

NEXO

The Official Newsletter of

The Julian Samora Research Institute
The Midwest's Premier Latino Research Center



An excerpt from Vol. XVIII · No. 1 | Fall 2014

Child Poverty among Immigrant and Racial/Ethnic Minority Families in Michigan: Explaining the Latino and Non-Latino Gaps

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ABSTRACT

Drawing on data from the 2007-2011 American Community Survey (ACS), this study examines variations in child poverty between immigrant and native children and between racial/ethnic minority and non-minority children in Michigan. This study also assesses the relative and combined influences of immigrant status and race/ethnicity on child poverty, controlling for child, family, and residence characteristics. We find that slightly more than one in five children in Michigan live in poverty and significant gaps in child poverty rates exist between immigrant and between racial/ethnic minority children. Although racial/ethnic gaps in child poverty persist, child poverty among Latino children, especially first-generation Latino immigrant children, is significantly reduced after controlling for child, family, and residence confounders. The results imply that policy and program interventions to improve the education, skills, on-the-job-training and to create better job opportunities with steady and living wages, may reduce immigrant and racial/ethnic minority gaps in child poverty.



Michigan's children are White, 17 percent Black, seven percent Latino, and almost three percent Asian; five percent are from other racial/ethnic groups, including Native American, other race, and two or more races, respectively. About 11 percent of Michigan children are immigrants, that is, they have a parent who was born outside of the United States. Almost 40 percent of Latino children and 88 percent of Asian children are immigrants. Socioeconomically, slightly more than one in five children in Michigan live in poverty (20.5 percent).

Children are the future of every society. For that reason, children receive more attention and scrutiny than other population groups. Children are also vulnerable because they depend on parents and other adults in the community for their survival and development. In recent years, there has been a great deal of attention to

1. INTRODUCTION

In 2007-2011, Michigan had almost 2.4 million children, representing about 24 percent of the total population. These children are ethnically and racially diverse. Close to 70 percent of

addressing the needs of children in Michigan. To that end, some programs have invested a great amount of resources toward enhancing children's welfare and development. The growth of the Latino, Asian, and other immigrant populations in Michigan and nationwide has also spurred the need to create immigrant friendly environments aimed at enhancing immigrant children's well-being and development.

Poor families experience greater economic stress than non-poor families and are disproportionately overrepresented among racial/ethnic minorities. In Michigan, for example, about 24 percent of Latino families, 28 percent of Black families, and 21 percent of Native American families live in poverty compared to eight percent of non-Latino White families. Comparatively, Asian families have relatively lower poverty rates – about nine percent. In general, poor families lack adequate resources to meet their children's well-being and developmental needs. Moreover, immigrant families may face additional barriers to access resources for their children's well-being and developmental needs.

Research has shown that poverty has a negative effect on children's outcomes, including physical health (e.g., physical growth problems, low birth weight, child mortality, lead poisoning, and short hospital stays); educational achievement (e.g., grade repetition, dropping out of high school, learning disabilities, and low cognitive development); emotional and behavioral problems and depression; and other consequences, such as teenage out-of-wedlock birth, child abuse and neglect, and violent crimes (Aber et al., 1997; Brooks-Gunn and Duncan, 1997; Duncan and Brooks-Gunn, 1999, 2000; Duncan, Brooks-Gunn, and Klebanov, 1994; Lichter, 1997; Malat, Oh, and Hamilton, 2005; McLeod and Shanahan, 1996; Petterson and Albers, 2001).

This study draws on census data from the 2007-2011 American Community Survey (ACS) in Michigan to examine the economic well-being of children in Michigan using different measures of child poverty. The large sample of the data allows us to examine how Michigan children are doing by looking at their

demographic, socioeconomic, and other family characteristics. In particular, this study examines variations in child immigrant poverty, both first-generation and second-generation immigrant children, and how they are compared to non-immigrant children. In addition, this study assesses the extent to which the gaps in child poverty rates between immigrant and native children and between racial/ethnic minority and non-minority children in Michigan are reduced and/or persist once known socio-demographic, economic, and residential factors are taken into consideration.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Previous research on poverty has focused on both individual characteristics (e.g., parental education) and on existing social structural forces beyond individuals that affect their daily lives, particularly economic, social, and political systems (O'Conner, 2001; Iceland, 2006; Van Hook, Brown, and Kwenda, 2004; Brown & Hirschl, 1995; Bluestone & Harrison, 1988; RSS Task Force on Persistent Poverty, 1993). In this paper, we focus on three main theoretical explanations from the literature: 1) human capital theory, 2) economic restructuring, and 3) social stratification explanations. The first highlights the influences of human capital of individuals and in this case that of parents; the second stresses the influences of the change in economic structure and opportunities, especially the declining earnings and availability of well-paid jobs; and the third focuses on the hierarchical and uneven access to opportunities across social class, race/ethnicity, immigrant status, gender, and other social statuses.

Human Capital Theory

The prominent explanation of why individuals live in poverty tends to focus on individual characteristics such as educational attainment, skills, and job experiences. The main argument from this perspective is that individuals with lower levels of education, skills, and job experiences are poorly remunerated and, therefore, are likely to live in poverty.

The human capital theory (Becker, 1964;

Borjas, 1990; Lichter et al., 1993) asserts that workers with weak skills (e.g., lack of education or relevant experiences) are less productive at work and are, therefore, poorly remunerated in the labor market and experience more job instability. In contrast, individuals with higher educational attainment and greater job skills and experiences are arguably more productive employees, earn higher wages, experience greater job stability (Lichter et al., 1993; Snipp et al., 1993) and are therefore, less likely to live in poverty. This individual-focused explanation of poverty is prominent in policy on poverty circles and is often used to explain why race/ethnic minorities and some immigrant groups live in poverty.

From this perspective, child immigrant poverty has been attributed to the quality of recent immigrants. It is argued that the quality of recent immigrants has declined since the passage of 1965 Immigration Act (Borjas, 1990; Brimelow, 1997) which allowed entry from non-European countries. The admission of a large number of immigrants with low educational levels, skills, and limited job experiences into the United States may have contributed to increases in immigrant child poverty (Van Hook, Brown, and Kwenda, 2004).

While the human capital explanation of child immigrant poverty is informative, emphasis on individual attributes alone often overlooks the enormous impact of existing social, economic, and political systems on poverty (Iceland, 2006; O'Conner, 2001). We expect that human capital measures partially explain the levels of child immigrant and racial/ethnic minority poverty. However, we also expect that gaps in child poverty rates between immigrants and natives and between racial/ethnic minority and non-minority children persist even after taking into consideration human capital factors.

Economic Restructuring

Structural explanations of poverty stress the lack of access to opportunities in local labor markets as the main cause of high poverty levels (Iceland, 2006; Bluestone & Harrison, 1988). Economic restructuring refers to three

major interrelated changes that occurred in the U.S. economy, especially since the 1970s: 1) deindustrialization -- the transition in employment from extractive and manufacturing industries to service and information industries; 2) the increase in new technologies, especially in microelectronics and other high-tech industries; and 3) globalization -- the integration of international markets for goods, services, capital, information, and labor (Brady, Beckfield, & Zhao, 2007). These economic transformations have not only created new structures of work, they have also stressed and constrained choices available to workers in different labor markets and have been linked to increases in poverty in both rural and urban areas, a more polarized class structure, and a decline in employment opportunities (Wilson, 1997; Wilson, 1996; Tickamyer and Duncan, 1990; Brown & Hirschl, 1995, Bluestone & Harrison, 1988). Referring to rural communities, Tickamyer and Duncan (1990) indicated that many communities lacked stable employment, opportunities for mobility, investment in the community, and diversity in the economy and other social institutions. Such communities, they argued, were increasingly and spatially isolated and particularly vulnerable to adverse effects from structural economic change (Tickamyer and Duncan, 1990). The same can be said of urban communities where the disappearance of good manufacturing jobs from cities such as Detroit and Flint in Michigan, followed by the flight of middle-class families from those communities, has created impoverished and isolated places with limited employment opportunities, engendering what Wilson (1987) has termed the "truly disadvantaged."

The new immigrants, especially Latinos, are moving either in rural communities to work in dairy and non-dairy farms or in structurally neglected cities to pursue their American Dreams. The structure of today's economy (with expanding opportunities in both high-end and low-end occupations, but not middle occupations) has made it more difficult for today's new arrivals, many of whom start out with low levels of education, to work their way up the job ladder (Portes and Zhou, 1993; Zhou,

1997; Zhou and Bankston, 1998; Van Hook, Brown, & Kwenda, 2004). We expect that child immigrant and racial/ethnic minority poverty will be associated with parents' employment status, industry of employment, and metropolitan/non-metropolitan residence controlling for parents' educational levels and other individual/family characteristics. We also expect that these variables will significantly reduce the gaps in child poverty between immigrant and native children and between racial/ethnic minority and non-minority children.

Social Stratification

The increase in child immigrant and racial/ethnic minority poverty may be related to changes in racial/ethnic composition, heightened racial/ethnic segregation and discrimination, and the backlash against immigrants in the United States (Van Hook, Brown, and Kwenda, 2004). Immigrant scholars argue that recent immigrants may be less able to incorporate socially and economically than did immigrants from the early half of the twenty first century because of persistent and growing racial discrimination (Portes and Zhou, 1993; Waters, 1994, 1990; Alba and Nee, 1997).

The literature on urban poverty highlights deindustrialization and class segregation in particular as hampering the economic mobility of less skilled Blacks in the labor markets (Wilson, 1987). Massey & Denton (1993) indicated that segregation, interacting with economic forces, reinforces minority poverty by limiting access to a broad range of metropolitan area employment opportunities. John Iceland (2006) for example, added that some of the processes that have hindered African American economic well-being, such as discrimination, segregation, and human capital differentials, have also affected other minority groups, including Latinos, Asian Americans, and Native Americans, though the experiences of each group may differ considerably depending on regional concentration, population size, labor market niche, and the White population's reaction to its presence (Iceland, 2006).

In general, immigrant families are at greater risk of poverty and have lower incomes than native families. Limited language proficiency and unfamiliarity with American customs and the labor market considerably hinder immigrant economic mobility in the short run. But over time and in subsequent generations, labor market barriers become less important (Borjas, 1990; Iceland, 2006). In general, poverty rates are highest among recent immigrants, particularly among recent migrants from Mexico (Iceland, 2006). We expect that child poverty rates will be significantly higher among immigrant children than among native children. We also expect that Latino and Black children will be more likely to live in poverty than White and Asian children. After controlling for parents' employment status, education, and other relevant demographic characteristics, we expect that immigrant-native gaps in child poverty will be substantially reduced while racial/ethnic gaps in child poverty will remain.

2. METHODS

Data

This study draws on data from the 2007-2011 American Community Survey (ACS). The Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) contains a sample of actual responses to ACS. Each record in the file represents a single person, or in the household-level dataset, a single housing unit. PUMS files covering a five-year period contain records of data from approximately five percent of the United States population. In this study, we focus on children ages 0 – 17 years living with at least one parent or a related householder. Only biological son/daughter, adopted son/daughter, stepson/daughter, brother/sister, grandchild, and other relative under 18 years are included in the analysis. Children living in group quarters, roommates, housemates, and other non-related children to the householder, husband/wife, or unmarried partner are excluded. We also excluded households in which the average age of parents was under 18 years. After selecting children living in households with a parent or a related householder, this study uses about 94 percent

of the child population in Michigan. About 247,901 children (or 11 percent) live in immigrant families. About two percent of those children are first-generation immigrants, whereas nine percent are second-generation immigrants. Descriptive statistics of selected socio-demographic and family background characteristics are displayed in Table 1.

Measures

Child poverty -- The dependent variable of interest is child poverty. The child poverty rate is defined as the percentage of children living in families with incomes below the official poverty thresholds. Although the official poverty rate is the most widely used, we also analyze other dimensions of child poverty, including deep child poverty (the percentage of children living in families with incomes less than 50 percent of the official poverty thresholds), near child poverty (the percentage of children living in families with incomes 50 percent greater than the official poverty thresholds), relative child poverty (the percentage of children living in families with incomes less than half of the median family income), and low income (the percentage of children living in families with incomes 200 percent of the official poverty thresholds or 100 percent greater than the official poverty thresholds).

Immigrant status - The main independent variable is child immigrant status. Immigrant or foreign-born individuals are those born outside the United States and its territories. Individuals born in Puerto Rico and other territories of the United States or born abroad to U.S. citizen parents are considered native-born. Children of immigrant families have at least one foreign-born parent. Children of native families live with either two parents who are native born or a single parent who is a native born. Among children in immigrant families, first generation immigrant children are those who were born outside the United States and its territories and who have at least one foreign-born parent. Second generation immigrant children are those who were born in the United States and its territories with at least one parent who was

born outside of the United States and its territories. The reference group is native-born children who live with their native-born parents or parent, often referred to as third or later generation.

Parental origin -- This variable is defined by grouping countries based on the geography of all immigrants. Countries are grouped into nine origin country groups: 1) Mexico; 2) Canada and Bermuda; 3) Central America; 4) Caribbean; 5) South America; 6) Europe; 7) Asia; 8) Africa; and 9) Oceania (Australia, New Zealand, and other countries).

Race/ethnicity -- The racial/ethnic groups are mutually exclusive and include the following: Hispanic or Latino (Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, and other Hispanic/Latino, which includes Dominican, Central American, South American, and other Hispanic/Latino not elsewhere classified), non-Hispanic White, non-Hispanic Black, non-Hispanic Asian (Chinese, Indian, Japanese, Filipino, and other Asians including Pacific Islanders), Native American (American Indian or Alaska natives), and other racial/ethnic groups, including some other races and two or more racial groups.

Control variables -- The following family and child characteristics that were significantly related to child poverty in previous studies were controlled in the analysis: family/household structure and composition, parental education, parental employment, industry of employment, parental age, child's age, sex, language, and non-metro/metro residence.

Family/household structure -- In this study, family is defined as to include the householder and all individuals living with the householder and related to him/her by birth, marriage or adoption, as well as the unmarried partner of the householder. This definition of the family is more inclusive than the U.S. census definition, where the family only includes the householder and those related to him/her by birth, marriage or adoption. Family structure is indicated by the following dummy variables: Cohabiting with biological and non-biological parent/partner; single-father family (no spouse/partner present); single ever-married mother family (no spouse/

partner present); and single never-married mother family. Married-couple family (where both biological parents are present in the household) is the reference category. The following household composition variables were also included in the analysis: the number of related children in the household; the presence of grandparents; and the presence of other adult relatives (e.g., brother/sister, parent-in-law, son/daughter-in-law or other relatives).

Parental education -- Parental education is measured by parents, partners' highest educational attainment and is categorized into four dummy variables: less than high school, high school, some college, and college or more education. The reference category is college education or more.

Parental employment -- Parental employment is measured by the employment status of father and that of mother. Parental employment is defined as a dummy variable indicating whether or not at least one parent in the household works full-time, full-year round (i.e., worked at least 35 hours per week for 50 weeks a year).

Industry of employment -- Using industry codes from the ACS data, we used the following dummy variables to measure industry of employment:

- 1) Agricultural industries (agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting);
- 2) construction and non-durable manufacturing;
- 3) distributive services (wholesale trade and transportation, warehousing, and utilities);
- 4) high-wage services (Information; Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate (FIRE); professional, scientific, and management; administrative and waste management services; and education services, health care and social assistance;
- 5) consumer low-wage services (retail trade, arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services, and other services); and
- 6) Unemployed and not working (i.e., with no work experience in the last 5 years or earlier or

never worked). High-wage industries, which include mining, durable manufacturing, public administration, and active duty military, is the reference category.

Language -- We also included two dummy variables for language: limited English proficiency and linguistic isolation. Limited English proficiency is a dummy variable indicating whether respondents speak a language other than English at home and whether they speak English well, not well, or not at all. The reference category is English proficiency, i.e., those who speak English at home or who speak another language at home but also speak English very well. Linguistic isolated households are those in which no person age 14 years and older is English proficient. All members of such a household are considered linguistically isolated, even though these households may include English proficient children under age 14.

Parental age, child's age and sex -- We also included the average parental age in the case of two parents or two cohabiting couples and the reference age in the case of single parent-headed households. Child age is categorized into two dummy variables: under six years and 6 – 11 years. The reference category is 12 – 17 years. We used a dummy variable for male with female as the reference category.

Metropolitan/non-metropolitan residence -- Metropolitan and non-metropolitan status of residence were defined using the 2003 USDA-Beale codes. Beale codes are defined at the county level, which means that PUMA within the same county were assigned the same code. In cases where many small counties were grouped into one PUMA (U.S. Census confidentiality), we assigned the lowest Beale code to that PUMA. We included two dummy indicators for residence: other metro (county in metro area of 250,000 to one million population and county in metro with fewer than 250,000 population); and non-metro counties (codes 4 or greater in the Beale codes). The reference category for the metro/non-metro residence is large metro (county in metro area with a population of one million or more).

TABLE 1. Descriptive Statistics (Mean and Standard Deviations) of Selected Characteristics

Characteristic	Total	1 st Generation	2 nd Generation	3 rd + Generation
	(N=2,228,113)	(N=42,484)	(N=205,417)	(N=1,980,212)
	(100.0 percent)	(1.9 percent)	(9.2 percent)	(88.9 percent)
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)
Child Poverty				
Deep official poverty, percent	0.094 (0.292)	0.155 (0.361)	0.085 (0.279)	0.094 (0.292)
Official poverty, percent	0.205 (0.403)	0.300 (0.458)	0.233 (0.423)	0.200 (0.400)
1.5 x official poverty, percent	0.312 (0.463)	0.433 (0.496)	0.356 (0.479)	0.304 (0.460)
Relative poverty, percent	0.284 (0.451)	0.360 (0.480)	0.285 (0.452)	0.282 (0.450)
2 x official poverty, percent	0.414 (0.493)	0.542 (0.498)	0.460 (0.498)	0.407 (0.491)
Child's Age, percent				
Less than 6	0.306 (0.461)	0.131 (0.337)	0.382 (0.486)	0.302 (0.459)
6 – 11	0.335 (0.472)	0.360 (0.480)	0.351 (0.477)	0.333 (0.471)
12 – 17 (reference category)	0.359 (0.480)	0.510 (0.500)	0.267 (0.442)	0.365 (0.482)
Male, percent	0.514 (0.500)	0.533 (0.499)	0.520 (0.500)	0.513 (0.500)
Race/Ethnicity, percent				
Hispanic/Latino	0.070 (0.395)	0.194 (0.395)	0.253 (0.435)	0.048 (0.214)
Non-Hispanic White (reference)	0.702 (0.458)	0.406 (0.491)	0.435 (0.496)	0.736 (0.441)
Black	0.154 (0.361)	0.060 (0.237)	0.036 (0.185)	0.168 (0.374)
Asian	0.029 (0.169)	0.314 (0.464)	0.214 (0.410)	0.004 (0.063)
Other	0.005 (0.073)	0.000 (0.000)	0.002 (0.046)	0.006 (0.076)
Region of Parents' Origin, percent				
Mexico	0.186 (0.389)	0.151 (0.359)	0.208 (0.406)	0.066 (0.249)
Canada and Bermuda	0.069 (0.253)	0.042 (0.200)	0.064 (0.244)	0.152 (0.359)
Central America	0.025 (0.157)	0.009 (0.096)	0.030 (0.170)	0.016 (0.126)
Caribbean	0.019 (0.137)	0.022 (0.146)	0.018 (0.131)	0.027 (0.161)
South America	0.028 (0.164)	0.020 (0.141)	0.027 (0.163)	0.045 (0.207)
Europe	0.172 (0.377)	0.149 (0.356)	0.142 (0.349)	0.447 (0.497)

Table 1. Continued

Characteristic	Total	1 st Generation	2 nd Generation	3 rd + Generation
	(N=2,228,113)	(N=42,484)	(N=205,417)	(N=1,980,212)
	(100.0 percent)	(1.9 percent)	(9.2 percent)	(88.9 percent)
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)
Asia	0.455 (0.498)	0.539 (0.498)	0.467 (0.499)	0.220 (0.414)
Africa	0.042 (0.200)	0.064 (0.245)	0.039 (0.193)	0.026 (0.159)
Oceania	0.005 (0.068)	0.003 (0.056)	0.005 (0.073)	0.002 (0.047)
Family/Household Structure, percent				
Married couple (reference)	0.686 (0.464)	0.867 (0.340)	0.882 (0.323)	0.662 (0.473)
Cohabiting couple	0.061 (0.239)	0.017 (0.129)	0.021 (0.142)	0.066 (0.248)
Single-father family	0.040 (0.195)	0.020 (0.141)	0.019 (0.136)	0.042 (0.201)
Single ever-married mother	0.121 (0.326)	0.082 (0.274)	0.057 (0.231)	0.129 (0.335)
Single never-married mother	0.092 (0.289)	0.015 (0.120)	0.022 (0.147)	0.101 (0.301)
Number of children	2.436 (1.249)	2.556 (1.350)	2.615 (1.308)	2.415 (1.238)
Grandparent in the home, percent	0.077 (0.267)	0.063 (0.242)	0.090 (0.286)	0.076 (0.265)
Other relatives in the home, percent	0.131 (0.337)	0.066 (0.248)	0.086 (0.280)	0.137 (0.344)
Household size	3.084 (2.631)	4.414 (1.309)	3.899 (1.606)	2.970 (2.714)
Parental age	39.146 (8.668)	40.369 (6.994)	39.123 (7.751)	39.123 (8.787)
Parental Education, percent				
Less than high school	0.067 (0.251)	0.229 (0.420)	0.165 (0.371)	0.054 (0.226)
High School	0.192 (0.394)	0.186 (0.390)	0.164 (0.370)	0.195 (0.396)
Some college	0.377 (0.485)	0.127 (0.333)	0.210 (0.407)	0.400 (0.490)
College or more (reference)	0.363 (0.481)	0.458 (0.498)	0.461 (0.498)	0.351 (0.477)
Limited English Proficiency, percent	0.016 (0.124)	0.257 (0.437)	0.063 (0.244)	0.006 (0.075)
Linguistically Isolated, percent	0.024 (0.152)	0.348 (0.476)	0.169 (0.375)	0.002 (0.042)
At least one parent full-time year round, percent	0.699 (0.459)	0.648 (0.478)	0.708 (0.454)	0.700 (0.458)

Table 1. Continued

Characteristic	Total	1 st Generation	2 nd Generation	3 rd + Generation
	(N=2,228,113)	(N=42,484)	(N=205,417)	(N=1,980,212)
	(100.0 percent)	(1.9 percent)	(9.2 percent)	(88.9 percent)
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)
Industry of Employment				
Agriculture	0.011 (0.104)	0.023 (0.149)	0.023 (0.150)	0.010 (0.097)
Construction/low-wage manufacturing	0.092 (0.289)	0.094 (0.292)	0.098 (0.298)	0.091 (0.288)
High-wage industries (reference)	0.199 (0.399)	0.224 (0.417)	0.225 (0.418)	0.196 (0.397)
Distributive services	0.064 (0.245)	0.066 (0.248)	0.056 (0.231)	0.065 (0.246)
High-wage services	0.364 (0.481)	0.257 (0.437)	0.307 (0.461)	0.372 (0.483)
Consumer services	0.187 (0.390)	0.202 (0.401)	0.188 (0.391)	0.186 (0.389)
Unemployed/Not working/NA	0.084 (0.277)	0.135 (0.342)	0.102 (0.303)	0.081 (0.272)
Residence				
Large metropolitan (reference)	0.448 (0.497)	0.664 (0.472)	0.626 (0.484)	0.425 (0.448)
Other metropolitan	0.440 (0.496)	0.320 (0.466)	0.342 (0.474)	0.452 (0.498)
Nonmetropolitan	0.112 (0.315)	0.016 (0.125)	0.033 (0.177)	0.122 (0.328)

Data Source: 2007-2011 American Community Survey

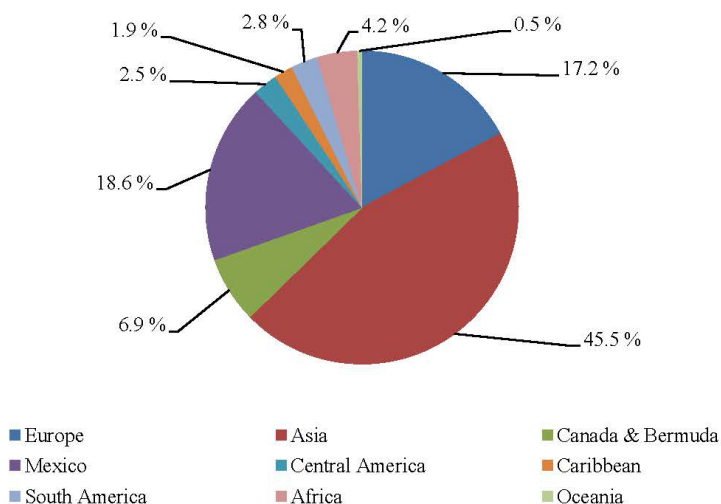
Analytic Methods

The analysis is organized in three steps: First, descriptive statistics show how child poverty indicators vary by immigrant status, region of parents' origin, and race/ethnicity. Second, a series of logistic regression models determine how immigrant status and race/ethnicity are associated with child poverty indicators, adjusting for the influences of family and child characteristics, including family structure, parental education, parental employment, and child's age, sex, and language measures. Finally, charts of predicted probabilities of child poverty by immigrant status and race/ethnicity are displayed.

Results

Children in immigrant families in Michigan are predominantly from Asia (46 percent), Mexico (19 percent) and Europe (17 percent). About 7 percent of immigrant children are from Canada; four percent from Africa; almost three percent from Central America, and three percent from South America; and about two percent from the Caribbean, respectively (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1. Percent of Children of Immigrants by Region of Parents' Origin



How do children in immigrant families compare to native children in terms of child poverty? Table 2 displays poverty rates for children in Michigan by immigrant status. The results in Table 2 show that nine percent of children in Michigan are in deep poverty (i.e., their family income is less than 50 percent of the official poverty thresholds); one-fifth of children in Michigan are in poverty (i.e., their family incomes are below the official poverty thresholds); and 31 percent of children are poor or near poor (i.e., their family incomes are 50 percent greater than the official poverty thresholds).

Another way to look at the poverty level of children is to use a measure of relative child poverty as indicated by the percentage of children living in families with incomes less than half of the median family income. About 28 percent of children in Michigan were relatively poor. About 41 percent of children in Michigan were low income (twice the poverty official threshold) (Table 2). Regardless of which indicator is used the results in Table 2 show that first-generation immigrant children in Michigan are significantly more likely than second- and third-generation children to be in poverty. Using the official poverty definition, about 30 percent of first-generation immigrant children were in poverty as compared to 23 percent for second-generation children, and 20 percent for third or later generation children, respectively (Table 2).

TABLE 2. Child Poverty Rates in Michigan by Immigrant Status (Weighted percent)

	Deep official poverty	Official poverty	1.5 x official poverty	Relative poverty	2 x official poverty
Total	9.4	20.5	31.2	28.4	41.4
<i>Immigrant Status</i>					
1 st generation	15.4	30.0	43.3	36.0	54.2
2 nd generation	8.5	23.3	35.6	28.5	46.0
3 rd generation or more	9.4	20.0	30.4	28.2	40.7

How do Latino children in immigrant families differ from other immigrant and non-immigrant families in terms of poverty? Table 3 displays child poverty rates by immigrant status and race/ethnicity. The results in Table 3 show that child poverty rates differ by immigrant status and race ethnicity. About 33 percent of Latino children lived in poverty, as compared to 20 percent of non-Latino children. Among non-Latino children, Black children had the highest

poverty rate (44 percent) whereas Asian and White children had the lowest poverty rate (14 percent). About 38 percent of first-generation Latino immigrant children lived in poverty, as compared to 28 percent of non-Latino first-generation immigrants. Among first-generation immigrants, Asian children had the lowest poverty rate. Among second-generation immigrant children, Latinos had higher poverty rates than non-Latino immigrant children. About 37 percent of second-generation Latino immigrant children lived in poverty. In comparison, 19 percent of second-generation non-Latino immigrants lived in poverty. Among third-generation or later immigrants, Black children had the highest poverty rates (45 percent), followed by Latino children (30 percent). Third-generation or later Asian children had the lowest child poverty rate (7 percent) (see Table 3).

TABLE 3. Child Poverty Rates in Michigan by Immigrant Status and Race/Ethnicity (Weighted percent)

	Total	First Generation	Second Generation	Third Generation or later
Total	20.5	30.0	23.3	20.0
<i>Race/Ethnicity</i>				
Hispanic/Latino	32.6	37.8	36.9	29.7
Non-Hispanic	19.6	28.1	18.7	19.5
White	13.9	35.7	21.8	13.1
Black	44.2	37.1	24.5	44.7
Asian	13.8	17.4	13.9	6.9
Other	27.7	18.3	10.6	30.3

Table 4 displays the results of child poverty rates in immigrant families by region of parents' origin. The results show that immigrant children whose parents are from Central America and Mexico are more likely to be in deep poverty, poverty, and near poverty than those from other regions. They are also more likely to be relatively poor and low income (twice the official poverty threshold) (Table 4).

TABLE 4. Child Poverty Rates in Immigrant Families by Region of Parents' Origin (Weighted percent)

	Deep official poverty	Official poverty	1.5 x official poverty	Relative poverty	2 x official poverty
<i>Region of Parents' Origin</i>					
Mexico	14.0	39.3	63.3	49.4	78.0
Canada and Bermuda	1.5	4.5	10.8	7.3	15.7
Central America	19.4	41.8	57.8	48.9	65.2
Caribbean	5.0	16.8	31.5	27.5	46.2
South America	0.6	9.6	14.5	12.8	22.3
Europe	4.4	13.3	21.1	16.5	31.5
Asia	10.6	24.2	33.8	28.4	43.1
Africa	10.3	27.2	44.1	33.5	58.8
Oceania	12.2	12.2	19.6	14.4	20.8

The next question is whether child poverty gaps between immigrant and non-immigrant children of different racial and ethnic groups remain after controlling for the influences of family and child characteristics. To answer this question, we ran a series of nested logistic regression models of child poverty on immigrant status and race/ethnicity including immigrant status and race/ethnicity interactions and controlling for child and family characteristics (Table 5). Model 1 estimates immigrant gaps in child poverty, controlling for age and sex, providing a baseline of comparison for subsequent models that add other explanatory variables. Exponentiating the log-odds coefficient, we see that first-generation immigrant children's odds of poverty are $\exp(0.629) = 1.88$ those of third-generation immigrant children (95% confidence interval [CI] for relative odds=1.70, 2.07). Second-generation immigrant children's odds of poverty are 1.16 those of third-generation immigrant children (95% CI=1.11, 1.22). The results also indicate that child poverty is 1.69 times higher among children under six years than children ages 12-17 years (95% CI=1.62, 1.75). The results also indicate that child poverty is 1.34 times higher among children ages 6-11 years than children ages 12-17 years (95% CI=1.29, 1.39).

Model 2 adds race/ethnicity and the interaction terms of immigrant status and race ethnicity. Latinos' odds of child poverty are 2.54 times of Whites (95% CI=2.36, 2.70). Blacks' odds of child poverty are 5.05 times those of Whites (95% CI=4.86, 5.24). Asians'

odds of child poverty are 0.40 times those of Whites (95% CI=0.32, 0.49). Immigrant status is protective for first-generation Latinos and first- and second-generation Blacks as indicated by the negative interaction coefficients. However, immigrant status is not protective for second-generation Asians as indicated by the positive interaction coefficients. Adding race/ethnicity in model 2 increases significantly the logistic regression coefficient that describes the gap in poverty between first-generation immigrant and third-generation immigrant children. The odds ratio describing that gap increased from 1.88 to 3.56 (95% CI=3.11, 4.08]. Adjusting for race/ethnicity also increases the logistic regression coefficient that describes the gap in poverty between second-generation immigrant and third-generation immigrant children. The odds ratio describing that gap increased from 1.16 to 1.50 (95% CI=1.40, 1.62].

Model 3 introduces controls for family structure and composition. The results show that the odds of poverty of children living with cohabiting couples are 9.22 times those of children with married parents (95% CI=8.21, 10.36). For children with single fathers, the odds of poverty are 4.65 times those of children with married parents (95% CI=4.29, 5.04). For children with single ever-married mothers, the odds of poverty are 8.25 times those of children with married parents (95% CI=7.84, 8.67). For children with single never-married mothers, the odds of poverty are 15.77 times those of children with married parents (95% CI=14.88, 16.71). The results in model 3 also show that the odds of child poverty are 1.65 times higher for each additional child in the household (95% CI=1.62, 1.67), 0.65 times lower for children living in households with grandparents, and 1.18 times higher if there are other relatives living in the household. Adding these controls also increases the logistic regression coefficient that describes the gap in poverty between first-generation immigrant and third-generation immigrant children. The odds ratio describing that gap increased from 3.56 to 5.77 (95% CI=4.99, 6.67]. Adjusting for these controls also increases the logistic regression coefficient that describes the gap in poverty between second-generation immigrant and third-generation immigrant children. The odds ratio describing that gap increased from 1.50 to 2.46 (95% CI=2.27, 2.66].

Model 4 adds controls for parental education and language. As expected, the results indicate that the odds of child poverty are 15.57 times higher for children whose parents have less than a high school education (95% CI=14.37, 16.86); 6.61 times higher for children whose parents have a high school education (95% CI=6.20, 7.04); and 3.64 times higher for children whose parents have some college education (95% CI=6.20, 7.04) than those of children whose parents have a college education, respectively. The results also show that the odds of child poverty are 1.24 times higher for children living in limited English proficiency households (95% CI=1.07, 1.42) and 1.83 times higher for children living in linguistically isolated households (95% CI=1.62, 2.05). Adding these controls reduces the logistic regression coefficient that describes the gap in poverty between first-generation immigrant and third-generation immigrant children. The odds ratio describing that gap decreased from 5.77 to 3.10 (95% CI=2.61, 3.69]. Adjusting for these controls also decreases the logistic regression coefficient that describes the gap in poverty between second-generation immigrant and third-generation immigrant children. The odds ratio describing that gap decreased from 2.46 to 2.37 (95% CI=2.17, 2.59].

The final model controls for parent employment, industry of employment, and metropolitan/nonmetropolitan residence. The results show that the odds of child poverty are 0.10 times lower for children with parents working full-time full-year round (95% CI=0.10, 0.11) than those of children with parents working less than full-time/full-year round or not working. The results also show that the odds of child poverty are 2.36 times higher (95% CI=1.96, 2.84) for children with parents working in the agricultural sector; 1.24 times higher (95% CI=1.13, 1.36) for children with parents working in construction and low-wage manufacturing; 1.19 times

TABLE 5. Logistic Regression Models of Child Poverty on Immigrant status and Race/Ethnicity, Controlling for Child and Family Characteristics.

TABLE 5. Logistic Regression Models of Child Poverty on Immigrant status and Race/Ethnicity, Controlling for Child and Family Characteristics.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Intercept	-1.645***	-2.103***	-4.170***	-3.553***	-2.264***
First generation	.629***	1.270***	1.752***	1.132***	1.017***
Second generation	.151***	.407***	.901***	.863***	.903***
Male	-.022	-.012	.001	.013	.001
Child's age					
< 6 years	.522***	.562***	.604***	.351***	.194***
6 – 11 years	.293***	.328***	.233***	.130***	.096***
Race/Ethnicity					
Latino		.926***	.405***	.191***	.244***
First generation x Latino		-.752***	-.517***	-1.129***	-.891***
Second generation x Latino		-.115 [†]	.053	-.832***	-.602***
Black		1.619***	.575***	.528***	.652***
First generation x Black		-1.485***	-.887***	-.152	.218
Second generation x Black		-1.382***	-.650***	-.400*	-.381*
Asian		-.919***	-.698***	-.051	.327*
Second generation x Asian		.448***	.268*	-.376*	-.398*
Other		.697***	.211 [†]	.098	-.248 [†]
Family/Household Structure					
Cohabiting couple			2.222***	1.580***	1.623***
Single-father family			1.537***	1.100***	.767***
Single ever-married mother			2.110***	1.817***	1.228***
Single never-married mother			2.758***	2.049***	1.436***
Number of children			.500***	.429***	.460***
Grandparent in the home			-.437***	-.331***	-.529***
Other relatives in the home			.161**	.260***	.217***
Parental age				-.036***	-.047***
Parental Education					
Less than high school				2.745***	2.156***
High School				1.888***	1.492***
Some college				1.291***	1.047***
Language					
Limited English Proficiency				.212**	.196*

Table 5. Continued

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Linguistically Isolated				.601***	.431***
At least one parent full-time year round					-2.286***
Industry of Employment					
Agriculture					.858***
Construction/low-wage manufacturing					.214***
Distributive services					.170**
High-wage services					.452***
Consumer services					1.111***
Unemployed/Not working/NA					1.373***
Residence					
Other metropolitan					.187***
Nonmetropolitan					.519***
L^2	1,875.67	16,957.99	52,969.23	69,127.24	99,404.90
df	5	14	21	27	36

† $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

higher (95% CI=1.06, 1.33) for children with parents working in distributive services; 1.57 times higher (95% CI=1.47, 1.69) for children with parents working in high-wage services; and 3.04 times higher (95% CI=2.82, 3.26) for children with parents working in consumer services than those of children with parents working in high-wage industries, respectively. Further, the results indicate that the odds of child poverty are 1.68 times higher for children in nonmetropolitan areas than those of children in large metropolitan areas (95% CI=1.56, 1.80). The odds of child poverty are 1.21 times higher for children living in other metropolitan areas than those of children in large metropolitan areas (95% CI=1.15, 1.26). Adding these controls further reduces the logistic regression coefficient that describes the gap in poverty between first-generation immigrant and third-generation immigrant children. The odds ratio describing that gap decreased from 3.10 to 2.77 (95% CI=2.27, 3.38]. Adjusting for these controls, however, increases the logistic regression coefficient that describes the gap in poverty between second-generation immigrant and third-generation immigrant children. The odds ratio describing that gap increased from 2.37 to 2.47 (95% CI=2.23, 2.73] (Table 5).

We next present predicted probabilities of child poverty by immigrant status and race/ethnicity, controlling for child's age and sex (Figure 2). The results in figure 2 show that after adjusting for child's age and sex,¹ first-generation Latino immigrant children, followed by first-generation Black immigrant children, have higher predicted probabilities than first-generation White immigrant children and first-generation Asian immigrant children. Among second-generation immigrant children, Latinos had also higher predicted probabilities of child's poverty than other racial/ethnic groups. Among third-generation or later immigrant children (i.e., native-born children to native-born parents), Black children had the highest predicted probability of being poor, followed by Latino children. Asian and White children

1 The average proportions of male children and the average proportion of children in each age category were used in the computation of predicted probabilities. Predicted probabilities were computed using coefficients in the logistic regression model that included immigrant status, child's age groups and sex and by using the formula: $[\exp(\beta)/(1+\exp(\beta))]$.

had significantly lower predicted probability of being poor when compared to Latino or Black children. These results show significant gaps in child poverty rates between immigrant-born and native-born children and between racial/ethnic groups in Michigan. Do these gaps in child poverty persist after controlling for child/family characteristics?

Figure 2. Predicted Probabilities of Child Poverty by Race/Ethnicity and Immigrant Status, Controlling for Child Age and Sex: 2007-2011

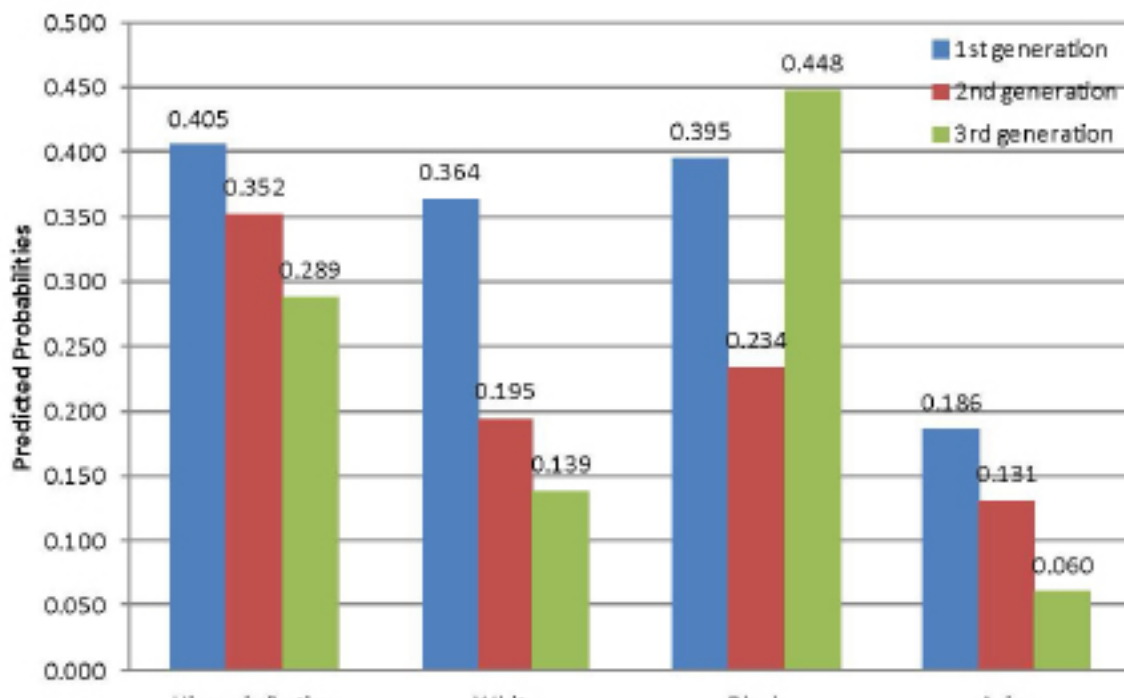
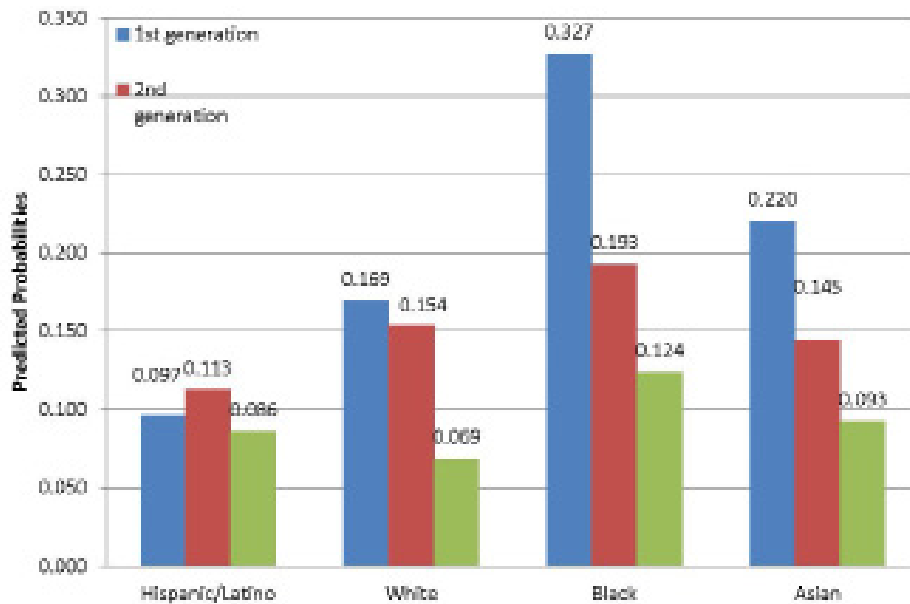


Figure 3 displays predicted probabilities of child poverty by immigrant status and race/ethnicity, controlling for child’s age and sex, family structure, parental age, parental education, language English proficiency and isolation, parental employment and industry of employment, and nonmetro/metro residential location. The results in Figure 3 show that among first-generation immigrant children, Latino immigrant children had the lowest predicted probability of being poor while Black immigrant children had the highest, controlling for socio-demographic, family structure, employment and industry, and residence variables. The predicted probabilities of being poor for White and Asian first-generation immigrant children were between those of Latino and Black first-generation immigrant children. Among second-generation immigrant children, Black, followed by White and Asian children had higher predicted probabilities of being poor than Latino children. Among third-generation immigrant children, Black children also had the highest predicted probabilities of being poor, almost twice that of White children. Latino and Asian third generation children had predicted probabilities of living in poverty of about one and a half that of White children (Figure 3). These results show that although the gaps in child poverty between immigrant and natives and between children of different racial/ethnic groups are significantly attenuated once we control for child/family socio-demographic, employment and industry of employment, and metro/nonmetro residence, these gaps persist.

Figure 3. Predicted Probabilities of Child Poverty by Race/Ethnicity and Immigrant Status, Controlling for Child Age and Sex, Family Structure, Parental Education, Parental Employment, and Language: 2007-2011



4. Conclusion and Discussion

The objectives of this study were to examine variations in child poverty rates in Michigan among immigrant and racial minority children and to assess the extent to which the gaps in child poverty rates between immigrant and native children and between racial/ethnic minority and non-minority children in Michigan are reduced and/or persist once known socio-demographic, economic, and residential confounders are accounted for. The following main findings emerged from the analysis.

First, slightly more than one in five children in Michigan live in poverty (20.5 percent) and significant gaps in child poverty rates exist between immigrant-born and native-born children and between racial/ethnic groups.

Second, although the racial/ethnic gaps in child poverty persist, the probability of child poverty among Latino children, especially first-generation Latino immigrant children, is significantly reduced after controlling for socio-demographic, parental education, employment and industry of employment, and residence predictors. Using changes in predicted probabilities of child poverty before and after these factors are controlled for, the predicted probability of child poverty decreased from 0.29 to 0.09 (or 70 percent) for third-generation Latino children; 0.41 to 0.10 (or 76 percent) for first-generation Latino immigrant children; and from 0.35 to 0.11 (or 68 percent) for second-generation Latino immigrant children, respectively.

The probability of child poverty for third generation Black immigrant children is also significantly reduced, but the probability of poverty for first- and second-generation Black immigrant children remains the highest and the least reduced once socio-demographic, parental education, parental employment, industry of employment and residence factors are controlled. The predicted probability of child poverty decreased from 0.45 to 0.12 (or 72 percent) for third-generation Latino children; 0.40 to 0.33 (or 17 percent) for first-generation

Black immigrant children; and from 0.23 to 0.19 (or 18 percent) for second-generation Black immigrant children, respectively.

The probability of child poverty for White children, especially first-generation and third-generation immigrant children, is also significantly reduced. The predicted probability of child poverty increased from 0.06 to 0.09 (or 54 percent) for third-generation Asian children; 0.19 to 0.22 (or 19 percent) for first-generation Asian immigrant children; and from 0.13 to 0.15 (or 11 percent) for second-generation Asian immigrant children. The predicted probability of child poverty decreased from 0.14 to 0.07 (or 50 percent) for third-generation White children; 0.36 to 0.17 (or 53 percent) for first-generation White immigrant children; and from 0.20 to 0.15 (or 21 percent) for second-generation White immigrant children, respectively. In contrast, predicted probabilities of child poverty for Asian children, especially third-generation children significantly increased.

Third, these results provide insights into why gaps in child poverty remain between immigrant and native children and between children of different racial/ethnic groups in Michigan. These results are consistent with the human capital explanations. Parental education and other human capital predictors explain a substantial portion of variations in child poverty and the gaps in child poverty between immigrant and native children. In particular, parental education is negatively associated with child poverty, once other factors have been controlled. These results also are consistent with economic restructuring explanations, with employment of parents, industry of employment, and metro/non-metro residence predicting child poverty and in the expected directions, and accounting for much of the variations in child poverty between immigrant and native children and between children of different racial/ethnic groups. These results are also consistent with social stratification explanations. Child poverty rates significantly differ by immigrant status and race/ethnicity. Although gaps in child poverty are significantly attenuated for immigrant and non-immigrant children of different racial/ethnic groups, such gaps persist.

Overall, the results in this study have policy implications. The gaps in child poverty between immigrant and native children and between racial/ethnic groups are likely to remain and potentially widen as long as the characteristics of their families differ significantly with respect to education, household structure and composition, and employment. One potential way to reduce such gaps would be to design policy and programs aimed at improving the education, skills, and on job-training of immigrant parents. This is crucial for the economic well-being of many families because the economy has been restructured from an extractive and manufacturing economy to an information and service economy that requires better education and skills. However, even such a policy would not be enough, as long as there remain social, economic, and political systemic barriers that prevent upward mobility of many disadvantaged population groups. Reducing place inequality in terms of economic opportunities in certain areas of the state; creating better job opportunities with steady and living wages; and reducing social inequalities between different population groups ought to be considered priorities for a

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growing diverse population. Without such structural and systemic policy changes, existing gaps in child poverty between immigrant and native children and between racial/ethnic groups will continue to restrict progress and upward mobility of many future generations.

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