Data on Immigrants and Immigrant Integration

Panel on the Integration of Immigrants into American Society

Committee on Population
Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education
Panel Members

MARY WATERS (Chair), Department of Sociology, Harvard University

RICHARD ALBA, Department of Sociology, Graduate Center of the City University of New York

FRANK D. BEAN, Center for Research on Immigration, Population and Public Policy, University of California, Irvine

IRENE BLOEMRAAD, Department of Sociology, University of California, Berkeley

MICHAEL FIX, Migration Policy Institute

NANCY FONER, Department of Sociology, Hunter College, and Graduate Center of the City University of New York

CHARLES HIRSCHMAN, Department of Sociology, University of Washington

DANIEL T. LICHTER, Department of Policy Analysis and Management, Cornell University

DOUGLAS S. MASSEY, Department of Sociology, Princeton University

CECILIA MENJIVAR, Department of Sociology, University of Kansas

S. KARTHICK RAMAKRISHNAN, Department of Political Science, University of California, Riverside

AUDREY SINGER, Metropolitan Policy Program, The Brookings Institution

DAVID T. TAKEUCHI, Boston College School of Social Work

KEVIN J.A. THOMAS, Department of Sociology, Pennsylvania State University

STEPHEN TREJO, Department of Economics, University of Texas, Austin

RICHARD WRIGHT, Department of Geography, Dartmouth College

HIROKAZU YOSHIKAWA, Department of Applied Psychology, New York University
Panel Charge

1. Summarizing what is known about how immigrants and their descendants are integrating into American society;

2. Discussing the implications of this knowledge for informing various policy options;

3. Identifying any important gaps in existing knowledge and data availability.
Data on Immigrants and Immigrant Integration

• Integration at the individual level
• Integration as an intergenerational phenomenon
• The report attempts to evaluate both*
• The panel concluded that key data are not available
Main Data Sources for Integration Issues

- Administrative data
- Surveys
  - Government
  - Nongovernment
- Qualitative Data
Measuring Legal Status

- Administrative sources
- Survey data
- Qualitative data
- Data on Undocumented Immigrants
Data on the Second Generation

• Minor children living in households with foreign-born parents

• Few surveys ask adults about parents’ birthplace – (push to get question on ACS)

• No nationally representative survey beyond CPS (limited subnational groups and geographies)
Challenges

- Ambiguity in duration and intent to settle
- Small sample size
- Lack of longitudinal data
- Capturing contexts of reception
Data Recommendations

• Add birthplace of parents question to ACS
• Test & add question about legal status on CPS
• Include provision for longitudinal survey in new immigration legislation
• Make more administrative data available to researchers & public
• Big surveys like GSS, NLS, and Adolescent Health Survey should oversample immigrants, esp. Asian and non-Mexican Hispanic groups