a lack of education.

The research -- the largest and longest-running study of children of immigrants yet conducted -- confirms the critical importance of education.

Led by sociologists Ruben Rumbaut of the University of California-Irvine and Alejandro Portes of Princeton University, the study shows many such young adult children of immigrants have lower levels of education, lower incomes, higher birth rates and higher levels of incarceration.

Furthermore, the researchers found it is the U.S.-born children of Mexican, Haitian and West Indian immigrants who experience those problems in the largest proportions.

"The greatest educational disadvantage is found among children of Mexican immigrants and Laotian and Cambodian refugees in our sample -- close to 40 percent of whom did not go beyond a high school diploma," said Rumbaut. "Education is the key to successful upward mobility among children of immigrants, so the discrepancies that emerge in educational achievement among immigrant groups tend to persist in trends for income, employment and incarceration."

The study appears online this week in the Migration Information Source.

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