LOOKING DOWN OR LOOKING UP: STATUS AND SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING AMONG ASIAN AND LATINO IMMIGRANTS IN THE UNITED STATES

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Abstract: Foundational theories of international migration rest on the assumption that immigrants maintain reference groups in their country of origin even after settling in a new place. Such assumptions are extended in popular accounts to argue that immigrants therefore do not mind dirty, dangerous, or demeaning jobs that native-born workers shun. This paper uses data from the nationally-representative National Latino and Asian American Survey to examine whether immigrants' subjective well-being is shaped more by social comparisons in the home country, as theory would predict, or by social comparisons in the United States. I find that both rational assessments of the decision to migrate and affective well-being are more closely associated with comparisons to others in the United States than comparisons to those in the home country. This finding challenges migration theories, and suggests the need for further research on the effects of destination country social status on international migrants.

INTRODUCTION

Studies of immigrants to the United States often report that because US wages are higher than those in immigrants' sending countries, immigrants are willing to take dirty, dangerous, or demeaning jobs that native workers will not accept. Popular accounts take the assumption one step further, reporting that immigrants are "happy" to work in jobs that native workers find undesirable. The assumption that immigrants evaluate jobs and social positions in reference to the occupational and social organization of their home country derives from foundational theories of labor migration. According to these theories (Piore 1979; Stark 1991), immigrants' sense of well-being in the United States is not determined by objective conditions, nor by comparison to the social position of US natives, but rather forms through comparison to the conditions they would have faced had they remained in their home country. Over time however, these theories posit, immigrants may begin to identify more with the destination country and switch their reference group to similar immigrants in the United States, or to the US majority population.

Although these assumptions about immigrants' frames of reference play an important role in theories of migrant behavior, the empirical evidence is relatively weak. To date, tests of these hypotheses have been limited to small, ethnographic samples of a particular immigrant group, often in an enclave context, or they have relied on small survey samples that cannot be taken as representative of US immigrant communities in general. In this paper I use data from the National Latino and Asian American Survey (NLAAS), a large, nationally representative sample of Latino and Asian immigrants, to test the hypothesis that immigrants use their home country as a reference group and therefore that this comparison and not a comparison with US natives shapes their subjective well-being. Although these data do not ask immigrants directly

about which group they compare themselves to, they do ask immigrants to rank themselves relative to their peers in their home country, their community in the United States, and the US majority population. They also ask about current well-being. Thus, by comparing the associations between immigrants' self reports of social standing and subjective well-being, I can determine whether the social comparisons to the home country are indeed strongly associated with levels of subjective well-being in the United States, controlling for other factors.

The analysis of immigrants' reference groups and the impact of these reference groups on well-being has both theoretical and practical importance. With respect to theory, this paper is the first to empirically test the importance of foreign reference groups inherent in several major theories about the determinants of international migration. With respect to practice, the analysis speaks to the popular perception in the United States that immigrants do not mind the types of work and the low wages that native workers scorn as degrading. Social psychological work suggests that the assumption that immigrants are not bothered by such jobs can lead to severe stereotyping and even dehumanization of immigrant groups working low-status jobs (Lee and Fiske 2006). Providing evidence of the true impact of low social standing on immigrants' well-being can help to counter such stereotypes and can provide a sounder basis on which to develop policies that encourage or discourage reliance on immigrants to fill low-paying, low-prestige jobs.

IMMIGRANTS'REFERENCE GROUPS

Two major theories of international migration include an assumption that immigrants compare their current situation to their situation in the home country and seek to improve their status according to home country social standards. Piore (1979), outlining segmented labor market theory, argues that international migration is caused by an inherent demand for low-wage

labor in developed countries. Piore theorizes about "long-distance migrants from underdeveloped rural areas" (Piore 1979, 12). He argues that most long-distance migrants intend to be temporary migrants and divorce their social identity from their work, which they see as merely a means to a financial end. Rather, he says, temporary immigrants' social identities are "located in the place of origin, the home community" (Piore 1979, 54). He further argues that the type of low-status jobs that migrants take in more developed countries fall in the middle to upper range of the status hierarchy of jobs in sending countries because they are industrial rather than agricultural and their association with modernity elevates their status. Therefore, immigrants can compare themselves to workers in their home country and feel a sense of occupational mobility, even if their work places them in the low end of the occupational prestige scale in their destination country. Although Piore says most migrations are intended to be temporary, he recognizes that a sizable number of immigrants do settle permanently. He says these settled immigrants may gradually become concerned about the status of their occupations in their new country, though this transition in attitudes in the job market is generally not complete for first generation immigrants.

Stark, outlining "the new economics of labour migration" explains that the decision to migrate is partly determined by a sense of relative deprivation. Stark draws on Runciman's definition of relative deprivation: 1) the person does not have thing X, 2) he sees some other person(s) or his future self as having X, whether or not this is true, 3) he wants X, and 4) he sees it as feasible that he should have X (Runciman 1966, p. 10). Stark (1991) argues that relative deprivation in a country of origin can provide an incentive to migrate if an individual or family foresees lower relative deprivation after migration because remittances or savings brought home with migrants allow the family to raise their relative income and standard of living. This theory

rests on the assumption, as Stark notes, that in the short run, international migrants continue to employ the country of origin as a reference group. In the long run, however, immigrants may begin to employ their new country as their reference group. Stark also notes that in the medium run, immigrants may associate themselves simultaneously with two reference groups or may work at shaping their reference groups in order to mitigate negative comparisons. For example, immigrants may avoid associating too much with the mainstream society in order to insulate themselves from negative comparisons with their richer, native-born neighbors (Fan and Stark 2007).

Despite the pervasive use of these theories, little research has been brought to bear on the question of immigrants' reference groups. The studies that do exist tend to be small in scale, and geographically and culturally bounded, limiting generalizability. However, a few studies provide some suggestive evidence on immigrants' reference groups and the impact of these reference groups on subjective well-being. One study of nearly 1,600 low-income people of Mexican origin in Texas asked respondents to first rank themselves on a socioeconomic ladder compared to "other people" and then to report to whom it was they were comparing themselves when giving their rank. The foreign-born respondents were most likely to say they were comparing themselves to Mexicans in the United States rather than to "people in the US and Anglos" or to Mexicans in Mexico (Franzini and Fernandez-Esquer 2006). However, the non-random sample and the use of Texas as a location for this survey sharply limit the generalizability of these results, as the authors note.

Zhou (1995), using ethnographic methods, argues that Chinese immigrant women in New York were more willing to take low-paying jobs in the garment industry than Puerto Rican women partly because they compared their employment situation in New York to their life in

their villages in China, and that this homeward orientation was perhaps due to their location in a concentrated ethnic enclave. In interviews with Mexican and Chicana women in the San Francisco Bay area, Segura (1989) similarly found that the women felt they were upwardly mobile if their current job was better than those of others in their co-ethnic community. Rogg (1971) observed that a sample of Cuban refugees in New Jersey experienced downward occupational mobility during their move to the United States, but expressed greater satisfaction with their US jobs than with their previous Cuban jobs. Rogg hypothesized that the refugees compared their US occupations favorably to those of other members of the strong refugee community. Grasmuck and Pessar (1991) discovered that Dominican immigrants in the United States reported being members of the US middle class if they were able to acquire the consumer goods such as kitchen appliances, color television, and cars that would provide a middle-class status in the Dominican Republic. This homeward orientation led the migrants to reject suggestions that their low-skill jobs made them part of the working class.

SOCIAL STANDING AND SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING

Studies of immigrants' sense of social position compared to various reference groups form just a small part of a much larger literature on the effects of relative social standing on subjective well-being. Numerous studies with non-immigrant samples have concluded that relative social position is an important determinant of subjective well-being. Easterlin reported a "paradox" in 1974 that while higher income was associated with greater happiness in cross-sectional data, the level of subjective well-being in the United States had not risen since 1945 even though real income had doubled. He posited that a rise in national income did not increase happiness because people used others around them as a reference in evaluating their own wealth,

so that relative income and status were more important in determining subjective well-being than absolute income. A research enterprise formed around the question of whether absolute or relative income made a greater difference in subjective well-being. A number of studies have demonstrated a strong and significant association between relative income or relative deprivation and various measures of subjective well-being, in some cases showing the effect to be greater than that of absolute income (Stewart 2006; Frey and Stutzer 2002; Luttmer 2005; Ball and Chernova 2008; Ferrir-i-Carbonell 2005; Clark and Oswald 1996).

Lower social status along dimensions other than income also can have negative effects on subjective well-being. For example, studies conducted between 1957 and 1996 found that even after controlling for income, marital status, and age, African-Americans continuously report being less satisfied and less happy than whites (Hughes and Thomas 1998). This finding has been replicated in South Africa (Frey and Stutzer 2002). In psychological laboratory studies, manipulating people's relative standing downward lowers happiness and satisfaction (Diener et al. 1999). Studies of physical health likewise point at a correlation between low social status and subjective well-being. Health disparities between higher and lower income individuals and groups can only be partly explained by health behaviors and medical care. Researchers hypothesize that the residual differences may be due to "psychosocial stress," the fact that having subordinate status and reduced control over one's life causes stress (Cutler, Deaton, and Lleras-Muney 2006). Researchers have found that individuals who are in subordinate situations, of low status, subject to arbitrary demands, or subjected to racial discrimination have "fight of flight" responses that negatively impact health over time (Seeman, Singer, Rowe, Horwitz and McEwen 1997).

SUBJECTIVE VS. OBJECTIVE RELATIVE SOCIAL STATUS

Constructing measures of relative status is far from straightforward. Generally, researchers identify income, occupations, educational attainment, or other measures of SES relative to some reference group. But because researchers usually lack data to develop empirically-driven definitions of people's reference groups, they are forced to construct reference groups based on a set of assumptions. Studies to date have variously defined reference groups as others in a geographic area, others with similar socio-demographic characteristics, or others in the same or similar occupations (Clark, Frijters, and Shields 2008). In order to get around the problem of constructing reference groups for respondents, a newer literature has begun examining the relationship between subjective social standing (SSS) and health and well-being outcomes. Adler et al. (2000) developed a new measure of subjective social and economic standing which asked respondents to place themselves on symbolic ladder of 10 rungs, with the top rung representing people with the best jobs, most money, and most education, and the bottom rung representing those with least money, worst or no jobs, and least education. A range of studies employing this measure have found that among diverse populations, controlling for objective SES, SSS is significantly related to adult physical health outcomes (Leu et al. 2008). Furthermore, there is some evidence that SSS is even more closely associated with health outcomes than is social status measured objectively through income, educational attainment, and occupation (Adler et al. 2000; Franzini and Fernandez-Esquer 2006).

There are two good, albeit contradictory, reasons to expect that SSS may better predict subjective well-being than objective measures of class and status. Research has soundly demonstrated that most individuals employ reference group behavior in describing their rank in society, leading them to conclude that they fall in or near the middle of the class/income/status

distribution even if their income is substantially higher or lower than the median. There is some correlation, of course, between subjective and objective measures of social standing, but people are not necessarily fully aware of their position in society (Kelley and Evans 1995). Given the disparity between people's perceptions of their rank in society and objective measures of social class, it seems reasonable to expect that their perceptions of their social status affect their subjective well-being more than objective indicators of status do. Alternatively, it is possible that subjective social status captures some nuance of an individual's social standing that objective measures cannot reflect. For example, there is a difference in the social meaning of a bachelor's degree from an Ivy League institution as compared to a degree from a local public university, but most measures of SES capture only the years of education attained, not the prestige of the school granting the degree (Franzini and Fernandez-Esquer 2006).

HYPOTHESES

Drawing on subjective measures of social standing, in this paper I ask: Do immigrants compare themselves to others in their home country when evaluating their relative economic and social standing? Following current migration theories and evidence on the importance of subjective social status for subjective well-being, I would expect that they do and as a result that immigrants' subjective social standing in their country of origin is positively and significantly related to their subjective well-being in the United States. I would also expect that subjective social standing in the United States as a whole or in the US community is not significantly associated with well-being in the United States. Second, I ask: Is this association between subjective social standing in the country of origin and subjective well-being stronger for more recently arrived immigrants than for immigrants who have lived in the United States for a longer

duration? Drawing on Stark and Piore's work, I hypothesize that subjective social standing in the immigrants' home country is better predictive of subjective well-being for recent immigrants than for longer-term immigrants who are expected to transition to a US reference group.

DATA AND METHODS

The National Latino and Asian American Study (NLAAS), conducted in 2002-2003, was designed as part of the Collaborative Psychiatric Epidemiology Surveys (CPES), which were undertaken in order to study the prevalence and correlates of mental disorders among the general population and minority groups. They also sought to investigate cultural and ethnic influences on mental disorders, and the role of ethnic disparities, discrimination, and assimilation on mental disorders (Alegria et al. 2004). The NLAAS is representative of Latino American and Asian American adults aged 18 and older residing in households in the United States. The weighted response rate of primary NLAAS respondents was 77.6 percent and for secondary respondents the response rate was 80.3 percent, leading to a sample size of 4,649. The sample includes four target Asian groups: Chinese, Filipino, Vietnamese, and other Asian descent, and four Latino groups: Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, and other Latino descent. The sampling design involved three stages: 1) primary sampling of units defined as metropolitan statistical areas or county units, and secondary sampling of units formed from contiguous groupings of census blocks, selected with probability proportionate to size; 2) high-density supplemental sampling, which oversampled census block groups with high density of target ancestry groups; and 3) recruitment of secondary respondents from households in which one eligible member had already been interviewed. Face-to-face interviews were conducted by bilingual interviewers with linguistic and cultural backgrounds similar to those of the target population. From this sample, I selected

the foreign-born residents (N=3,237) and further restricted my analysis to respondents who had answered all questions employed in this analysis. This reduced the sample size by another 269 respondents to 2,968. All descriptive statistics and regressions use sample weights. Observations are weighted to match the national distribution of ethnicity by ethnic composition of one's neighborhood (block group). Although Stark and Piore developed their theories to talk about labor migrants, one could argue that refugees would likewise evaluate their well-being in reference to those who were not able to leave their country of origin. To test this, I combine voluntary migrants and involuntary migrants (refugees) in my main analysis, but then replicate my analyses separately for voluntary and involuntary migrants.

In order to measure subjective well-being in the United States, I look at four outcome variables. These measures aim to examine two different dimensions of immigrants' well-being in the United States. The first dimension is migrants' rational assessment of the decision to migrate. To measure this, I first look at satisfaction with US economic opportunity. Satisfaction with economic opportunity was originally measured on a scale from one to five, with one representing a response of "very dissatisfied," and five representing a response of "very satisfied." However, there were very low response rates for categories one through three, so I collapse answers from one (very dissatisfied) to three (neither dissatisfied nor satisfied) into a ranking of one. In my coding, two represents "satisfied," and three "very satisfied." As shown in table 1, the average response was 2.14 (see Table 1). The second measure capturing migrants' rational assessment of their migration outcome looks at migrants answer to the following question: "If you had to make the decision today, would you still move to the United States?" Answers of yes are coded 1, and no coded 0. A full 93 percent of the sample said they would still move. The second dimension of well-being that I examine is affective well-being. I look at both self-reported mental health status

and at self-reported frequency of depression in the past month. Early in the survey, respondents were asked to rate their overall mental health on a five-point scale from poor to excellent. The average answer for the sample was 3.75. Frequency of depression in the past month is also coded on a five point scale, with one representing an answer of "all of the time," and five representing an answer of "never," with an average answer of 4.40.

[Table 1. Description of Variables and Weighted Means]

The main independent variables in this analysis are three measures of SSS, in the United States, in the respondent's US community, and in the respondent's country of origin. The question asking about SSS in the United States, accompanied by a picture of a ladder with ten rungs, was worded as follows:

> "Think of this ladder as representing where people stand in the United States. At the top of the ladder are the people who are the best off - those who have the most money, the most education and the most respected jobs. At the bottom are the people who are the worst off - who have the least money, least education, and the least respected jobs or no job. The higher up you are on the ladder, the closer you are to the people at the very top; the lower you are, the closer you are to the people at the very bottom. What is the number to the right of the rung where you think you stand at this time in your life, relative to other people in the United States?"

The version of this question asking about subjective social standing (SSS) in the community instructed respondents to define "community" as they saw fit. The question about SSS in the country of origin instructed respondents to think about their rank in this moment and where they would stand on the ladder if they were still in their country of origin. Therefore, this question should capture people's perceptions about where their wealth, educational attainment, and occupation would currently place them on the class/status scale in their country of origin. As shown in table 1, the mean SSS reported for the United States was 5.48, the mean SSS for the US community was 6.07, and the mean SSS for the country of origin was 6.04. In my regression

analysis I standardize these rankings in order to enable comparisons of the strength of the effects of the various measures of SSS.

I also include basic demographic controls such as female (1=female, 0=male), age and age squared, whether the respondent is either married or cohabiting with a partner (1=yes, 0=no), region of US where the respondent lives, how many children live in the respondent's home, and self-reported physical health on a one to five scale from poor to excellent. Forty-nine percent of the sample is female, the mean age is 40, and 72 percent of the sample was living with a spouse or partner. About 15 percent had one child in the household, and 22 percent had more than one child in the household. The modal health response was three ("good"). In some models I further control for logged household income (in $1,000s), whether the household had income top-coded at $200,000, years of educational attainment, and occupations roughly separated by occupational prestige. The average years of education are 11, the mean household income is $43,000, 3 percent of the sample had top-coded income, and the modal occupation was "other," followed closely by routine tasks. About 7 percent of the sample was unemployed, and 29 percent were not in the labor force.

Finally, I include a range of immigration-related measures. These include country of birth, citizenship status, length of US residence, refugee status, and English speaking ability. The modal country of birth is Mexico, 58 percent of the sample lacks US citizenship, and 18 percent had been in the United States for less than 5 years, while 34 percent had been in the country for more than 20 years. Thirty-one percent of the respondents were involuntary migrants. Thirty-nine percent reported speaking English poorly, while 13 percent reported speaking English excellently. In order to measure transnational behavior, I also use a report of whether respondents said their primary residence was the United States or another country (I collapsed

those reporting that both countries are their primary residence into those reporting their country of origin as their primary residence), and frequency of return to the country of origin last year. Of the sample, 22 percent said that their primary residence was in their country of origin, while 27 percent had visited their country of origin one or more times in the past year.

VALIDITY OF MEASURES

Before looking at the effects of subjective social standing on various measures of subjective well-being, I first verify that the SSS rankings are picking up meaningful variation in the factors they are meant to measure (wealth/income, education, and occupational prestige). To do this, I regress SSS on reported household income, educational attainment, occupation, and basic demographic characteristics. Table 2 shows the results of this regression for SSS in the United States. I would expect that SSS would be higher for those with higher income, greater educational attainment, and higher occupational prestige. All models show that associations are in the expected direction and significant. In model 4, higher logged income leads to a significant increase in SSS in the United States— about a 16.5 percent increase in SSS for a $1,000 increase in income—while having a topcoded income ($200,000 or higher) is associated with a 0.99 point increase in SSS in the United States. An additional year of educational attainment is associated with a 0.02 point increase in US SSS, and there are some associations between having some type of professional occupation and higher SSS. Therefore, subjective social standing in the United States does seem to be picking up the variation in educational attainment, income, and occupational prestige that the question sought to measure. The results for the regression looking at the correlates of SSS in the immigrants' US communities are quite similar to the results for SSS in the United States (results available upon request). In the case of SSS in the country of

origin, income is less predictive, as would be expected since absolute US income and occupational prestige should be less correlated with income relative to those living in a context entirely different from the United States. On the other hand, education is more predictive of SSS in the home country than SSS in the US as a whole.

[Table 2. Determinants of Perceived Rank in the US and Table 3. Correlations between Rank Variables]

Second, I verify that the three different subjective social standing measures (compared to those in the home country, compared to the immigrants' US community, and compared to those living in the United States as a whole) are picking up meaningful differences between the three types of SSS. Indeed, on average, individuals reported a significantly higher SSS (0.57 points higher) in their country of origin than in the United States. Figure 1 shows the different levels of subjective social standing by country of origin. The difference in current SSS between the country of origin and the United States was largest for those from China (1.52 points) and smallest for those from Mexico (0.22 points). Overall, the weighted correlation between current social standing in the country of origin and current social standing in the United States is 0.36 (see table 3). Individuals also reported, on average, a higher social standing in their US community than in the United States as a whole. The average difference between SSS in the community and SSS in the United States is 0.59 points, significant at the 1 percent level, and the weighted correlation here is higher (0.70). These systematic differences in SSS suggest 1) that respondents were answering these questions thoughtfully enough to report different ranks in the three different social settings indicated, and 2) that the respondents are able to conjure up various mental reference groups, including a sub-community that possesses characteristics different from the United States as a whole. Furthermore, the fact that individuals ranked themselves higher in

their US community than in the United States as a whole suggests that, on average, respondents consider themselves a part of communities in which their socioeconomic status compares more favorably than it does in the United States as a whole.

[Figure 1. Measures of Subjective Rank, by Place of Birth]

RESULTS

Based on Piore (1979) and Stark (1991), I hypothesized that subjective social standing in the country of origin would have a significant, positive association with all four measures of immigrants' well-being in the United States. Table 4 shows the associations between social standing in the country of origin and the four outcomes, including increasing controls. Because of the fairly high correlation between SSS in the immigrants' US community and SSS in the US as a whole, table 4 looks only at SSS in the US as a whole and SSS in the country of origin.

Looking first at rational assessments of the decision to migrate, model 5, with the full set of controls, shows that SSS in the country of origin is indeed significantly associated with higher satisfaction with US economic opportunity, but the association is in the wrong direction. A one standard deviation increase in SSS in the country of origin is associated with a 0.06 decrease in the level of satisfaction, not an increase in satisfaction. On the other hand, although we would suspect that SSS in the US should not affect satisfaction with US economic opportunity, a one standard deviation increase in SSS in the US is associated with a larger 0.12 point increase in satisfaction with US economic opportunity. Model 10 shows the effects of the two types of SSS on whether migrants say they would still move to the United States if deciding today. In concordance with the findings about satisfaction, but countering theory, this model shows that higher SSS in the country of origin is significantly associated with lower odds of saying one

would still migrate today, while, in concordance with theory, higher SSS in the United States is not significantly associated with whether one would still migrate if deciding today.

[Table 4. Effect of Subjective Social Rank and Objective Social Status on Four Measures of Subjective Well-Being]

Looking next at the effect of SSS on affective well-being, model 15 shows the association between the two measures of SSS and the frequency of depression in the past month with full controls. Remember that depression in the past month is reverse coded, so a positive coefficient indicates less frequent depression. This model shows that, counter to theory, higher SSS in the country of origin is not significantly associated with lower frequency of depression. However, SSS in the United States is significantly and positively associated with lower frequency of depression, going against expectations that SSS in the United States should not importantly affect well-being. Model 20 similarly shows that SSS in the country of origin is not significantly associated with better mental health, while higher SSS in the United States is associated with significantly more positive self reported mental health.

Overall, the models in table 4 contradict my hypotheses. For rational assessments of the decision to migrate, SSS in the country of origin is associated with significantly lower assessments of well-being, not higher well-being as hypothesized. Further, SSS in the United States is significantly and positively associated with greater satisfaction with US economic opportunity, while theory had suggested that SSS in the United States would not have significant associations with well-being. For measures of affective well-being, there is no support for the theory that higher SSS in the country of origin is associated with significantly higher well-being. Further, there is evidence that higher SSS in the United States is significantly and positively associated with higher well-being rather than having no association as hypothesized.

Prior work has uncovered some evidence that migrants compare their situation mainly to others in their immigrant communities. To investigate whether this is borne out by my data, I next looked at the associations between SSS in the country of origin and SSS in the US community on subjective well-being. Table 5 shows these results. Models 5 and 10 show that higher SSS in the US community is associated with more positive assessments of US economic opportunity, but not higher odds of saying one would still migrate if deciding today. Still, these results somewhat counter the hypothesis that SSS in the US community is not be associated with subjective well-being. As in table 4, models 5 and 10 show that higher SSS in the country of origin is associated with significantly lower odds of saying one would still migrate if deciding today, but show no association between SSS in the country of origin and higher satisfaction with economic opportunity. Neither model shows that higher SSS in the country of origin improves the rational assessment of the decision to migrate. Looking at affective well-being, model 15 shows that neither SSS in the country of origin nor SSS in the US community are significantly associated with lower frequency of depression. However, model 20 shows that higher SSS in the US community is associated with a significantly more positive assessments of mental health, while SSS in the country of origin still does not have a significant association. As with table 4, these models suggest overall that my hypotheses are incorrect. Higher SSS in the US community is significantly associated with more positive subjective well-being for two of my four measures, while higher SSS in the country of origin is associated with lower odds of saying one would migrate again if deciding today, and is not significantly associated with my three other outcome measures.

ROBUSTNESS CHECKS

These findings provide substantial evidence that SSS in the United States as a whole and in the US community are more positively associated with subjective well-being in the United States than is SSS in the country of origin. However, the findings so far are subject to several counter hypotheses. In this section, I will examine these counter arguments, and examine whether the findings can hold in the face of these criticisms.

First, one could argue that the relationship between SSS and the four measures of subjective well-being is spurious. It could be that people with more positive dispositions report higher social standing and more positive subjective well-being, while those with more pessimistic dispositions report lower subjective well-being and lower social standing. These scenarios are likely true and lead to some concern about the veracity of the relationships observed. However, all of the models described above include more than one measure of SSS. If a person simply has a positive disposition, that person is likely to inflate all three measures of SSS, not just one. Therefore, in models including two measures of SSS, we can compare the standardized coefficients on the SSS measures, and see which of those measures is more strongly associated with the well-being outcome. The fact that SSS in the United States or in the US community is more positively related to subjective well-being than SSS in the home country, even when both SSS measures are included in the same model should ease concerns that the results are spuriously caused by variation in respondents' dispositions.

Second, one might be concerned that the association between SSS and well-being is a spurious relationship because both SSS and well-being are actually caused by objective factors such as education, income, and occupational prestige. However, tables 4 and 5 show that the relationships between SSS and well-being hold even after controlling for these objective

measures of social standing. Further, I examined the relationship between objective social status and my four measures of well-being to see if these relationships are stronger than those between SSS and the measures of well-being. Table 6 shows that higher income is associated with greater satisfaction with US economic opportunity and with higher odds of saying one would still migrate if deciding today, but not with affective well-being. However, other relationships are less clear. Higher educational attainment is associated with lower odds of saying one would still migrate if deciding today, but also with more positive self reported mental health. Having some type of professional career is associated with greater satisfaction with US economic opportunity and with better mental health, but has no significant association with whether one would still migrate if deciding today or with frequency of depression in the past month. Likewise, being unemployed is associated with lower satisfaction with US economic opportunity and with greater frequency of depression in the past month, but has no association with the ratification of the decision to migrate or with overall mental health. Overall, the associations between specific objective measures of social standing and subjective well-being are not as clear-cut as the associations between SSS and subjective well-being.

[Table 6. Effect of Objective Social Status and Immigration Factors on Four Measures of Subjective Well-Being]

Third, one could argue that because I am looking at voluntary migrants and involuntary migrants combined, my sample does not really match the type of migrants that Piore and Stark were writing about. It could be that the expected relationships hold for voluntary migrants, but not for refugees/involuntary migrants. To test this, I repeated my analyses looking separately at voluntary and involuntary migrants (results available upon request). Because the sample sizes were smaller, the results were not always significant. However, for both voluntary migrants and

refugees, the directions of the associations between SSS in the United States and SSS in the home country and the four measures of well-being were generally the same as each other and as the full sample. Therefore, these results present the same story as the full sample, suggesting that SSS in the United States is more positively associated with greater subjective well-being than SSS in the country of origin, even if one looks only at the voluntary migrants about which Stark and Piore wrote.

Fourth, one might suspect that migrants from certain countries of origin are driving the observed relationships, and that looking at Asian and Latin American immigrants in aggregate obscures the true relationships between SSS in the United States and the home country and subjective well-being in the United States. To investigate this, I ran all regressions again, separately for each place of birth (see table 7). Where associations are significant, they generally match the findings from the overall sample. For satisfaction with US economic opportunity, the association between SSS in the United States and satisfaction is significant and positive for immigrants from China, Vietnam, Mexico, and Cuba, and for other Hispanic immigrants, while SSS in the United States and satisfaction with US economic opportunity were not significantly associated for other groups. The overall negative association between SSS in the country of origin and satisfaction with US economic opportunity seems to be driven by the significant, negative association found among Vietnamese, Cuban, and Puerto Rican immigrants. This association was not significant for the other immigrant groups. For the ratification of the decision to migrate, the association with SSS in the United States as a whole was significant and positive for those from China and Vietnam, but not significant for other groups. The association between SSS in the home country and whether one is likely to migrate again if deciding today was negative and significant for those from Vietnam and Mexico, but not signfiicant for other groups.

For frequency of depression in the past month, the significant, positive association between SSS in the United States and less frequent depression seems to be driven by significant associations among those from the Philippines and Cuba, while for self-reported mental health the positive association with higher SSS in the United States is driven by immigrants from Vietnam and Cuba. The association between SSS in the home country and self-reported mental health is not significant for immigrants from any sending country, while the association between SSS in the home country and less frequent depression is significant only for immigrants from Vietnam, and this association is positive. Overall, these country specific regressions support the story told by the full sample regressions – that higher SSS in the United States is more positively related to higher subjective well-being than is SSS in the home country for both rational assessments of the decision to migrate and for affective well-being.

Finally, there is some reason to worry that my measure of subjective social standing in the country of origin is problematic. It could require some mental acrobatics for respondents to say what their social standing would be if they were still in their country of origin but had the characteristics they have today. Answering such a question also requires respondents to know what conditions are like in their country of origin. For those how have been away a long time, and particularly for those who do not make visits back to their home country, it may be impossible to determine where one's income, occupation, etc. would place them in the social hierarchy of this country. There might be reason to worry that rather than answering the question as intended, respondents answered what their social standing was in their country of origin before they emigrated. The principal investigators of the NLAAS report that cognitive pre-testing of the survey instrument did not reveal that respondents found this question difficult to

answer.[1] However, in order to try to independently test whether respondents may have been misinterpreting the question or answering incorrectly, I repeated my analyses for only recent immigrants (those in the country for less than 10 years) who received their education in their home country and who had low educational attainment (less than 12 years of education). Looking at this subgroup should screen out those who had been away from their home country too long to know where they would stand in the social hierarchy. Screening out those with high education should also mean that those reporting high SSS in their home country are not doing so because they had high home country SSS before migration (since we know they are not, at least, part of the college educated elite). Finally, because Piore in particular based his theory on low-skill migrants moving from agricultural areas, focusing on this low education subgroup focuses in on the population on which Piore's theory was most directly based.

In this subsample of 311 respondents, the same general story appears as was seen in the full sample, although the small sample size means that many fewer coefficients are significant (tables available upon request). Higher SSS in the United States is still associated with significantly higher satisfaction with US economic opportunity, while higher SSS in the country of origin is associated with lower satisfaction, though the latter is not significant except at the 10 percent level. The associations between SSS in the country of origin and the United States and whether a migrant says they would still move if deciding today are both negative, but not at all significant. For the two measures of affective well-being, SSS in the home country is associated with greater well-being, but the associations are not significant. SSS in the United States is associated with lower frequency of depression, though the relationship is not significant, and the direction of the association between SSS in the United States and self reported mental health is unstable in this restricted sample. The small sample size precludes drawing strong conclusions

[1] Personal communication with Margarita Alegría.

from these results. The only significant results suggest that SSS in the United States matters more for satisfaction with US economic opportunity than does SSS in the home country, which supports the general story that SSS in the United States is more positively associated with greater affective well-being than is SSS in the home country. However, there is not clear evidence about whether SSS in the home country or in the United States is more positively associated with better affective well-being.

RESULTS BY DURATION OF US RESIDENCE

Both Piore (1979) and Stark (1991) hypothesize that immigrants' reference groups are likely to shift to domestic comparisons the longer the immigrants reside in the United States. In order to test whether this part of the hypothesis is borne out by the data, I next looked at the effect of interactions between the three subjective social standing ranks and time in the United States on measures of subjective well-being. Specifically, I looked at whether the associations between social rankings and my four outcomes where different for those who had been in the United States for less than five years compared to those who had been in the United States for five years or more. As shown in table 8, there is some weak evidence of interactions between time in the United States and subjective social standing, controlling for demographic characteristics and country of birth. Models 7, 9, and 10 suggest, consistent with theory, that subjective social standing in the United States and in one's US community matter less for newer immigrants than for longer term immigrants in shaping depression and mental health outcomes. However, no other interactions are statistically significant.

In order to verify whether the switch from comparisons to the home country to comparisons to the US took longer than five years, I repeated the regressions with interactions, looking instead at interactions with having been in the United States for 10 or more years. These

analyses (available upon request) provide very little evidence of differential correlations by time in the United States. The only significant interaction term suggests that rank in the United States has a smaller association with mental health for those who have been in the United States less than 10 years than it does for those who have been in the United States ten years or more. Many of the other interaction terms had signs in the unexpected direction. Overall, these regression do not provide strong evidence that reference groups shift after 10 years in the United States.

In sum, these findings show that SSS in the United States is less related to the affective well-being of more recently arrived immigrants than it is to the well-being of immigrants with longer tenures in the United States, as theory would predict. However, there is no clear evidence that the associations of SSS in the country of origin or in the United States with rational assessments of migration outcomes vary by duration in the United States. Nor is there evidence that social standing in the country of origin matters more for newer immigrants than for immigrants who have resided in the United States longer for any of the four well-being outcomes.

[Table 8. Correlates of Four Outcomes with Time in US Interactions]

CONCLUSIONS

Foundational theories of international migration assume that immigrants maintain their home country as a reference group, and that therefore, evaluations of the success of an international move depend on improvement over one's peers in the sending country. Popular discussions of US immigration further assume that immigrants from developing countries with low levels of educational attainment are content to take the low-wage, low-prestige jobs that Americans seem to spurn and are unbothered by their low status in the United States. However, the analysis above shows that higher social standing in one's country of origin is associated with

lower satisfaction with the decision to migrate or with the economic outcome of that decision. Going even more against existing theories, a fairly clear picture emerges in which higher social standing in the United States as a whole and in migrants' US communities brings higher subjective well-being, both in terms of rational assessments of the decision to migrate and in terms of affective well-being.

It appears that the foreignness of Asian and Latino immigrants in the United States does not, in fact, insulate them from the negative effects of low social standing in the United States. Rather, immigrants endure the deleterious low social status they experience here. This suggests a need for further investigation into immigrants' reference groups, and a possible need to reconsider theories predicated on the idea that immigrants retain their home country as a reference group. If migrants do not move in order to raise their relative status at home, then this begins to raise the question of what makes migration to the United States worth this sacrifice.

The migration literature suggests several potential answers to this question. Classic economic theories of international migration would not see this as a quandary. Under such theories, people move across national borders when expected incomes in the destination country, minus the costs of migration, exceed expected incomes in the home country. Whether these wages come with depression, dissatisfaction, regret, or poor mental health is not considered (though more inclusive models might define expected "utility" defined broadly enough to consider subjective well-being). However, such economic theories have failed to explain modern migration trends, and are largely considered to be incomplete, if not wholly incorrect explanations of the determinants of international migration.

For those migrants lacking legal status – the NLAAS does not differentiate among legal and illegal non-citizens – the "locking in effect" that Massey (2002) describes could keep

immigrants in the United States even if their migration experience turns out to be more unpleasant than expected. Massey, talking particularly about Mexican migration, explains that increased border enforcement has meant that it is no longer possible for migrants to enter the United States for temporary work and then return home periodically. Increased border enforcement measures and restrictive visa-issuance policies mean that once immigrants enter the country to work without legal status, they often stay for long durations since the uncertainty of a reentry is too great to risk a trip home. Even if immigrants find that the social costs of US residence outweigh the anticipated economic benefits, they may remain in the United States for fear that this is their one chance to amass earnings or decrease relative deprivation.

Finally, it could be that immigrants simply have a longer mobility horizon than international migration theories expect. Rather than working toward their own social and/or economic mobility, many Latino and Asian immigrants to the United States may be looking to provide greater economic security and social mobility for their children, regardless of the cost to themselves. Robert Smith (2006) describes the "immigrant bargain" that immigrants strike with their children, in which children's achievements are expected to validate parents' sacrifice (see also Suarez-Orozco and Suarez Orozco 1995, 117-118). Overall, greater research is needed into the motivations for, evaluations of, and post-hoc justifications of migration decisions.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

There are a number of limitations to this study. First, given that the rankings are subjective, it remains a bit unclear to what people were referring in evaluating their social position. Asking respondents to define "community" in the way that makes most sense for them gets around problems of assuming reference groups, but does not allow us to know whether these are mainly co-ethnic communities, diverse immigrant communities, geographically shaped

communities, or perhaps transnational communities. Likewise, as stated above, immigrants may have imperfect information about the social hierarchy in their country of origin.

Second, the data employed here do not allow us to compare social standing before migration with social standing after migration. Longitudinal data, which is not currently available, would allow a comparison of home country social standing before and after migration, to see if these gains in home country social standing led to positive assessments of the migration decision, or served as bolsters to mental health in the face of possible low social standing in the United States. Future research could also better tackle the question of which reference groups immigrants employ in evaluating their well-being in the United States by replicating Franzini's (2006) study with a representative sample, asking immigrants to rank their social standing, and then questioning them about the community they used as a reference group in determining that standing. In sum, there is much room for further study, but this paper presents some evidence that Stark and Piore's theories about immigrant's retaining their home country as a reference group need to be reconsidered.

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Table 1. Description of Variables and Weighted Means

		Total		Vietnamese		Filipino		Chinese		Other Asian		Cuban		Puerto Rican		Mexican		Other Hisp	
	Definition	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev
Outcome variables																			
Satisfaction	Satisfaction with US economic opportunity, dissatisfied to neutral=1, satisfied=2, very satisfied=3	2.14	0.67	1.99	0.75	2.27	0.56	1.95	0.62	2.01	0.64	2.33	0.71	2.19	0.70	2.21	0.64	2.14	0.71
Mental Health	Self reported mental health, poor to excellent	3.75	1.05	3.59	1.13	3.99	0.91	3.52	0.99	4.14	0.92	3.79	1.12	3.67	1.09	3.55	1.07	3.99	0.97
Depression past month	Self-reported frequency of depression in past month, 1=none of the time, 5=all of the time	0.93	0.25	0.96	0.19	0.94	0.24	0.92	0.27	0.90	0.31	0.97	0.17	0.91	0.28	0.94	0.24	0.93	0.25
Would move	Would still migrate if deciding today, yes=1	4.40	0.86	4.54	0.92	4.55	0.63	4.31	0.80	4.51	0.73	4.28	1.02	4.08	1.04	4.45	0.81	4.35	0.95
Subjective social standing																			
Rank in US as a whole	Self-reported current rank on 1 to 10 scale of wealth, education, respected job, in United States	5.48	2.01	4.99	2.30	6.16	1.62	5.44	1.95	6.19	1.72	5.47	2.13	5.94	2.07	5.23	2.05	5.38	1.94
Rank in country of origin	Self-reported current rank on 1 to 10 scale of wealth, education, respected job, if still lived in country of origin	6.04	2.62	5.53	2.66	7.22	2.13	6.96	1.90	7.19	1.93	5.30	3.61	6.39	2.49	5.45	2.58	5.97	2.72
Rank in community	Self-reported current rank on 1 to 10 scale of wealth, education, respected job, in "community" as self defined	6.07	2.02	5.53	2.32	6.53	1.65	5.80	2.00	6.66	1.81	6.30	2.20	6.45	2.03	5.87	1.99	6.10	2.06
Demographics																			
Female	Is female, yes=1	0.49	0.50	0.52	0.50	0.57	0.50	0.53	0.50	0.49	0.50	0.49	0.50	0.46	0.50	0.44	0.50	0.55	0.50
Cohabiting	Respondent is either married or living with partner	0.72	0.45	0.76	0.43	0.78	0.42	0.74	0.44	0.75	0.43	0.66	0.48	0.57	0.50	0.77	0.42	0.64	0.48
Age	Age in years	39.94	14.55	44.03	14.85	46.58	16.03	42.87	13.90	38.45	13.66	51.67	16.97	47.24	16.48	35.41	11.87	39.97	14.48
Self-rated health status																			
Poor	Respondent reported that own physical health was poor	0.03	0.16	0.10	0.30	0.00	0.04	0.02	0.13	0.02	0.14	0.07	0.25	0.11	0.31	0.01	0.10	0.03	0.17
Fair	Respondent reported that own physical health was fair	0.24	0.42	0.12	0.33	0.12	0.33	0.21	0.41	0.08	0.27	0.17	0.38	0.29	0.45	0.34	0.47	0.20	0.40
Good	Respondent reported that own physical health was good	0.31	0.46	0.32	0.47	0.34	0.47	0.42	0.49	0.32	0.47	0.29	0.45	0.23	0.42	0.29	0.45	0.30	0.46
Very good	Respondent reported that own physical health was very good	0.26	0.44	0.29	0.45	0.36	0.48	0.27	0.45	0.33	0.47	0.23	0.42	0.21	0.41	0.21	0.41	0.30	0.46
Excellent	Respondent reported that own physical health was excellent	0.17	0.37	0.17	0.37	0.18	0.38	0.08	0.27	0.25	0.43	0.23	0.42	0.17	0.38	0.15	0.36	0.17	0.38
Parental status																			
One child	One child in household	0.15	0.36	0.19	0.39	0.13	0.33	0.14	0.35	0.13	0.33	0.13	0.34	0.09	0.28	0.14	0.35	0.19	0.40
More than one child	More than one child in household	0.22	0.41	0.15	0.35	0.16	0.37	0.10	0.29	0.15	0.36	0.06	0.23	0.07	0.26	0.35	0.48	0.16	0.37
Region of Country																			
Northeast	Respondent lives in Northeast of US	0.23	0.42	0.18	0.38	0.11	0.31	0.19	0.40	0.24	0.43	0.06	0.23	0.62	0.49	0.04	0.20	0.56	0.50
Midwest	Respondent lives in Midwest of US	0.07	0.26	0.03	0.16	0.07	0.26	0.09	0.28	0.14	0.35	0.00	0.00	0.15	0.36	0.07	0.26	0.04	0.20
South	Respondent lives in South of US	0.24	0.42	0.18	0.39	0.07	0.26	0.04	0.19	0.08	0.27	0.93	0.25	0.20	0.40	0.30	0.46	0.19	0.40
West	Respondent lives in West of US	0.47	0.50	0.62	0.49	0.75	0.44	0.68	0.47	0.54	0.50	0.01	0.09	0.03	0.16	0.59	0.49	0.21	0.40
Economic factors																			
Education	Educational attainment, in years	11.13	4.08	11.84	4.00	13.64	3.20	13.44	3.58	14.48	3.36	11.80	3.75	10.96	3.65	9.05	3.51	11.09	3.79
Household income	Household income, in thousands	43.14	42.03	47.78	44.96	67.73	50.31	62.03	55.41	63.07	51.36	38.66	39.92	39.84	34.85	30.90	30.05	39.64	36.57
Household income topcoded	Household income was $200,000 or greater, and so was topcoded at $200,000	0.03	0.17	0.03	0.16	0.08	0.27	0.08	0.27	0.07	0.25	0.04	0.19	0.03	0.16	0.01	0.08	0.02	0.14
Occupation																			
Other	Occupation is some other occupation	0.18	0.38	0.23	0.42	0.16	0.36	0.18	0.39	0.19	0.39	0.15	0.36	0.17	0.37	0.21	0.41	0.12	0.33
Operators	Occupation is operator	0.07	0.26	0.19	0.39	0.02	0.14	0.03	0.17	0.05	0.22	0.08	0.27	0.13	0.33	0.08	0.27	0.07	0.26
Trades	Occupation is trade worker	0.10	0.30	0.09	0.28	0.04	0.21	0.06	0.24	0.02	0.14	0.11	0.32	0.06	0.25	0.14	0.35	0.11	0.31
Service	Occupation is personal or protective services worker	0.08	0.28	0.08	0.27	0.09	0.29	0.06	0.24	0.04	0.20	0.05	0.22	0.11	0.31	0.08	0.28	0.12	0.32
Customer service	Occupation is customer service clerk	0.08	0.27	0.06	0.24	0.07	0.25	0.05	0.22	0.08	0.28	0.06	0.24	0.14	0.35	0.08	0.27	0.09	0.28
Office clerks	Occupation is office clerk	0.04	0.20	0.03	0.17	0.08	0.27	0.10	0.29	0.04	0.20	0.04	0.20	0.05	0.22	0.02	0.15	0.04	0.20
Associate professional	Occupation is professional with some formal training	0.06	0.24	0.07	0.26	0.15	0.36	0.07	0.26	0.10	0.30	0.05	0.23	0.06	0.24	0.03	0.17	0.06	0.24
Professional	Occupation is professional with a university degree	0.09	0.29	0.08	0.27	0.22	0.41	0.24	0.43	0.25	0.43	0.08	0.27	0.04	0.20	0.02	0.13	0.07	0.25
Corporate manager	Occupation is a corporate or general manager	0.05	0.22	0.02	0.15	0.04	0.21	0.09	0.29	0.13	0.34	0.05	0.22	0.01	0.10	0.03	0.16	0.05	0.22
Routine tasks	Occupation is performing routine tasks	0.16	0.37	0.09	0.29	0.05	0.22	0.07	0.26	0.05	0.23	0.15	0.36	0.14	0.35	0.25	0.43	0.15	0.36
Not stated	Occupation was not stated	0.08	0.26	0.05	0.22	0.08	0.27	0.04	0.20	0.04	0.20	0.16	0.37	0.10	0.30	0.06	0.24	0.12	0.32
Labor force status																			
Unemployed	Respondent is unemployed	0.07	0.25	0.08	0.28	0.05	0.22	0.06	0.24	0.07	0.25	0.05	0.21	0.04	0.20	0.06	0.24	0.09	0.28
Not in labor force	Respondent is not working or looking for work	0.29	0.45	0.29	0.45	0.27	0.45	0.27	0.45	0.29	0.45	0.39	0.49	0.43	0.50	0.29	0.46	0.25	0.43
Immigration Factors																			
Noncitizen	Not a US citizen, yes=1	0.58	0.49	0.28	0.45	0.34	0.47	0.41	0.49	0.50	0.50	0.46	0.50	0.02	0.13	0.80	0.40	0.62	0.48
Length of US Residence																			
Less than 5 years	Respondent has lived in the United States for fewer than 5 years	0.18	0.38	0.17	0.38	0.15	0.36	0.16	0.37	0.24	0.43	0.19	0.40	0.06	0.23	0.18	0.39	0.17	0.37
5 to 10 years	Respondent has lived in the United States for 5 to 10 years	0.16	0.37	0.26	0.44	0.11	0.32	0.18	0.38	0.12	0.32	0.15	0.36	0.09	0.29	0.17	0.38	0.17	0.37
11 to 20 years	Respondent has lived in the United States for 11 to 20 years	0.32	0.47	0.30	0.46	0.33	0.47	0.37	0.48	0.31	0.46	0.10	0.30	0.21	0.41	0.34	0.47	0.36	0.48
More than 20 years	Respondent has lived in the United States for more than 20 years	0.34	0.47	0.27	0.44	0.40	0.49	0.29	0.45	0.33	0.47	0.56	0.50	0.64	0.48	0.31	0.46	0.31	0.46
Primary residence is in country of origin	Respondent reported primary residence is in another country or in both the United States and another country	0.22	0.41	0.05	0.22	0.15	0.36	0.07	0.25	0.18	0.39	0.08	0.27	0.21	0.41	0.33	0.47	0.19	0.39
Refugee	Respondent reported that migrated b/c had to (not b/c wanted to)	0.31	0.46	0.17	0.38	0.31	0.46	0.33	0.47	0.28	0.45	0.67	0.47	0.30	0.46	0.29	0.45	0.33	0.47
Frequency of return to origin last year																			
No times	Respondent did not visit country of origin last year	0.70	0.46	0.84	0.36	0.70	0.46	0.64	0.48	0.66	0.48	0.88	0.33	0.76	0.43	0.68	0.47	0.70	0.46
Once	Respondent visited country of origin one time last year	0.22	0.41	0.14	0.35	0.24	0.43	0.31	0.46	0.31	0.46	0.11	0.31	0.14	0.35	0.17	0.38	0.26	0.44
Twice	Respondent visited country of origin two times last year	0.04	0.19	0.01	0.12	0.04	0.19	0.04	0.19	0.03	0.16	0.01	0.10	0.05	0.22	0.06	0.23	0.03	0.16
Three or more times	Respondent visited country of origin three or more times last year	0.01	0.10	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.04	0.01	0.10	0.01	0.09	0.00	0.05	0.02	0.12	0.02	0.14	0.00	0.04
English speaking ability (ref=poor)																			
Poor	Respondent reports English speaking ability is poor	0.39	0.49	0.36	0.48	0.03	0.18	0.24	0.43	0.06	0.23	0.52	0.50	0.24	0.43	0.59	0.49	0.39	0.49
Fair	Respondent reports English speaking ability is fair	0.23	0.42	0.18	0.38	0.41	0.49	0.33	0.47	0.44	0.50	0.18	0.39	0.34	0.47	0.11	0.31	0.22	0.42
Good	Respondent reports English speaking ability is good	0.26	0.44	0.38	0.49	0.21	0.41	0.30	0.46	0.18	0.38	0.18	0.38	0.29	0.45	0.25	0.43	0.29	0.45
Excellent	Respondent reports English speaking ability is excellent	0.13	0.33	0.08	0.27	0.34	0.48	0.13	0.34	0.33	0.47	0.12	0.33	0.14	0.35	0.06	0.23	0.10	0.30
N		2968		440		327		416		287		481		182		440		395	

Table 2. Weighted Correlations between Rank and Relative Income Variables

	Rank in US	Rank in community	Rank in country of origin
Rank in US	1.00	0.70	0.36
Rank in community	0.70	1.00	0.39
Rank in country of origin	0.36	0.39	1.00

Table 3. Determinants of Perceived Rank in US (on 1-10 scale), OLS

	(1)		(2)		(3)		(4)	
	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE
Logged household income	0.224***	(0.045)	0.223***	(0.045)	0.190***	(0.044)	0.153***	(0.043)
Household income is 200,000+	1.409***	(0.254)	1.424***	(0.260)	1.269***	(0.260)	0.992***	(0.264)
Educational attainment (years)	0.072***	(0.016)	0.078***	(0.016)	0.062***	(0.016)	0.022	(0.017)
Labor force status (ref=employed)								
Unemployed	-0.533**	(0.224)	-0.514**	(0.221)	-0.511**	(0.208)	-0.525***	(0.200)
Not in labor force	0.304**	(0.132)	0.290**	(0.134)	0.340**	(0.147)	0.330**	(0.143)
Occupation (ref=repetitive tasks)								
Other	0.127	(0.209)	0.169	(0.210)	0.050	(0.210)	-0.035	(0.207)
Operators	0.513**	(0.237)	0.560**	(0.237)	0.513**	(0.225)	0.391*	(0.221)
Trades	0.106	(0.220)	0.133	(0.219)	0.218	(0.211)	0.187	(0.207)
Service	0.367	(0.242)	0.386	(0.242)	0.417*	(0.241)	0.352	(0.221)
Customer service	0.543**	(0.232)	0.528**	(0.232)	0.474**	(0.228)	0.354	(0.227)
Office clerks	0.289	(0.245)	0.353	(0.246)	0.268	(0.231)	0.005	(0.242)
Associate professional	0.470**	(0.218)	0.485**	(0.220)	0.417*	(0.218)	0.138	(0.219)
Professional	0.908***	(0.214)	0.968***	(0.212)	0.883***	(0.209)	0.631***	(0.210)
Corporate manager	0.650***	(0.247)	0.692***	(0.246)	0.718***	(0.252)	0.434*	(0.251)
Not stated	0.363	(0.242)	0.379	(0.243)	0.392	(0.243)	0.276	(0.240)
National origin (ref=Mexican)								
Vietnamese			-0.675***	(0.179)	-0.576***	(0.180)	-0.612***	(0.184)
Filipino			0.079	(0.153)	0.072	(0.161)	-0.288*	(0.169)
Chinese			-0.558***	(0.162)	-0.412**	(0.169)	-0.477***	(0.171)
Other Asian			0.030	(0.180)	0.059	(0.177)	-0.220	(0.183)
Cuban			-0.182	(0.143)	-0.148	(0.183)	-0.134	(0.188)
Puerto Rican			0.299	(0.201)	0.660***	(0.219)	0.258	(0.224)
Other Hispanic			-0.156	(0.153)	0.031	(0.175)	-0.043	(0.168)
Female					0.215**	(0.105)	0.299***	(0.103)
Lives with spouse or partner					0.362***	(0.115)	0.434***	(0.114)
Age					-0.057***	(0.019)	-0.040**	(0.019)
Age squared					0.001***	(0.000)	0.000**	(0.000)
Parental status (ref=no children at home)								
Has one child at home					-0.230	(0.147)	-0.235	(0.145)
Has more than one child at home					-0.041	(0.134)	-0.023	(0.132)
Region of US (ref=Northeast)								
Midwest					0.446**	(0.195)	0.328*	(0.196)
Southern					0.336**	(0.170)	0.239	(0.168)
Western					0.346**	(0.153)	0.230	(0.149)
Self reported health status (ref=poor)								
Fair					0.306	(0.309)	0.275	(0.302)
Good					0.908***	(0.305)	0.808***	(0.297)
Very good					1.001***	(0.308)	0.788***	(0.301)
Excellent					1.112***	(0.329)	0.925***	(0.322)
Refugee (vs. voluntary migrant)							-0.055	(0.099)
Not a citizen							-0.126	(0.123)
Time in the US (ref=less than 5 years)								
5 to 10 years							-0.339**	(0.166)
11 to 20 years							-0.197	(0.168)
20 plus years							-0.128	(0.192)
Enblish speaking ability (ref=poor)								
Fair							0.595***	(0.138)
Good							0.896***	(0.161)
Excellent							1.399***	(0.188)
Primary residence is in another country							0.052	(0.132)
Frequency of return to home country last year (ref=0 times)								
Once							-0.120	(0.111)
Twice							0.315	(0.237)
Three or more times							1.124	(0.785)
Constant	3.552***	(0.232)	3.570***	(0.231)	3.622***	(0.541)	3.826***	(0.579)
N	2968		2968		2968		2968	
R-sq	0.110		0.123		0.161		0.201	

Standard errors in parentheses

* p<0.10 ** p<0.05 ***p<0.01

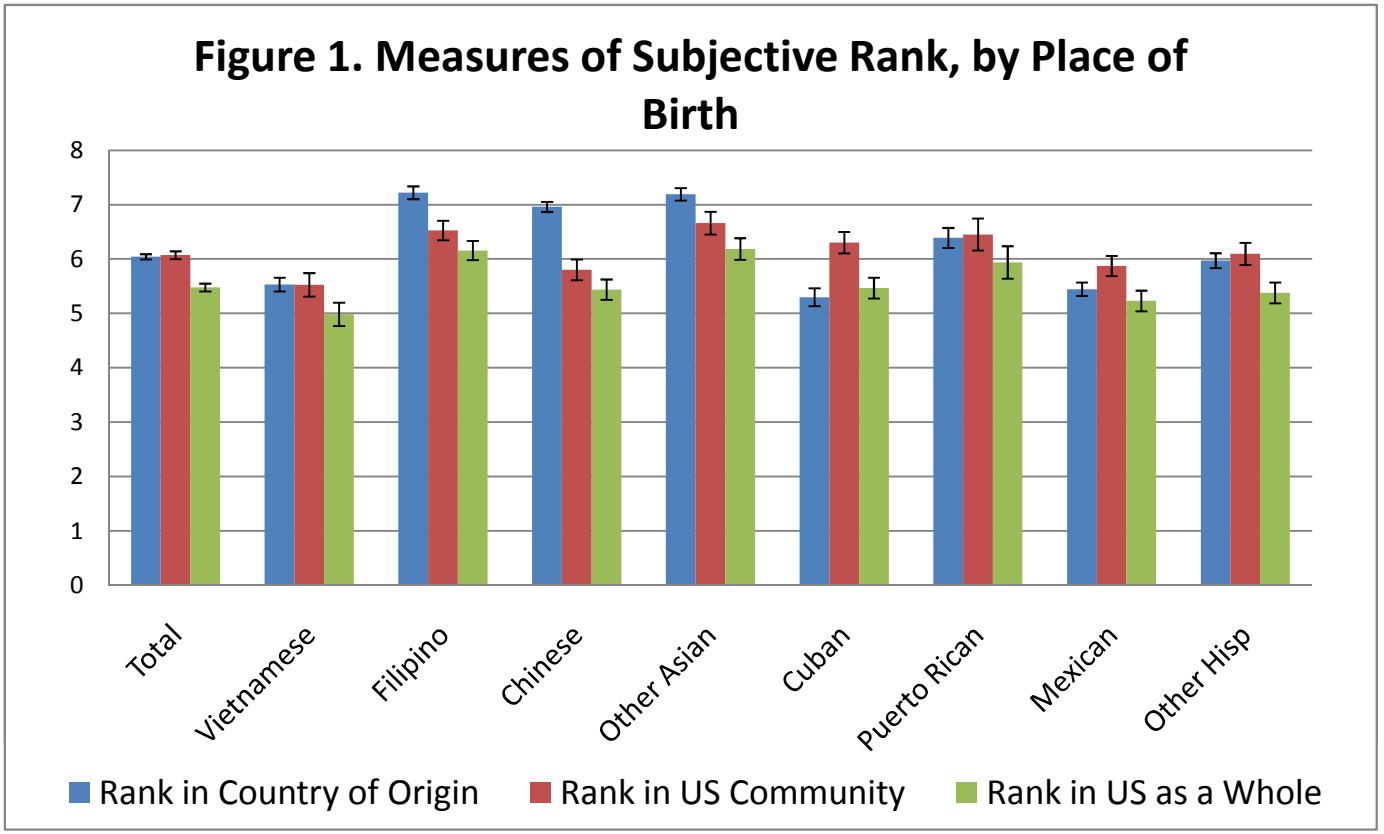
Figure 1. Measures of Subjective Rank, by Place of Birth
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1
0
Total
Vietnamese
Filipino
Chinese
Other Asian
Cuban
Puerto Rican
Mexican
Other Hisp
Rank in Country of Origin
Rank in US Community
Rank in US as a Whole

Table 4. Effect of Subjective Social Standing in US and Origin on Four Measures of Subjective Well-Being

	Satisfaction with US Economic Opportunity, OLS										Would Still Move, Logistic Regression									
	(1)		(2)		(3)		(4)		(5)		(6)		(7)		(8)		(9)		(10)	
	b	SE			b	SE	b	SE	b	SE	O.R.	SE			O.R.	SE	O.R.	SE	O.R.	SE
Rank in country of origin	0.004	(0.024)			-0.061**	(0.025)	-0.056**	(0.026)	-0.058**	(0.025)	0.710**	(0.112)			0.644***	(0.101)	0.683**	(0.109)	0.694**	(0.111)
Rank in US as a whole			0.124***	(0.017)	0.138***	(0.018)	0.125***	(0.018)	0.115***	(0.018)			1.095	(0.132)	1.210*	(0.139)	1.214	(0.152)	1.170	(0.138)
Demographic controls	yes***		yes***		yes***		yes***		yes**		yes		yes		yes		yes		yes	
Country of birth controls	yes***		yes***		yes***		yes***		yes***		yes		yes*		yes		yes*		yes*	
Objective status controls	no		no		no		yes**		yes*		no		no		no		yes***		yes***	
Immigration controls	no		no		no		no		yes***		no		no		no		no		yes***	
Constant	4.122***	(0.165)	4.186***	(0.164)	4.219***	(0.164)	4.294***	(0.179)	4.494***	(0.198)										
N	2968		2968		2968		2968		2968		2968		2968		2968		2968		2968	

	Depression in Past Month, Ordered Logistic Regression										Self-Reported Mental Health, Ordered Logistic Regression									
	(11)		(12)		(13)		(14)		(15)		(16)		(17)		(18)		(19)		(20)	
	O.R.	SE			O.R.	SE	O.R.	SE	O.R.	SE	O.R.	SE			O.R.	SE	O.R.	SE	O.R.	SE
Rank in country of origin	1.148*	(0.091)			1.066	(0.088)	1.062	(0.088)	1.068	(0.089)	1.268***	(0.094)			1.126	(0.088)	1.063	(0.083)	1.054	(0.083)
Rank in US as a whole			1.187***	(0.065)	1.170***	(0.067)	1.147**	(0.069)	1.120*	(0.069)			1.320***	(0.069)	1.284***	(0.070)	1.230***	(0.067)	1.150**	(0.063)
Demographic controls	yes***		yes***		yes***		yes***		yes***		yes***		yes***		yes***		yes		yes**	
Country of birth controls	yes***		yes***		yes***		yes***		yes***		yes***		yes***		yes***		yes***		yes***	
Objective status controls	no		no		no		yes***		yes***		no		no		no		yes***		yes***	
Immigration controls	no		no		no		no		yes		no		no		no		no		yes***	
Constant																				
N	2968		2968		2968		2968		2968		2968		2968		2968		2968		2968	

Standard errors in parentheses

Demographic controls include gender, marital status, age, age squared, and region of the country. For models 1-5 they also include self reported physical health status.

Country of birth controls include a dummy variable for country of birth, or for being in the "other Asian" or "other Latino" category.

Objective status controls include educational attainment, household income, a dummy for topcoded household income, employment status, and occupation.

Immigration controls include refugee status, citizenship status, length of residence in the United States, English ability, whether the immigrants' primary residence is in another country, and frequency of return to the home country the prior year.

* p<0.10 ** p<0.05 ***p<0.01

Table 5. Effect of Subjective Social Standing in Community and Origin on Four Measures of Subjective Well-Being

	Satisfaction with US Economic Opportunity, OLS									
	(1)		(2)		(3)		(4)		(5)	
	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE
Rank in co	0.004	(0.024)			-0.044*	(0.027)	-0.041	(0.027)	-0.042	(0.026)
Rank in US			0.075***	(0.018)	0.087***	(0.019)	0.075***	(0.019)	0.063***	(0.019)
Demograp	yes***		yes***		yes***		yes***		yes**	
Country of	yes***		yes***		yes***		yes***		yes***	
Objective s	no		no		no		yes***		yes***	
Immigratio	no		no		no		no		yes***	
Constant	4.122***	(0.165)	4.138***	(0.166)	4.159***	(0.165)	4.217***	(0.182)	4.418***	(0.202)
N	2968		2968		2968		2968		2968	

	Would Still Move, Logistic Regression									
	(6)		(7)		(8)		(9)		(10)	
	O.R.	SE	O.R.	SE	O.R.	SE	O.R.	SE	O.R.	SE
Rank in co	0.710**	(0.112)			0.621***	(0.112)	0.664**	(0.123)	0.683**	(0.125)
Rank in US			1.087	(0.133)	1.238	(0.165)	1.219	(0.166)	1.156	(0.164)
Demograp	yes		yes		yes		yes		yes	
Country of	yes		yes*		yes		yes*		yes*	
Objective s	no		no		no		yes**		yes***	
Immigratio	no		no		no		no		yes***	
Constant										
N	2968		2968		2968		2968		2968	

	Depression in Past Month, Ordered Logistic Regression									
	(11)		(12)		(13)		(14)		(15)	
	O.R.	SE	O.R.	SE	O.R.	SE	O.R.	SE	O.R.	SE
Rank in co	1.148*	(0.091)			1.065	(0.089)	1.065	(0.089)	1.071	(0.091)
Rank in US			1.167***	(0.061)	1.148**	(0.063)	1.118**	(0.063)	1.094	(0.063)
Demograp	yes***		yes***		yes***		yes***		yes***	
Country of	yes***		yes***		yes***		yes***		yes***	
Objective s	no		no		no		yes***		yes***	
Immigratio	no		no		no		no		yes	
Constant										
N	2968		2968		2968		2968		2968	

	Self-Reported Mental Health, Ordered Logistic Regression									
	(16)		(17)		(18)		(19)		(20)	
	O.R.	SE	O.R.	SE	O.R.	SE	O.R.	SE	O.R.	SE
Rank in co	1.268***	(0.094)			1.088	(0.084)	1.034	(0.080)	1.024	(0.080)
Rank in US			1.358***	(0.072)	1.327***	(0.073)	1.264***	(0.071)	1.193***	(0.066)
Demograp	yes***		yes***		yes***		yes		yes**	
Country of	yes***		yes***		yes***		yes***		yes***	
Objective s	no		no		no		yes***		yes***	
Immigratio	no		no		no		no		yes***	
Constant										
N	2968		2968		2968		2968		2968	

Standard errors in parentheses

Demographic controls include gender, marital status, age, age squared, number of children in the household, and region of the country. For models 1-5 they also include self reported physical health status.

Country of birth controls include a dummy variable for country of birth, or for being in the "other asian" or "other latino" category.

Objective status controls include educational attainment, household income, a dummy for topcoded household income, employment status, and occupation.

Immigration controls include refugee status, citizenship status, length of residence in the United States, English ability, whether the immigrants' primary residence is in another country, and frequency of return to the home country the

* p<0.10 ** p<0.05 ***p<0.01

Table 6. Effect of Objective Social Status on Four Measures of Subjective Well-Being

	Satisfaction with US Economic Opportunity, OLS		Would Still Move, Logit		Depression in Past Month, Ordered Logit		Mental Health, Ordered Logit	
	(1)		(2)		(3)		(4)	
	b	SE	O.R.	SE	O.R.	SE	O.R.	SE
Occupation (reference is repetitive tasks)								
Other	0.040	(0.070)	0.711	(0.307)	1.756***	(0.354)	1.590**	(0.322)
Operators	0.056	(0.077)	0.652	(0.294)	0.971	(0.230)	1.394	(0.300)
Trades	0.062	(0.074)	0.593	(0.267)	0.876	(0.207)	0.757	(0.174)
Service	0.097	(0.078)	1.072	(0.500)	1.059	(0.247)	1.197	(0.263)
Customer service	0.007	(0.076)	0.896	(0.433)	0.970	(0.236)	1.298	(0.267)
Office clerks	0.087	(0.078)	1.583	(1.150)	1.552*	(0.403)	1.078	(0.292)
Associate professional	0.054	(0.090)	1.006	(0.495)	1.134	(0.275)	1.840***	(0.381)
Professional	0.173**	(0.076)	1.246	(0.567)	1.185	(0.251)	1.488*	(0.320)
Corporate manager	0.186**	(0.089)	0.558	(0.313)	1.412	(0.387)	1.726**	(0.422)
Not stated	0.019	(0.077)	0.912	(0.470)	0.917	(0.223)	0.837	(0.198)
Educational attainment (years)	-0.005	(0.006)	0.918**	(0.031)	1.004	(0.016)	1.085***	(0.019)
Logged household income	0.048***	(0.016)	1.248***	(0.091)	1.074	(0.050)	1.049	(0.053)
Household income is $200,000+	0.386***	(0.089)	1.541	(0.827)	1.376	(0.423)	0.933	(0.236)
Labor force status (ref=employed)								
Unemployed	-0.142**	(0.071)	0.665	(0.238)	0.584***	(0.118)	1.003	(0.201)
Not in labor force	-0.009	(0.049)	1.367	(0.407)	0.522***	(0.077)	0.654***	(0.092)
Constant	4.166***	(0.182)						
N	2968		2968		2968		2968	

Standard errors in parentheses

All models control for gender, marital status, age, age squared, parental status, region, and country of birth. Model 1 controls for self reported physical health status.

* p<0.10 ** p<0.05 ***p<0.01

Table 7. Effect of Subjective Social Standing in US and Origin on Four Measures of Subjective Well-Being, by Country/Place of Birth

Satisfaction with US Economic Opportunity, OLS																				
	Full sample		China		Filipino		Vietnamese		Other Asian		Mexican		Cuban		Puerto Rican		Other Hispanic	
Rank in country of origin	-0.058**	(0.025)	-0.016	(0.056)	0.073	(0.064)	-0.103**	(0.041)	0.139	(0.104)	-0.063	(0.045)	-0.086***	(0.031)	-0.195**	(0.081)	-0.043	(0.056)
Rank in US as a whole	0.115***	(0.018)	0.153***	(0.037)	0.057*	(0.032)	0.148***	(0.050)	-0.035	(0.044)	0.100***	(0.035)	0.158***	(0.029)	0.090*	(0.054)	0.199***	(0.045)
Constant	4.494***	(0.198)	3.528***	(0.474)	3.356***	(0.472)	4.745***	(0.456)	3.364***	(0.681)	4.726***	(0.514)	4.152***	(0.371)	5.311***	(0.729)	4.115***	(0.417)
N	2968		416		327		440		287		440		481		182		395	
Would Still Move if Deciding Today, Logistic Regression																		
	Full sample		China		Filipino		Vietnamese		Other Asian		Mexican		Cuban		Puerto Rican		Other Hispanic	
Rank in country of origin	0.694**	(0.111)	0.871	(0.357)	1.417	(0.976)	0.200***	(0.077)	1.420	(0.559)	0.564**	(0.150)	0.803	(0.208)	0.594	(0.244)	0.758	(0.246)
Rank in US as a whole	1.170	(0.138)	1.959**	(0.533)	0.947	(0.322)	2.170**	(0.775)	1.393	(0.358)	1.101	(0.212)	1.278	(0.427)	1.071	(0.291)	0.982	(0.280)
N	2968		416		327		440		287		440		481		182		395	
Self Reported Mental Health, Ordered Logistic Regression																		
	Full sample		China		Filipino		Vietnamese		Other Asian		Mexican		Cuban		Puerto Rican		Other Hispanic	
Rank in country of origin	1.054	(0.083)	1.438	(0.375)	1.348	(0.361)	0.902	(0.133)	0.775	(0.328)	0.868	(0.120)	1.205*	(0.131)	1.618*	(0.429)	1.340	(0.265)
Rank in US as a whole	1.150**	(0.063)	1.280*	(0.187)	1.073	(0.152)	1.524***	(0.239)	1.303	(0.221)	1.178	(0.127)	1.544***	(0.161)	1.329*	(0.218)	0.899	(0.139)
N	2968		416		327		440		287		440		481		182		395	
Frequency of Depression in the Past Month, Ordered Logistic Regression																		
	Full sample		China		Filipino		Vietnamese		Other Asian		Mexican		Cuban		Puerto Rican		Other Hispanic	
Rank in country of origin	1.068	(0.089)	0.954	(0.223)	1.261	(0.353)	1.475**	(0.229)	0.981	(0.422)	0.960	(0.151)	1.218*	(0.139)	1.551	(0.418)	0.975	(0.190)
Rank in US as a whole	1.120*	(0.069)	1.376*	(0.250)	1.418**	(0.219)	0.827	(0.132)	1.110	(0.207)	1.149	(0.139)	1.257**	(0.131)	1.149	(0.232)	0.983	(0.151)
N	2968		416		327		440		287		440		481		182		395	

Standard errors in parentheses

All models control for gender, marital status, age, age squared, educational attainment, refugee status, and citizenship status.

Satisfaction, self reported mental health, and frequency of depression models also control for number of children in the household, household income, topcoded household income, occupation, employment status, years in the United States, English speaking ability, and whether the immigrants' primary residence is in the United States.

Satisfaction with US economic opportunity models also control for self reported physical health status.

Full sample models also control for country of birth, US region of residence, and frequency of return to the home country.

* p<0.10 ** p<0.05 ***p<0.01

Table 8. Correlates of Four Outcomes with Time in US Interactions

	Satisfaction with US Economic Opportunity, OLS						Would Still Move, Logistic Regression					
	(1)		(2)		(3)		(4)		(5)		(6)	
	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE	Odds ratio	SE	Odds ratio	SE	Odds ratio	SE
Ranks												
Rank in US as a whole	0.109***	(0.019)					1.082	(0.149)				
Rank in US as a whole*in US <5 years	0.047	(0.042)					0.951	(0.219)				
Rank in country of origin			0.005	(0.025)					0.742*	(0.130)		
Rank in country of origin*in US <5 years			-0.004	(0.068)					0.828	(0.297)		
Rank in community					0.077***	(0.019)					0.974	(0.138)
Rank in community*in US <5 years					-0.025	(0.046)					1.409	(0.322)
Constant	4.190***	(0.168)	4.160***	(0.175)	4.160***	(0.170)						
N	2968		2968		2968		2968		2968		2968	

	Depression in Past Month, Ordered Logistic Regression						Self-Reported Mental Health, Ordered Logistic Regression					
	(7)		(8)		(9)		(10)		(11)		(12)	
	Odds ratio	SE	Odds ratio	SE	Odds ratio	SE	Odds ratio	SE	Odds ratio	SE	Odds ratio	SE
Ranks												
Rank in US as a whole	1.269***	(0.078)					1.432***	(0.082)				
Rank in US as a whole*in US <5 years	0.738**	(0.092)					0.693***	(0.087)				
Rank in country of origin			1.157*	(0.097)					1.299***	(0.104)		
Rank in country of origin*in US <5 years			0.970	(0.213)					0.847	(0.165)		
Rank in community					1.232***	(0.071)					1.393***	(0.083)
Rank in community*in US <5 years					0.764**	(0.101)					0.870	(0.114)
N	2968		2968		2968		2968		2968		2968	

Standard errors in parentheses

* p<0.10 ** p<0.05 ***p<0.01

Note: All models control for age, age squared, gender, marital status, US region, number of children at home, time in the US, and country of birth. Models 1-3 also control for self-reported health status.