

Chapter 19. The role of migration for intergenerational mobility

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Chapter 19: The role of migration for intergenerational mobility

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When they decide to emigrate, migrants often hope for better socioeconomic prospects for themselves and their children. In this chapter, we review the interdisciplinary empirical literature on social mobility within immigrant families. While immigrants often experience downward mobility upon arrival in the destination country, their children are more likely to be upwardly mobile in terms of both educational attainment and labor-market outcomes. Yet, net of distributional differences between groups, the association between parental and children's SES (i.e. relative mobility or fluidity) appears more similar in immigrant and native families. Compared to their non-migrant counterparts, immigrant families tend to improve their life chances relative to the origin society. Beyond these master trends, empirical studies show varying patterns between different groups and countries. We explore four main mechanisms accounting for observed differences in mobility: (1) immigrant selection, (2) educational systems, (3) ethnic community and neighborhoods, and (4) racial discrimination.

Keywords: social mobility; fluidity; immigration; first generation; second generation; discrimination

Introduction

Social mobility aspirations are at the root of many migration decisions. Yet, the actual socioeconomic standing attained by immigrants in the destination country often proves lower than initially hoped. Migration may actually result in downward intragenerational mobility when comparing migrants' relative position in the country of origin and destination (Gans, 2009). Upward social mobility expectations are often transferred to the next generation in the hope that children's mobility will compensate for their parents' status loss. The "immigrant bargain" refers to immigrant parents' willingness to work undesirable jobs in order to safeguard better mobility prospects for their children (Alba & Forner, 2015). This mechanism implies that, in the end, upward intergenerational social mobility is how migrants judge the success of their migration project.

Strikingly, the literature on the socioeconomic integration of immigrants—labelled as first generations—and their descendants—second and subsequent generations—has not paid much attention to social origins, while the literature on social mobility has largely focused on class mobility in the general population ignoring migration background or ethnicity. Yet, studying both social origins and migration status is needed to assess the extent of the specific penalty faced by immigrants and their descendants, as well as to refine our understanding of intergenerational social mobility (Li & Heath, 2016).

In this chapter, we review empirical studies from multiple disciplines that focus on 1) describing the patterns of intergenerational social mobility within immigrant families; 2) explaining the observed patterns by identifying the specific resources possessed and obstacles faced by immigrant families.

1. Describing intergenerational mobility patterns in immigrant families: social origins matter

1.1. Reconciling the assimilation and intergenerational mobility frameworks

Social mobility scholarship routinely distinguishes *absolute* mobility—the observed movement of individuals between social positions—from *relative* mobility—also called social fluidity, the chances of upward or downward movement of individuals from different social backgrounds. In immigrant assimilation studies, the central question is usually whether there is a convergence in the social position of immigrants’ descendants and natives’ descendants over time and across generations (Alba & Nee, 2003). Ignoring immigrant status in social mobility studies comes at the cost of assuming that it does not impact social reproduction patterns. Conversely, not taking into account parental social background in assimilation studies assumes that immigrant and native parents are homogenous and weigh similarly on their descendants’ destiny (Li & Heath, 2016).

In recent years, several authors have aimed at articulating the two research traditions. The traditional way to conceive of social mobility and migration status is to treat them as independent processes, which could be formally expressed in equation (1):

$$Y^R = a + b_1M^R + b_2Y^P + e \quad (1)$$

Following Duncan and Trejo (2015) and Li and Heath (2016), social background and migration status can be allowed to interact:

$$Y^R = a + b_1M^R + b_2Y^P + b_3Y^P x M^R + e \quad (2)$$

In both equations (1) and (2), Y^R represents the respondent’s social position, M^R their migration status, Y^P their parents’ social position. In equation (1), coefficient b_2 captures the usual positive association between parents’ and respondent’s social position.

Importantly, equation (2) introduces $Y^P x M^R$, an interaction between migration status and parental social position. The effect of migration status on the respondent’s social position expresses itself both as a main effect (measured by coefficient b_1) and in interaction with parental background (coefficient b_3). Overall, immigrants’ children differences in social position relative to natives’ children are therefore a combination of the main effect of migration origins, their parental social position and the specific strength of the parent to child transmissions in immigrant families (Luthra & Waldinger, 2013).

In equation (1), coefficient b_1 captures the overall effect of group membership on the respondent's social position, net of parental influences.

- For descendants of immigrants, the *neo-assimilation model* (Alba & Nee, 2003) expects that b_1 is negative but becomes closer to 0 over generations. Indeed, migration matters initially but subsequent generations converge with the mainstream society, and no "migration penalty" persists.
- However, other models suggest that b_1 persists over generations and can be either negative or positive. The direction and magnitude of this coefficient may indeed differ across immigrant communities, as predicted by *segmented assimilation* (Portes & Zhou, 1993) or "*pluralist*" *incorporation* (Luthra & Waldinger, 2013).

In equation (2), coefficient b_3 corresponds to the variation in the effect of parental social background according to migration status. If it is negative, it reflects the lower transmission of social position for the migrant group considered (i.e., higher social fluidity or weaker social reproduction) compared to natives. When added to b_2 , it reflects the overall degree of intergenerational mobility for the given migrant group.

- The *neo-assimilation model* expects that b_3 will be negative in the first generation and then come close to 0 in subsequent generations. At first, social fluidity is higher among migrants and then mechanisms of social mobility become similar to those occurring in native families.
- *Segmented or "pluralist" assimilation theories* argue that coefficient b_3 will remain significant in subsequent generations and vary by ethnicity.

The brief formal presentation of these different incorporation models can help us make sense of variations in empirical patterns of intergenerational social mobility between immigrant and native families presented below.

1.2. Educational mobility: intergenerational progress thanks to lower social reproduction

A large body of literature highlights educational attainment gaps for first-generation immigrants, a result that holds after adjusting for parents' socioeconomic origins (Gries et al., 2021; Hermansen, 2016; OECD, 2018). The gaps tend to be larger for immigrants who migrate at a later age, highlighting the structuring role of attending school in the receiving country. The intergenerational convergence of immigrants' educational attainment with natives suggests similar or higher upward educational mobility for immigrants' descendants compared to natives' descendants. This trend is confirmed in a large number of countries (Bauer & Riphahn, 2007; Hermansen, 2016; Luthra & Waldinger, 2013; OECD, 2018; Tran, 2018; Beauchemin et al., 2022). In other words, educational reproduction tends to be slightly greater among natives than immigrants.

Beyond these master trends, research also underlines variations in intergenerational educational mobility between immigrant groups (Luthra & Waldinger, 2013). On the one hand, some immigrant groups with relatively low socioeconomic origins are characterized by lower rates of educational mobility and have even sometimes been characterized by “working-class stagnation” (Terriquez, 2014). Individuals belonging to these groups tend to remain poorly qualified over generations but they are not “downwardly mobile” (Portes & Zhou, 1993) since they still slightly improve compared to their parents. In the United States, this pattern has been observed for children of Mexican and Salvadoran origins. In Europe, ethnic penalties remain for some immigrant groups over generations. For instance, children of immigrants in Italy, especially from Yugoslavia, Macedonia, Morocco and Tunisia, are more likely to enroll in vocational tracks in secondary school, even after controlling for parents’ social background, hindering their access to higher education (Barban & White, 2011).

On the other hand, some immigrant groups experience much higher upward educational mobility than natives. Irrespective of the social position of their parents, children of immigrants from these countries attain high educational qualifications on average so that they are deemed to benefit from an “immigrant advantage” (Lee & Zhou, 2014). The paradigmatic group in this situation are Asian Americans, in particular the Chinese, Korean, Indian and Vietnamese descendants, for whom, contrary to non-Hispanic White natives, a weak, if any, association exists between parents’ and offspring’s education (Fishman, 2020; Lee & Zhou, 2014; Luthra & Waldinger, 2013). This situation is also observed for the children of Asian immigrants in Switzerland (Bauer & Riphahn, 2006) and in Canada (OECD, 2018), Italians in Germany (Bönke & Neidhöfer, 2018) and South Asian and Caribbean groups in the United Kingdom (Zuccotti & Platt, 2021).

Finally, the patterns of educational mobility are also gendered (Park et al., 2015). According to two large comparative analyses in Western countries, while male immigrants were in many cases advantaged in their origin countries, daughters of immigrants on the whole outperform sons in school and this gender gap tends to be larger among children of immigrants than among children of natives (Fleischmann et al., 2014; OECD, 2018). Upward mobility appears higher for second-generation females than for males in the United States (Park & Myers, 2010; Park et al., 2014), Canada (Chen & Hou, 2019) and France (Beauchemin et al., 2022), but lower in Austria (OECD, 2018).

1.3. The transmission of labor-market positions: varying patterns

While labor market disadvantage is common across origins and countries of destination for first-generation migrants (Pichler, 2011), their children’s labor market outcomes are closer to that of natives, as research pioneered by Chiswick (1977) in the US has highlighted. However, other studies have cautioned against this optimism, pointing out that immigrant earnings disadvantage relative to native workers persists over generations in some ethnic groups (Borjas, 2006).

Cross-country comparisons suggest that “entrenched disadvantage” is less common in North America (US and Canada)—where children of immigrants may even benefit from an “earnings premium.” In Europe, higher unemployment rates among migrant descendants remain of particular concern (OECD, 2018), despite the emergence of steep upward mobility pathways to top occupational positions among second-generation migrants in Europe (Schneider et al., 2022).

1.3.1. Absolute mobility on the labor market: the risk of labor market exclusion

Overall, immigrant origins are salient in labor market outcomes. While migrants often experience absolute downward mobility compared to their parents in their country of origin (Heath & Ridge, 1983; Li & Heath, 2016) or at least less upward mobility than natives (Heath & McMahon, 2005), their children experience higher upward mobility than natives’ children of the same birth cohort (Heath & McMahon, 2005). However, these trends may be misestimated because they do not account for the parents’ pre-migration occupational positions in their origin country. Indeed, children of immigrants in the US are recovering from instances of parental occupational decline between their pre- and post-migration occupational position and advancing where their parents could not (Potochnick & Hall, 2021). This optimistic trend in absolute mobility from the first to the second generation should be nuanced in two ways. First, daughters of migrants are more at risk of not participating in the labor market—despite their higher academic achievement—especially after having their first child (OECD, 2018). Second, in European societies, unemployment is a challenge for low-educated children of immigrants (e.g. Heath et al., 2008; Li & Heath, 2016). In the UK, second-generation Black Caribbeans, Black Africans and Pakistanis/Bangladeshis are particularly at risk of being excluded from the labor market, even after accounting for their parental social background (Li & Heath, 2016).

1.3.2. Relative mobility on the labor market: the risk of “perverse openness”

The rather high absolute upward mobility flows may simply reflect the low starting points of migrants. Controlling for changes in the occupational structure across generations, relative mobility (or social fluidity) need not follow the same trends as absolute mobility (Heath & Zhao, 2021).

In Norway, child-by-parent gradients in earnings are broadly similar for children of immigrants and children of natives (Hermansen, 2016). By contrast, in the US, based on merged censuses spanning more than a century, children of immigrants have higher upward mobility rates than natives’ children, conditional on the earnings rank of their parents (Abramitzky et al., 2021). Using more conventional US survey data, Luthra and Waldinger (2013) also find more intergenerational mobility for all immigrant groups, but they insist on the variations in the relationship between parental and children’s position depending on the origin country.

Using occupational class positions, Platt (2005) finds a lower association between parents' and children's occupations (i.e. more relative intergenerational mobility) among migrant groups than among natives in the UK. Yet this higher fluidity is not necessarily good news for ethnic minorities as it means that children of advantaged parents are not able to retain their advantaged socioeconomic position in the next generation. This is especially the case for Caribbean, Pakistani and African men according to Zuccotti (2015), while Indian migrants more easily maintain their advantaged position. Other studies in the UK using log-linear models qualify this result, finding ethnic minorities to have relative mobility levels that are similar to those of White British natives (Li & Heath, 2016), with the exception of the "perverse openness" for Black African men, which denotes the enduring importance of their minority status that "trumps" class background in the second generation (Heath & McMahon, 2005; Li & Heath, 2016).

1.4. An alternative reference group: immigrants compared to non-migrants in the origin country

Following the assimilation paradigm, the overwhelming majority of studies assessing intergenerational mobility in immigrant families compare it to the mobility of native families in the destination country. Other authors adopt an alternative *dissimilation perspective*, "the process of becoming different," i.e. the "counterpart to assimilation, the process of groups or individuals becoming similar" (FitzGerald, 2012, p. 1733). This perspective (sometimes referred to as an "origin-country perspective"; Zuccotti et al., 2017) assesses the extent to which immigrant families' socioeconomic status and social mobility is different from that of people who stayed in their origin country. It could be argued that the dissimilation perspective is more in line with immigrants' personal experiences, as: "People do not move to compete with other groups in the destination society but to improve their life chances—and their children's—relative to what they would have been in the origin society" (Zuccotti et al., 2017, p. 98).

Such an approach requires information on migrants in the destination country and stayers in the origin country. A series of recent studies have dramatically advanced this field by focusing on Turkish immigrants and their descendants in the EU—"the largest non-EU migrant group in Europe" (Bayrakdar & Guveli, 2021, p. 3038)—and comparing them with Turks who stayed in Turkey (Zuccotti et al., 2017; Bayrakdar & Guveli, 2021; Guveli & Spierings, 2022). Using a combination of surveys (multiple European Social Surveys waves and European Values Studies) that cover Turks in Western European destinations and in Turkey, Zuccotti et al. (2017) compare the educational and occupational intergenerational mobility in both groups. They demonstrate that the children of low-class Turkish migrants experience more absolute upward educational and occupational mobility than their counterparts in Turkey. However, occupational returns to education appear higher in Turkey, especially among women.

Even better suited to fulfil the promises of the dissimilation perspective, an original survey, the 2000 Families study (Guveli et al., 2017), collected data in five high immigrant-sending

regions in Turkey by sampling migrants and nonmigrants and their descendants in Turkey and Western Europe. Building on this survey, Guveli and Spierings (2022) find that first-generation female Turkish migrants—and, to an even larger extent, their daughters—have a higher likelihood of paid employment in Europe than their comparable counterparts in Turkey. This is largely explained by higher educational attainment and lesser religiosity among Turks in Europe. With the same data, Bayrakdar and Guveli (2021) show that in terms of both absolute and relative educational mobility, migration has been beneficial to Turkish second generations in Europe, especially women. This higher rate of intergenerational fluidity compared to Turkish society can also be read as stemming from the disruptive effect that international migration has on intergenerational transmissions, limiting the ability of Turkish-origin immigrants to pass on their socioeconomic resources to their children.

Another way to consider the origin country in research on immigrants' intergenerational mobility is to assess the effects of migration on the socioeconomic outcomes of those left behind. Focusing on three sub-Saharan African countries of origin (Burkina Faso, Kenya and Senegal), Chae and Glick (2019) find that recent migration has no universally positive effect on left-behind children's school enrollment. The effect is most positive in Kenya and among positively selected migrants. Sanchez-Soto (2017) studies the effect of migration to the US on the intergenerational educational mobility of non-migrant youth in Mexico. Having an emigrant in the household is associated with higher odds of upward intergenerational educational mobility. Yet, higher prevalence of migration in the local community is associated with lower such odds.

While this first section has presented a comprehensive picture of the patterns of intergenerational mobility in immigrant families, the next section contributes to explaining how these patterns are produced and reproduced. We highlight the specific resources and obstacles that promote or hinder socioeconomic attainment and intergenerational transmissions in immigrant families.

2. Explaining intergenerational mobility patterns in immigrant families: specific resources and obstacles

2.1. Pre-migration resources and intergenerational mobility

A key feature of international migration is its selective character: those who emigrate are different from those who stay in their origin country. Immigrant parents' often low socioeconomic status in the destination country might be an unreliable indicator of their true socioeconomic and cultural resources. Instead, immigrants' socioeconomic, and especially educational selectivity, likely captures "hidden dimensions of class background that matter for the intergenerational transmission of advantage or disadvantage" (Feliciano & Lanuza, 2017, p. 232). Most studies agree that, on average, immigrants tend to be positively selected in terms of educational attainment (Feliciano, 2005b; Belot & Hatton, 2012; Ichou & Goujon,

2017; Van de Werfhorst & Heath, 2019) or class background (Witte et al., 2021), i.e. they are more educated and from higher social classes than non-migrants who stay in their country of birth.

There is evidence to suggest that immigrant parents' educational selectivity has positive intergenerational effects. Over and above their absolute educational attainment level, immigrant parents' relative—or “contextual” (Feliciano & Lanuza, 2017)—educational attainment compared to their non-migrant counterparts impacts the educational attainment of their children in the destination country (Ichou, 2014; Feliciano & Lanuza, 2017). Overall, children of immigrants tend to reproduce their parents' pre-migration class status in the destination country (Potochnick & Hall, 2021). These positive intergenerational effects are also documented when immigrants' educational selectivity is measured at the national group level (Feliciano, 2005a; Van de Werfhorst & Heath, 2019), specifically in Asian American communities (Lee & Zhou, 2015; Tong & Harris, 2021).

There are no certainties about the mechanisms through which immigrants' pre-migration status affects their children's attainment. Recent findings suggest that “the social position before migration provides an important reference point by which immigrants judge their success in the new country” (Engzell & Ichou, 2020, p. 471). Immigrants' occupational decline when arriving in the destination country—due to the imperfect transferability of educational credentials and/or discrimination (Gans, 2009; Fellini et al., 2018; Potochnick & Hall, 2021)—triggers strategies of “postponing mobility” (Gans, 2009, p. 1664) by transferring their expectations onto their children.

Indeed, specific favorable attitudes and practices observed among immigrants, often referred to as “immigrant optimism” (Kao & Tienda, 1995), may have structural origins in their pre-migration status and positive educational selectivity (Fernández-Kelly, 2008; Fernández-Reino, 2016; Feliciano & Lanuza, 2017). Many studies reviewed by Schnell and his colleagues (2015) observe that second-generation youth tend to achieve better educational success than their working-class background would have predicted (Crul et al., 2012), because of “high parental ambitions, expectations, aspirations and specific types of parental support” (Schnell et al., 2015, p. 2). Evidence suggests that these attitudes can be transferred intergenerationally as parents' pre-migration resources are a strong predictor of the children's educational aspirations (Engzell, 2019; Feliciano, 2006).

2.2. The institutional context of reception: migration regimes and educational institutions

Institutional contexts in destination countries also affect the transmission of social positions within migrant families. Migrants' legal status may have indirect consequences on social mobility. Legal status affects migrants' labor market position (Bean et al., 2011) as well as their children's. Children of unauthorized migrants indeed have lower educational attainment and poorer socioeconomic outcomes compared to those with a legal status (Bean et al., 2011; Lee, 2019). Undocumented legal status is one of the mechanisms that trap Latino migrants

into the working class in the US (Terriquez, 2014). The intergenerational transmission of low socioeconomic position in this case may be associated with the threat of deportation that undocumented parents experience. Because their parents are “unauthorized” in the US, migrants’ children are more prone to avoid “surveilling” institutions, i.e. institutions that keep formal records (Desai et al., 2020). Even though they have themselves obtained a legal status, children of immigrants are then more likely to work informally, which limits their possibilities for social mobility. Overall, this legal disadvantage accounts for some of the occupational disadvantage of the descendants of Mexican and Salvadoran migrants, in line with the “segmented assimilation” and “working-class stagnation” models (Luthra & Waldinger, 2013). Social mobility in immigrant families is also affected by educational institutions in the destination country. For instance, Bauer and Riphahn (2006) show that early school enrollment is positively related to intergenerational mobility, and all the more so in immigrant families. In Norway, Midtbøen and Nadim (2022) interviewed migrants’ children with top occupational outcomes and identified that educational institutions have been key opportunity settings for these upwardly mobile migrant descendants. The egalitarian features of the Norwegian welfare state, and the late-tracking nature of its educational system, seem to offer more generous upward mobility opportunities for children from socioeconomically disadvantaged families. Conversely, in Italy, early tracking tends to favor parents’ choice more than the ability of students and ends up favoring native Italians while leaving behind successful children of immigrants (Barban & White, 2011).

2.3. Neighborhood and ethnic community

Research on intergenerational mobility in the general population has started to emphasize the role of geographical location in promoting or hindering intergenerational mobility (Chetty et al., 2014). In the case of immigrant families, many historical studies insist on settlement location as a key factor in explaining social mobility. For instance, using US Census microdata, Goodwin-White (2016) shows that the metro-area characteristics in the previous generation have significant impacts on the wage and educational outcomes of the second and 1.5 generation 30 years later, controlling for current metro-level characteristics. Analyzing intergenerational mobility in immigrant families between 1880 and 2018 in the US, Abramitzky and his colleagues (2021) trace back immigrants’ historical advantage in upward mobility to immigrant parents’ choice to settle in places that offered better socioeconomic prospects for their offspring.

Borjas coined the expression “ethnic capital,” i.e. “the average skills and labor market experiences of the ethnic group in the parent's generation” (1992, p. 148), and showed that it plays an important role in intergenerational mobility. Average educational attainment in the parents’ generation seems to play an especially important positive role on children’s outcomes (Aydemir et al., 2009). Taking into account group-level SES reveals a higher intergenerational persistence in ethnic gaps than traditional individual-level analyses find (Borjas, 1992). The amount of social capital, i.e. the number and strength of social ties within

the ethnic community, affects immigrants' children's outcomes (Zhou, 1997; Portes, 1998). In their study of the Vietnamese community in New Orleans, Zhou and Bankston (1999) show that in structurally disadvantaged neighborhoods, immigrant families may strive to preserve the strength of their ethnic community and its values in order to shield their offspring from acculturating into the lowest segments of American society and to foster upward social mobility. More recent work by Lee and Zhou (2014; 2015) shows that the high achievement of the offspring of low-SES Asian immigrants in the US partly results from community-level processes, combining cultural "success frames," and resources brought by local schools and by some positively selected coethnics.

Yet, local contexts may also have a negative impact. Segmented assimilation theory (Portes & Zhou, 1993) recognizes the ambivalent effect of the local context of reception: the neighborhoods in which immigrants settle often concentrate economic hardships and racial stigma that can block successful upward mobility in the next generation, leading to "entrapment mobility" (Abada & Tenkorang, 2009). Children of Mexican immigrants in the US tend to be overrepresented in underprivileged high schools increasing their risk of downward mobility (Hao & Pong, 2008). Finally, neighborhood is not relevant in all contexts: in Norway, Hermansen (2016) acknowledges that the role of neighborhood segregation proves much less important than individual-level parental characteristics in explaining native-immigrant gaps in children's socioeconomic attainment.

2.4. Ethnic and racial discrimination

Discrimination is a key mechanism that can impede the socioeconomic attainment of immigrants and their descendants, especially those from ethnic, racial and/or religious minorities. Discriminatory practices in hiring are well documented in the US against Black and Latino applicants (Pager et al., 2009). In a recent systematic review, Quillian and Midtbøen conclude that "discrimination against non-Whites is ubiquitous" (2021, p. 403). In a previous meta-analysis, Quillian and his coauthors (2019) find discrimination in hiring against every non-White group in virtually all of the nine countries in Europe and North America under study. Black and Muslim minorities appear to be specifically targeted by hiring discrimination. In another large-scale meta-analysis, Thijssen and his coauthors (2022) conclude that the level of discrimination against Black applicants varies across Western countries, and is overall lower in the US than in Europe, while Muslims are discriminated against similarly in all 20 countries under study.

In their review on the assimilation of the second generation, Drouhot and Nee (2019) point to a specific hostility against Muslim minority groups in Europe (see also on France: Adida et al., 2010; Pierné, 2013; and on Britain: Cheung, 2014; Heath & Martin, 2013). Based on a field experiment in five European countries (Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom), Di Stasio and her coauthors find "alarming levels of discrimination" against

Muslim applicants and those from Muslim-majority countries on the labor market (2021, p. 1305).

Unless discrimination is substantially smaller for immigrants' children than for their parents, it will contribute to blocking upward intergenerational mobility. Unfortunately, after reviewing the relevant literature on this specific issue, Quillian and Midtbøen (2021, p. 404) state that "Immigrant generation differences in discrimination are small." Studies find either no statistically significant differences in labor market discrimination levels between the first and second generation (Carlsson, 2010; Quillian et al., 2019; Zschirnt & Ruedin, 2016), or differences that are small in size with first-generation immigrants slightly more discriminated against (Veit & Thijsen, 2021).

Conclusion

In this chapter, we first outlined the importance of accounting for social background when assessing the socioeconomic fate of immigrants and their descendants. While immigrants may experience downward mobility in the course of their migration trajectory, their children are often upwardly mobile in terms of both educational attainment and labor-market outcomes. Yet, relative mobility (or fluidity) appears similar among immigrant and native families, but immigrants' descendants are more at risk of being excluded from the labor market. Comparing socioeconomic outcomes of immigrants with their counterparts in their country of origin, a growing literature shows that migration is an avenue to improve one's life chances relative to the origin society.

Beyond these master trends, empirical studies show varying mobility patterns between different immigrant groups, shaped by different mechanisms highlighted in the second section: 1) Immigrants are often positively selected from their country of emigration so that they carry along resources that enhance their children's outcomes in the country of destination; 2) Immigrants' intergenerational upward mobility is fostered by favorable contexts of reception and educational institutions that offer inclusive and standardized tracks; 3) Community and neighborhood may favor children's upward mobility but also act as mobility traps; 4) Enduring ethnic/racial and religious discrimination limits upward mobility pathways for non-White immigrant groups.

Future research still has plenty of avenues to improve our collective knowledge on these issues. First, we can only regret the limited geographical scope of the current literature, which tends to exclude South-South migration. In general, more cross-country comparisons are needed to firmly assess the importance of institutional settings in social mobility. Second, little is known on the impact of migration flows on the overall country-level social fluidity, though a burgeoning literature has started to assess this aspect (e.g. Yaish & Andersen, 2012). Finally, more survey-based research on multigenerational mobility could further explore the enduring role of migration in mobility over more than two generations. Specifically, our

understanding of intergenerational mobility in immigrant families would be improved by including the fate of the third generation, i.e. immigrants' grandchildren.

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