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Socioeconomic Status of Second-Generation Southeast Asians: New Evidence and Analysis

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Cover Page Footnote

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Socioeconomic Status of Second-Generation Southeast Asians: New Evidence and Analysis

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Abstract

Over a million refugees and other immigrants arrived in the United States from Southeast Asia starting in 1975. Forty-five years later, their adult children have completed their education in the United States and entered the labor force. This study uses a large microdata sample from the American Community Survey to describe and compare the socioeconomic status of Southeast Asian American adults and native-born white adults. Results are disaggregated by gender, generation (Generation 1.5 and Generation 2), and ethnic group (Hmong, other Laotian, Cambodian, and Vietnamese). Regression analysis—controlling for age, educational attainment, and other factors—shows that native-born white men generally have higher predicted median hourly wages and earnings and higher labor force participation rates than Southeast Asian men, although Vietnamese men surpass white men in some measures. On the other hand, Southeast Asian women's predicted median wages, earnings, and labor force participation rates exceed those of native-born white women.

Keywords: immigrant assimilation, Hmong Americans, Southeast Asian Americans, second-generation, Generation 1.5, wages, earnings, socioeconomic status

Introduction

Starting in 1975, over 1.5 million Southeast Asian refugees and other immigrants arrived in the United States, following the end of the Vietnam War (Zong and Batalova 2016). Along with immigrants from Latin America, they represented a sharp turn in immigration history away from the European origins that had prevailed earlier. On average, Southeast Asian refugees brought lower levels of education and English language fluency than earlier immigrants, and many struggled to gain a foothold in the American labor market. But in the last forty-five years, first-

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generation Southeast Asians have enjoyed considerable economic progress, on average, with some surpassing native-born Americans in socioeconomic status.

With the passage of time, we can now also survey the economic progress of second-generation Southeast Asian Americans—the children of the postwar immigrants. Those who were born in 1975 are now forty-five years old, and some younger adults—including children in Generation 1.5 who arrived in the last wave of Hmong refugees in the early 2000s—are now entering the labor force. How are second-generation Southeast Asian Americans faring in the American labor market? The long, rich history of immigration in the United States points to many possible outcomes. Are second-generation Southeast Asian Americans another example of an Asian “model minority,” surpassing other native-born Americans in educational attainment, occupational status, and income? Or have their parents’ challenges persisted in the next generation, so second-generation adults are falling short of the American mainstream? This study analyzes a large microdata sample to address these questions. The data show that the average socioeconomic status of second-generation Southeast Asian Americans is about equal to that of other native-born Americans. Digging deeper into this picture of broad parity, we see significant differences between men and women, between adults with ancestral origins in different Southeast Asian countries, and between Generation 1.5 and Generation 2.

Earlier research has consistently shown that second-generation immigrant adults tend to have higher educational attainment, wages, and earnings than their parents, and also higher levels than other native-born American adults (Hum & Simpson, 2007; Card et. al., 2000; Trevelyan et al., 2016; Chiswick & DebBurman, 2004). These studies looked at immigrants in general or in broad categories—not Southeast Asians in particular. The success of second-generation adults depends a lot on the educational attainment, occupations, and cultural bequests of their parents, so second-generation earnings are correlated with first-generation earnings (Borjas, 1994). Borjas (1994) suggests that another factor in the “intergenerational transmission of skills” is “the average quality of the ethnic environment” in which children grow up—“ethnic capital”—so immigrant communities play an important role in determining second- and later-generation outcomes.

Since Southeast Asian first-generation immigrants had lower levels of human capital and occupational status than other Asian immigrants and native-born workers, second-generation Southeast Asian Americans may have started out with some disadvantages. The insight that immigrant assimilation in the second and later generations follows divergent pathways growing out of the distinct histories and cultures of different immigrant groups is embodied in segmented assimilation theories (Rumbaut, 1994; Portes et al., 2009; Xiong, 2013). These posit that different ethnic groups’ pre-immigration experiences and post-immigration reception tend to lead the second generation into one of three outcomes: “assimilation into the white middle-class majority; ... downward mobility and assimilation into the inner-city underclass; [or] upward mobility and heightened ethnic awareness within solidary immigrant communities” (Rumbaut, 1994, p. 753). In a series of longitudinal surveys of second-generation children and young adults in San Diego from 1992 to 2002, Portes et al. (2009) found that Laotian and Cambodian children were less likely than children from other groups—and no more likely than their first-generation parents—to have graduated from high school, and their families were more likely to be living in poverty.¹ Nevertheless, despite their low socioeconomic status, these children were unlikely to follow the path of “downward assimilation.” The authors suggest that children in these groups, “with lower levels of human capital but ensconced in strong co-ethnic communities,” benefited from a process of “selective acculturation,” characterized by simultaneous openness to American culture and respect for their ethnic traditional roots, which is “associated with positive outcomes

because youths learn to appreciate and respect the culture of their parents and because command of another language gives them a superior cognitive vantage point, as well as a valuable economic tool” (Portes et al., 2009, pp. 1081–1082).

Like Portes et al. (2009) and Rumbaut (1994), other studies of second-generation Southeast Asian Americans often focused on students’ success in school and their expectations regarding further educational attainment (Hao & Bonstead-Bruns, 1998; Goyette & Xie, 1999). This made sense, since education is a critical determinant of eventual success in the labor market, an important channel for intergenerational transmission of parents’ skills and values, and the setting for critically important processes of racialization and marginalization. The research focus on educational achievements was also a practical necessity, since the second-generation Southeast Asian American cohort was still very young (and only recently out of school) at the time of those studies.

The socioeconomic success of Asian Americans as a broad group inspired the “model minority” paradigm, which also (like segmented assimilation theory) asserts that the diverse circumstances of different ethnic groups lead to different assimilation outcomes. Proponents of the model minority stereotype argue that Asian Americans have achieved high average levels of socioeconomic status as a result of essential cultural attributes. Educational attainment plays a key role in this story: Asian traditional values and culture lead Asian Americans to achieve high levels of education, which in turn opens doors to high-status, highly paid professional occupations. This success is transmitted from one generation to the next, as the children of highly educated Asian Americans grow up with every advantage and high expectations, and consequently repeat their parents’ success. While the model minority paradigm predicts positive outcomes for Asian Americans, Ngo and Lee (2007), Lai (2013), Chou and Feagin (2015), and Lee et al. (2017) point out that it in fact serves to perpetuate and deepen racial discrimination against Asian Americans.

Based on evidence of parity between economic outcomes for Asian Americans and native-born whites, Sakamoto et al. (2009) and Kim and Sakamoto (2010) argued that Asian Americans were no longer held back by racial discrimination in the United States, and social class (mediated by educational attainment) had largely supplanted race as a central determinant of their socioeconomic status. Hirschman and Wong (1984) suggested that the evidence instead points to persistent racial discrimination against Asian Americans, since they just achieve socioeconomic parity with native-born whites, not superiority, as a result of their higher levels of educational attainment and professional advancement. In an analysis of Canadian data from 2011, Boyd and Tian (2016) concluded that second-generation Asians’ higher levels of education indeed led to higher earnings, indicating that their race was not a significant barrier. Kim and Sakamoto (2014) showed that the earnings of less-educated Asian American men were significantly lower than those of less-educated native-born white men, suggesting that racial discrimination is significant for Asian American men whose education does not meet the standard portrayed in the model minority stereotype.

Scholars who have explored the model-minority hypothesis are usually quick to acknowledge that the Asian American category is too broad, encompassing a diverse collection of groups with sharply different origins and outcomes. In the literature on segmented assimilation theory and the model minority paradigm, some studies (such as Kim & Sakamoto, 2014) report disaggregated data and results for Vietnamese Americans; but their data samples included relatively few Southeast Asian Americans from other origins, so they were usually cast into a residual “other Asians” category. In this article we can take a closer look at Hmong Americans,

Laotian Americans, and Cambodian Americans, since our data include thousands of observations in these groups, not hundreds.

The model minority stereotype was initially inspired by the success of Asians who arrived in the United States as economic immigrants, not refugees. People who come to the United States seeking opportunity tend to be younger, highly motivated, better educated, and often have roots in cultures that value hard work and education (Chiswick, 1979). These attributes help to explain why many Asian Americans have been so successful. In contrast, Southeast Asian immigrants arrived more recently, often as refugees fleeing from war-torn regions, and they were not self-selected for socioeconomic potential. Cortes (2004) and Chin and Cortes (2015) show that refugees typically earn lower wages and incomes than economic immigrants upon arrival in the United States, since they have lower levels of human capital; and then they tend to experience faster economic progress in subsequent years. Cortes's model focuses on wages and earnings for first-generation immigrants, not the second generation; but the distinction between refugees and economic immigrants has interesting implications for Southeast Asian Americans. Since the values and skills of immigrants tend to be echoed in later generations, Southeast Asian Americans are likely to follow different assimilation pathways from those of earlier Asian cohorts; and the economic outcomes for children of Southeast Asian immigrants who arrived in the United States earlier (who were more likely to be refugees) might differ from children of economic and kinship immigrants who arrived later.

Among the few studies that provide a disaggregated picture of the socioeconomic status of Southeast Asian American groups, Sakamoto and Woo (2007) found that second-generation Vietnamese had “extraordinarily high average values” of educational attainment, hourly wages, and professional advancement compared with native-born whites and other groups, while other second-generation Southeast Asians had significantly lower educational attainment and somewhat lower hourly wages than native-born whites. Their sample, from the 2000 U.S. Census, was relatively small and only included adults up to age 33. In a broad summary based on these results, Sakamoto et al. (2009) concluded that Cambodians, Hmong, Laotians, and Vietnamese “do not ... face any substantial and systematic disadvantage in the contemporary labor market when controlling for highest educational level completed and other basic demographic variables” (p. 267).

The analysis in the present article cannot settle questions raised by segmented assimilation theory or the model minority paradigm, but the data and econometric results presented here can shed light on their merits. While the microdata used in this study describe the lives of thousands of Southeast Asian Americans in remarkably rich detail, the data cannot capture their values, expectations, ambitions, and frustrations, or the ways they are perceived—racialized and minoritized—by their communities and society more broadly. The more modest goal is to provide a valuable statistical perspective for important critical discourses regarding issues of race in Southeast Asian Americans' lives.

This study describes and analyzes the median hourly wages, median earnings, and labor force participation rates of second-generation Southeast Asians, with a focus on Hmong Americans. Socioeconomic outcomes are disaggregated to the level of ethnic groups, genders, and generations. This article is the first to analyze recent data on labor market outcomes of second-generation Southeast Asian Americans; the first to provide evidence on wages, earnings, and employment for second-generation Southeast Asian Americans in their middle years; and the first to measure whether outcomes differ between Southeast Asian adults in Generation 1.5 and Generation 2.

Data

This study uses microdata from large American Community Survey (ACS) samples provided by IPUMS-USA (Ruggles et al., 2020). Southeast Asian Americans represent a small share of each year's sample, so data from many years are pooled in order to increase the sample size. The data include 1-in-240 (approximately) ACS samples from 2001 through 2004 and 1% ACS samples from each year from 2005 through 2018. The database also includes a 0.05% random sample of native-born, white adults as a comparison group.

In the ACS data, Southeast Asian Americans can be identified using three indicators: reported race, ancestry, or language spoken at home. This study uses broad definitions of the Hmong, Laotian, Cambodian, and Vietnamese ethnic groups, categorizing a person as a member of one of the four mutually exclusive groups if they claim that ethnic identity in at least one of the three indicators. In the relatively few cases where this categorization is ambiguous—for example, if a person reports that their race is Hmong and their ancestry is Cambodian—priority is given to the race indicator. While most Hmong Americans have ancestral roots in Laos, the term “Laotian” is used here to refer to non-Hmong Laotians.

Wages, incomes, and earnings in this study are measured in 2016 dollars. The observations in our pooled sample include individual weights, and the weights are applied throughout the analysis (Solon et al., 2015).² (The results change only slightly if the analysis is performed using the unweighted data.) The tables of results report the numbers of observations in the unweighted sample.

The focus here is on prime-working-age adults (25 to 54 years old). The Southeast Asian American groups in the sample include two categories: second-generation adults, born in the United States in 1975 or later, and Generation 1.5 immigrants, who were foreign-born and arrived in the United States in 1975 or later as children younger than 12 years old. Based on these definitions, the 2001 sample includes some Southeast Asian second-generation adults who had just reached prime working age and Generation 1.5 adults up to 37 years old. In 2018, the last year in the pooled sample, second-generation Southeast Asians could be as old as 43 years, and Generation 1.5 adults could be up to 54 years old. The comparison group includes native-born white adults aged 25 to 54.

In this study, all Southeast Asian American adults born in the United States in 1975 or later are included in the “second generation” category. The data do not provide the birthplaces of individuals' parents (unless they were living in the same household), so the second-generation category mistakenly includes some third-generation adults as well; but their number is likely very small. Individuals might be incorrectly categorized as second-generation for two reasons. First, the parents of some adults in our sample were themselves second-generation immigrants born after 1975. Given the age limits on the sample, misclassifications of this type must be rare. Second, other adults in the sample may have parents who lived in the United States before 1975. This must also be rare, since the Southeast Asian American population was relatively small before 1975. The U.S. Census did not identify residents as specifically Vietnamese, Laotian, or Cambodian before 1980; but data from the federal Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) indicate that only 18,558 Southeast Asian immigrants—almost all from Vietnam—were admitted to the United States from 1955 to 1974, and “only a few” arrived before 1955 (Gordon 1987, p. 154). By 1980, the Census Bureau reported that 231,120 U.S. residents were born in Vietnam, 54,881 were born in Laos, and 20,175 were born in Cambodia; but these included the large first wave of Southeast Asian refugees (Gibson & Jung, 2006). The inclusion of some third- or subsequent-generation adults in our second-generation sample might bias our estimates of Southeast Asian socioeconomic

progress, but it is difficult to predict the direction of the bias. There is some evidence that second-generation immigrants are more likely than third-generation immigrants to complete a college degree, while the evidence on relative income and earnings is mixed (Yang, 2004; Gambino, 2017; Trevelyan et al., 2016). In any case, our sample is likely to include very few third-generation adults, so any resulting bias is probably small.

Educational Attainment and Labor Market Outcomes Across Ethnic Groups, Genders, and Generations

Table 1 displays summary statistics for Southeast Asian working-age adults in Generation 1.5 and Generation 2, as well as comparative statistics for white adults born in the United States (Means and medians in Table 1 were calculated using person weights in the data, while sample sizes and standard errors of means in the table are based on unweighted data.)

Table 1
Summary Statistics by Group, Gender, and Generation

	Hmong adults							
	Generation 1.5				Generation 2			
	men		women		men		women	
	mean or median	s.d. of mean	mean or median	s.d. of mean	mean or median	s.d. of mean	mean or median	s.d. of mean
Age	33.8	0.1	33.3	0.2	29.3	0.1	29.1	0.1
In the labor force	85.9%	0.9%	83.8%	0.9%	86.1%	0.9%	84.8%	1.0%
Low English	3.9%	0.5%	4.2%	0.5%	1.9%	0.3%	2.1%	0.3%
Speaks English at home	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Married	57.2%	1.2%	63.1%	1.2%	33.2%	1.2%	46.7%	1.3%
Median household income	\$74,284	\$1,520	\$70,296	\$1,536	\$76,440	\$1,939	\$72,520	\$1,654
At Least High School	94.3%	0.6%	95.3%	0.5%	94.2%	0.6%	95.9%	0.5%
College Grad	26.8%	1.1%	28.4%	1.1%	17.6%	1.0%	27.7%	1.2%
Children under age 5	0.6	0.02	0.5	0.02	0.4	0.02	0.5	0.02
Children 5 and older	1.3	0.04	1.9	0.04	0.4	0.02	0.9	0.03
N	1709		1628		1560		1505	

Table 1 (*cont.*)

	Working Hmong adults							
	Generation 1.5				Generation 2			
	men		women		men		women	
	mean or median	s.d. of mean	mean or median	s.d. of mean	mean or median	s.d. of mean	mean or median	s.d. of mean
Median hourly wage	\$18.44	\$0.89	\$16.88	\$0.62	\$15.71	\$0.71	\$15.72	\$0.38
Median earnings	\$36,960	\$1,102	\$32,100	\$760	\$31,310	\$836	\$29,120	\$726
Annual hours worked	1965.6	16.9	1823.2	16.9	1887.0	18.1	1801.5	18.4
SEI	40.7	0.6	45.4	0.6	37.1	0.6	46.5	0.6
At Least HS	96.6%	0.5%	96.7%	0.5%	95.8%	0.5%	97.2%	0.4%
College Grad	28.7%	1.2%	31.1%	1.3%	19.1%	1.1%	30.5%	1.3%
N	1413		1341		1292		1262	

Table 1 (*cont.*)

	Laotian adults							
	Generation 1.5				Generation 2			
	men		women		men		women	
	mean or median	s.d. of mean	mean or median	s.d. of mean	mean or median	s.d. of mean	mean or median	s.d. of mean
Age	35.2	0.1	34.8	0.1	29.1	0.1	29.1	0.1
In the labor force	85.3%	0.8%	82.5%	0.8%	85.9%	1.2%	84.3%	1.2%
Low English	3.7%	0.4%	2.9%	0.3%	1.5%	0.4%	0.8%	0.3%
Speaks English at home	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Married	40.9%	1.1%	51.5%	1.0%	22.4%	1.3%	32.3%	1.5%
Median household income	\$81,795	\$1,508	\$78,217	\$1,469	\$76,450	\$2,158	\$75,264	\$2,277
At Least High School	90.6%	0.6%	94.5%	0.5%	92.4%	0.9%	95.9%	0.6%
College Grad	21.9%	0.9%	28.3%	1.0%	15.9%	1.1%	29.3%	1.5%
Children under age 5	0.3	0.01	0.4	0.01	0.2	0.02	0.3	0.02
Children 5 and older	0.6	0.02	1.1	0.02	0.3	0.02	0.5	0.03
N	2205		2369		1040		979	

	Working Laotian adults							
	Generation 1.5				Generation 2			
	men		women		men		women	
	mean or median	s.d. of mean	mean or median	s.d. of mean	mean or median	s.d. of mean	mean or median	s.d. of mean
Median hourly wage	\$19.51	\$0.64	\$17.83	\$0.66	\$15.62	\$0.55	\$16.09	\$0.70
Median earnings	\$40,000	\$926	\$34,440	\$719	\$30,300	\$1,103	\$31,360	\$899
Annual hours worked	2018.5	15.3	1851.3	14.6	1854.5	22.5	1836.2	23.7
SEI	39.9	0.6	45.3	0.5	37.0	0.8	45.3	0.7
At Least HS	92.5%	0.6%	95.8%	0.4%	93.6%	0.9%	97.0%	0.6%
College Grad	23.9%	1.0%	30.9%	1.1%	16.8%	1.3%	32.9%	1.7%
N	1794		1920		828		788	

Table 1 (*cont.*)

	Cambodian adults							
	Generation 1.5				Generation 2			
	men		women		men		women	
	mean or median	s.d. of mean	mean or median	s.d. of mean	mean or median	s.d. of mean	mean or median	s.d. of mean
Age	34.0	0.1	34.1	0.1	29.1	0.1	28.9	0.1
In the labor force	87.0%	0.7%	80.3%	0.8%	84.7%	1.1%	83.2%	1.0%
Low English Speaks English at home	3.9%	0.4%	4.6%	0.4%	1.9%	0.4%	2.0%	0.4%
Married	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Median household income	43.6%	1.1%	50.6%	1.0%	22.5%	1.2%	32.1%	1.3%
At Least High School	\$82,096	\$1,612	\$80,250	\$1,745	\$77,040	\$2,123	\$79,380	\$2,032
College Grad	90.9%	0.6%	92.5%	0.5%	91.5%	0.8%	95.1%	0.5%
Children under age 5	25.8%	1.0%	30.5%	1.0%	23.4%	1.2%	31.8%	1.3%
Children 5 and older	0.3	0.01	0.4	0.01	0.2	0.01	0.3	0.02
N	0.6	0.02	1.0	0.03	0.2	0.02	0.5	0.02
	2186		2317		1333		1368	
	Working Cambodian adults							
	Generation 1.5				Generation 2			
	men		women		men		women	
	mean or median	s.d. of mean	mean or median	s.d. of mean	mean or median	s.d. of mean	mean or median	s.d. of mean
Median hourly wage	\$20.77	\$0.93	\$17.80	\$0.73	\$16.23	\$0.57	\$16.91	\$0.70
Median earnings	\$41,760	\$1,038	\$34,800	\$956	\$30,720	\$1,166	\$30,750	\$926
Annual hours worked	1979.4	15.6	1837.3	15.3	1898.5	21.9	1791.9	19.7
SEI	41.3	0.6	47.7	0.5	40.7	0.7	47.3	0.6
At Least HS	93.3%	0.6%	94.4%	0.5%	94.7%	0.7%	95.9%	0.5%
College Grad	28.5%	1.1%	33.8%	1.1%	25.8%	1.4%	35.1%	1.5%
N	1812		1824		1064		1118	

Table 1 (*cont.*)

	Vietnamese adults							
	Generation 1.5				Generation 2			
	men		women		men		women	
	mean or median	s.d. of mean	mean or median	s.d. of mean	mean or median	s.d. of mean	mean or median	s.d. of mean
Age	35.6	0.1	35.6	0.1	29.9	0.1	29.9	0.1
In the labor force	89.0%	0.3%	82.4%	0.4%	87.3%	0.4%	85.4%	0.5%
Low English Speaks English	3.7%	0.2%	4.0%	0.2%	1.9%	0.2%	1.8%	0.2%
at home	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Married	49.3%	0.5%	58.4%	0.5%	26.0%	0.6%	35.8%	0.6%
Median household income	\$98,500	\$960	\$107,968	\$1,116	\$95,200	\$1,226	\$98,400	\$1,386
At Least High School	95.5%	0.2%	96.6%	0.2%	96.6%	0.2%	97.3%	0.2%
College Grad	51.1%	0.5%	60.3%	0.5%	49.7%	0.7%	61.4%	0.6%
Children under age 5	0.3	0.01	0.3	0.01	0.2	0.01	0.3	0.01
Children 5 and older	0.5	0.01	0.7	0.01	0.1	0.01	0.3	0.01
N	11,636		11,354		5754		5619	
	Working Vietnamese adults							
	Generation 1.5				Generation 2			
	men		women		men		women	
	mean or median	s.d. of mean	mean or median	s.d. of mean	mean or median	s.d. of mean	mean or median	s.d. of mean
Median hourly wage	\$26.50	\$4.81	\$25.35	\$1.55	\$20.62	\$0.41	\$21.15	\$0.39
Median earnings	\$55,550	\$736	\$49,200	\$638	\$40,600	\$788	\$40,400	\$688
Annual hours worked	2070.8	736.4	1917.1	638.4	1953.9	787.5	1877.3	688.2
SEI	53.9	0.2	56.4	0.2	51.8	0.3	56.1	0.3
At Least HS	96.8%	0.2%	97.7%	0.2%	97.6%	0.2%	98.5%	0.2%
College Grad	55.3%	0.5%	64.8%	0.5%	52.9%	0.7%	65.0%	0.7%
N	9645		8985		4795		4704	

Table 1 (*cont.*)

	White adults			
	men		women	
	mean or median	s.d. of mean	mean or median	s.d. of mean
Age	39.9	0.0	40.0	0.0
In the labor force	88.9%	0.1%	77.7%	0.1%
Low English	0.3%	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%
Speaks English at home	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Married	58.2%	0.1%	61.7%	0.1%
Median household income	\$81,840	\$163	\$79,730	\$163
At Least High School	93.2%	0.0%	94.8%	0.0%
College Grad	31.8%	0.1%	35.9%	0.1%
Children under age 5	0.2	0.00	0.2	0.00
Children 5 and older	0.7	0.00	0.9	0.00
N	313,834		322,218	

	Working White adults			
	men		women	
	mean or median	s.d. of mean	mean or median	s.d. of mean
Median hourly wage	\$22.88	\$0.37	\$18.33	\$0.14
Median earnings	\$50,400	\$139	\$34,560	\$87
Annual hours worked	2158.4	1.3	1817.2	1.4
SEI	45.9	0.0	51.7	0.0
At Least HS	95.1%	0.0%	96.8%	0.0%
College Grad	34.8%	0.1%	39.6%	0.1%
N	262,920		245,769	

A broad comparison of means and medians across ethnic groups in Table 1 suggests that the socioeconomic status of Vietnamese American adults is higher by most measures than that of white adults, who in turn rank higher than other Southeast Asian American groups. The median income (in 2016 dollars) in white households was \$80,800, compared with \$99,800 in Vietnamese adults' households, about \$78,800 in Laotian and Cambodian adults' households, and about \$73,600 in Hmong adults' households. (These figures and those that follow are averages calculated across the generations and genders shown in Table 1.) Vietnamese adults are more likely to have completed high school or college than other groups: for example, 55.5% of working-age Vietnamese adults in the sample completed college, compared with 33.9% of white adults, 23.7% of Laotian adults,

27.9% of Cambodian adults, and 25.0% of Hmong adults. Table 1 includes group means for the Duncan Socioeconomic Index (*SEI*), which is a crude but illustrative occupational status measure that ranges from 0 (for low-status occupations) to 100 (for the highest-status occupations).³ The Appendix provides a list of the *SEI* scores associated with 200 occupations. Vietnamese adults' mean *SEI* score of 54.5 surpasses white adults' mean of 48.6, indicating that Vietnamese adults achieved higher levels of professional advancement, on average. The mean *SEI* scores for other Southeast Asian American adults were lower, ranging from 41.8 for Laotians to 44.3 for Cambodians.

Southeast Asian adults in Generation 1.5 and Generation 2 have achieved remarkable progress beyond their immigrant parents' generation. Table 2 shows summary statistics for first-generation Southeast Asian adults for comparison. Even after living in the United States for many years, they reported relatively low average levels of human capital and economic progress. For example, about 32% of Hmong first-generation adults reported that they had no education, and only 58% had at least a high school education. About 2% to 4% of Southeast Asian adults in Generation 1.5 and Generation 2 reported that they did not speak English well; and while this is significantly higher than for native-born white adults, it contrasts sharply with their immigrant parents, among whom more than 40% (and 57% of first-generation Hmong adults) did not speak English well.

It is important to note the significant differences between the four first-generation groups in Table 2: Hmong immigrants tended to have the lowest levels of human capital, labor force participation, occupational status, wages, and incomes, while Vietnamese immigrants generally had the highest levels. To the extent that parents' educational attainment and socioeconomic status are transmitted to their children, we would expect to see these first-generation differences reflected in second-generation outcomes.

The data in Table 1 show that the experiences of many Southeast Asian women in Generation 1.5 and Generation 2 are radically different from those of first-generation women. Southeast Asian women in the first immigrant generation had significantly lower levels of education, English language fluency, labor force participation, and wage income than first-generation men, on average. Among their children, women are more likely than men to have graduated from high school or completed a college education, and their labor force participation rates are closer to those of men. However, reflecting the broader gender gap in the labor market, these women work fewer hours per year than men, on average, and their median hourly wages are lower.

It is surprising to see in Table 1 that Generation 1.5 adults—both men and women—have higher levels of educational attainment and superior labor market outcomes in almost all comparisons with Generation 2 adults. But the Generation 2 cohorts are younger, on average, than the Generation 1.5 cohorts, and we will see that the difference disappears when age and other factors are taken into account in the regression analysis described later. Similarly, the average age of white adults in the sample is higher than that of Southeast Asian American adults, and this tends to bias their levels of socioeconomic indicators upward.

Table 2

Summary Statistics – First-Generation Southeast Asian Adults

	Hmong adults			
	Generation 1			
	men		women	
	mean or median	s.d. of mean	mean or median	s.d. of mean
age	42.9	0.19	42.1	0.19
In labor force	73.7%	1.1%	54.5%	1.2%
Low English	45.6%	1.3%	67.4%	1.1%
No Education	31.7%	1.2%	54.4%	1.2%
married	80.2%	1.0%	74.0%	1.0%
median household income	\$59,040	\$1,668	\$53,286	\$1,651
family size	6.3	0.07	6.3	0.07
At Least HS	57.8%	1.3%	34.3%	1.1%
College Grad	9.5%	0.7%	5.7%	0.6%
N	1563		1643	

	Working Hmong adults			
	Generation 1			
	men		women	
	mean or median	s.d. of mean	mean or median	s.d. of mean
median hourly wage	\$15.38	\$0.70	\$12.72	\$2.65
median wage income	\$30,086	\$1,115	\$24,000	\$652
annual hours worked	1863.8	18.0	1847.8	21.6
SEI	29.5	0.62	27.3	0.65
At Least HS	62.8%	1.4%	44.9%	1.7%
College Grad	11.0%	0.9%	8.6%	0.9%
N	1130		868	

Table 2. (*cont.*)

	Laotian adults			
	Generation 1			
	men		women	
	mean or median	s.d. of mean	mean or median	s.d. of mean
age	45.4	0.14	43.4	0.14
In labor force	83.7%	0.8%	68.6%	0.9%
Low English	35.6%	1.0%	47.7%	0.9%
No Education	15.4%	0.8%	19.1%	0.8%
married	66.4%	0.9%	73.1%	0.8%
median household income	\$69,216	\$1,242	\$68,068	\$1,183
family size	3.9	0.04	3.9	0.03
At Least HS	70.1%	0.9%	64.3%	0.9%
College Grad	11.9%	0.6%	10.4%	0.6%
N	2420		2848	

Median Hourly Wages Over the Life Cycle

Comparisons of labor market outcomes must take age differences into account. An individual's hourly wage and annual earnings tend to follow an inverted U-shaped path over the life cycle, increasing during the 20s and 30s to a peak in the 40s or 50s, and then perhaps declining a bit in later years. During the working years, an adult accumulates work experience (both general skills and employer-specific knowledge), promotions, and seniority. In addition, some working-age adults continue their schooling, which enhances their earning power. As a result, older workers tend to have higher wages and incomes than younger adults, on average. The cohorts in Table 1 have different average ages, so the comparisons in the last section must be modified to control for age.

Figure 1 displays estimates of median hourly wages (in 2016 dollars) over the life cycle for Southeast Asian American men and native-born white men, based on predictions at ages 25 to 50 from quantile wage regressions, controlling for Census region and market wage trends. These wage profiles are consistent with the broad patterns in Table 1: white men earn higher median wages than Generation-1.5 and Generation-2 Hmong, Laotian, and Cambodian men, while men who identify as Vietnamese earn more than all other groups. Figure A1 in the Appendix adds 95% confidence intervals for the median wage estimates to the wage profiles for Hmong men, Vietnamese men, and white men. (Since the white sample is so large, its confidence interval is very narrow, virtually coinciding with the wage profile.) The confidence intervals for the three groups in Figure A1 overlap only a little, indicating that the differences between the estimated men's median wages at most ages are statistically significant.

Figure 1
Wage Profiles by Age, Generation 1.5 and Generation 2 Men

Figure 2 compares estimated wage profiles by age, again controlling for Census region and market trends, for working Southeast Asian and white women. Table 1 showed that Southeast Asian American women obtain more education than white women, on average. As a result of differences such as this, we see in Figure 2 that the wage profiles for Southeast Asian women generally lie at or above the profile for white women after adjusting for age in the quantile regression model.

Figure 2

Wage Profiles by Age, Generation 1.5 and Generation 2 Women

Estimation of the wage profiles in Figure 1 and Figure 2 is based on quantile regression models in which the dependent variable is the log of hourly wages. In every previous study that used linear regression analysis to compare wages or earnings across Asian groups, the entire sample was included in a single regression, with dummy variables identifying individuals in the different groups. That specification implicitly assumes that the true regression coefficients to be estimated are identical across groups. When this linear restriction is tested using Wald tests for all pairs of groups, the assumption is rejected at the 5% level for all pairs except Laotian and Cambodian adults, which implies that it is not appropriate to include all groups in a single regression. In accordance with this result, this article uses separate regressions for different groups. Summary statistics are shown in Table A1 in the Appendix, and quantile regression results are summarized in Table A2.

Quantile regression methods are used for two reasons. Unlike least squares regression, which estimates the relationship between the explanatory variables and the mean value of the dependent variable, quantile regression can explain the determinants of the median value. The distributions of wages and incomes have long upper tails, so median values describe the distributions better than mean values, which can be inflated by a few exceptionally high observations. Second, the hourly wage data include outliers on both the low and high ends, and those outliers have a strong influence on least squares estimates of the mean wage. Since quantile

regression focuses on the median value, the results are not so sensitive to the presence of extreme outliers.

Age, which enters the quantile regression model as a quadratic, is correlated with work experience and other unobserved, time-dependent factors over the life cycle. Some other important determinants of labor market outcomes—such as education, language skills, marital status, and region of residence—are included in the model and might also change over the life cycle, adding to the growth in a person's hourly wage. In principle, time might also enter the model in two other ways: through an individual's birth year and the sample year in which the person is observed. Among the Southeast Asian American adults in this study, birth years range from 1964 (for some adults in Generation 1.5) to 1993 (for those who turned 25 years old in 2018). Birth years might be an important marker of the changing circumstances these adults faced in their formative years: a second-generation child born in 1975 might have faced different challenges and opportunities from one born in 1990. The sample year also might be an important explanatory variable, since it could reflect macroeconomic trends or changes in immigrants' lives in growing ethnic enclaves. Unfortunately, since these variables and age are linearly related (sample year = birth year + age), one of them must be left out of the model in order to avoid multicollinearity. In the quantile regression model, the sample year is excluded; but the model includes annual data on median usual weekly earnings of workers in the United States, in the *MedianWeeklyEarnings* variable, as an alternative indicator of macroeconomic conditions. In Table A2 in the Appendix, the estimated coefficients on *MedianWeeklyEarnings* in almost all groups are positive and statistically significant, as expected. The estimated coefficients on the birth year variable are usually negative and statistically significant, indicating that among adults of any given age, median wages tend to be a little smaller for those born (and observed) later, even after controlling for the level of median earnings. Since the estimated birth-year coefficient for white adults is similar to that for Southeast Asian American adults, there is no little evidence here of significant, distinctive trends over time in median wages for the children of Southeast Asian immigrants.

Human capital endowments are represented in the model by three binary variables: *Low English*, which indicates that an individual does not speak English well; *At Least High School*; and *College Grad*. (Since college graduates also completed high school, the total impact of a college degree, compared with not having a high school education, is equal to the sum of the *At Least High School* and *College Grad* coefficients.) As expected, the estimated coefficient on *Low English* is negative and statistically significant in most groups, and the educational attainment coefficients are uniformly positive and significant. The importance of the education variables can be seen clearly in a comparison between Hmong Americans and Vietnamese Americans. The latter are much more likely to have completed college, as shown in Table 1, and the regression results in Table A2 show that they enjoy a much higher return to a college education. For example, among men with less than a high school education, the Duncan Socioeconomic Index (*SEI*) of occupational status for working Hmong Americans is about the same as for working Vietnamese Americans (approximately 30), and men with less than a high school education in both groups earn similar median hourly wages (about \$12.82 per hour). But college-educated Vietnamese American men enter occupations with significantly higher average occupational status than college-educated Hmong American men—an *SEI* of 65 vs. 59—and their median hourly wage is much higher (\$32.45 vs. \$22.58).

Are there differences in earning power between adults in Generation 1.5 and Generation 2? The quantile wage regression results offer weak evidence that Generation 2 adults may tend to earn higher wages than Generation 1.5 adults. The regression model includes a binary variable that

identifies Generation 2 adults, and the coefficient on this variable provides an estimate of their (percentage) median-wage advantage over Generation 1.5 adults. The estimated coefficients on this variable are positive for all groups except one, but generally not significantly different from zero. The only statistically significant difference is for Vietnamese American women, for whom the median wage in Generation 2 is estimated to be about 3.5% higher than in Generation 1.5, holding other factors constant. In Table 1, Generation 1.5 adults have higher median hourly wages than Generation 2 adults, but the quantile regression results show that differences in age and other factors can explain (and possibly reverse) this pattern.

Educational attainment plays a central role in debates about the validity of the model minority stereotype, and the quantile wage regression model makes it possible to test the hypothesis more formally. How would wages compare if Southeast Asian Americans and native-born whites had the same level of education? Figure 3 displays predicted median wages in each group (along with 95% confidence intervals), based on the quantile wage regression results, assuming that all adults have the same level of education: either a high school diploma or a college degree. The predictions additionally control for other factors by assuming that all individuals are 30 years old, were born in 1980, have a region of residence that reflects the geographical distribution of Southeast Asians in the sample,⁴ and face average macroeconomic conditions. By controlling for age, education, and many other factors, the results summarized in Figure 3 reveal fundamental differences between ethnic groups. (Figure 3 can be thought of as a vertical slice at age 30 from a graph like Figure 1, holding several variables equal across groups.)

Figure 3

Predicted Median Hourly Wages—Assuming All Adults Have the Same Level of Education

Figure 3 (cont.)

When we assume that all men have at least a high school education (and not a college degree), Vietnamese men's advantage over white men disappears, and the predicted hourly wages of white men are significantly higher than predicted wages in any of the Southeast Asian groups. This suggests that the higher wages achieved by Vietnamese men, as depicted in Table 1 and Figures 1 and 2, are a result of their higher average level of education (for example, 50.6% are college graduates compared with 31.8% among white men) and higher return to education (an estimated *College Grad* coefficient of 0.565 versus 0.462 for white men in the quantile wage regression model). On the other hand, the predicted median wages for women in all four Southeast Asian groups are significantly higher than white women's predicted median wages when we assume that they all have at least a high school education.

If we instead assume that all adults have a college degree, Vietnamese men again stand atop the rankings in the predictions in Figure 3, with a predicted median wage of \$29.58 per hour, followed by white men at \$28.13. Since these estimates assume away Vietnamese men's educational attainment advantage, their higher predicted wages must be due to their higher return to a college education. This result could emerge if Vietnamese men are more likely than white men to use their college degrees to enter high-paying STEM fields and other professional occupations. There is some evidence for this hypothesis in the data, which include information on each person's occupation.

Annual Earnings

This section presents comparisons of inflation-adjusted median annual earnings across groups. Earnings are correlated with hourly wages, which were discussed in the last section; but two additional factors come into play when earnings are considered. An employee's annual earnings are equal to the hourly wage times annual hours of work, and we saw in Table 1 that average hours of work can differ significantly between groups and genders. Earnings can also include non-wage income from farming, ownership of a small business, or other self-employment.

Quantile regression methods are used once again to generate comparisons of earnings across groups. The dependent variable in the model is the log of annual earnings (in 2016 dollars), and the model includes the same explanatory variables as the wage model. In the regression results, summarized in Table A4 in the Appendix, the estimated coefficients generally have the expected signs. After controlling for levels of educational attainment, the predicted rankings of median annual earnings across groups, shown in Figure 4, are similar to the rankings of median wages in Figure 3. If we assume that all adults have at least a high school education (but not a college degree), white men's predicted median earnings exceed those of men in every Southeast Asian group, while white women's predicted median earnings lie below Southeast Asian women's predicted earnings. Assuming instead that all adults have completed college degrees, white men's predicted median earnings are higher than those for Vietnamese men, although the difference is not statistically significant.

Figure 4

Predicted Median Annual Earnings—Assuming All Adults Have the Same Level of Education

Figure 4 (*cont.*)

It is interesting to note that when all adults are assumed to have a college degree, the predicted earnings of Hmong women are significantly lower than those of other groups. This is largely due to the fact that Hmong women have a lower return to a college education than women in other groups. The estimated coefficient on the *College Grad* variable for Hmong women is 0.378, which indicates that earnings tend to be approximately 37.8% higher for Hmong women who obtain a college degree, holding other factors constant. The comparable coefficients for women in other groups are significantly higher, with Vietnamese women enjoying a return of about 65.6%. If Hmong women's return to a college education were instead 0.536, like Cambodian women's, their predicted earnings in Figure 4 would be about \$46,858, almost \$7,000 higher. Compared with Vietnamese women, college-educated Hmong women are more likely to enter lower-paid occupations, such as social work or teaching, rather than high-paying STEM fields. Differences in occupational choices across Southeast Asian groups are an important topic for future research.

Labor Force Participation

First-generation Southeast Asian immigrants—particularly Hmong refugees and others born in Laos and Cambodia—were less likely to join the labor force than native-born white adults. For example, in the 1990 Census, less than 50% of Hmong men and less than 25% of Hmong women were working or looking for work. In Table 1, labor force participation rates among the adult children of Southeast Asian immigrants are uniformly above 80% across groups, genders, and

generations, showing that they have largely surmounted their parents' challenges in the labor market. Since paid work is normative among working-age adults, the differences in labor force participation rates between groups in Table 1 are small; but a closer look reveals interesting patterns in the data. The most striking detail in Table 1 is that labor force participation rates for Hmong, Laotian, and Cambodian men in Generation 1.5 and Generation 2 are lower than for native-born white men, while the rates for women in all the Southeast Asian groups are much higher than for white women. Can differences in age or educational attainment explain these differences between groups, or do they reflect more fundamental differences between Vietnamese Americans and other Southeast Asians, and between Southeast Asians and native-born whites?

It should be noted at the outset that labor force participation, unlike hourly wages or earnings, is not a clear marker of labor-market "success." Many adults prefer to engage in other activities outside the labor market (such as attending college or taking care of children or elderly family members), and their living standards would be lower if they had to work. It would be interesting to examine more closely the choices made by those who choose not to work; but that goes beyond the scope of this study.

The probability of labor force participation is explored here in a probit model. The dependent variable is a binary indicator of labor force participation, and the explanatory variables are mostly the same as in the quantile regression models considered earlier. Three explanatory variables are expected to be particularly important in labor force participation decisions, especially for women: total income of other members of the individual's family (*OtherFamilyIncome*); the individual's number of children less than five years old (*nchlt5*); and the number of children aged five years or older (*nOlderChildren*). The probit model also includes an additional variable, *LFPRtrend*, which is an annual series measuring cyclical nationwide trends in labor force participation.⁵ For example, *LFPRtrend* captures the decline in labor force participation rates during and after the Great Recession. Table A6 in the Appendix shows summary statistics, and Table A7 summarizes the estimated impacts of explanatory variables on labor force participation rates in the probit model. For example, the estimated marginal effect of the *CollegeGrad* variable for Hmong women is 0.122, indicating that Hmong women with a college degree are about 12.2% more likely to be in the labor force, holding other factors constant.

When we control for age, educational attainment, region, and market trends in Figure 5, many of the rankings between groups noted in Table 1 remain. Assuming that all adults have at least a high school education, Hmong and other Laotian women are predicted to have significantly higher labor force participation rates than native-born white women. The predicted labor force participation rate for Vietnamese women is lower, about equal to that of white women, suggesting that their high average rate in Table 1 was largely due to their high level of educational attainment. In Table 1, white women's labor force participation rate was a relatively low 77.7%—much lower than the predicted rates shown in Figure 5. This discrepancy is largely explained by the fact that white women in the sample are significantly older, on average, than women in other groups, and older women's labor force participation rates tend to be lower. When we control for age in Figure 5, their predicted labor force participation rate is higher.

Figure 5
Predicted Labor Force Participation Rates—Assuming All Adults Have the Same Level of Education

Under the assumption that all men have at least a high school education, the predicted labor force participation rate for native-born white men is higher than the rates for men in all Southeast Asian groups—an inversion of the pattern in the women’s groups. The stark contrast between the men’s and women’s rankings raises an important question: Why are Southeast Asian men less likely than white men to join the labor force, while Southeast Asian women are more likely to work than white women? It is tempting to attribute this to the differences in educational attainment we see in Table 1; but the probit model already accounts for this in the *At Least High School* and *College Grad* variables. This is a compelling topic for future research in this area.

Explaining Differences Between Groups, Genders, and Generations: Beyond the Data

After controlling for many factors in the regression models described in the last three sections, we see that there are still significant differences between second-generation ethnic groups. These elemental differences, which cannot be explained away by other attributes in the data, are essentially associated with each group’s ethnic identity. The paths that these children of immigrants follow as adults are shaped by cultural traditions, parental influences, role models in their ethnic communities and the majority population, discrimination against Asians, and their experiences in the public school system, where they learned the English language while most spoke their parents’ language at home. Understanding these stories is the ultimate goal of research like the present study.

As children of recent refugees, many second-generation Southeast Asians faced formidable obstacles in their education and careers, and yet they achieved considerable success as adults. Many scholars have attributed their success to their cultural inheritance, which is said to value education, set high expectations, and emphasize the importance of good work habits and effort. Ngo and Lee (2007) discuss these factors in a valuable survey of research on the educational challenges and achievements of second-generation Southeast Asians that recognizes and respects the distinct identities of the Hmong, Laotian, Cambodian, and Vietnamese groups. The regression results in this article show the second-generation consequences of the diverse cultural origins of Southeast Asian Americans, but it will take a more sophisticated analysis to identify the most important causal relationships that link culture to outcomes.

Lo (2013, 2017) presents evidence that may start to explain why Southeast Asian men’s wages and earnings rank lower and Southeast Asian women’s rank higher than native-born whites. In a survey and interviews with several dozen Hmong teenage students in Sacramento, Lo found that Hmong girls were more academically engaged and motivated than Hmong boys, and the girls reported higher average GPAs. Girls viewed higher education as a pathway that could help them move beyond constraints imposed by gender norms and inequality within traditional Hmong culture. Studies cited in Ngo and Lee (2007) noted that cultural norms of early marriage and early childbearing were barriers to educational achievement for Hmong women in the past, but Hmong women have been more likely to pursue higher education in recent years, demonstrating a “process of cultural transformation within the Hmong American community” (p. 431). On the other hand, Lo concluded that Hmong “boys face more overt discrimination and hostility in mainstream society that make them susceptible to downward assimilation” (Lo, 2013, p. iv).

The intergroup comparisons in this article offer some weak evidence on the relationship between the parents’ educational attainment and occupational status and their children’s economic success. Our data, while very detailed, do not provide information on the educational attainment and occupations of each individual’s parents. However, the aggregate data for first-generation

adults—the parents—in each ethnic group (in Table 2) show clear patterns, and we can see those patterns reflected in the economic achievements of their children. On average, first-generation Hmong adults faced deeper challenges in the labor market than first-generation Vietnamese adults, and this helps to explain why second-generation Hmong adults have lower median wages and earnings than second-generation Vietnamese adults.

These parental factors—unobservable at the individual level—are very important, and their omission from the regression model may introduce bias into the coefficient estimates. For example, one important omitted variable is the father's educational attainment. We expect that the father's education would be positively related to the child's hourly wages, earnings, and labor force participation as an adult, and also positively related to many other explanatory variables, such as the child's educational attainment and English language fluency. These two relationships together imply that omission of father's education from the model likely results in positive bias in our estimates of the coefficients on the child's educational attainment and English fluency variables (Wooldridge, 2016). As a result, the positive coefficient estimates on those variables in the regressions may overstate the true magnitude of their effects.

ACS data on second-generation adults' language preferences offer intriguing insights into their assimilation paths. According to data in Table 1, while more than 96% of Southeast Asians in Generation 1.5 and over 98% in Generation 2 reported that they speak English well, a surprisingly large share speak a language other than English—presumably their parents' language—at home. Only about 5% of Hmong adults in Generation 1.5 and about 12% in Generation 2 speak English at home. These percentages rise to about 20% in Generation 1.5 and 40% in Generation 2 among Vietnamese adults—still significantly less than half. As noted earlier, Portes et al. (2009) suggested that the path of “selective acculturation” leads to better assimilation outcomes, and they noted that “Fluent bilingualism in the second generation is a good indicator of this eclectic path” (p. 1081).

Conclusions

Do Southeast Asian Americans face significant labor-market discrimination? An ideal approach to this question would hold all other important factors besides ethnic identity constant, which is very difficult in practice. The best place to look for answers might be in experimental studies like those surveyed by Quillian et al. (2017), which seek direct evidence of discrimination in hiring and promotions. The results presented here fall short of that ideal, but they shed some light on the question by comparing median wages, median earnings, and labor force participation rates across ethnic groups while controlling for many factors, including age and education, in a large representative sample. Native-born white men rank significantly higher than Southeast Asian American men in many labor-market outcomes. Southeast Asian American women reverse this pattern by achieving higher wages and earnings than native-born white women. Predicted median wages and earnings of college-educated Vietnamese Americans surpass those of other Southeast Asians and native-born whites.

The evidence in this study can inform ongoing discussions of the applicability of segmented assimilation theory and the model minority paradigm in studies of Southeast Asian Americans. It also pushes to the forefront several new questions that should be addressed in future research. Why are Southeast Asian men relatively less successful in the labor market, and Southeast Asian women more successful, when compared with native-born whites? Do we need to disaggregate the Southeast Asian American groups further to look more closely at labor-market challenges facing adults with low levels of education? What role do choices of field of study and occupation play in

explaining differences in wages and earnings between Southeast Asian groups? The ACS data tell us each working adult's occupation and (starting in 2009) each college graduate's field of study. An individual chooses their level of educational attainment, college major, and occupation together, so it would be difficult to disentangle their choices in an analysis; but this analysis would help us understand differences in labor-market outcomes between groups. Most broadly, this study lays groundwork for future research investigating how the distinctive cultural traditions and histories of Southeast Asians from different origins shape the choices and achievements we see in the data.

About the Author

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Notes

1. In the longitudinal surveys upon which Portes et al. (2009) is based, the “Lao/Cambodian” and Vietnamese subsamples each numbered a little less than 200, and their average age in the last survey round was 24.
2. Since the microdata samples represent different percentages of the population in different years, the individual weights in the data are not directly comparable across years. Before pooling the data, we normalize the weights so the average weight is the same across years. This approach retains the correct relative weights between individuals within each year in the pooled sample.
3. IPUMS-USA describes the calculation and limitations of the SEI measure and alternative measures at https://usa.ipums.org/usa/chapter4/sei_note.shtml. Table A9 in the Appendix shows how various occupations map into SEI scores.
4. Kim and Sakamoto (2014) point out that labor market outcomes are significantly different in the Pacific region, which raises interesting questions that deserve further study in the future: Why is California different? A confounding factor here is that California includes disparate labor markets: wages and earnings are high in the Bay Area (where there is a large Asian American population), but relatively low in the Central Valley (where most Hmong Americans live).
5. The calculation of the annual LFPRtrend variable is based on Van Zandweghe (2017).

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Appendix

Figure A1
Wage Profiles and 95% Confidence Intervals by Age

Table A1
Summary Statistics: Working Adults (wage income > 0)

Variable	Hmong men		Laotian men		Cambodian men		Vietnamese men		White men	
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
hourly wage	\$21.04	\$28.23	\$21.82	\$21.57	\$23.88	\$28.60	\$41.47	\$661.94	\$31.50	\$215.35
annual earnings	\$38,924	\$34,075	\$43,098	\$35,833	\$45,081	\$38,743	\$64,857	\$64,627	\$66,551	\$69,037
age	31.52	5.33	33.12	5.96	32.18	5.50	33.72	6.30	39.62	8.71
Low English	1.9%	13.6%	2.6%	15.8%	2.4%	15.2%	2.9%	16.7%	0.3%	5.1%
AtLeastHS	96.2%	19.1%	92.9%	25.6%	93.8%	24.1%	97.1%	16.8%	95.1%	21.5%
CollegeGrad	23.9%	42.7%	21.4%	41.0%	27.3%	44.6%	54.4%	49.8%	34.8%	47.6%
Middle Atlantic	0.4%	6.1%	3.0%	17.1%	6.3%	24.2%	5.7%	23.2%	12.7%	33.3%
East North Central	21.8%	41.3%	8.7%	28.2%	5.2%	22.2%	4.2%	20.0%	17.7%	38.2%
West North Central	26.6%	44.2%	13.0%	33.6%	4.7%	21.1%	4.0%	19.6%	8.6%	28.0%
South Atlantic	8.5%	27.9%	11.5%	31.9%	10.7%	30.9%	12.6%	33.2%	17.8%	38.2%
East South Central	0.2%	4.8%	3.9%	19.3%	1.4%	11.9%	1.5%	12.3%	6.2%	24.2%
West South Central	2.7%	16.2%	10.4%	30.5%	5.7%	23.1%	16.4%	37.0%	10.9%	31.1%
Mountain	2.9%	16.8%	6.1%	23.9%	4.4%	20.5%	4.5%	20.7%	7.9%	27.0%
Pacific	36.2%	48.1%	39.4%	48.9%	48.2%	50.0%	47.7%	49.9%	12.8%	33.4%
married	48.1%	50.0%	38.1%	48.6%	38.5%	48.7%	43.7%	49.6%	61.3%	48.7%
MedianWeeklyEarnings	1005.65	15.29	1004.75	15.13	1004.86	14.90	1004.79	14.69	1004.86	14.28
OtherFamilyIncome	\$44,346	\$56,265	\$40,819	\$55,129	\$42,782	\$58,323	\$47,423	\$67,356	\$31,533	\$49,439
LFPRtrend	-0.12	0.53	-0.14	0.53	-0.16	0.55	-0.16	0.54	-0.17	0.53
birthyr	1981.51	6.04	1979.18	6.14	1980.28	5.90	1978.48	6.66	1970.80	10.03
nchlt5	0.51	0.81	0.29	0.58	0.30	0.61	0.27	0.58	0.23	0.54
nOlderChildren	0.89	1.38	0.54	0.95	0.48	0.91	0.38	0.81	0.76	1.06
Unweighted N	2,705		2,640		2,893		14,456		262,920	

Table A1 (Cont.)

Variable	Hmong women		Laotian women		Cambodian women		Vietnamese women		White women	
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
hourly wage	\$19.20	\$15.48	\$21.13	\$23.44	\$22.38	\$26.77	\$31.96	\$116.15	\$23.87	\$62.07
annual earnings	\$34,046	\$25,047	\$37,818	\$28,120	\$39,509	\$33,839	\$57,433	\$54,166	\$42,854	\$42,533
age	31.17	5.23	32.98	5.78	31.88	5.45	33.50	6.28	39.74	8.79
Low English	1.8%	13.2%	2.0%	14.0%	2.6%	15.9%	2.5%	15.5%	0.2%	4.7%
AtLeastHS	96.9%	17.3%	96.2%	19.2%	94.9%	21.9%	97.9%	14.2%	96.8%	17.6%
CollegeGrad	30.8%	46.2%	31.4%	46.4%	34.3%	47.5%	64.9%	47.7%	39.6%	48.9%
Middle Atlantic	0.7%	8.1%	3.5%	18.3%	6.9%	25.3%	6.2%	24.1%	13.0%	33.6%
East North Central	20.6%	40.5%	8.9%	28.5%	5.5%	22.7%	4.1%	19.9%	17.9%	38.3%
West North Central	27.7%	44.7%	9.8%	29.8%	4.3%	20.2%	3.9%	19.3%	8.9%	28.4%
South Atlantic	8.5%	27.9%	12.3%	32.9%	10.5%	30.7%	12.8%	33.4%	17.7%	38.2%
East South Central	0.5%	7.1%	4.8%	21.4%	0.8%	8.9%	1.7%	12.8%	6.2%	24.0%
West South Central	2.0%	13.9%	11.5%	31.9%	5.1%	21.9%	16.6%	37.2%	10.8%	31.0%
Mountain	3.0%	17.0%	5.6%	23.0%	4.5%	20.8%	4.8%	21.3%	7.6%	26.5%
Pacific	36.1%	48.0%	37.9%	48.5%	49.3%	50.0%	46.5%	49.9%	12.2%	32.8%
married	54.4%	49.8%	44.8%	49.7%	42.1%	49.4%	49.0%	50.0%	60.1%	49.0%
MedianWeeklyEarnings	1005.21	15.17	1004.55	14.57	1004.48	15.07	1004.96	14.85	1004.82	14.25
OtherFamilyIncome	\$41,396	\$49,860	\$47,065	\$63,377	\$48,809	\$61,972	\$64,491	\$84,633	\$52,369	\$69,099
LFPRtrend	-0.15	0.54	-0.20	0.54	-0.17	0.54	-0.15	0.55	-0.17	0.53
birthyr	1981.82	5.91	1978.95	5.96	1980.67	5.87	1978.82	6.71	1970.65	10.15
nchlt5	0.53	0.79	0.31	0.60	0.34	0.61	0.29	0.58	0.20	0.49
nOlderChildren	1.35	1.58	0.89	1.11	0.76	1.09	0.54	0.92	0.85	1.05
Unweighted N	2,603		2,717		2,963		13,703		245,769	

Table A2
Quantile Wage Regression Results

Generation2 age	Working men (ages 25 to 54)									
	Hmong		Laotian		Cambodian		Vietnamese		White	
	coefficient	t	coefficient	t	coefficient	t	coefficient	t	coefficient	t
	0.029	1.06	0.013	0.33	-0.051	-1.37	0.015	0.87	0.059***	29.42
	0.060**	2.09	0.055**	2.26	0.070***	2.70	0.112***	9.89	-	-
age squared	-0.0007	-1.61	-0.0006*	-1.73	-0.001**	-2.42	-0.001***	-8.72	0.0006***	-24.99
Low English	-0.263***	-8.28	0.022	0.23	0.039	0.26	-0.163**	-2.48	-0.179***	-4.51
AtLeastHS	0.164***	2.88	0.209***	3.72	0.160*	1.77	0.306***	6.87	0.280***	30.98
CollegeGrad	0.257***	8.28	0.423***	13.52	0.447***	15.66	0.565***	38.89	0.462***	139.30
MidAtlantic	0.232	0.79	-0.278***	-3.15	-0.103	-0.91	-0.126**	-2.28	-0.019***	-2.64
EastNorthCentral	-0.153	-1.21	-0.147**	-2.45	-0.128**	-2.28	-0.198***	-4.22	-0.111***	-16.52
WestNorthCentral	-0.124	-0.98	-0.171***	-3.24	-0.134	-1.01	-0.111*	-1.87	-0.163***	-21.07
SouthAtlantic	-0.282**	-2.14	-0.186***	-3.55	-0.174***	-3.33	-0.105**	-2.35	-0.109***	-15.99
EastSouthCentral	-0.170	-1.27	-0.160*	-1.70	-0.159*	-1.73	-0.186***	-2.90	-0.209***	-24.15
WestSouthCentral	-0.240	-1.55	-0.160***	-2.78	-0.0856	-0.93	-0.050	-1.19	-0.133***	-16.61
Mountain	-0.131	-1.00	-0.158**	-2.29	-0.175**	-2.46	-0.067	-1.39	-0.124***	-15.68
Pacific	-0.177	-1.40	-0.072	-1.52	-0.067	-1.46	0.019	0.50	0.017**	2.32
married	0.110***	4.09	0.102***	3.23	0.184***	5.63	0.136***	7.73	0.180***	46.31
MedianWeeklyEarnings	0.003***	3.26	0.002*	1.87	0.002**	2.25	0.001**	2.27	0.001***	9.13
birthyr	-0.010***	-3.47	-0.008**	-1.97	-0.015***	-3.89	-0.011***	-5.98	-0.006***	-17.76
nchlt5	0.0003	0.02	0.021	0.97	0.023	0.75	0.031**	2.47	0.044***	14.56
nOlderChildren	-0.001	-0.07	0.038***	2.90	0.004	0.27	0.037***	4.25	0.035***	22.49
_cons	19.313***	3.28	14.907**	1.96	29.822***	3.80	20.540***	5.75	11.542***	17.55
Unweighted N	2705		2640		2893		14,456		307,669	
Pseudo R2	0.0892		0.1177		0.1432		0.1727		0.1439	

Generation2 age	Working women (ages 25 to 54)									
	Hmong		Laotian		Cambodian		Vietnamese		White	
	coefficient	t	coefficient	t	coefficient	t	coefficient	t	coefficient	t
	0.037	1.35	0.040	1.03	0.030	1.04	0.035**	2.04	0.068***	32.22
	0.095***	4.63	0.093***	3.13	0.037	1.54	0.076***	6.49	-	-
c.age#c.age	-0.001***	-4.10	-0.001**	-2.61	-0.0004	-1.12	0.0008***	-4.97	0.0007***	-28.98
Low English	-0.010	-0.15	-0.053	-0.60	-0.265***	-9.49	-0.201***	-2.90	-0.180***	-4.33
AtLeastHS	0.377***	7.24	0.359***	4.86	0.272***	4.87	0.244***	3.33	0.358***	34.32
CollegeGrad	0.354***	11.84	0.373***	11.59	0.475***	19.08	0.563***	36.22	0.499***	147.12
MidAtlantic	-0.129	-1.31	-0.150*	-1.68	-0.067	-1.17	0.052	1.09	-0.018**	-2.30
EastNorthCentral	-0.070	-0.77	-0.165**	-2.27	-0.283***	-3.50	-0.167***	-3.10	-0.136***	-17.72
WestNorthCentral	-0.006	-0.07	-0.102	-1.50	-0.024	-0.47	-0.157**	-2.00	-0.190***	-21.84
SouthAtlantic	-0.133	-1.42	-0.054	-0.86	-0.065	-1.23	-0.032	-0.72	-0.127***	-16.73
EastSouthCentral	0.103	1.14	-0.199***	-2.78	-0.129	-1.53	-0.247***	-3.31	-0.258***	-28.32
WestSouthCentral	-0.225**	-2.01	-0.204***	-2.97	-0.248***	-4.32	-0.052	-1.19	-0.173***	-20.21
Mountain	-0.066	-0.54	-0.060	-0.76	-0.015	-0.25	-0.073	-1.59	-0.133***	-14.82
Pacific	-0.058	-0.63	-0.035	-0.62	-0.058**	-2.07	0.082**	2.05	0.021**	2.56
l.married	0.075***	2.94	0.082***	2.71	0.112***	4.65	0.120***	7.41	0.060***	16.27
MedianWeeklyEarnings	0.0002	0.34	0.003***	2.73	0.001	1.62	0.002***	3.55	0.0009***	8.02
birthyr	-0.007**	-2.42	-0.006	-1.53	-0.011***	-3.31	-0.009***	-4.90	-0.004***	-11.39
nchlt5	0.005	0.31	0.011	0.60	0.010	0.74	0.070***	5.41	0.050***	13.45
nOlderChildren	-0.016*	-1.86	-0.036**	-2.46	-0.051***	-4.71	-0.028***	-3.09	-0.031***	-17.84
_cons	15.062**	2.49	10.188	1.28	23.259***	3.41	16.338***	4.66	7.750***	11.00
Unweighted N	2603		2717		2963		13,703		296,625	
Pseudo R2	0.0982		0.1033		0.127		0.1564		0.1229	

Table A3

Predicted median hourly wages by education level (data for Figure 3)

Men (High school education):

	(estimate)	(low)	(high)
Hmong	\$16.69	\$15.98	\$17.43
Laotian	\$16.18	\$15.58	\$16.80
Cambodian	\$16.81	\$16.02	\$17.63
Vietnamese	\$16.81	\$16.39	\$17.25
White	\$17.73	\$17.62	\$17.84

Men (College education):

	(estimate)	(low)	(high)
Hmong	\$21.58	\$20.18	\$23.07
Laotian	\$24.82	\$23.41	\$26.31
Cambodian	\$26.27	\$24.81	\$27.81
Vietnamese	\$29.58	\$28.93	\$30.24
White	\$28.13	\$27.93	\$28.34

Women (High school education):

	(estimate)	(low)	(high)
Hmong	\$14.86	\$14.32	\$15.42
Laotian	\$15.62	\$15.00	\$16.27
Cambodian	\$15.20	\$14.66	\$15.75
Vietnamese	\$15.31	\$14.86	\$15.79
White	\$14.13	\$14.04	\$14.23

Women (College education):

	(estimate)	(low)	(high)
Hmong	\$21.16	\$20.01	\$22.38
Laotian	\$22.69	\$21.40	\$24.06
Cambodian	\$24.42	\$23.31	\$25.60
Vietnamese	\$26.89	\$26.24	\$27.55
White	\$23.28	\$23.12	\$23.45

Table A4
Quantile Median Earnings Regression Results

	Working men (ages 25 to 54)									
	Hmong		Laotian		Cambodian		Vietnamese		White	
	coefficient	t	coefficient	t	coefficient	t	coefficient	t	coefficient	t
Generation2	0.037	1.07	-0.038	-0.78	-0.052	-1.40	0.023	1.23		
age	0.098***	2.63	0.092***	2.90	0.104***	3.69	0.151***	11.56	0.071***	32.15
c.age#c.age	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-0.001	2.07	-0.001**	-2.51	-0.001***	-3.25	-0.002***	10.34	0.0008***	-28.00
Low English	-0.174	1.37	-0.103	-0.77	-0.092	-0.82	-0.237***	-3.19	-0.248***	-5.75
AtLeastHS	0.280***	3.08	0.267***	3.15	0.252***	5.48	0.337***	6.39	0.390***	36.66
CollegeGrad	0.284***	9.08	0.427***	11.75	0.492***	17.28	0.628***	41.51	0.517***	146.45
MidAtlantic	0.440	1.32	-0.399***	-4.25	-0.092	-1.47	-0.166***	-3.39	-0.016**	-2.22
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
EastNorthCentral	-0.171**	2.18	-0.201***	-2.76	-0.150***	-2.88	-0.287***	-5.66	-0.101***	-14.27
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
WestNorthCentral	-0.130*	1.73	-0.199***	-2.70	-0.179	-1.26	-0.234***	-4.21	-0.144***	-17.04
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
SouthAtlantic	-0.259***	2.96	-0.178***	-3.03	-0.179***	-4.17	-0.167***	-4.20	-0.083***	-11.36
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
EastSouthCentral	-0.088	0.28	-0.253**	-2.02	-0.170	-1.06	-0.179***	-3.97	-0.204***	-22.70
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
WestSouthCentral	-0.266**	2.17	-0.200***	-2.81	-0.135	-1.45	-0.137***	-3.75	-0.085***	-10.30
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mountain	-0.077	0.98	-0.177**	-2.05	-0.235***	-2.74	-0.190***	-4.54	-0.121***	-13.41
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pacific	-0.200***	2.70	-0.133**	-2.33	-0.105***	-3.16	-0.085**	-2.57	0.0005	0.07
married	0.141***	4.11	0.165***	4.50	0.222***	7.29	0.201***	10.90	0.258***	59.72
MedianWeeklyEarnings	0.003***	3.54	0.002*	1.82	0.002**	2.04	0.001**	2.18	0.001***	8.71
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
birthyr	-0.008**	2.01	-0.007	-1.41	-0.015***	-3.66	-0.011***	-5.81	-0.005***	-15.38
nchlt5	0.008	0.38	0.023	0.83	0.021	0.87	0.037***	3.11	0.056***	16.53
nOlderChildren	0.010	0.92	0.045***	2.89	0.0009	0.05	0.033***	4.52	0.0480***	27.89
_cons	19.705***	2.65	19.490**	2.13	35.404***	4.48	28.083***	7.45	18.113***	25.21
Unweighted N	2776		2729		2999		15,293		281,795	
Pseudo R ²	0.0866		0.1064		0.131		0.1672		0.1343	

Table A4 (*cont.*)

	Working women (ages 25 to 54)									
	Hmong		Laotian		Cambodian		Vietnamese		White	
	coefficient	t	coefficient	t	coefficient	t	coefficient	t	coefficient	t
Generation2	0.035	0.99	0.065	1.53	0.049	1.18	0.060***	2.94		
age	0.108***	4.26	0.101***	3.35	0.101***	2.79	0.120***	8.19	0.090***	37.00
c.age#c.age	-0.001***	-3.68	-0.001***	-2.76	-0.001**	-2.35	-0.001***	-6.70	-0.001***	-32.87
Low English	-0.183	-1.07	-0.158	-0.93	-0.234***	-3.84	-0.242***	-4.43	-0.108***	-2.65
AtLeastHS	0.369***	2.98	0.410***	7.43	0.373***	3.73	0.358***	4.82	0.532***	33.84
CollegeGrad	0.378***	11.88	0.426***	12.06	0.536***	16.35	0.656***	33.09	0.578***	150.04
MidAtlantic	-0.080	-0.46	-0.287***	-2.94	-0.127	-1.25	0.092*	1.81	-0.018*	-1.88
EastNorthCentral	-0.092	-0.52	-0.310***	-3.91	-0.277***	-3.55	-0.095*	-1.80	-0.118***	-12.78
WestNorthCentral	-0.030	-0.17	-0.262***	-2.92	-0.208	-1.34	-0.181**	-2.52	-0.146***	-14.80
SouthAtlantic	-0.116	-0.66	-0.118	-1.43	-0.152**	-2.49	-0.050	-1.13	-0.091***	-10.03
EastSouthCentral	0.198	1.08	-0.312***	-2.95	-0.098	-0.90	-0.239***	-3.11	-0.221***	-19.43
WestSouthCentral	-0.321	-1.60	-0.292***	-3.58	-0.180*	-1.80	0.004	0.11	-0.123***	-12.74
Mountain	0.057	0.30	-0.175	-1.62	-0.044	-0.61	-0.028	-0.54	-0.134***	-12.59
Pacific	-0.093	-0.54	-0.153**	-2.10	-0.081**	-1.95	0.082**	2.22	0.0006	0.05
married	0.129***	3.79	0.124***	3.71	0.090***	2.71	0.122***	6.29	0.027***	6.42
MedianWeeklyEarnings	0.0001	0.13	0.003**	2.51	0.002	1.51	0.002***	3.75	0.001***	8.20
birthyr	-0.006	-1.46	-0.007*	-1.64	-0.014***	-3.16	-0.011***	-4.98	-0.001**	-2.52
nchlt5	0.012	0.61	-0.038	-1.20	0.0002	0.01	-0.002	-0.16	-0.047***	-10.27
nOlderChildren	-0.012	-1.14	-0.042***	-2.67	-0.054***	-3.58	-0.041***	-3.63	-0.069***	-31.90
_cons	19.730**	2.43	20.169**	2.23	35.058***	3.92	26.433***	6.24	8.716***	10.88
Unweighted N	2648		2782		3058		14,426		258,614	
Pseudo R ²	0.0878		0.0813		0.1092		0.1296		0.0926	

Table A5

Predicted Median Annual Earnings by Education Level (data for Figure 4)

Men (High school education):

	(estimate)	(low)	(high)
Hmong	\$32,734.01	\$31,058.57	\$34,499.84
Laos	\$33,124.88	\$31,643.56	\$34,675.20
Cambodia	\$32,448.19	\$30,770.45	\$34,217.41
Vietnam	\$32,334.50	\$31,447.66	\$33,246.01
White	\$36,814.24	\$36,556.71	\$37,073.58

Men (College education):

	(estimate)	(low)	(high)
Hmong	\$43,518.87	\$40,698.23	\$46,534.53
Laos	\$50,759.29	\$47,327.18	\$54,440.30
Cambodia	\$53,094.04	\$50,053.11	\$56,319.16
Vietnam	\$60,572.73	\$59,142.79	\$62,036.61
White	\$61,746.34	\$61,270.27	\$62,225.49

Women (High school education):

	(estimate)	(low)	(high)
Hmong	\$27,423.90	\$26,134.72	\$28,776.66
Laos	\$29,108.34	\$27,792.46	\$30,486.83
Cambodia	\$27,947.97	\$26,387.88	\$29,600.01
Vietnam	\$26,968.64	\$25,973.45	\$28,001.97
White	\$24,739.09	\$24,522.34	\$24,957.51

Women (College education):

	(estimate)	(low)	(high)
Hmong	\$40,009.41	\$37,527.15	\$42,655.86
Laos	\$44,571.95	\$41,836.31	\$47,486.94
Cambodia	\$47,770.81	\$44,779.24	\$50,962.23
Vietnam	\$51,967.30	\$50,602.18	\$53,368.72
White	\$44,076.85	\$43,720.83	\$44,435.77

Table A6
Summary Statistics—Working-Age Adults

Variable	Hmong men		Laotian men		Cambodian men		Vietnamese men		White men	
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
In Labor Force	86.0%	34.7%	85.5%	35.2%	86.0%	34.7%	88.4%	32.0%	88.9%	31.4%
age	31.58	5.39	33.17	5.97	32.07	5.46	33.64	6.35	39.93	8.74
Low English	2.9%	16.8%	2.9%	16.8%	3.1%	17.4%	3.1%	17.3%	0.3%	5.2%
AtLeastHS	94.2%	23.3%	91.2%	28.3%	91.1%	28.5%	95.9%	19.9%	93.2%	25.1%
CollegeGrad	22.2%	41.6%	19.8%	39.8%	24.8%	43.2%	50.6%	50.0%	31.8%	46.6%
Middle Atlantic	0.5%	6.7%	2.8%	16.5%	6.3%	24.2%	5.6%	23.0%	12.6%	33.1%
East North Central	20.7%	40.5%	8.2%	27.4%	4.6%	21.1%	4.0%	19.7%	17.3%	37.9%
West North Central	25.6%	43.7%	11.5%	31.9%	4.1%	19.9%	3.8%	19.0%	8.4%	27.7%
South Atlantic	8.3%	27.7%	11.1%	31.4%	10.3%	30.4%	12.4%	32.9%	17.8%	38.2%
East South Central	0.3%	5.9%	3.8%	19.0%	1.3%	11.2%	1.6%	12.5%	6.6%	24.8%
West South Central	2.6%	16.0%	10.6%	30.8%	5.7%	23.1%	16.2%	36.9%	11.0%	31.3%
Mountain	2.7%	16.3%	6.1%	24.0%	4.2%	20.0%	4.5%	20.8%	7.8%	26.9%
Pacific	38.4%	48.6%	42.0%	49.4%	50.1%	50.0%	48.5%	50.0%	13.2%	33.9%
married	45.3%	49.8%	34.6%	47.6%	35.4%	47.8%	41.3%	49.2%	58.2%	49.3%
MedianWeeklyEarnings	1005.53	15.40	1004.78	15.02	1004.80	14.87	1004.75	14.71	1004.78	14.28
OtherFamilyIncome	\$45,167	\$56,473	\$42,200	\$56,419	\$43,536	\$58,778	\$48,023	\$66,843	\$31,776	\$50,357
LFPRtrend	-0.13	0.54	-0.15	0.53	-0.17	0.55	-0.17	0.55	-0.17	0.53
birthyr	1981.53	6.08	1979.18	6.15	1980.44	5.90	1978.55	6.71	1970.53	10.06
nchlt5	0.48	0.79	0.27	0.56	0.28	0.59	0.25	0.56	0.21	0.53
nOlderChildren	0.88	1.39	0.51	0.93	0.45	0.89	0.36	0.80	0.72	1.05
Unweighted N	3,117		3,068		3,338		16,908		304,391	

Table A6 (*cont.*)

Variable	Hmong women		Laotian women		Cambodian women		Vietnamese women		White women	
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
In Labor Force	84.3%	36.4%	82.9%	37.6%	81.4%	38.9%	83.4%	37.2%	77.7%	41.6%
age	31.23	5.28	33.08	5.81	32.10	5.59	33.65	6.33	40.01	8.76
Low English	3.1%	17.5%	2.3%	14.9%	3.6%	18.8%	3.2%	17.7%	0.3%	5.2%
AtLeastHS	95.6%	20.5%	94.9%	21.9%	93.4%	24.8%	96.8%	17.5%	94.8%	22.1%
CollegeGrad	28.0%	44.9%	28.5%	45.1%	30.9%	46.2%	60.7%	48.8%	35.9%	48.0%
Middle Atlantic	0.9%	9.5%	3.5%	18.4%	6.8%	25.3%	6.2%	24.1%	12.7%	33.3%
East North Central	19.9%	39.9%	8.2%	27.4%	5.2%	22.3%	4.1%	19.9%	17.4%	37.9%
West North Central	26.0%	43.8%	10.0%	30.0%	3.8%	19.0%	3.7%	18.9%	8.3%	27.6%
South Atlantic	8.5%	27.9%	12.0%	32.5%	10.1%	30.2%	12.7%	33.2%	17.8%	38.3%
East South Central	0.5%	7.3%	5.0%	21.7%	1.0%	9.9%	1.7%	12.8%	6.6%	24.9%
West South Central	1.9%	13.7%	11.1%	31.4%	5.2%	22.2%	16.7%	37.3%	11.2%	31.6%
Mountain	3.0%	17.0%	5.8%	23.3%	4.4%	20.4%	4.8%	21.3%	7.7%	26.6%
Pacific	38.3%	48.6%	39.3%	48.8%	50.8%	50.0%	46.8%	49.9%	12.7%	33.3%
married	55.0%	49.7%	45.9%	49.8%	43.4%	49.6%	50.6%	50.0%	61.7%	48.6%
MedianWeeklyEarnings	1005.01	15.28	1004.33	14.68	1004.36	15.02	1004.79	14.81	1004.76	14.25
OtherFamilyIncome	\$43,011	\$53,287	\$48,836	\$63,632	\$51,145	\$65,206	\$68,473	\$89,199	\$57,334	\$77,688
LFPRtrend	-0.16	0.54	-0.20	0.54	-0.18	0.54	-0.16	0.55	-0.17	0.53
birthyr	1981.75	5.91	1978.96	5.94	1980.44	5.95	1978.63	6.72	1970.39	10.09
nchlt5	0.55	0.80	0.36	0.65	0.37	0.64	0.31	0.61	0.23	0.54
nOlderChildren	1.37	1.59	0.92	1.12	0.82	1.13	0.58	0.95	0.89	1.09
Unweighted N	3,114		3,328		3,698		16,859		319,476	

Table A7
Profit Labor Force Participation Results

Generation2	Hmong men		Laotian men		Cambodian men		Vietnamese men		White men	
	dy/dx	z	dy/dx	z	dy/dx	z	dy/dx	z	dy/dx	z
	0.026	1.6	0.013	0.62	0.019	1.13	0.004	0.52		
age	-0.001	0.42	0.001	0.6	0.002	1.07	0.005***	5.33	-0.003***	17.64
Low English	-0.218***	3.71	-0.135***	2.58	-0.129***	2.75	-0.029*	1.86	-0.004	-0.34
AtLeastHS	0.221***	4.65	0.096***	3.05	0.161***	4.61	0.108***	5.58	0.132***	34.79
CollegeGrad	0.045***	3.12	0.038**	2.26	0.056***	4.42	0.059***	9.55	0.062***	48.98
Middle Atlantic	0.056	0.41	-0.030	0.84	0.007	0.19	0.003	0.11	-0.001	-0.44
East North										
Central	0.125	1.07	-0.039	1.44	0.088***	3.77	0.019	0.71	-0.002	-0.68
West North										
Central	0.134	1.14	-0.021	0.77	0.0664666*	1.79	0.062**	2.56	0.007*	1.89
South Atlantic	0.088	0.75	-0.028	1.06	0.022	0.83	0.008	0.36	-0.011***	-3.52
East South										
Central	-0.109	0.44	-0.058	1.34	0.104***	4.34	0.009	0.27	-0.031***	-7.94
West South										
Central	0.110	0.87	-0.056*	1.76	0.014	0.47	0.014	0.6	-0.008**	-2.32
Mountain	0.139	1.16	-0.088**	2.37	0.039	1.06	-0.012	0.46	-0.009**	-2.37
Pacific	0.063	0.54	-0.081***	3.71	-0.013	0.62	0.000	0	-0.018***	-5.38
married	0.071***	4.36	0.065***	4.36	0.047***	3.24	0.046***	6.39	0.075***	43.78
MedianWeekly										
Earnings	0.0001	0.18	-0.0005	0.89	0.000	0.16	0.000	0.2	-0.00002	-0.37
LFPRtrend	-0.011	-0.7	-0.012	0.86	0.004	0.34	0.001	0.09	0.002	1.46
OtherFamilyInc	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
ome	0.0000003**	-2.4	0.0000002**	2.13	0.000	1.57	0.0000001***	3.42	0.000000293***	26.48
birthyr	-0.0006	0.32	0.002	1.02	0.001	0.33	0.002**	2.5	-0.0001	-0.88
nchl5	0.006	0.58	0.028**	2.06	0.047***	3.42	0.017***	2.56	0.007***	4.02
nOlderChildren	0.001	0.25	0.006	0.72	0.027***	3.02	0.024***	4.42	0.015***	18.45
Pseudo R ²	0.0962		0.0601		0.1006		0.0683		0.0963	
Unweighted N	3,117		3,068		3,338		16,908		304,391	

Table A7 (cont.)

Generation2	Hmong women		Laotian women		Cambodian women		Vietnamese women		White women	
	dy/dx	z	dy/dx	z	dy/dx	z	dy/dx	z	dy/dx	z
	0.018	0.95	0.020	0.95	0.005	0.25	0.016*	1.86		
age	-0.002	0.95	0.000	0.02	0.002	0.88	0.006***	5.61	-0.002***	10.32
Low English	-0.299***	4.55	-0.085	1.45	-0.191***	3.59	-0.073***	-3.24	-0.038**	-2
AtLeastHS	0.179***	3.62	0.178***	3.78	0.058*	1.65	0.138***	5.44	0.252***	47.51
CollegeGrad	0.122***	8.75	0.086***	5.63	0.120***	7.98	0.093***	11.59	0.114***	64.62
Middle Atlantic	-0.186	1.22	-0.017	-0.4	-0.003	0.09	-0.020	-0.86	-0.017***	-4.09
East North Central	-0.024	0.51	-0.028	0.73	-0.018	0.42	-0.046*	-1.75	-0.012***	-3.05
West North Central	0.018	0.39	-0.047	-1.2	0.002	0.04	-0.002	-0.07	0.015***	3.32
South Atlantic	-0.057	1.15	-0.057*	1.66	-0.013	0.42	-0.011	-0.59	-0.040***	-9.65
East South Central	-0.077	0.71	-0.049	1.13	-0.112	1.35	0.007	0.2	-0.077***	15.18
West South Central	-0.015	0.23	-0.060*	1.66	-0.047	1.26	-0.002	-0.1	-0.051***	-11.3
Mountain	-0.059	0.91	-0.083*	1.95	0.021	0.61	-0.026	-1.13	-0.039***	-8.11
Pacific	-0.059	-1.3	-0.063**	2.04	-0.055**	2.18	-0.019	-1.08	-0.042***	-9.67
married	-0.011	0.65	-0.014	0.85	-0.033*	1.85	-0.010	-1.28	-0.012***	-5.58
MedianWeekly Earnings	0.000	0.47	0.001	1.09	0.000	0.4	0.000	1.58	0.0002**	2.38
LFPRTrend	-0.009	-0.6	-0.043***	2.74	0.004	0.23	0.003	0.42	0.002	1.12
OtherFamilyIncome	0.0000005***	3.15	0.0000003***	3.22	0.000000591***	5.61	0.0000004***	-12	0.0000007***	59.81
birthyr	-0.001	0.41	-0.001	0.57	0.002	0.78	0.002**	2.37	0.0008***	4.45
nchlt5	-0.043***	-4.8	-0.083***	7.28	-0.040***	3.45	-0.051***	-8.9	-0.107***	62.77
nOlderChildren	0.011**	1.97	0.0004	0.05	0.001	0.09	-0.014***	-3.43	-0.018***	20.71
Pseudo R ²	0.1063		0.0717		0.0588		0.057		0.079	
Unweighted N	3,114		3,328		3,698		16,859		319,476	

Table A8

Predicted Labor Force Participation Rates by Education Level (Data For Figure 5)

Men (High school education):

	(estimate)	(low)	(high)
Hmong	0.8712583	0.8440259	0.8984906
Laotian	0.8841561	0.8653896	0.9029226
Cambodian	0.8982518	0.877364	0.9191397
Vietnamese	0.8818566	0.8703987	0.8933145
White	0.9201125	0.9176739	0.922551

Men (College education):

	(estimate)	(low)	(high)
Hmong	0.9167033	0.8902812	0.9431253
Laotian	0.9202486	0.8922646	0.9482325
Cambodian	0.9456438	0.9280049	0.9632828
Vietnamese	0.936472	0.9283839	0.94456
White	0.9671523	0.9655912	0.9687134

Women (High school education):

	(estimate)	(low)	(high)
Hmong	0.8083813	0.7791837	0.837579
Laotian	0.8272413	0.8052905	0.8491922
Cambodian	0.7895047	0.7619596	0.8170498
Vietnamese	0.775725	0.7595857	0.7918643
White	0.7810724	0.7771718	0.7849731

Women (College education):

	(estimate)	(low)	(high)
Hmong	0.93457	0.9139738	0.9551661
Laotian	0.9072366	0.8858466	0.9286266
Cambodian	0.9049757	0.8835876	0.9263638
Vietnamese	0.8705534	0.8609373	0.8801695
White	0.8831648	0.8803222	0.8860074

Table A9
SEI Occupational Status Codes (from ipums.org)

Occupation	SEI code
N/A (blank)	0
Porters	4
Lumbermen, raftsmen, and woodchoppers	4
Sawyers	5
Weavers, textile	6
Farm laborers, wage workers	6
Private household workers (nec)	7
Hucksters and peddlers	8
Laborers (nec)	8
Janitors and sextons	9
Paperhangers	10
Mine operatives and laborers	10
Taxicab drivers and chauffeurs	10
Charwomen and cleaners	10
Fishermen and oystermen	10
Blasters and powdermen	11
Service workers, except private household (nec)	11
Gardeners, except farm and groundskeepers	11
Molders, metal	12
Shoemakers and repairers, except factory	12
Attendants, hospital and other institution	13
Farmers (owners and tenants)	14
Roofers and slaters	15
Laundry and dry cleaning Operatives	15
Oilers and greaser, except auto	15
Truck and tractor drivers	15
Cooks, except private household	15
Painters, construction and maintenance	16
Sailors and deck hands	16
Waiters and waitresses	16
Stationary firemen	17
Barbers, beauticians, and manicurists	17

Table A9 (*cont.*)

Counter and fountain workers	17
Watchmen (crossing) and bridge tenders	17
Members of the armed services	18
Painters, except construction or maintenance	18
Operative and kindred workers (nec)	18
Guards, watchmen, and doorkeepers	18
Carpenters	19
Cement and concrete finishers	19
Automobile-mechanics and repairmen	19
Attendants, auto service and parking	19
Housekeepers, private household	19
Attendants, recreation and amusement	19
Bartenders	19
Farm foremen	20
Cranemen, derrickmen, and hoistmen	21
Shipping and receiving clerks	22
Bakers	22
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