SNAPSHOTs
OF A RESEARCHER’S LIFE

ABOUT RUBÉN G. RUMBAUT

- **Position:** Professor of sociology, University of California, Irvine
- **Research focus:** International migration, types of immigrants, inter-generational differences in adaptation, social mobility, bilingualism, ethnic identities, transnational ties, and more
- **Research direction:** Directed (with Alejandro Portes) the ongoing Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS). Directed the first National Survey of Immigration Scholars in the US (NASIS). Directed several major studies of Southeast Asian refugees, including A Study of Southeast Asian Refugee Youth (SARYS) and the Indochinese Health and Adaptation Research Project (IHARP). Directed (with a University of California team) the Immigration and Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles study (IIMMLA). Directed (with John Weeks) major studies of infant health and mortality. Directed additional studies on topics such as immigrant students in California and transitions to adulthood in the second generation.
- **Most recent study:** (With Cynthia Feliciano) The Second Generation in Middle Adulthood
- **Currently working on:** Comparative Longitudinal Study of Educational Attainment and the Transition to Adulthood in Mexico and the United States
- **Publications:** Author of over 170 papers and coauthor or coeditor of 14 books

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An interview with Rubén G. Rumbaut, a principal investigator of the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS) [ICPSR Study 20520]
HOW DID YOU GET INVOLVED IN THIS STUDY?

The two studies that I deposited with ICPSR are two of the three largest studies that have been done in the United States on the children, especially young adult children of immigrants. Only one of the three, the first, is a longitudinal study [CILS]. The other two are large but cross-sectional studies (in Los Angeles [IIMMLA] and New York [ISGMNY]). When Alejandro Portes and I started what became known as the CILS study (the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study), I was in San Diego and he was in Baltimore at Johns Hopkins. We have directed it since 1991, although the origins of what became CILS go back to the late '80s. We finally got it funded in 1991. When we started, we had spent two years trying to get NICHD funding, and when we didn't get it, we went separately through private foundations. We received grants from the [Andrew W.] Mellon, Spencer, and the National Science foundations, although only for the first wave of the survey. We didn’t know at the time that it would become a longitudinal study.

We got the baseline funding in the fall of 1991, and we drew the CILS sample at that time. I directed the half of the project in San Diego, California, and Alejandro set up a team through FIU, Florida International University, in Miami. Coordinating the site effort in South Florida was Lisandro Pérez, a professor of sociology at FIU at the time. We went through the unified school systems of both areas. I had been working for years with the San Diego City Schools and knew the principals of practically every high school; I also knew people in the superintendent’s office and the central administration. We had been preparing for this for some time, so we had a great deal of entrée with the school system of San Diego. It was a relatively easy matter to gain the cooperation of principals for all of the schools that had 8th and 9th grades, which were the two grades from which we wanted to draw our sample. In the 8th and 9th grades most students were 14 or 15 years old. We had decided to start at that grade level because dropping out of school is a rare occurrence in the 8th grade; if we had started at older ages, say in the 11th or 12th grades, we would have had a serious problem with biased samples — since different ethnic groups have higher dropout rates than others. In the South Florida area, Lisandro Pérez and his team proceeded equivalently, and they gained entrée into the Miami-Dade County Unified School District. The San Diego Unified School District at the time was the eighth-largest in the country, but Miami’s was the fourth-largest. They drew a stratified random sample of schools to make sure they included different areas by socioeconomic class and, in addition, they included the Broward County Unified School District (in the Fort Lauderdale area immediately north of Miami-Dade), and two private schools that drew Latin American young people from the upper middle classes of the communities that had settled there, primarily Cubans and Nicaraguans.
We drew the CILS sample that fall and obtained parental consent, so that by January of 1992, we were ready to begin data collection. The first surveys were completed throughout the spring semester of 1992, from January to June. By the end of June, we had completed surveys with over 5,200 8th and 9th graders: in the case of San Diego, with eligible students in all of the 8th- and 9th-grade classrooms of the San Diego Unified School District; in the case of Miami, Broward, and the two private schools, with a stratified random sample of eligible students there. Combined, they represented 77 different nationalities. About half of the overall merged sample were US-born children with at least one — or in most cases two — immigrant parents. The other half were foreign-born children who had come to the United States as children with their families, with their parents — what I have called the “one-and-a-half” generation. Although

Table 1
CILS Sample: Size, Location (Florida or California), and Family Socioeconomic Status by National Origin of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Origin</th>
<th>Size Total CILS Sample (N)</th>
<th>Location of Sample</th>
<th>SES Ranking Family Socioeconomic Status¹</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Location of Sample Miami/Fort Lauderdale (N)</td>
<td>San Diego (N)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>755</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>727</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuba (private school)</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuba (public school)</td>
<td>1,044</td>
<td>1,042</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicaragua</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominican Republic</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Latin America</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haiti and West Indies:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamaica, West Indies</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>819</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>808</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laos (Lao)</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laos (Hmong)</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Asia</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other Countries²</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>5,262</td>
<td>2,842</td>
<td>2,420</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹Composite index (0 to 1) of father’s and mother’s education, occupational prestige, and home ownership.
²Of those 126 respondents, 88 are of European or Canadian origin, while 38 hail from the Middle East or Africa.
Source: Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS)
they represented that many national origins, certain groups dominated, depending on the nationalities that had settled in these two respective areas of the United States. In San Diego for example, the principal nationalities were Filipinos, Mexicans, Vietnamese, Cambodians, Laotians, Hmong, Chinese, and a scattering of Central Americans, Salvadorans, Guatemalans and so forth. In Miami it was a Latin journey: there were very few Asians in the Miami area, but every country in Latin America and the Caribbean was represented. The largest samples there were Cubans and Nicaraguans as well as Haitians and Jamaicans, Dominicans, Colombians, etc. We went to each school, administered the questionnaire, collected the data, and in that way, the process continued through June, until we completed all of the surveys. If a student was not there at the time that we surveyed them, we went back. If they were sick or absent for whatever reason, we followed up as many as six times in order to make sure that everyone in the sample was surveyed.

So, by June of 1992, we completed the first wave of data collection. We began the analysis and that led, in 1994, to a special issue of the *International Migration Review*, which Alejandro edited—almost all of the articles of which were written by colleagues of ours reporting on a whole range of findings from that first wave of interviews. Then in 1995, we approached funding agencies again and got funded for a second wave of data collection. That same year we also applied for funding from the Russell Sage Foundation, and they gave a very generous grant for us to interview their parents as well as a supplement to the interviews of the students. The parents had to be interviewed one on one at their homes and at their convenience, and often in the languages of the parents. In San Diego for example, our team of interviewers had to speak eight different languages—and in the Miami area they had to speak Spanish or in some cases, Haitian Creole, in order to complete the interviews with the parents. Those were much more costly because they involved one-on-one personal interviews, but the data that we collected from the parents became a very important piece for certain findings that we would later report. Because the interviews with parents took well over a year to complete, data collection extended well into 1996. In 1997 we began the whole process of coding, cleaning, and merging the data from the two sites. The end of the 1990s became a very intensive process of data analysis with CILS. It led ultimately to the publication not only of new raft of articles and chapters but to the publication of two companion books that Alejandro and I authored, which came out at the same time, published by the University of California Press and the Russell Sage Foundation. The first is *Legacies: The Story of the Immigrant Second Generation*, and the second is *Ethnicities: Children of Immigrants in America*. Those two volumes collected most of the findings and the analyses that we had been able to mine from the first two waves of data collection with the students and with the parental interviews as well.

Around that time, in the year 2000, Alejandro and I began to consider the feasibility of a third wave of data collection. One thing that happened during the intervening years, which we could not have anticipated in the early ’90s when we began the study, was that the Internet and the World Wide Web would have come into being, and companies that could track down individuals by address, name, and other characteristics including Social Security Numbers, which we had collected earlier on. During that year, we were able to establish the feasibility of
recontacting our sample even though by then, they were now in their mid-20s and no longer the 17- and 18-year-olds that they had been when we had last interviewed them back in 1995, when they were finishing high school and almost in every case were still living in their homes with their parents. Once we established that it was feasible to track them down, the Russell Sage Foundation again gave us very generous support, and with that funding we began what became an arduous process of tracking them down — all these 5,000 young people who by then were no longer just living in the San Diego and the Miami areas but in fact we found them in 37 different states of the United States; we even got some questionnaires back from military bases overseas because some of the young adults in our sample had joined the military and we were able to track them down there.

The data collection process for the third wave of CILS began in 2001, but it wasn’t completed until the end of 2003. As it turned out, beginning in 2002 for the San Diego half of the sample and then in 2004 for the Miami half, we also conducted in-depth qualitative interviews in both the Miami and San Diego areas with a subsample of respondents. In San Diego, for example, we completed 134 in-depth interviews and in Miami about 55 in-depth interviews, which added a really important qualitative dimension to the quantitative survey data. In the first two waves of data collection we also collected complete academic histories from the school systems so we have actual GPAs, their test scores, whether the students were eligible for free lunches or not, language classifications, and so on. We have considerable data from school systems, institutional data, survey data, parental data, and in-depth qualitative data as well. All this has been placed with ICPSR, with the exception of the qualitative data, but all the quantitative data is available through ICPSR.

WHAT WERE THE CENTRAL OBJECTIVES?

In one way or another, a great deal of my research over the decades has focused on issues of children, youth, and families of immigrants and refugees in the United States. Those interests were nascent early on, but it was not until 1984, at the University of California in San Diego, when I was a professor there, that I met Alejandro Portes, who had come to spend a year sabbatical at UCSD. It was during that time that we started collaborating and planned what became our first book, Immigrant America: A Portrait. In 1988, when he and I were celebrating having nearly completed that manuscript, we asked ourselves the question, “What is the next frontier in immigration research?” As it turned out, just a year before, I had completed a study of Southeast Asian refugee youth, of the children of the refugees from Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. I had been working with the school system in San Diego and finding some very interesting things that turned conventional wisdom on its head: for example, Hmong high school students who had arrived in San Diego only five years before already had higher GPAs than white, middle-class native students in San Diego high schools, despite the fact that Hmong parents had the highest poverty rates in the country. Alejandro and I agreed that what had been ignored up to that point was the generation of the immigrants’ children, who after all will be the lasting legacies of the contemporary mass immigration to the United States.
In the ’70s and into the ’80s, the main concern of scholars and of the society at large was on the adult immigrants themselves. In the case of the refugees, for example, the end of the Vietnam War was followed by the Refugee Act of 1980 and the largest refugee resettlement program in US history. That year of 1980 was the peak year in US refugee resettlement history: 168,000 refugees were admitted to the United States. The Marielitos came from Cuba in 1980 as well. There was a lot of concern about the economic self-sufficiency of refugees and increasingly so during the ’80s. Concern also grew about undocumented immigration, particularly from Mexico, and that concern led to the passage of IRCA in 1986, the Immigration Reform and Control Act. The amnesty that was provided at that time combined with the first governmental sanction of employers who knowingly hired undocumented workers. The combination of different types of immigration, of refugees, “brain drain” immigration, and undocumented labor combined to make immigration a growing focus among policy makers, and among scholars the focus was directed to the incorporation of these different types of adult migrants.

What Alejandro Portes and I saw in 1988 was the importance of looking at what comes next. Adult immigrants can in most cases (refugees are an exception) go back home, but their children born here are here to stay. They become American, they come to speak English without an accent, they grow roots here. So the question that we saw as a significant theoretical question, as well as a significant policy question, was: “What will happen long term to the ethnic communities that are being formed through contemporary mass migration, the new ethnic and racial formations and the communities where they settle? What will be the consequences for the society as a result of the incorporation of the second generation?” That is where our focus was placed, and that was the underlying rationale for the development of the CILS study and for the objectives that we then developed for our research effort, what became CILS and the studies that then would follow.

WHAT WERE YOUR MAJOR FINDINGS?

In your ICPSR website for the CILS study, you have a link to related literature, to published findings that have been based on the data that we collected with CILS and that (are) deposited with ICPSR. If you click on that link, there are some 150 books, articles, chapters, theses, and reports already listed. There are papers and theses that focus on educational outcomes, that focus on child/parent relationships, acculturation, language issues, self-esteem, depression, gender differences and gender roles, the evolution of the relationship between aspirations and expectations measured at the end of junior high and at the end of senior high and then 10 years later in early adulthood. We have looked at the dimensions of school engagement, of experiences as well as expectations and perceptions of discrimination,
and the effects of discrimination on a variety of outcomes. We have looked at occupational outcomes in adulthood, arrests and incarcerations and experiences with the criminal justice system, family formation, the entering into relationships and unions, marriage or cohabiting, having children, teenage childbearing, childbearing in early adulthood. There are some in our sample that by the age of 24–25 had four or five children already; there are many others that hadn’t had a single child. In fact, not a single Chinese in our sample by the age of 24 had had a child yet. So you see huge differences in the trajectories of the many ethnic groups that are in our study.

Because we have data on the parents, we also have a lot of information about their different class origins, not only the different national origins and cultural origins but the different class origins of the families that immigrated to the United States. Some came as immigrants with professional, highly educated parents; some came as refugees, especially in California, with the Vietnamese, and the Cambodian survivors of the Killing Fields of the late 1970s in Cambodia; and others from Laos, including the highland Hmong, whose parents often were not only illiterate but preliterate. There was no written notation for the Hmong language until missionaries introduced it in Laos in the 1950s. There was a wide range of resources that parents came with; some came with literally the shirts on their backs, some came very well prepared. Some Koreans in the 1970s and 1980s were arriving at LAX with an average of 16 years of education and as much as, in some cases, $100,000 in cash, as was allowed by the Korean government at the time. Many others were the children of undocumented laborers from Mexico, who came from rural areas in Mexico, for example, with only a 4th-grade education. All of that affected the subsequent trajectories of their children — the acculturative, educational, and ultimately occupational trajectories of the children. What our project was able to do was to cast a bright light on the complexity of contemporary immigration and the segmentation of the many different trajectories that the children of immigrants take into adulthood.

NOW THAT THESE DATA ARE AVAILABLE TO OTHER RESEARCHERS, WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO THOSE TRYING TO ANALYZE THE CONTENTS?

It is critical that people keep in mind that the South Florida area, the greater Los Angeles and San Diego areas, and the New York City area are very different contexts. They’re very different in their histories, they’re very different in the groups that have become incorporated there, they’re very different sites of incorporation. There sometimes can be a temptation, when you’re just downloading survey data, to just combine all the survey data and if you see that there are Mexicans in California and Mexicans in Florida and maybe Mexicans in New York, to combine them all and treat them all as Mexicans — or Chinese, or Cubans. That would be a mistake because New York is very different from Los Angeles. The user of the data should always be keenly aware of the timing, the period in which the sampling took place, the ages of the respondents at the time that they entered the sample and at the time that they were surveyed, what was going on in the places where they were surveyed. The importance of taking period and place and the characteristics of the different populations, in these different circumstances
— of contextualizing, in other words, the studies, as well as the data — is a critical piece of advice that I would give to anyone before they risk the fallacy of assuming that they can lump everyone together into certain categories and then proceed to treat them as if they were homogeneous ones.

To give an example of how context makes a big difference, one of the questions that we spent a great deal of time in all three surveys in CILS had to do with ethnic identity and racial identity. In the case of ethnic identity, the questions permitted open-ended responses so that people could write down anything that they wanted to express: what they called themselves, what labels they used to identify themselves. One of the things we noticed between the first and second waves of interviews in San Diego is that there was a very significant shift in the opposite direction from what assimilationist perspectives would have predicted in the way that Mexicans in particular, but also some other groups, identified themselves three years later. They were becoming more acculturated in terms of, for example, their preferences for and fluency in English, but when it came to identity, self-definitions, in the case of the Mexicans, a huge number who had earlier identified either as Mexican-American with a hyphen or as Chicanos now began to identify as Mexican, period. There was a sample of Mexicans in Florida, but that shift did not take place in Florida. It only happened in California. What happened was that just before we entered the field to collect data in January of 1995, a very divisive proposition, Proposition 187 in California, was passed in a landslide in November of 1994. Prop 187 and the nonstop barrage of TV ads that accompanied it, targeted undocumented immigrants and Mexican immigrants in particular in the most blatant kind of way. And that led to one of the theoretical and empirical findings that we then later reported in our book Legacies and elsewhere that had to do with the concept of “reactive ethnicity.” These young people reacted to these events during a time of identity crisis, the years in which they are crystallizing an identity and developing a more politicized notion of who they were. They saw that their heritage was being disrespected, that their parents’ heritage and their own parents were being, in the case of Mexicans in particular but also of immigrants writ large, were being put down, were being put “in their place,” were being called names, were being discriminated against, and so they responded by digging their heels and asserting a proud self-identification with precisely that which the dominant majority was disssing, in reaction to it. That was a very clear contextual effect in Southern California, but you saw none of it in South Florida where there was no such proposition: there were no such politics going on at the time.

WHEN YOU WERE AN UNDERGRADUATE IS THIS THE CAREER YOU THOUGHT YOU WOULD HAVE?

Not at all. I was Pre-med throughout all my four years of college, and I graduated as a Pre-med. I did major in sociology and anthropology as well as biology, but I did so only in order to be a well-rounded physician. I never imagined during my undergraduate years that I was going to make a career out of the study of sociology.
WHAT EXCITES YOU ABOUT BEING A RESEARCHER NOW?

In the first place, to me it’s exciting to be involved in investigating something that you don’t know quite how it’s going to end up; it’s like a detective story, suspenseful. The process of investigation, when you approach it in that manner, as an exciting, suspenseful detective story, as a set of puzzles that have to be solved, is a source of continual challenge and interest to me. I also like very much working with ideas and connecting theoretical ideas with actual empirical findings, and testing them, and not simply trying to impose a set of preconceived ideas or dogmas or doctrines on reality — but rather letting reality teach me about what I need to learn about the way the world is, the way human beings are and the way our contexts always fill us with surprises and with unexpected findings. The discovery of the new and the surprising is a constant source of interest and excitement.

WHAT ARE SOME CHALLENGES OF THE RESEARCH PROCESS?

Especially research of this sort is extremely challenging on many levels. First, it’s thoroughly multicultural, especially here in Southern California where I’ve done many studies. CILS was not the first study I had done. I had done much more complex and complicated studies of the Southeast Asian refugees who were first settled in the United States from Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. At one point in the early ’80s, for example, in a project I directed called IHARP, I had over 100 staff working in eight different languages. I later went to Vietnam and to Cambodia with some of my staff. But the challenges have to do with the fact that you really have to understand the history of the countries of the people that you’re studying. If you’re going to study Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, you really have got to know why people left, what were the circumstances under which they left, what is the history of the relationship between the United States and the country of origin of all these immigrants … whether it’s Mexico, the Philippines, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, or Colombia. In a way, if you want to understand immigration, you have to understand the history of the world. It is a constant challenge to keep reading and to keep understanding. Add to that not only history but different languages, different cultures, different alphabets, different religions, different ages and stages at which people come, different gender perspectives, different class backgrounds, even preliterate people. We once had to organize an exorcism in a home in San Diego for a Hmong family in the early 1980s in one of the studies that I directed. You have no idea the kinds of complexities you get into.

Sampling poses very significant challenges; sometimes there are things that are never written about in the books that you read when you are taking a class on how to do sampling. For example, it turns out that there is an ethnic politics that you have to navigate. Back in the early ’80s that became a very dicey and precarious minefield of ethnic politics to navigate.
because you couldn’t afford to antagonize one group or another, each of which brought their own prejudices to the mix. Those were not the kinds of things you read about in methodology texts. Those are the kinds of things you learn by doing and those are the kinds of challenges that come from doing research in these complex, multicultural, multipolitical communities; but they also add to the interest, and to the enthusiasm and to the never-ending fascination of what you’re studying. You learn not only from the findings of the data that you collect. You learn a lot just in trying to get ready to collect the data: in trying to set up a sample, figuring out how to design an instrument, how to formulate the kinds of questions you want to ask. There’s a lot that can be also said about what these days gets lumped under the category of “human subjects” in research, but before we had IRBs there was a lot about the ethics of doing research that I made it a point of emphasizing.

Every time I train a group of interviewers, from my earliest studies to today, I tell them that we’re not here to do guinea pig research, we’re not here to do hit-and-run research — we are doing studies of human beings. I recall the early studies that I did of Southeast Asian refugees, who included the survivors of the Cambodian Killing Fields, the boat people from Vietnam, the Hmong who would go for 17 days across a jungle and many died along the way before they could cross the Mekong River to Thai refugee camps — and then end up in the United States with a huge set of new problems: in dire poverty and with no idea, for example, if someone dies of how do you do a funeral and where do you go, and what are lawyers, and what happens with car insurance, and all these kinds of things... I felt we had an obligation to help after we collected the data, and followed the technical and scientific procedures of the study. We had collected information in a structured way on the whole set of life problems of hundreds of human beings. In many cases, we knew exactly what could then be done. I stressed that we have a moral obligation to help, and we were able to intervene in many different ways and circumstances, from preventing a suicide to helping with social and health care services, college applications, funerals, contacts, basic information. To me, when I think of research and when I think of answering the question you just asked me, I think of those things, too: not only the technical aspects that are challenging, but the moral ones and the social ones and the political ones.

What are your future research plans?

Alejandro Portes and I are completing a new (fourth) edition of our book Immigrant America: A Portrait, which includes a fully updated chapter focusing on our longitudinal findings in CILS, both quantitative and qualitative. I am also working on a book based on an analysis of the merged IIMMLA and CILS-San Diego datasets, with the working title of Paradise Shift: Immigration, Mobility and Inequality in Southern California. A limitation of those surveys of young adults is that data collection ended in 2004, prior to the “Great Recession” that followed after 2007. In part to update that story I will soon start a follow-
up project (in collaboration with Cynthia Feliciano of UC Irvine), The Second Generation in Middle Adulthood, involving in-depth interviews with a subsample of CILS-San Diego respondents who are now in their mid- to late thirties, an age when we can ascertain more completely their life trajectories over the past decade — plus gain a unique longitudinal view across a span of more than 20 years in the lives of these respondents. Finally, I am currently involved in an exploratory binational project (with Enrique Martínez Curiel of the University of Guadalajara), Estudio Longitudinal de Logros Educativos y la Transición a la Adultez en México y Estados Unidos [ELLES-MEXUS] — A Comparative Longitudinal Study of Educational Attainment and the Transition to Adulthood in Mexico and the United States — comparing samples of young adults from the same hometown in Jalisco who stayed versus those who immigrated to California, as well as samples of indigenous young people from Guerrero who have followed different paths in their migration to the New York City area.

WHAT ARE YOUR VIEWS ON DATA SHARING WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF THE RESEARCH COMMUNITY, AND WHY DID YOU DEPOSIT YOUR RESEARCH WITH ICPSR AND RCMD?

I think data sharing is absolutely essential. I see no justification, having gotten funding whether from governmental or private agencies, for restricting or delaying that information solely for the use of one’s research team. I don’t understand the moral justification for that. I think, to the contrary, that sharing the data with the larger social science community and among your research community is the best way to make your work most fruitful. We have so much data that there’s no way that a few of us by ourselves can exhaust it, even if we spent the rest of our lives doing nothing but. The best and most efficient and most effective way of learning and of having an impact through expanding our knowledge base is by making our data available to the public and for public use as soon as possible, as soon as it’s cleaned. You don’t want to put out data that’s not been thoroughly inspected — but once you do that, then I think it’s essential and critical to share it. And why ICPSR and RCMD? Especially when this is something that is made available to all users, regardless of whether you have resources or not, whether you belong to an elite network of colleges or not. Because I think ICPSR is the single best source for publicly available social science data of this kind. It’s a way of getting it out in the best way to the greatest number.

HOW DID YOU FIND THE DEMANDS ON YOUR TIME WERE WITH THIS?

The demands on my time were very limited, practically minuscule; I cannot speak with greater satisfaction about the help that I got from the staff at ICPSR, the work that they did. They did most of the work of getting it ready: we provided a clean data set to them, but once we provided that to them, it was very little what I had to do, just to check things, inspect things,
make some suggestions here or there, but it was a piece of cake. So on those grounds also, I would very much encourage others to go through ICPSR, because some other ways of releasing data require that you get almost a mini grant just to pay for your staff’s time to try to prepare a dataset. I could not be more pleased with the effort and the quality of ICPSR and its staff in getting our dataset online for public use.

**HOW HAVE YOU APPLIED THIS RESEARCH EXPERIENCE IN THE CLASSROOM?**

I rely on my research constantly in the classroom, all the time. I use it as a way of enlivening what I’m teaching about, of giving real-life examples and illustrations, and getting students enthused. So it is not just something that’s in a book somewhere and it’s somehow disconnected, but I can show them how it applies to their lives — especially when we’re dealing with something like immigration. In the classes that I teach here in Southern California, virtually everybody has a story to tell that resonates with what we have been researching now for several decades, and so the use of the research in the classroom is just tailor-made to enliven the classroom and to make students enthusiastic about their studies.

**ARE YOU THINKING OF DOING ANOTHER WAVE OF THE CILS DATA?**

Sometimes people ask us about that. I remember a 1999 meeting at the Russell Sage Foundation that Alejandro and I attended with the Russell Sage committee that advises them on immigration research issues, and the president of the foundation, Eric Wanner, asked us something similar. We had not yet begun the third wave at that time; that would begin about a year and a half later. So at the time when he asked the question, none of us had yet anticipated whether we would be doing a third wave, let alone a fourth. But he did ask Alejandro and me if we were considering investing more time and effort and energy in research on children of immigrants in the second generation. I remember saying to Eric that if time permitted and I was able to last as long as it was necessary to do so, I actually was interested not only in pursuing the transition into adulthood of the second generation, but also in pursuing it into the third generation of the grandchildren of the current wave of immigrants. I even had a tentative title for a book that I might come up with: *The New Third Generation*. (I said that because the first essays that had been published in the *International Migration Review* in 1994 were later collected and published as a volume, published by Russell Sage in 1996 under the title of *The New Second Generation*.) But already then in 1999, in the back of my mind I was sort of thinking about *The New Third Generation*, although it’s going to take at least another 20 years or so before the third generation of the grandchildren will be fully on the scene. It’ll probably be in the 2030s before the third generation will come into
its own, but it’ll be within the next decade that the second generation will fully peak. Right now, the second generation of the current wave of immigrants still has a median age in the early teens. Although there are millions and millions of young adults who are already having very significant effects in all kinds of areas of the society — economic, educational, cultural, political, etc. — the full impact of the second generation, what we have been studying longitudinally now for two decades, will not be felt until this coming decade that we’re now entering and that will probably peak by the year 2020 or so.

The mission of the Resource Center for Minority Data (RCMD) is to provide educators, researchers, and students with data resources so that they can produce analysis of issues affecting racial and ethnic minority populations in the United States. The changing demographic composition has expanded the scope of the US racial and ethnic mosaic. As a result, interest in and research on race and ethnicity have become more complex and expansive.

RCMD assists in the public dissemination and preservation of quality data to generate more “good science” for years to come. Additionally, the RCMD team provides interviews such as this one as a way to highlight excellent work done by top researchers and to provide greater insight into the research experience.