The Changing Face of World Cities

Young Adult Children of Immigrants in Europe and the United States

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CHAPTER 4

SUCCESS AGAINST ALL ODDS

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Scholars have given considerable attention to the educational pathways of the new second generation, the children of immigrants to the United States and western Europe who came of age at the turn of the twenty-first century. Social scientists on both sides of the Atlantic have consistently reported significant differences in academic outcomes among second-generation youth and across national-origin groups. Some do extraordinarily well, yet others fail to graduate from high school. Outcomes vary systematically by group. Second-generation Mexicans in the United States and second-generation Turks in northwestern Europe tend to fall toward the low end. Researchers have studied both groups extensively because a great many of them are dropping out of high school (in the United States) or failing even to complete lower secondary education (in Europe). Despite high dropout rates, a small but visible group of young people from these backgrounds manage to beat the odds and achieve university educations. Although they may be anomalous, they are too numerous to ignore, yet researchers and policymakers continue to focus on failures.

Our aim is to use these success stories to better understand the pathways and mechanisms that enable the second generation to achieve a

good education (or prevent it), drawing on our previous research (Crul 2000a; Crul and Vermeulen 2006; Crul and Heering 2008; Zhou and Lee 2007; Zhou et al. 2008). Specifically, we compare successful second-generation Mexicans in Los Angeles with their Turkish counterparts in Berlin, Frankfurt, Rotterdam, and Strasbourg. The strategy behind this comparative approach is to identify similarities and differences across national contexts.

We foreground the experiences and practices of successful immigrant youth to demonstrate how institutional arrangements in school and external resources account for their success (Crul and Holdaway 2009; Crul and Schneider 2009; Crul, Schneider, and Lelie 2012). Crucial to this effort are a detailed reconstruction of school careers and, more precisely, an inventory of the opportunities and constraints these students face during their education and the pathways they take to adulthood (Crul 2000b; Zhou and Lee 2007; Zhou et al. 2008). We analyze both quantitative and qualitative data to explain what enables some immigrant youth of severely disadvantaged backgrounds to succeed, how they have tapped into additional resources in their quest to get ahead, and which institutional and social settings have helped promote their success.

Our comparative analyses are twofold. First, we analyze survey data collected in Los Angeles and select cities in northwestern Europe to look at the pathways successful second-generation youths have taken. Second, we turn to qualitative data from in-depth, life history interviews to highlight illustrative cases of high academic achievement despite disadvantaged backgrounds. The interviews allow us to examine closely the choices made, the conditions under which they were made, and the resources that allowed for these choices. Combining the quantitative and qualitative data allows us to identify some key mechanisms for success. We gain analytical mileage from comparing similarly situated groups across different contexts in making more general claims about the mechanisms of success than if we focused on only one national setting or on only one ethnic group.

Data

We draw on two large surveys of the new second generation: the IIMMLA and TIES. We also analyze face-to-face, in-depth interview data from two qualitative studies, as well as census data.

As outlined earlier, we chose to compare the experiences of second-generation Mexican and Turkish youths because of their similarly disadvantaged backgrounds. Although these groups differ in important ways—most notably religion—both have parents who were poor labor migrants who arrived in their host countries with low levels of education into contexts where manufacturing employment was declining. The media and public policy debates have negatively stereotyped both groups. Examining the successful outcomes of young people from such backgrounds allows us to assess how different educational systems sort people across opportunities and, most important, to identify the unique pathways and mechanisms for succeeding within them.

We study second-generation Mexicans in one metropolitan context, Los Angeles. They come from by far the largest immigrant group in the United States and in Los Angeles. Mexicans make up more than 30 percent of immigrants to the United States and 32 percent of immigrants in greater Los Angeles. Los Angeles is particularly interesting because nearly two-thirds of Los Angeles's residents (62 percent) are either immigrants or the children of immigrants.

We compare the second-generation Turks in Europe across four metropolitan settings—Berlin, Frankfurt, Rotterdam, and Strasbourg. These are the largest Turkish communities in Germany, the Netherlands, and France, and their educational systems contrast in interesting ways with that of the United States. The German case differs most because of its strongly vocationally oriented system. The French case is most similar because its primary and secondary system is largely comprehensive and its higher education is selective. The Dutch case is a mix of the German and French systems, including both a vocationally oriented track and elements of a comprehensive school system, such as intermediary classes and access to higher education through middle vocational education.

In a comparison of the U.S. and European settings, the two-year community colleges (or junior colleges) in the United States serve similar roles as the middle vocational colleges in the Netherlands; both institutions potentially provide students access to higher education through less competitive, more inclusive channels. By contrasting the U.S. and European school systems, we show the impact of different institutional arrangements but also highlight how each educational system provides some opportunities for educational mobility to second-generation Mexicans and Turks.

Mexican Migration to Los Angeles

Mexican migration to the southwest United States was an integral part of the development in commercial agriculture, mining, light industry, and the railroad in the late nineteenth century. At the outset, Mexican immigrant

labor was needed for economic expansion, but later it became a convenient scapegoat during periods of economic contraction (Daniel 1981; Sánchez 1993). The increasing demand for unskilled migrant labor during World War II attracted a continual flow of Mexican immigrants to cross the border—with or without legal documentation (Durand, Malone, and Massey 2003; Massey and Espinosa 1997; Monroy 1999). U.S. ambivalence about Mexican migration was epitomized by Operation Wetback in 1954, when the authorities apprehended Mexicans—regardless of their legal status—and forcibly deported them (Lee and Bean 2010). The Mexican population in Los Angeles grew rapidly over the past century, tripling from 1920 (30,000) to 1930 (97,000) before World War II and growing exponentially since the U.S. immigration reform of 1965. Today, 3.1 million of Los Angeles County's 10 million residents are of Mexican origin.

Past and contemporary Mexican immigrants largely hail from rural backgrounds and arrive with little education and or job skills. Until recently, many sojourning workers were concerned primarily with job opportunities (Massey 1986; Sánchez 1993). Mexican immigrants tend to find work in agribusiness and construction in the Southwest, as well as in textile mills and chicken processing plants in other parts of the United States (Massey 1986). Mexican Angelinos—native or immigrant, mestizo or mulatto—have faced structural barriers to mobility (Acuña 1996; Monroy 1999; Sánchez 1993; Telles and Ortiz 2008).

As it has been for the children of all immigrants, education has always been the key to social mobility and the American Dream for the children and grandchildren of Mexican immigrants (Valencia 2002). However, Mexicans face unique challenges in their quest for a quality education. They are highly concentrated in inner-city neighborhoods plagued by poverty, inadequately funded schools, family disruption, single parenthood, teenage pregnancy, youth gangs, violent crimes, drug abuse, and alcoholism. Although second-generation Mexicans often live in families with both parents, most work full time—or even hold multiple jobs, working different shifts—in low-wage industries. The parents' severe lack of human, social, and cultural capital leaves them dependent on their children as translators and cultural brokers with the outside world (Lee 2002). In addition, the parents' low levels of human capital and their need to juggle the demands of work and household responsibilities often prevent them from giving much tangible help to support their children's education. Adding to their disadvantage, most second-generation Mexicans attend poorly performing public schools with high dropout rates and a large concentration of minority students from low-income families. Most second-generation Mexican students in Los Angeles face a daunting cumulative disadvantage that can severely truncate their educational and social mobility (Zhou 1997; Zhou and Lee 2007).

Turkish Migration to Western Europe

The first Turkish labor migrants came on their own initiative to Germany in the 1950s and to the Netherlands and France at the beginning of the 1960s. The continuing demand for low-skilled workers in the textile and metal industries triggered a chain migration by relatives and friends, and official labor migration agreements with Turkey were signed at the end of the 1960s. European industries needed a new source of low-skilled labor and recruited the majority of these first-generation Turkish guest workers from the lowest socioeconomic strata in their home country. Labor recruitment was aimed only at men; women came only much later to join their spouses. The peak of labor migration occurred between 1970 and 1974, after which official migration halted (Crul and Doomernik 2003). An estimated 4 million people of Turkish descent now live in Europe, half in Germany (Crul and Vermeulen 2003a). The recession in the 1980s hit the industrial sector hard, and many first-generation Turkish men lost their jobs. Because most Turkish women were not employed, many Turkish immigrant families came to depend on welfare as a result.

The change in the political climate in Europe since 9/11 and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have made matters even more difficult for Turkish immigrants and their children. As one of the largest Muslim populations in Europe, the Turkish community (along with other Muslims) has increasingly been the target of hostility, racism, and discrimination. The rise of anti-immigrant populist parties across Europe sends the message that many Europeans believe that Muslims do not belong in Europe. These sentiments are similar to those expressed by some in the American Tea Party Movement who hold strong anti-immigrant sentiments, aimed primarily at Mexican immigrants.

Like children of Mexican immigrants in Los Angeles, second-generation Turks are from poorly educated families. Table 4.1 shows the educational levels of the fathers and mothers in three categories: primary school, secondary school (high school), and postsecondary school (university or higher vocational). The majority of parents had only a primary school education and mothers generally had even less education than fathers. First-generation Turks in Berlin and Frankfurt are, on average, the least educated among those in the four cities. Like their Mexican counterparts, many Turkish immigrant parents are unable to help their children with

TABLE 4.1 Parents of Second-Generation Turks

	Berlin	Frankfurt	Rotterdam	Strasbourg
Speaking the national language				
Father hardly or not at all	1.6%	3.2%	5.7%	15.4%
Mother hardly or not at all	19.4	18.0	26.0	31.4
Father's education				
Primary school at the most	74.3	72.6	50.5	54.4
Secondary school	24.7	22.6	40.8	41.5
Postsecondary	1.0	4.8	8.8	4.1
Mother's education				
Primary school at the most	77.8	72.3	68.9	70.2
Secondary school	22.2	26.9	25.8	28.4
Postsecondary	0.0	0.8	5.3	1.4
Parents married	95.3	95.6	82.5	93.3

Source: Authors' compilation based on TIES survey 2007, 2008 (data not yet publicly available).
Note: The TIES survey comprises eight separate national data sets, collected by Institute for Studies on Migrations (IEM), Comillas Pontifical University, Spain; Swiss Forum for Migration and Population Studies (SFM), Neuchâtel, Switzerland; Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute (NIDI), The Hague, Netherlands; Austrian Academy of Sciences (ÖAW), Vienna, Austria; the European Research Centre on Migration and Ethnic Relations (ERCOMER), Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium; National Institute for Demographic Studies (INED), Paris, France; Institute for Migration Research and Intercultural Studies (IMIS), University of Osnabrück, Germany; Centre for Research in International Migration and Ethnic Relations (CEIFO), Stockholm University, Sweden. The TIES national surveys will be made publicly available by the national TIES partners individually, but were not yet available at the time of publication.

school work. In fact, many parents have difficulty speaking and reading the national language, which further disadvantages their children because European school systems expect parents to guide and support their children in school matters—a responsibility for which these Turkish parents are woefully ill equipped.

MEXICANS IN LOS ANGELES

U.S. Census data offer a comprehensive profile of the socioeconomic status (SES) of young Mexican Americans (native and immigrant) in Los Angeles. As table 4.2 shows, young Mexican Angelinos (age twenty-five to thirty-nine) are disadvantaged compared not only with non-Hispanic whites ut also in some instances with non-Hispanic blacks. They have less education, lower rates of labor force participation (but higher rates

TABLE 4.2 Socioeconomic Characteristics of Young Mexican Americans in Los Angeles

	Mexican	Non-Hispanic Black	Non-Hispanic White
Education			
Percentage no high school diploma	55.4	18.1	9.7
Percentage high school diploma	22.1	27.8	21.1
Percentage some college (including associate's degrees)	15.9	35.0	29.3
Percentage bachelor's degree or higher	6.6	19.1	40.0
Labor market status			
Percentage in labor force	65.8	73.4	80.4
Percentage working full time (thirty-five hours or more per week)	86.8	84.3	83.3
Percentage unemployment	5.3	9.1	4.4
Income			
Median family income in 1999 (in dollars)	$37,600	$40,100	$64,700
Earnings (full time, thirty-five hours or more per week)			
Percentage earning $30,000 or less	82.8	57.6	39.2
Percentage earning $30,001 to $49,999	12.0	26.6	29.0
Percentage earning $50,000 to $74,999	3.8	11.3	18.7
Percentage earning $75,000 or more	1.4	4.5	13.1
Home ownership	42.6	34.0	51.1
Family situation			
Percentage married couple families	69.1	37.3	56.4
Number of children under eighteen in household			
Percentage with no child	27.8	46.0	54.8
Percentage with one child	17.6	20.0	15.8
Percentage with two or more children	54.6	34.0	29.4
Incarceration (percentage institutional group quarter)	0.8	3.8	1.2
Total N in sample	1,075,922	263,339	964,025

Source: Authors' compilation based on Census 2000, 5 Percent Public Use Microdata Sample (U.S. Census Bureau 2000).

TABLE 4.3 Parents of Second-Generation Mexicans

Parents	Second-Generation Mexican	Native Black	Native White
English proficiency			
Father with no English proficiency	7.6	—	—
Mother with no English proficiency	10.7	—	—
Father's education			
Father with no high school diploma	47.3	10.9	3.5
Father high school	29.7	44.1	31.5
Father post high school	22.9	45.0	65.0
Mother's education			
Mother with no high school diploma	48.2	9.0	4.4
Mother high school	31.7	34.3	36.7
Mother post high school	20.1	56.8	58.8
Family situation			
Parents married	66.4	43.3	51.9
Parents owning a home	71.0	67.5	89.2

Source: Authors' compilation based on IIMMLA (Rumbaut et al. 2004).

of full-time employment and lower rates of unemployment) than blacks, lower earnings among those who worked full time, and lower median family household incomes. They fared slightly better than blacks in terms of home ownership, however. One advantage they have over blacks and whites is their intact family structure, despite the higher likelihood that their families include young children. They were also less likely to be in local jails than blacks or whites. These figures suggest that, on average, young Mexican Angelinos may be moving ahead of their parents, but they cluster in working-class positions rather than achieve middle-class status.

IIMMLA data for the U.S.-born children of Mexican immigrants confirm some of these general patterns. Table 4.3 shows that second-generation Mexicans came from families with very low human capital; about half of their parents had not completed high school, but they seemed to benefit from an intact family structure, in which both parents were present.

Table 4.4 shows how the children of Mexican immigrants fared as they entered adulthood. The most striking finding is the enormous intergenerational mobility evinced by the second generation; nearly half of Mexican immigrant mothers and fathers lack a high school diploma, but the figure drops to 12.5 percent in one generation. Moreover, close to one-

TABLE 4.4 Outcomes of Los Angeles's Second Generation

	Mexican	Native Black	Native White
Education: highest diploma or present level of schooling for those still studying			
No high school diploma	12.5	10.6	5.8
High school (diploma)	36.5	35.1	30.3
Trade school (diploma)	11.3	6.9	3.8
Two-year college (associate's degree)	16.7	20.2	10.5
Four-year college or graduate school (BA or MA)	23.0	27.2	49.6
Labor market status*			
Unemployment	10.7	12.1	4.7
Earnings			
$20,000 or less	74.4	73.7	60.2
$20,001 to $30,000	17.4	17.8	21.7
$30,001 to $50,000	7.6	6.9	12.2
Over $50,000	0.7	1.7	5.9
Home ownership	27.4	18.0	35.6
Family situation			
Married	37.1	25.9	44.6
Mean age when first child was born	22.1	22.3	25.4
Having children at teen age	14.8	12.0	2.9
Incarceration	11.2	19.3	10.6
Total in sample	553	401	402

Source: Authors' compilation based on IIMMLA (Rumbaut et al. 2004).
BA = bachelor's degree; MA = master's degree.
*Among those who are in the labor force.

quarter graduate from a four-year college, and another 16.7 percent earn an associate's degree. The clear pattern of intergenerational mobility is often missed when examining educational attainment cross-sectionally rather than intergenerationally. The gap in college education with whites, however, remains large (26.9 percentage points). Early childbearing may be problematic because it poses risk factors for social mobility, especially among women (Shearer et al. 2002; Portes and Rumbaut 2006). Mexican second-generation young people are as likely to have had children as teenagers as blacks and are five times more likely than whites. However, incarceration rates among second-generation Mexicans are relatively low and closely resemble those of native-born whites (Rumbaut 2005).

Pico Union, an inner-city neighborhood in downtown Los Angeles, is typical of the neighborhoods where second-generation Mexicans grow up. The 2000 census reports that more than three-quarters of the residents are Hispanic (40 percent Mexican, 14 percent Central American, 24 percent other Hispanic, along with 12 percent Asian, and few whites). More than three-quarters of neighborhood residents are foreign born, and a significant portion are undocumented. Two-thirds of Pico Union's residents have not completed a high school education, and 42 percent of the families live in poverty; the median household income is less than $18,000 (versus $42,000 for Los Angeles County). Most residents of Pico Union live in overcrowded rental housing. They are aware of the neighborhood's adverse reputation because of the high frequency of car thefts and burglaries and the visibility of hot spots for prostitution, gangs, drug-dealing, and public alcohol consumption and urination (Zhou 2009).

The local public schools are overwhelmingly Hispanic. For example, 88 percent of the nearly 5,000 students enrolled in one neighborhood high school are Hispanic, the majority of whom are Mexican. Nearly half (45 percent) of the students are classified as English-language learners (formerly limited English proficiency), and more than 75 percent qualify for free or subsidized lunches—an indicator of family poverty. Not only is the school understaffed, but its poor Hispanic students are also low achieving. Fewer than 13 percent of ninth, tenth, and eleventh graders score at or above the 50th national percentile ranking on the 1999 Stanford 9 test for reading (and less than 28 percent do so for math). Additionally, the high school dropout rate among Hispanic students—82 percent—is astronomically high (Zhou 2009). More students in this school are likely to drop out than to graduate.

Furthering the disadvantages they face in the school context is the situation of the immigrant parents. Mexican immigrants in Los Angeles have low socioeconomic backgrounds and often less than an elementary school education. In some cases, they are in the United States illegally. California has recently passed a number of initiatives that have negative consequences for the children of immigrants, including Proposition 209, which abolished affirmative action in college admission, and Proposition 227, which dismantled bilingual education. Funding for public education has also been cut back (Acuña 1996; Padilla and Gonzalez 2001; Telles and Ortiz 2008).

Remarkably, despite these huge disadvantages, about one in five second-generation Mexicans has either enrolled in a four-year college or graduate school or already earned a BA or master's (MA) degree. When we examined this group more closely, we found that its members followed a starkly

different life course than the average second-generation Mexican in our sample. For instance, they marry later, postpone having children, and have fewer children. They are more likely to marry a non-Hispanic partner who also has some college education: two-thirds of these partners had at least some college education. Their higher levels of education also resulted in better labor market outcomes; both partners usually work full time, and about 40 percent have an annual household income greater than $70,000.

One-third of the successful group of second-generation Mexicans work in the educational or social service sectors, and many (about 30 percent) volunteer in community organizations. Only a few (10 percent) work in professional jobs. That is, the educational mobility of the most successful second-generation Mexicans has not yet translated into prestigious jobs. However, nearly one-third are homeowners, and few have ever been arrested or incarcerated. In sum, the mobility pathways and future prospects for this group and their children look very different compared to those for other 1.5- or second-generation Mexicans in Los Angeles.

Second-Generation Turks in Europe

Members of the Turkish second generation in Rotterdam, Strasbourg, Berlin, and Frankfurt also overwhelmingly grow up in the poorest neighborhoods in these cities. Although these neighborhoods had large concentrations of Turkish inhabitants, in no case did Turks form the majority. Most neighborhoods have a mix of immigrant and non-immigrant inhabitants. One example is Het Oude Noorden in Rotterdam, which has 18,000 inhabitants and ranks as one of the poorest in the Netherlands. More than three-quarters of the apartments are social housing (similar to public housing in the United States). Children from the larger Turkish families usually do not have their own bedroom or a separate place to study. The neighborhood is also home to one of the lowest performing schools in the city. Moreover, many neighborhood residents are unemployed and Het Oude Noorden has a higher crime rate than the rest of the city. The police have therefore marked the neighborhood as a high risk zone, which allows them to search residents for weapons and drugs without cause in the street.

Given these poor neighborhood and family conditions, it comes as little surprise that many second-generation Turkish children perform poorly in school. As noted in table 4.5, about one-third of the second-generation Turks in the four cities do not study beyond compulsory lower secondary school (which is the equivalent to middle school in the

TABLE 4.5 Outcomes for the Second-Generation Turks

	Berlin	Frankfurt	Rotterdam	Strasbourg
Citizenship status				
Citizenship	89.7	77.5	94.0	98.4
Citizenship by birth (versus naturalization)	91.1	83.0	49.5	48.9
Education: highest diploma for those who left school or present level of schooling for those still studying				
No lower secondary diploma	4.7	1.4	12.0	6.7
Lower secondary school (diploma)	29.4	26.7	19.0	12.2
Apprenticeship and CAP/BEP (diploma; equivalent to trade school)	48.3	56.9	13.3	31.1
Upper secondary and MBO (diploma; equivalent to associate's degree)	10.9	8.2	28.1	21.1
Higher education (BA or MA)	6.7	6.7	27.6	29.0
Labor market status*				
Unemployment (ILO definition)	14.2	9.2	9.9	11.9
Home ownership (house owned by parents in parentheses)	12.3 (8.8)	14.7 (12.5)	19.5 (8.8)	10.3 (33.9)
Total in sample	253	250	263	240

Source: Authors' compilation based on TIES survey 2007, 2008.
BA = bachelor's degree; MA = master's degree; CAP = Certificat d'aptitude professionnelle; BEP = brevet d'etudes professionelles; MBO = middelbaar beroeps onderwijs (middle vocational education); ILO = International Labour Organisation.
*Among those in the labor force.

United States). European Union jargon refers to them as early school leavers and officially labels them as at-risk youth. Additionally, many of these pupils attended elementary schools where the majority of children were of immigrant origin. Those who make it to secondary school often end up in vocational schools with an even higher concentration of children of immigrants. Popularly referred to as ghetto schools, schools with many second-generation students are known for high levels of violence and high dropout rates.

TABLE 4.6 Higher Education, Second-Generation Turks and Comparison Group of Native Parentage

	Berlin and Frankfurt		Rotterdam		Strasbourg	
	Percentage	N	Percentage	N	Percentage	N
Tertiary education						
Turks	6.7	34	27.6	72	29.0	78
Comparison group	19.7	96	56.9	144	69.8	111
Among those whose parents had primary school education at most						
Second-generation Turks	2.5		19.5		29.4	

Source: Authors' compilation based on TIES survey 2007, 2008.

This poor academic performance translates into poor employment outcomes: unemployment rates are high, especially among the early school leavers (see table 4.5). Many second-generation Turkish girls who leave school early never enter the labor market and instead become homemakers. The majority marry coethnic partners with similarly slim educational credentials. These young couples usually build their lives in the same working-class neighborhoods as their parents and, as a consequence, remain surrounded by people of Turkish origin.

Despite this bleak portrait, we can also point to a growing group of well-educated second-generation Turks who, like their Mexican-origin counterparts, achieve academic success in spite of the odds. Table 4.6 shows how many students are pursuing higher education at the time of the survey or already have a higher education diploma (BA or MA); their profiles also differ from those of their fellow ethnics. This group also postpones marriage, and both partners stay active in the labor market after marriage. As urban professionals, they earn considerable incomes. Like their Mexican American counterparts in Los Angeles, many high-achieving second-generation Turks work in the public sector as policymakers, social workers, and teachers. However, a growing group also work in finance, law, and economics—the three university subjects second-generation Turks most often study at university. They are among the few who are able to buy their own house or apartment in the city, and they often move to better parts of their parents' neighborhood or into less segregated neighborhoods altogether. They are assuming leading positions in community organizations and becoming more visible in local political parties (Crul and Heering 2008).

The size of the successful group differs considerably across European cities (see table 4.6). Turkish educational outcomes rank highest in Strasbourg and Rotterdam but lowest in Berlin and Frankfurt, as found in the TIES survey. (We combine the Berlin and Frankfurt samples to get a large enough group for comparative analysis.) In Strasbourg, four times as many second-generation Turks are in the higher education category than in Berlin and Frankfurt. The outcomes for the comparison group (people whose parents are both native born) show that this largely reflects national trends on tertiary education attendance, which in general is higher in France and the Netherlands than in the German-speaking countries. The differences between the cities remain equally large when we look only at those children whose parents did not attend school beyond the primary level.

The Study of Success

Maurice Crul and Jens Schneider (2010) argue that international comparison reveals the importance of the interplay between agency and institutional arrangements that have a major impact on educational and labor market outcomes. The local or national specifics of a national educational system become evident only when it is compared with school systems in other countries. Adopting this comparative approach enables us to point to both the institutional hindrances as well as the role of supportive educational institutional and familial systems in each national or local setting.

Mexican Angelinos in the United States

The children of Mexican immigrants are often considered to be at a higher risk of failure than other immigrant groups in the United States, not only because many arrive with little education but also because many enter as unauthorized migrants (Bean and Stevens 2003). Because Mexicans often start much further behind other immigrants, some observers fear that they will never be able to catch up to native-born Americans. This concern generates anxiety about whether Mexican Americans will become mired in the bottom rungs of the occupational and pay structure and form a permanent and largely undocumented urban underclass (Borjas 1999; Huntington 2004). However, in the IIMMLA survey, about one in five second-generation Mexicans defies this trajectory. This group has attained extraordinarily high levels of education, especially given their parents' poor human capital and the disadvantaged neighborhoods in which they were raised.

The results from IIMMLA survey show that the school careers of these successful students differ in three important ways from those of many of their second-generation Mexican peers. First, the successful students

were significantly less likely to be placed in ESL (English as a second language) classes. Although all second-generation Mexicans are by definition U.S. born, many are placed in ESL classes in high school. Second, Mexicans who excelled in school were also significantly more likely to attend private or parochial schools. Despite their limited resources, some Mexican immigrant parents were able and willing to make a large financial investment in their children's education because they considered the local public schools to be of such poor quality.

Third, they were also more likely to be placed in honors or Advanced Placement (AP) classes in high school; the IIMMLA data show that about three-quarters of the students who went to college were placed in these more competitive tracks, providing second-generation Mexicans a different reference group than that available to those in the regular tracks. This informal tracking taught them to view college as an attainable goal, and the information that they gained in the honors and AP tracks also better prepared them to apply to college. Most, but not all, students who earned strong grades (As and Bs) were placed in honors classes or AP programs, though a small group report they mostly got As in high school but were not placed in an honors program or the AP track. This may be because the schools these students attended did not offer these programs, the respondents did not pursue these possibilities, or the students did not know about them. Of this smaller group, only one has a BA or MA diploma or is studying in a four-year college.

When we look at those who were in the honors program or AP tracks but did not enter a four-year college, we find that the majority finished high school but chose to attend a two-year community college rather than a four-year university. Some (13.3 percent) earned an associate's degree but did not transfer to a four-year university. The largest group, however, dropped out of community college in the first or second year without a degree. The critical point is that the success or failure of Mexican children is determined first in honors classes in high school but again later, in the initial years of college; many drop out of college at age eighteen or nineteen.

The IIMMLA data also reveal that neighborhood and community characteristics explain an important part of the college dropout patterns. The males in honors or AP classes who continued on to a four-year college were only a third as likely as those not in these classes to say that gangs and drugs had been a big problem in their neighborhood. Those who did not continue in college were twice as likely to have been arrested as those who did. Of the females who did not pursue further education, one-quarter married before they were twenty years old, and about 40 percent had a child by that age, which meant they had to juggle school and

child care or drop out of school altogether. In short, neighborhood disadvantages, early marriage, and pregnancy among women had a significant impact on the success of second-generation Mexicans who enrolled in and completed college.

A further remarkable finding is the large group of older, part-time students enrolled in four-year colleges and graduate schools, most of whom reentered school while working (which is true for most working-class students in general). This finding reflects the determination of these students as well as the flexibility of the U.S. educational system that offers the possibility of a second chance at a college degree if a student did not pursue one immediately after high school.

In the sections that follow, we present two life histories of the Los Angeles respondents whose educational pathways diverged at critical junctures, which consequently lead to dissimilar outcomes.

Case Study, Danielle: No Excuses Danielle is a thirty-four-year-old Mexican woman who immigrated to the United States at the age of one. Her parents entered the United States illegally but legalized themselves and their children after the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) immigration reform in 1986 when she was in the tenth grade. Danielle's legal status has therefore never hampered her educational opportunities. Given that her parents have only a general equivalency diploma, Danielle's educational intergenerational mobility is extraordinary. Not only has she graduated from college, but she has also earned a teaching certificate and holds a master's degree. We detail how she was able to achieve what she did despite poor parental human capital.

After leaving Mexico, Danielle's parents settled in a working-class neighborhood near Los Angeles and held blue-collar jobs. Her father worked in manufacturing and her mother worked in a factory as an assembler. Having witnessed how hard they labored and how little they earned in return, Danielle knew early on that she wanted to take a different path and become a professional.

Danielle's parents always stressed education and instilled the importance of attending college: college was simply expected. They knew that a college education would open doors for her that had been closed to them. Danielle also knew that she would need a college degree to fulfill her professional goal of becoming a teacher—a dream that her mother also had but was unable to realize. As Danielle explains, because her parents were unable to go to college, they were all the more adamant that all four of their daughters seize the opportunity.

Danielle enjoyed school, did well in her classes, and became actively involved in extracurricular activities such as softball and the drill team. A teenager with abundant energy, Danielle wanted to work part time during high school and got a job at a local car dealership to cover her personal expenses. Having witnessed her parents' struggle to make ends meet, Danielle could not imagine asking them for extra spending money. However, before she was allowed to accept the job, her father had a serious talk with her and made it very clear that she would be allowed to work only under the condition that she kept up her high grades. Vividly recalling this conversation, Danielle recognized the lesson: school should be her highest priority.

Danielle's efforts in high school earned her a 3.5 grade point average, and with guidance from her school's College Bound program, Danielle earned admission to several top four-year universities, including a University of California (UC) school. The College Bound program offered in Danielle's high school was critical because it helped guide her with information about the SAT exams as well as the college application process. This educational support system was critical because Danielle's parents (like many Mexican immigrant parents) did not know how to navigate the college admissions process, even though they desperately wanted their children to attend.

Although Danielle earned admission to a UC school, she decided to attend community college for a few years instead, given her family's limited financial resources. Not only was tuition much cheaper at the community college, but Danielle also saved money by living at home. Although she had to work part time during college to pay for her tuition, her parents helped as much as they could; they gave her $1,000 toward a car and also paid for her car insurance, which provided the means to go to classes. Danielle excelled in community college and eventually transferred to a four-year college where she received her bachelor's degree. After graduating from college, she earned her teaching credentials and a master's degree and then landed her dream job as a kindergarten teacher with an annual salary of $65,000 (more than her parents' combined salaries).

Danielle has achieved everything that she wanted—a college education, an advanced degree, a job as a teacher, and economic independence. What makes these achievements even more meaningful is that Danielle achieved what her mother had not been able to do for herself. Although Danielle recognizes that she has worked hard to get where she is, she firmly believes that the path to mobility is a simple one—education—open to all Americans. In fact, Danielle is extremely critical of Hispanics who do not prioritize education, including two of her siblings who did not make it to

college. She is doing what she can to ensure that her youngest sister, who is still in high school, follows Danielle's path.

Although Danielle takes a strictly individualistic approach to her educational success and maintains that there are no excuses in life for not getting ahead, she had several important advantages. First, her parents were determined that she attend college and always reminded her that college was expected. Second, they prioritized school over work. Third, her high school provided a program—College Bound—that helped her through the admissions process. Finally, her parents were willing and able to help her financially while she attended college. Although Danielle might have succeeded without these advantages, it seems clear that they were essential to her paving her path to educational mobility.

Case Study, Armando: Family Obligations Armando attended high school in a low-income neighborhood of Los Angeles where the majority of students were Latino or African American (Zhou et al. 2008, 52–53). "It was just basically a low end high school," Armando explained. "It's just baby-sit them [the students] and ship-them-out kind of place." Most students who attended Armando's high school did not take school seriously and were not college bound. Armando was an exception, even though his parents never pushed him to attend college. In fact, his parents were delighted that he graduated from high school—which neither of them had done. Armando always knew that he would go to college because he dreamed of becoming a doctor and knew that going to college and medical school was the only way he could reach this goal.

Because Armando's parents did not expect him to attend college, it is all the more remarkable that he learned about the college track in his high school and, furthermore, insisted on being placed in AP classes. The classes were a world apart from the regular ones in Armando's school; the students were serious and determined to go to college, and the teachers were eager to help them achieve their goal. Even today, Armando recalls the impact that his AP teachers have had in his life; they taught him not only how to write but also the importance of writing well. He fared well in his classes and received several awards for academic achievement.

His friends in his AP classes were also a pivotal part of his success and became the reference group by which he measured his success. Because of the competitive nature of AP classes, Armando felt that he had to do well. As he put it, "It was a little bit of keeping up with the Joneses kind of deal," with respect to grades. "They did that well. I am going to do that too." With friends who excelled in their classes, Armando felt he had no

choice but to perform just as well because he did not want to be an outsider. These two school resources—the AP classes and his AP friends—were instrumental in keeping Armando on track during high school.

Armando's efforts earned him admission into several top four-year universities, including an Ivy League university and a high-ranking UC school. Weighing his college options, he chose to attend a UC school because it was the only affordable option, given his family's limited financial resources. He also calculated that he would be able to live at home while attending the UC school. During his first two years of college, Armando immersed himself in course work to fulfill his premedical requirements and chose to major in biology. He worked part time to pay for his tuition, which he fully covered himself, without any financial help from his parents.

Although Armando skillfully juggled the demands of work and school during his first two years of college, he veered off course during the third. In his junior year, his parents decided to start their own business and expected Armando to do the books and taxes and his sisters to answer phones and deal with customers. Initially, Armando was excited about his parents' new business venture because he thought that this would enable them to secure a better future. The demands on Armando's time increased as his parents' business grew, and because he was optimistic about the prospects of his family's business, he decided to go to college only part time. Armando poured his time and energy into the family business, gave up his dream of becoming a doctor, and switched to what he felt was a less demanding major, art history. In his view (and that of his parents), a college degree became secondary because the business was growing and profitable. Here, we see an enormous difference between Armando's and Danielle's parents' priorities and trajectories; whereas Danielle's parents insisted that she prioritize school over work, Armando's parents insisted that he prioritize work over school.

Unfortunately, Armando's bet did not pay off: things did not turn out as he had hoped. After a few years, Armando's parents separated, and his father took the business, which was in his name, leaving nothing for the rest of the family. With the family business gone, Armando decided to return to school full time, but having limited college to part time for years, he found the transition to full-time college far more difficult than he had anticipated. Although Armando eventually graduated, it took him eight years to do so. Moreover, his bachelor's degree was not in biology, as he had originally planned, but in art history. With that major, Armando had a difficult time landing a job. Eventually he was hired as a bus driver for the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transport Authority (MTA). Armando

recently learned that he has a heart condition that makes him ineligible to drive a city bus, so he is currently unemployed and receives support through disability and Social Security.

At the age of forty-two, Armando lives with his mother and is now taking accounting classes at a local community college, with the hope that someday he may find work as an accountant. Reflecting on his college years, Armando wishes he could turn back time and do things differently. If given the chance, he would have chosen to attend the Ivy League school because he would have lived on the East Coast and not have felt such a strong obligation to help his family with the business. As Armando thinks about what might have been, he believes that he would have stayed in school full time, majored in biology, gone to medical school, and become a doctor.

Our analysis of these life histories of second-generation Mexicans reveals some significant mechanisms that serve to neutralize advantages or circumvent disadvantages (Zhou et al. 2008, 57–59). First, family educational expectations can have varied effects on children's outcomes. On the positive side, high expectations often contribute to desirable academic outcomes. Almost all of our respondents reported that their parents valued education and, moreover, expected that their children's education would exceed their own. However, family educational expectations can be at odds with other family obligations, such as the need to work to supplement the family household income. In low-SES families in particular, economic survival often stands in the way of laying a strong foundation for economic mobility, creating a conflict between working and school. As our study reveals, the burden of work often impedes or stalls educational achievement. For the children of Mexican immigrants, working during school was customary, not only for pocket money but also to help support their families. For second-generation Mexicans, having to work to support oneself and one's family while attending school can interfere with one's educational trajectory. Second, access to public resources is of paramount importance, especially for national-origin groups who are disadvantaged by low parental SES.

Our study confirms two major findings from existing research. First, most immigrant children from low-income families attend urban public schools, but those who have access to more competitive academic tracks, AP courses, and quality after-school programs tend to fare much better than their peers. This suggests that access to rigorous academic programs and supplementary after-school resources matters, especially for disadvantaged immigrant youth. Second, community colleges serve as bridging mechanisms for upward social mobility (Callan and Finney 2003; Portes and Fernandez-Kelly 2008; Szelényi and Chang 2010). Many of our respondents reported having taken the route of community colleges, either as steppingstones to four-year colleges or universities or to earn certificates and licenses that enabled them to seek jobs in skilled trades (for example, as teacher's assistants, lab technicians, dental assistants, and paramedics) or to develop their own businesses.

Second-Generation Turks in Europe

In the case of second-generation Mexicans, informal selection into the AP or honors tracks in high school, the neighborhood and community context, and the financial situation of the families are important factors in explaining success and failure. We now contrast the American case with that of the second-generation Turks in three European countries. The case that differs most starkly is Germany. In contrast to the United States, the German school system selects a formal track for children as early as age ten; they are selected either for Gymnasium or for Hauptschule or Realschule (the two last tracks both potentially lead to apprenticeships afterward). Fewer than 10 percent of second-generation Turks enter Gymnasium (the academic track). Of the 10 percent who take the academic track, even fewer actually make it into higher education. Of the second-generation children from poorly educated families, the majority have Turkish parents who attended only primary school or, at most, a few years of secondary school. Few survive further selection in the academic track. Early selection makes the period of preschool and elementary school the most important factor in determining academic success in the German system.

Among European countries, the school system in France is most similar to that of the United States. In Strasbourg, as in the rest of the country, selection does not take place until age fifteen (the end of college, which is similar to high school). At that point, students are selected into either a general or technological lyceum or a vocational track. Almost half of the second-generation Turks go to a general or technological lyceum, which, in principle, gives direct access into university. The group in lyceum is equal in size to the group of second-generation Mexican students (about 40 percent) that is tracked into an honors or AP program. Both comprehensive school systems enable children of disadvantaged family backgrounds to attend more academically rigorous tracks in secondary school. The most notable difference is that French students usually gain direct access to university, whereas second-generation Mexican students in the United States generally first attend a community college and often drop out before they graduate. The choice of a two-year college rather than a more prestigious

four-year university is due partly to the less rigorous admissions requirements and partly to the lower cost of community colleges, the latter of which is not a salient factor in France because its educational system is heavily subsidized by the government.

Like in the United States, neighborhood contexts play an important role in students' ability to continue in higher education and obtain a degree. Unfortunately, the TIES survey did not ask about incarceration. However, we can get some idea of students' high school environment to gauge their school and neighborhood context. Almost half the students on the academic track in Strasbourg who did not continue into higher education attended schools where more than three-quarters were of immigrant origin. This was true for only 15 percent of the students on an academic track who continued into higher education. The TIES survey also includes a question about peers in high school who dropped out of school; those with a peer in secondary school who dropped out are three times more likely to not pursue higher education or to drop out themselves. The neighborhood and peer context appears to play a similar role in France and Los Angeles.

The case of Rotterdam (the Netherlands) falls somewhere between the comprehensive system in France and the vocationally oriented system in Germany. One characteristic of the Dutch case is that half of the higher education students of Turkish descent made it into higher education through the vocational route. The largest group on this alternative route first went to a four-year middle vocational school (between the ages of sixteen and twenty) before entering higher education to get a BA. Middle vocational education in the Netherlands is partly modeled after the idea of the community colleges in the United States. The importance of the community college route in the United States makes the school careers of the successful second-generation Mexicans more similar to those of second-generation Turks in the Netherlands than one might expect. However, the indirect route in the Netherlands takes at least three years longer than the direct route. These students often come from large families in which both parents attended at most primary school. The indirect route seems to be an important alternative for persistent and smart children of disadvantaged families. The same seems to be true of the American students who use the two-year community college as a steppingstone to a four-year university.

In all three European countries, selection in secondary school plays an important part in whether students can enter higher education. However, national institutional arrangements take different approaches to determining who gets to enter an academic track in secondary school. These differences involve preschool attendance, school segregation, and late selection.

In Strasbourg, as in the rest of France, preschool attendance is almost universal. Children of immigrants as well as children of native parentage go to preschool at age two and half or three, almost without exception. As a result, Turkish children in France begin to learn French in an educational environment from a very early age. In the Netherlands and Germany, preschool attendance before the age of four and six, respectively, is optional, and as a result, many second-generation Turkish respondents do not attend preschool at all. In Germany, this means that a sizable group of second-generation Turkish children speak Turkish fluently but have a poor command of German when they enter school at the age of six. Those who attend preschool in Germany are significantly ($p < 0.01$) more likely to be placed in an academic track. Similarly, children of disadvantaged immigrants in the United States do not attend preschool, placing them at a disadvantage with respect to the French system.

Moreover, the quality of schools matters (more so in the United States than in Europe) and is related to the neighborhood SES and the degree of ethnic segregation—factors that sometimes, but not always, overlap. The Turkish group is the most segregated of all ethnic groups in the four western European cities, but segregation there has a totally different flavor than in Los Angeles. The neighborhoods in which Turks reside are more ethnically mixed than those dominated by ethnic minorities in Los Angeles and many other American cities. However, in the three large cities under study (Berlin, Frankfurt, and Rotterdam), Turks tend to concentrate in neighborhoods with the largest immigrant communities. In Berlin and Frankfurt, pupils in more segregated schools have significantly ($p < 0.05$) less access to an academic track. In Rotterdam and Strasbourg, there is no significant effect of school segregation. The mother's ability to speak German is a strong indicator of the decision to send a child to preschool and the choice of primary school in Germany. In families in which the mother does not master German, the children are less likely to attend preschool and more likely to attend primary schools with many other migrant children.

Another major difference between the three European cases is the timing of selection for academic or vocational tracks. In France, children are selected twelve to thirteen years after they have started school. In Germany, they are selected after only four to six years. The Netherlands is in between, with, on average, eight years between the start of schooling and selection.

Children from families with less education are better able to reach an academic track with a longer stretch of time between the start and selection into tracks. The obstacles second-generation Turks in the two German cities face are much greater than in the Dutch and French cities. On average, Turkish children start education later and are selected into less competitive tracks earlier. In this compressed time frame, the effect of segregated schools holds them back even further.

The different institutional school settings in the three countries require different forms of support from the parents. Because of the short period between the starting age and the selection age in Germany, and the fact that children in primary school only go to school half days, parents need to play an active role in their child's education. Parents are expected to provide practical help with homework and assist their children in reading and writing. According to their children, only a small group of Turkish parents in the two German cities were able to help often with homework. Even so, only 14 percent of these children of highly supportive Turkish parents were able to go to Gymnasium. This number is not much higher than the 10 percent who do not receive help from parents but nevertheless gain entrance to the academic track. Both cases show that the extra help that Turkish parents provide is not enough to compensate for their disadvantaged position and get their children into Gymnasium. The results in the Netherlands and France show the same difficulty; however, 25 percent of the Turks in the Netherlands and nearly 50 percent of those in France who do not receive help still manage to get into an academic track. The more stratified school system of Germany severely disadvantages and punishes children whose parents are unable to provide effective supplemental support.

The practical support of parents with homework requires knowledge of the national language and content of the homework. Parents can, however, also talk about the importance of school. For this, parents need less knowledge of the content. In all three countries, children whose parents often talk about school are much more often tracked (between one and a half and two times more often) into an academic track. The most open school system, in France, relies least on effective practical support with homework. Talking about school and meeting often with teachers are the most powerful factors in explaining differences among the students. The importance of support from older siblings is also remarkable in all three countries. For both sorts of help (talking about school and practical help) the help of older siblings is as important as the support of the parents. This supports the findings of earlier research among second-generation Turks (Crul 1994, 2000b), which underscores the importance of the support of older siblings in a situation in which parents often are not able to help.

The results in the four cities show that even successful students face challenging pathways. In Berlin, only the top students from relatively well-educated parents make it into higher education. In the other two cities, the university-going group is larger and more diverse. Because of an earlier start and later selection in France, many more above-average students can also take a direct route to higher education. In the Netherlands, students who test above average who are persistent enough can also enter higher education through a longer or alternative route. But in the two German cities, we find that even the brightest children of poorly educated parents do not make it to university. The academic track of the German school system gets progressively more selective until virtually all children from poorly educated Turkish parents are shunted off it.

Case Study, Zeliha: Familial Support Zeliha is a second-generation Turkish woman in France with a remarkable educational career that she combined with an early marriage and motherhood. Zeliha's father came to Strasbourg as a guest worker in construction; her mother is a housewife. Having suffered from the lack of educational opportunities in Turkey, her parents were motivated to provide better opportunities for their children. Zeliha started preschool (école maternelle) at the age of three. This was where she, like her two older siblings, learned to speak French, because her father had a very low proficiency in French and her mother did not speak it at all. Fortunately, the school did not expect frequent visits from parents except for the annual parental meetings. According to Zeliha, her parents handled bureaucratic affairs quite well without speaking French. The four brothers and sisters helped one another with their homework, and their parents managed to pay for some short-term private courses.

Zeliha's parents were fortunate to find social housing in the center of Strasbourg, unlike many workers who reside in the remote parts of the city or in villages dominated by large Turkish populations. Because school selection is determined by postal code, the center city location was a great advantage for Zeliha and her siblings. They had access to prestigious public schools in the neighborhood. Even though their house was quite small, Zeliha's father did not want to move because of the opportunities the location provided. Zeliha had only a few Turkish students in her lower secondary school class (collège), and she was the only Turkish pupil in the lyceum (lycée).

Zeliha had good grades and after lower secondary school (collège) went to a general lycée, at the end of which she earned a baccalaureate degree in economics and social sciences. She decided to pursue her dream to become an English teacher. However, things did not go as she had planned. On the first day, she was disappointed to enter a large amphitheater where a professor taught the entire course in English. She had not been aware that English proficiency was required to begin this course of study. Thus, in the second semester, she changed her major and transferred to French as a Foreign Language (FLE). She relates that, of the 250 students who had enrolled in the English department, only 100 remained. She believes that this dropout rate shows that most students did not receive enough guidance before choosing their major. Nevertheless, the flexibility of the system made it possible for her to transfer to another department without losing ground.

Although her older siblings pursued their education in the vocational field, Zeliha was the first to attend university. Her family was very proud and supportive of her educational career. Yet, in the midst of her undergraduate education, Zeliha made an unexpected decision. During the family's summer vacation in Turkey, she met a relative and decided to get married at age twenty. Zeliha's parents did not oppose her decision but warned her against the hardship of studying while married. Indeed, things did not go as easily as she had expected, but family support mechanisms eased the way. Her husband, who initially did not speak any French, found a job in the construction business through her father. The couple moved in with Zeliha's parents, which made it easier for her to attend school while her mother ran the household. Two years later, she became pregnant, but with the support of her mother, who took care of the baby, she was able to go back to school one month after giving birth. Zeliha also received a great deal of help from friends at school who covered her absences and assisted her with course work. And, finally, she earned a (professional) MA degree in French.

Zeliha received considerable support from her family in all her decisions. Access to public resources, such as government aid for low-income families, and public schools made it possible for her parents to support their children, despite their precarious economic situation and low human capital. Even though she took a large risk by getting married and having a child before she graduated, these personal decisions did not deter her educational pursuits. Thus, in an interaction with the institutional and social structures, Zeliha managed to pursue a successful career in education. After four years of intensive effort to finish her studies while raising her child, she decided to take a short break before starting to work. Her husband then started his business in a village of Strasbourg, which improved their financial situation and enabled them to move into their own apartment. Zeliha is thinking of looking for a part-time job "to keep the balance between family and work." She acknowledges the difficulties of finding a job as a woman wearing a head scarf, especially after the hardships she has experienced finding an apprenticeship. However, due to her positive experience at a company in which she worked as an apprentice, she was recently offered a part-time job there, and she is now more optimistic about her chances in the labor market.

Case Study, Volkan: Sports and School Volkan is a second-generation Turk in the Netherlands studying business economics in higher vocational education (a postsecondary institution specializing in training people for a profession). Volkan's mother arrived in the Netherlands in her early twenties. Unlike many Turkish immigrants, she tried to attend vocational education and, as a result, gained good command of the Dutch language. She later married a man from Turkey, and the couple opened a dry cleaning business. As a working mother, Volkan's mother has frequent access to Dutch society and she was actively involved in Volkan's school activities. Both parents not only supported their children's education financially but also helped them to pursue their objectives in life.

Initially, Volkan was not a motivated student. His grades were average, and at the end of secondary school, he was advised to go to the lowest track in secondary school (lower vocational education). He was not bothered by this low recommendation because his dream was to become a professional soccer player, and his mother supported his passion for sports. Volkan played during his teenage years in a semiprofessional league with other talented players. Volkan and his family lived in a highly segregated neighborhood where many young children were drawn into drugs and crime. Volkan's parents saw his involvement in sports partly as a way to keep him away from dangerous street life. Volkan always had a full schedule of studying, school, and sports practice on most days. Because of the low level of vocational education, he never experienced any problems doing his course work and playing sports. After finishing lower vocational education at age sixteen, he continued toward a four-year middle vocational education school.

Volkan's ambition of becoming a professional soccer player was checked by an injury he suffered. After this incident, he decided that betting on soccer as his only career choice was too risky. He finished his four years of middle vocational education (MBO), earning an associate's degree, but

believed that to be successful and earn a decent income, he needed to further his education. Hence, he decided to continue toward a four-year higher vocational (HBO) education school. Almost all of his friends and some of his cousins were studying economics at the time, and, considering the prospects of expanding the family business, Volkan decided that business economics would be a good choice. His family supported his decision. He signed up for the most prestigious business economics school in Amsterdam. Fortunately for Volkan, most youth who pursue noncompulsory schooling after the age of eighteen in the Netherlands are automatically entitled to a scholarship that continues for the entire four years of study. Volkan pays for his additional living expenses through his part-time job working as a gym instructor.

Like many students who take the long route into higher education in the Netherlands, Volkan had difficulty with some of the course work that presumes secondary school academic preparation. Even though the middle vocational diploma gives access to higher vocational training, the students lack some of the academic preparation necessary to excel in school. Because his friends and cousins were also studying economics, he was able to turn to them for help with his schoolwork, and his parents helped by providing extra assistance through a paid tutor. At the time of this writing Volkan is in his third year and has managed to pass all his courses by working hard, remaining dedicated, and accepting the help and support of his family and friends. Volkan now aspires to follow the university preparatory track (HBO propedeuse) and continue toward an MA university business degree. Volkan has decided that, once he finishes his studies, he will explore different job opportunities to gain further experience and extend his horizons.

Case Study, Derya: Parental Ambitions Derya is a successful second-generation Turkish woman in Germany with an MA in linguistics. Her father completed higher vocational school in Istanbul in the 1960s but, despite his advanced degree, had difficulty finding employment. Weary of trying to find a job through employment agencies, he decided to join the many guest workers migrating to Germany and found a job in the German telecommunication company. During visits back to Istanbul, he met Derya's mother, then a Turkish literature teacher in a high school in Istanbul, and they soon married. Derya's mother arrived in Germany in 1981, and Derya, their only child, was born two years later. Derya's mother attended a language school after her arrival in Germany. Over the years, both of her parents have acquired an average level of German, and they settled in a working-class German neighborhood.

Although it was not obligatory in the German system, Derya attended kindergarten at the age of three. Because Turkish was spoken at home, her parents wanted her to become familiar with the German language while socializing with other children. As a result, she did not have much difficulty with German when she began primary school. She remembers asking her mother certain questions about German grammar, but otherwise she did not receive much assistance from her parents throughout her schooling. Derya was a good student; she studied hard and did her homework regularly. She remembers that most of the students in her class (who were predominantly working class) were not nearly as studious and seemed rather careless about their future careers. This made it easy for her to stand out as a good student, and at the end of primary school, she and only one other student from her class were recommended to go on to Gymnasium (academic track).

Her positive school experience continued in Gymnasium, where the student body was more ethnically diverse. She had colleagues of Afghan and Persian backgrounds, as well as a few Turks, although most were German. Derya does not recall receiving any help from her parents with courses, but they would always ask whether she had completed her homework, and they asked her questions about school. She emphasizes that working together with her German friends improved her German language skills considerably.

Toward the end of high school, Derya experienced difficulties with her courses for the first time. She felt tired and worn out because of exams and classes, and her grades dropped. However, streaming down to a vocational track (as many others would do in that situation) was not an option; her parents would not have accepted the move. Because Derya did not aspire to go to medical or law school, her lower grades did not obstruct her university career. With a final push, she obtained her high school degree (Abitur), in part because she did not want to be the only one among her friends to fail.

When Derya graduated from high school, she was unsure about what subject to study in university, so she decided to take a year off to go abroad. This "social year" is popular among young people in Germany. Her mother was not pleased with the idea because she thought it was too early for Derya to leave home, but in the end both parents accepted her decision. In high school, Derya's favorite subject was French, so she decided to go to France as an au pair, with the intention of improving her language skills. She spent one year in Paris, where she enhanced her language skills considerably. When she returned to Germany, Derya decided to make use of

these skills and proceeded to study French as her major. Even though she has pleasant memories of her university years, she regrets having stayed in her hometown for school; she thinks she could have become more independent had she studied in another German city. Nevertheless, she is also happy that she can live with her parents.

In the first year of her university studies, Derya secured a mentoring job through her mother's contacts at work. This mentoring project was an initiative to provide course work aid to second-generation students by second-generation mentors who could also act as role models. After two years as a mentor, Derya was invited to join the organizational team and immersed herself in the project. Through this experience, she acquired skills in project management, organization, public relations, and communication, as well as more self-confidence and better presentation skills—all of which she believes will be useful in her future career. While working on this project, Derya began to reconsider her experience at school and the experience of immigrant children in general. She believes that such a mentoring project could have been very helpful for her in choosing her area of study and occupation.

Today, Derya has successfully finished her studies and is ready to enter the labor market. Even though she regrets not studying for a specific profession, such as the law, she is aware of the flexibility afforded by her skills when choosing among different sectors and companies.

Success Against the Odds

In our comparative study of Mexicans in Los Angeles and Turks in western European cities, we find discernible pathways of mobility among the second generation in their respective host societies. Both second-generation Mexicans and Turks come from low socioeconomic family backgrounds, their parents arrived in their host countries as low-skilled labor migrants, and they face a disadvantaged family situation in which both parents must work to make ends meet. Hence, despite stable households, most parents are unable to provide extra resources for their children's education. Despite similarities in family SES, the pathways and mechanisms that contribute to success vary in different national and local contexts. Comparative integration context theory posits that national institutional arrangements in school significantly shape the challenges faced by second-generation youth but also emphasizes that students can maximize opportunities within school systems, especially when there are windows of opportunities for active and persistent second-generation students, especially those who have supportive parents or siblings (Crul and Schneider 2010; Crul, Schneider, and Lelie 2012). In the United States, access to more competitive tracks in public schools, programs like College Bound that help students navigate the complex college system, and community colleges provide a pathway for second-generation Mexicans who are unable to turn to their parents for support. The U.S.-European comparison highlights this interplay between family SES and institutional and community resources and characteristics.

From the international comparison, we can deduce several important lessons. The best institutional setting for children from immigrant families with low parental human and cultural capital is provided by school systems in which all children start school at an early age, schools are ethnically diverse, and selection into tracks (formal or informal) is postponed until students are able to compensate for their disadvantaged starting position. The United States and Europe differ considerably in how they select children in high school or secondary school. In the United States, urban school systems are typically comprehensive, but the quality of individual schools differs enormously. In Europe, by contrast, school quality does not differ as much. This greater uniformity in school quality works to the advantage of second-generation youth in Europe, but early tracking in Germany and the Netherlands reduces their opportunities with respect to the more comprehensive school situation in the United States. However, honors classes and AP courses provide an informal variant of tracking in the United States that allows the brightest children from underprivileged families a chance to excel and move beyond high school. Still, most poor immigrant children in the United States find it hard to attend selective colleges and universities.

In the United States, the Netherlands, and France, children who were not able to access selective colleges or universities have found alternative routes. Vocational pathways in the Netherlands and France can be an alternative long route to higher education, as can community colleges in the United States. On both sides of the Atlantic, researchers often do not highlight these alternative routes because they still consider education to be a linear development from high school to college or from upper secondary school to university. However, many respondents who have beat the odds and attained higher education have used these alternative ways to mobility and have achieved success on their own terms.

The supportive role of parents in low-SES families is crucial in both Europe and the United States, but in a different way than that of more educated parents. These immigrant parents are usually unable to give practical help with homework and the college admissions process because of their low level of human capital, poor command of the native language, and scant understanding of the school system. However, second-generation children

whose parents hold high expectations—who consistently talk about the importance of school, who prioritize school over work, and who support choices that give their children the best educational opportunities—exhibit better educational outcomes than their counterparts whose parents do not. The support of older siblings and cousins also proves to be critical; they often help with homework and with the college admissions process, which compensates, in part, for their parents' severe lack of human capital.

There are other important structural differences across the Atlantic. One of the most notable is the clear relationship between the family's financial situation and the higher education opportunities available in the Los Angeles case. Families whose parents migrate to the United States illegally are usually in a precarious financial situation (Zhou and Lee 2007). The situation in Europe is quite different; schooling children rarely places financial demands on the families, even at the highest level, because higher education receives deeper public subsidies. (Of course, this also helps the young adult children of more affluent majority families.) This extra hurdle in the United States also comes with second-chance possibilities, however. Some IIMMLA respondents successfully managed to reenter the educational system after a hiatus from school, often in conjunction with work. In Europe, second-chance schooling opportunities are extremely limited; the TIES respondents almost never returned to school after entering the labor force.

In Europe, also, the inability of poorly educated immigrant parents to provide practical help with homework has consequences similar to the financial hurdles that poor immigrant parents in the United States face. Some European school systems (most notably in Germany, but also in Austria and Switzerland) rely heavily on the parents' ability to assist their children with homework. When parents are unable to do so, their children suffer, because they are underprepared and therefore underperform.

The cross-Atlantic comparison demonstrates that support from parents and siblings, the influence of the peer and neighborhood context, and access to alternative resources and routes all play important roles in shaping outcomes, despite large differences in how school systems are organized. At the same time, it highlights the ways in which each educational system either holds back (late start, early selection, or the funding of the higher education system) or advances the position of the second generation (preschool, late selection, honors or AP programs, alternative routes or second chances). Finally, the international context provides a glimpse of why second-generation Mexicans and Turks make the choices they do in the face of limited opportunities and enormous constraints and how they navigate this field in their quest to get ahead.

CHAPTER 5

ENTERING THE LABOR MARKET

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Finding a good foothold in the labor market is a crucial test for the second generation in western Europe and the United States. In recent years, as large numbers of the children of immigrants have come of age and embarked on their careers, we can begin to see what place they will occupy as adults. Knowing whether they are finding satisfactory employment in the economic mainstream is a significant first indicator of whether their working lives will be on par with those of their majority peers or whether they will remain a group apart from the broader society.

This question surfaces regularly in media and public debates. In Europe, commentators have expressed growing alarm that an alleged lack of integration of children of immigrants is fueling anti-immigrant sentiment, particularly toward Muslim communities. In the United States, scholars have expressed concern over the potential for "downward assimilation" (Haller, Portes, and Lynch 2011; Alba, Kasinitz, and Waters 2011). Worry about second-generation entry into an underclass has largely focused on the children of Spanish-speaking immigrants. On both sides of the Atlantic, we see increased anxiety over whether the children of immigrants are becoming more isolated from the mainstream and are having more difficulty entering the labor market. Popular discourse often links this worry