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Linking research, policy, and practice on immigrant Latino youth

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A crucial indicator of immigrant incorporation is the success of immigrant children and youth in the educational systems of receiving countries. The credentials that youth obtain through education can open pathways to their economic mobility and civic participation. Questions about what fosters or impedes these pathways are attracting interdisciplinary and international debate and sparking collaborations that link research, educational practice, and policy investments. This volume, and the conference from which it emerged, offer rare opportunities to reach across disciplines and modes of thinking about research, practice, and policy on migration, rights, and identities. This chapter offers the perspectives of a developmental psychologist and an educational researcher who draw across the social sciences and humanities to look at the academic pipeline problem.

The academic pipeline problem: local and global dilemmas

The educational pathways of immigrant youth can be seen as moving through *academic pipelines* from childhood through schooling to adult work, family, civic, and cultural identities (Gándara *et al.* 1998). The pipeline metaphor offers a developmental perspective on the "achievement gap" by tracing students' academic pathways over time. Although many nations hold ideals of equal access to school and advancement through merit, as each wave of children moves through primary and secondary school to college the numbers of immigrant, ethnic minority, and low-income youth in the academic pipeline shrink, and troubling gender gaps often appear. The academic pipeline problem makes university enrollments and college-based professions unrepresentative of their broader communities. It has been intensifying as immigrant, refugee, and ethnic minority youth make up growing segments of school enrollments in many nations. For example, in the US, Latino students are projected to comprise 25 percent of public school students by 2025 (President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans 2000). However, only 54 percent of Latinas and 51 percent of Latinos graduate from high school. Of students who persist to college, 11 percent of Latinas and 10 percent of Latinos complete a baccalaureate degree, and 0.3 percent of Latinas and 0.4 percent of Latinos earn a doctorate. Among white students these figures differ, with 84 percent of

women and 84 percent of men graduating from high school, 24 percent of women and 28 percent of men graduating from college, and 0.6 percent and 1.4 percent earning a doctorate, respectively (Burciaga *et al.* 2010).

Of course, a college education is not the only definition of success, and academic pipelines extend only to primary schools in some regions and to universities in others. But in each cultural group and each region worldwide, education is strongly linked to life opportunities and choices for youth. Those who are alienated from education and its opportunities are at higher risk for marginalized life pathways that are costly for themselves and their communities.

Capital, alienation, and challenge on pathways of immigrant youth

In this chapter, we consider three contrasting views of the forces shaping immigrant youth's identity pathways to adulthood that we call *capital*, *alienation*, and *challenge* (see also Cooper 2003; Cooper *et al.* 2005a). Sociological theories about families' social and cultural capital propose that youth whose parents have gone to college are more likely to develop college-based career identities than youth whose parents did not attend college, in a pattern known as "cultural reproduction" (Bourdieu and Passeron 1986; Coleman 1988; Lareau 2003; Stanton-Salazar 2004). Anthropologists and others who study youth alienation suggest that immigrant, low-income, and ethnic minority parents often hold high hopes for their children's school and career success, but as these children move through school their families' experiences of poverty and racism can foster mistrust of public institutions that dim parents' hopes for a better life for their children. Meanwhile, these youth may disengage from school as a way to defend against failure, and may seek other pathways for economic and cultural identities (Matute-Bianchi 1986; Ogbu 1991; Gibson *et al.* 2004; Vigil 2004). The "challenge" perspective has emerged from evidence that, under some conditions, experiences of poverty, racism, and other obstacles motivate immigrant youth to succeed on behalf of their families and communities, and that such challenges in the context of support can foster college, career, and cultural identities (Kao and Tienda 1995; Phelan *et al.* 1998; Cooper 1999; Portes and Fernández-Kelly 2008).

This chapter is written to bridge research, practice, and policies about the academic pipeline problem by highlighting models, evidence, and implications for how Latino immigrant youth forge identities that incorporate values of their cultural and family traditions as well as those of their schools, communities, and workplaces. We draw upon two challenge models: Bridging Multiple Worlds, and Community Cultural Wealth. Both focus on the challenges of immigration, poverty, and racism, and how family and community values and the personal strategies of immigrant youth can be resources in building pathways to college and career identities oriented to the professoriate. We also consider how these models have been used to understand pathways of undocumented Latino youth to obtaining a green card.

Bridging Multiple Worlds

The Bridging Multiple Worlds theory builds on the writings of Erikson on culture and identity development (1968) to ask how ethnically diverse youth, beginning in childhood, navigate across the cultural worlds of families, peers, schools, and communities on their pathways to college, career, and other identities. This multilevel model traces five interrelated dimensions over time that hold particular relevance to the academic pipeline problem: (1) *demographics along the academic pipeline* – to trace families' national origins, ethnicities, home languages, educational, and occupational backgrounds in each wave of students as they move from early childhood to adulthood; (2) youth's *identity pathways* to college, careers, and family roles; (3) their *math and language academic pathways* through school; (4) their *challenges and resources across the worlds* of families, peers, schools, and communities; and (5) *cultural research partnerships* that reach across nation, ethnicity, class, and religion to link researchers, educators, and policy-makers with youth and their families to open pathways through school. Studies with the Bridging Multiple Worlds model have included youth from African, Chinese, Mexican, Vietnamese, Filipino, and Japanese families and mapped how youth negotiate both individuality and connectedness across their worlds (Cooper 1999). This work is designed to advance research, practice, and policy on the academic pipeline problem with common tools for scientists, policy-makers, and educators as well as youth and families in multicultural societies.

Community Cultural Wealth

The Community Cultural Wealth framework (Yosso 2005) suggests that Communities of Color in the US – namely African Americans, Native Americans, Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders, and Latinas/os – may support students' educational mobility in ways that may not be evident when social and cultural capital are defined solely by formal education and job status (Bourdieu and Passeron 1986; see Kao and Rutherford 2007 for a discussion of challenges researchers have had in defining these concepts). This model proposes six forms of capital or resources for upward social mobility that have been cultivated and nurtured by Communities of Color in the US. This framework, informed by empirical research, consists of six forms of capital: *social*, *familial*, *linguistic*, *navigational*, *resistant*, and *aspirational*. Social capital is defined in terms of networks of social and community resources. Familial capital refers to the cultural knowledge nurtured among families that carry a sense of community, history, memory, and cultural intuition. Linguistic capital includes the intellectual and social skills attained through communication experiences in more than one language and/or style. Navigational capital is the skill of maneuvering through many, often diverse, social institutions. Resistant capital refers to knowledge and skills fostered through oppositional behaviors that challenge inequality and resist subordination. Finally, aspirational capital is the ability to maintain

hopes and dreams for the future in the face of real or perceived barriers. Each form of Community Cultural Wealth is conceptually distinct, but its expression may also entail other forms. For example, a student who aspires to attend college and resists her counselors' advice to take remedial courses by speaking directly with the school's course scheduler could be seen as demonstrating aspirational, resistant, navigational, and social capital. This framework is designed to foster a deeper understanding of how families and community members nurture resources for their children's upward social mobility. In addition, it sheds light on the array of family and community resources on which students may rely to navigate and succeed in school and beyond.

In this chapter we highlight evidence from longitudinal studies of Latino immigrant youth that we have conducted with our colleagues in California, as well as from related work across the social sciences and in other states and nations, to make two overarching arguments. First, views of culture, youth identity, and pathways to college and careers are often framed by mutually exclusive conceptions of individualism and collectivism that can lead to deficit models of immigrant youth and families with collectivist traditions. However, tracing the interplay of personal agency with social, institutional, and cultural resources and challenges can enrich such views. For example, as social actors, immigrant students may draw on traditional cultural values, such as *educación*, to cultivate resources for themselves and others in a quest for social change. (*Educación* expresses in Spanish a concept that extends the meaning of academic education to include values such as respect, integrity, and communal responsibility.) Second, understanding links across the multiple worlds of youth in diverse cultural communities, including their families, schools, and community organizations, benefits from such perspectives, and in turn advances research, practice, and policy that are helping open the academic pipeline.

Findings from studies of Latino immigrant students

How Latino immigrant youth build pathways to college

Two of the three longitudinal studies with Mexican immigrant families featured in this chapter were conducted in the Central Coast region of California (e.g., Azmitia and Cooper 2001; Cooper *et al.* 2005a). These studies found that most participating parents had received their formal education in rural Mexico – typically in the states of Jalisco and Michoacán. Most parents had less than a high school education, and many had an elementary school education (*primaria*) or less. In one longitudinal study, we interviewed 60 Mexican immigrant parents (and their children) in their homes about their goals and aspirations for their children's futures (Azmitia and Cooper 2001; Mena 2002; Azmitia *et al.* 2009). We followed these youth from elementary through high school. We were especially interested in how parents defined the good path of life, or *el buen camino de la vida*, and how they guided their children to stay on the good path or return to it. On the Hollingshead scale of occupational status, ranging from unskilled manual

labor to professional, most mothers were employed in modest occupations like picking strawberries and cleaning hotels. These same mothers' aspirations for their children were to attain careers as doctors, lawyers, and in other professional positions.

With regard to the aspirations and identity pathways of immigrant youth, we draw from a second longitudinal study with Mexican immigrant families in a 15-year university–community partnership between the University of California and a community college preparation program (Cooper *et al.* 2005a; Denner *et al.* 2005). The program awards scholarships and offers support and year-round activities to help students from low-income, primarily Mexican immigrant families to stay on track or get back on track to college and careers. Our partnership collected long-term data from over 150 students, from their entering the program at age 11 in 1996 through high school graduation at age 18 and into young adulthood. Data sources include application essays, interviews with students and parents, school transcripts, and a web-based survey for young adult alumni. When youth applied to the program, they described their career dreams in the same way as the parents in the previous study: they too wanted careers as doctors, lawyers, teachers, and technically skilled workers (as well as soccer and football heroes), with most careers requiring college preparation. These students were typical of their local ethnic community in parent education, home language, family income, and school achievement. However, more girls than boys applied for and were selected for the program. This gender imbalance in the cohort we have studied increased through high school and parallels state and national gender imbalances in college enrollment, but has been rectified in recent study cohorts with innovations by the program director.

Based on their school transcripts, the range of students' math pathways as they advanced through school exhibited five prototypes: high, declining, increasing, "back on track" (declining then increasing), and persisting or consistently low. Consistent with prior research, we found that students who had passed Algebra in ninth grade were more likely to be eligible for four-year universities and college-based careers as they completed high school, but several students who were eligible for four-year universities went to community college for economic and personal reasons. A follow-up study of these students at age 25 is tracing how they are reconciling their idealistic career aspirations with the realities of their academic preparation, and how their actual careers exemplify "looking up and giving back" from fields in which Latinos are under-represented, such as science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). We also traced pathways of the large number of English learners in this group (Behrens 2008). These students appeared to be at greater risk of dropping out of high school than US-born students, although many have built pathways to the university. The challenges that students encountered as they made their way through their English classes were a key part of their pathways to college, but it is striking that most held positive views of their English teachers' helping them make these transitions and prepare for college. We need to understand more about this, given widespread portrayals of these classes as gatekeepers.

To look at how the immigrant youth in this program bridged the challenges and resources across their worlds, we asked them, on surveys at their annual Summer Institute, "Who helps you?" and "Who causes you difficulties?" on a range of topics (Holt 2003). When we asked youth about who helped them stay on track to college, one 15-year-old Latina girl wrote:

> My mom loved to go to school, but had to quit school to start working at the age of 12. Her mom didn't let her do her homework and she really liked to do homework.... She tells me I need to seize the time that I have to go to college and not drop out of school.

A 14-year-old Latino boy wrote:

> My parents told me to go to college because if I wanted to get a house I had to get a good job. Going to college helps you get a career instead of being a gangster, drug dealer or other things that cause you to get in trouble with the cops even though you get good money in a dangerous way.

These quotes illustrate one of the most important findings of our longitudinal studies: that students continue to report, from childhood into young adulthood, that their immigrant parents remain central to their staying on track to and through college, not in spite of their modest education but because of it (see also Portes and Fernández-Kelly 2008). This finding also challenges the widely held myth that Latino immigrants hold low aspirations for their children's education, for which interventions are needed to raise their aspirations (Valencia and Black 2002). We also found that successful students drew emotional and instrumental resources by bridging their multiple worlds while keeping ties to their families. Over a one-year period, students in this program, which holds year-round activities designed to link families, peers, and schools into college-going convoys, increasingly listed their mothers as helping them go to college, and peers more often as helping them with schoolwork.

How can such partnerships help align resources for immigrant youth pathways? In the US and other nations, programs serving immigrant youth typically target specific transitions within the academic pipeline. These programs are often disconnected from one another, and thus may offer only short-term support. However, to address the pipeline problem and the costs of alienation among downwardly mobile youth, private and public sector leaders across the political spectrum are starting earlier along the academic pipeline than the point of college admissions. Such leaders – including the US National Governors' Association – want to connect and align interventions and institutions. These partnerships could produce what some optimistically call "seamless" educational systems (with accountability) towards choices of college and careers. Such partnerships may include community organizations, schools, and universities, as well as immigrant youth and their families. Working with such partners, the P-20 Leaders' Group across the 10 campuses of the University of California collaborates to open academic pipelines in communities across the state.

Community Cultural Wealth: how Chicanas build pathways to the professoriate

Much research on the factors that contribute to academic success and to college and career aspirations highlights families and communities as key resources (Solorzano 1986; Gándara 1995; Cooper *et al.* 2005b). These studies challenge stereotypes of immigrant parents and communities as not caring about their children's educational advancement, and suggest that immigrant families and communities possess hidden forms of capital (Su 2008) that are frequently not recognized as important for educational and career identity formation (Valencia and Black 2002). Yosso (2005) refers to these as *Community Cultural Wealth.*

A recent longitudinal study of 15 Chicana PhD students in Education in Southern California investigated two questions (Burciaga 2008). First, how had these students used Community Cultural Wealth strategies for their own persistence from preschool through elementary, junior high, high school, college, and graduate school? Second, how were these students' values of *educación* related to their Community Cultural Wealth strategies? This highly selective sample of doctoral students included all Chicana students in their graduate program except one. At the time, this university was educating the largest number of Chicana PhD students in Education in the state of California. Three participants were immigrants, five were children of immigrants, three were grandchildren of immigrants, and four were great-grandchildren of immigrants or of US natives. Thirteen had immediate family members who supported their educational persistence, and two had survived abusive relationships with immediate families with the support of extended family and friends. Thus, we see in their backgrounds families acting as both resources and challenges to educational persistence.

The study used the interview method of *testimonio*, an approach similar to oral history developed in Latin America that incorporates the political, social, and cultural histories that accompany life experiences. Interviews included demographic questions about families' levels of schooling, and courses students had taken in school. Questions about persistence asked who had been influential in students' lives during elementary, junior high, and high school, and how such influences had affected their persistence. Assessment of students' aspirations drew on their retrospective views of their childhoods and prospective views of their pathways beyond the doctorate. Data were collected between December 2003 and April 2007. Community Cultural Wealth strategies and *educación* values were coded inductively from responses during the full interview.

With few exceptions, all six forms of Community Cultural Wealth strategies were evident in each *testimonio* interview. Here we highlight examples of aspirational, familial, and social capital. One participant, Soledad, described aspirational capital when she recalled that as a child, "I didn't know exactly what [college] was and neither did my parents, but I knew it was a place I was going."

Despite Soledad's immigrant parents being unfamiliar with the pathway to higher education in the US, they supported her aspirations to persist towards college. Familial capital was most often evident in family stories of immigration influencing students' educational persistence, with family stories of hardship and perseverance fueling students' desires to persist through each phase of the pipeline toward the PhD. For example, Cristina recounted emotionally wrenching stories her grandfather told her about his immigration to the United States. When he and her grandmother found work, they found a home that was close to the packing plant where her grandfather would work and close to a school so his children would have more opportunities than they had in Mexico. Thus, students' accounts of each form of capital they used to persist through the pipeline defined immigrant families and communities as crucial resources.

The second question looked at the relationship between students' espousing three values of *educación* – respect, integrity, and communal responsibility – and their use of the Community Cultural Wealth strategies. Although students linked values of respect and integrity to particular forms of Community Cultural Wealth, they invoked the value of communal responsibility with respect to all six forms. That is, the ways these students located, utilized, and ultimately contributed to Community Cultural Wealth almost always referenced their value of communal responsibility. For example, all 15 Chicanas' aspirations beyond the doctorate referenced community responsibility in how their future professions could "give back" resources to families and communities that they had accessed along their own pathways. Many sought to address problems of the educational tracking of underrepresented students that funnel them away from college-preparatory classes, as well as other educational inequities. All 15 shared experiences or observations of such tracking. Despite their own educational success, all aspired to careers that addressed educational inequities. Vitoria, for example, spoke about being one of very few Students of Color or economically poor students in her honors courses. These were "where the white kids were.... Kids with houses took honors classes and kids in apartments didn't. That's the way it broke down at our school." Vitoria wanted to pursue a PhD in education because she felt there were too few administrators and others in positions of power in educational settings who advocated for students, "not ... to be a superintendent or use it as a stepping stone but because I really want to enact reform and make it better for kids and for futures."

In their Community Cultural Wealth strategies, these Chicana students drew extensively from their families and communities. Such strategies can easily be overlooked when immigrant families' social capital is equated with parents' formal education and job status, but these strategies were crucial for students' persisting through each stage of the educational pipeline, and developing and maintaining their aspirations. Moreover, they established and maintained their strongest ties with those teachers, professors, and program staff who espoused *educación* values of respect, integrity, and communal responsibility.

With their Community Cultural Wealth strategies and *educación* values, these Chicana students became social actors, challenging inequities in their quest for social change. This study indicates that such strategies and values can be self-generating resources for Latino immigrant communities seeking educational success. Although these resources were often located among family and community members, the importance of teachers, professors, and programs who espoused *educación* values speaks to the role of institutional agents as they bridge Latino immigrant students' worlds (Stanton-Salazar 2004). The Community Cultural Wealth and *educación* approaches for locating and utilizing resources for persistence is not only changing institutions but also expanding resources for future generations of Students of Color.

How undocumented immigrant youth build pathways to college

Recent data indicate that undocumented immigrants have been coming to the US primarily from Mexico and Latin America, but also from Asia and Europe (Passel 2006). Recent years have also seen a shift from states of earlier settlement, such as California, New York, Texas, Florida, Illinois, and New Jersey, to new gateways that include Arizona, North Carolina, Georgia, and Tennessee. Across the US, undocumented youth are estimated to include about 715,000 aged five to 17 years and 360,000 aged 18 to 24 years (The Migration Policy Institute 2006).

In the US, ten states currently offer in-state college tuition rates to undocumented immigrant youth who meet a set of criteria that typically include having lived in the state for a specified number of years, graduating from a state high school, acceptance from a college or university, and filing a legal affidavit that they will seek legal residency. These states include California (where this law is called AB 540), Texas, Utah, Washington, New York, Oklahoma, Illinois, Kansas, New Mexico, and Nebraska. A challenge for undocumented youth involves learning about such state policies and finding nongovernmental grants, scholarships, and loans; these youth are ineligible for most state and federal financial aid or loans, and private scholarships that do not require evidence of citizenship are rare (Olivérez *et al.* 2006; Yñiguez 2006). More generally, such issues have played a central role in debates on the proposed federal DREAM (Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors) Act, that provides a pathway to legal residency for undocumented youth who grow up in the US if they graduate from college or serve in the US military (The Migration Policy Institute 2006).

Both the Community Cultural Wealth and Bridging Multiple Worlds models are useful for understanding challenges and resources for college pathways of undocumented immigrant youth in California. Approximately 20,000 undocumented students, most of them Latinos, attend a public college in California. Perez-Huber and Malagón (2007) drew from the work of Solorzano and Yosso (2000) in conducting case studies of six undocumented college students, born in Mexico, El Salvador, and Guatemala. Three had entered college without knowing about AB 540 (the California law providing a route to eligibility for in-state tuition rates) and began paying out-of-state fees unnecessarily. All worried about financial issues and how being undocumented would affect their future careers. As one student explained,

I can't be involved in many social activities because of it [her undocumented status], I can't apply for scholarships, I can't apply for financial aid, I can't apply for loans, I can't buy a home ... I'm non-existent in a way, you know what I mean? As my senior year approaches ... what am I gonna do?

(Perez-Huber and Malagón 2007: 857)

Notably, each student drew upon trustworthy sources of shared values and social support – their families and often other undocumented students – as they struggled to navigate through college.

A new direction for research, practice, and policy involves the emerging role of university student organizations led by undocumented immigrant youth. These settings can offer a safe place where these youth can speak openly about their experiences, draw upon and provide social support, and take collective action. Common challenges include students' fear of legal repercussions and stigma of their undocumented status (Seif 2004). Other students may not have learned about their undocumented status until late adolescence because parents had withheld this information to protect their children from inadvertently disclosing it. In one student organization at the University of California, called Students Informing Now (S.I.N.), leaders found that "many undocumented students had experienced isolation, marginalization, stigma, fear, and shame" (S.I.N. Collective 2007: 85). This organization affirms collective and individual rights of undocumented students to attend university as well as their capacities to take political action.

One issue that has been largely unexamined involves how undocumented immigrant youth build their pathways to the "green card" that provides identification as a legal permanent resident of the US (Green 2003). The green card is required for immigrant youth to establish eligibility for college scholarships or loans from state and federal sources. The Bridging Multiple Worlds model was used to design a longitudinal study of the pathways of Latino immigrant youth who succeeded in obtaining their green cards. This process took from eight to eleven years, as youth reached across their worlds for resources from parents, school counselors, community organizations, parents' employers, legislators, and immigration authorities (Cooper and Villagomez 2003). For example, it took Esperanza 11 years to get her green card. She drew upon individual, social, and institutional resources, including her own persistence, her family, her father's employer, and immigration advice from the Catholic Charities community organization. Although she was accepted to the University of California, she attended community college while awaiting her green card, then transferred to the university. Such findings reveal the interplay of a Latina immigrant youth's personal agency in accessing resources across her worlds in constructing her legal national identity and her pathway to college. They also hold implications for research and policy for undocumented youth. Like Catholic Charities in Esperanza's case, community organizations are serving as cultural brokers to help students and families obtain their green cards (Yñiguez 2006).

Research with undocumented youth and their families is clearly a sensitive area, with the validity of both quantitative and qualitative evidence affected by

the vulnerability of these communities. For example, rather than asking respondents directly, researchers have estimated undocumented populations with a number of approaches, such as subtracting the estimated legal immigrant population from the total foreign-born population (Passel 2006), and analyzing the numbers of detainees intercepted at or near the US–Mexican border (Weeks *et al.* 2009). As with other vulnerable groups, qualitative studies also rely on exceptional efforts to protect undocumented participants (Liamputtong 2007). Still, this emerging literature points to important directions for future work.

Resources for linking research, practice, and policy

The academic pipeline problem is a local, national, and global dilemma. Demographic changes in immigration of youth and families are challenging many communities who once saw themselves as homogeneous and just, but are rethinking and, in some cases, redesigning their educational and career credentialing systems for economic, political, and ethical reasons. Researchers, practitioners, and policy investors are working together rather than using traditional translational approaches to "giving science away" (Denner *et al.* 1999).

For research in mapping challenges and resources for immigrant youth pathways, evolving models of capital, alienation, and challenge offer complementary levers for understanding gains and losses emerging through the academic pipeline problem for societies, institutions, social networks, and individuals. Aligning structural and personal levels is productive so that immigrant youth and their families can be understood as social actors and thus potential assets, not simply as outcomes who are deficient or incomplete in their assimilation. Partnerships among researchers, practitioners, and policy-makers use demographic data but also move beyond national origin, socioeconomic status, and gender to map levers of change. Key next steps will be to build clearer interdisciplinary alignment of models, concepts, and measures to track both cultural parallels and variations across local and national communities (Cooper *et al.* 2005c). For example, the Bridging Multiple Worlds and Community Cultural Wealth models highlighted in this chapter can be aligned with the "segmented assimilation" model of Portes and colleagues (Portes and Fernández-Kelly 2008), who show how immigrant parents' education and occupational status, in concert with their reception in the US and ethnic networks, propel their children along upward, level, or downward pathways. Their work also reveals how exceptions to downward pathways can occur when youth draw upon motivation from their families' lives of hardship and from institutional resources of schools, pre-college programs, and community colleges.

For practitioners working directly on the pipeline problem, intergenerational networks can be created when immigrant college students serve as cultural brokers between youth and elders. This chapter has shown how successful Latino immigrant youth bridge values of home (*educacion*) and mainstream cultures (education). More generally, materials about pathways to college in families' home languages can help bridge generations for cultural, college, and career

identities; such materials are available in 19 languages besides English at www.bridgingworlds.org. In accordance with the US Civil Rights Act of 1964, schools in all states collect data on students' home languages. A survey of six states revealed 150 languages spoken, with surprising similarities across states (Trinh *et al.* 2007). Such findings point to the importance of linguistically diverse materials and programs for opening the academic pipeline for immigrant youth.

In terms of policy investments, private foundations and private–public partnerships are key players in work on the pipeline problem because of their autonomy and nimbleness (Cooper 2008). They help advance research and practice as well as guide further investments. Systemic work on incorporating immigrant youth is a relatively new field, so both failures and successes are important sources for learning. Foundations support learning communities to consider sensitive issues such as undocumented youth and both fragile and sustainable innovations.

Incorporating immigrant youth into the educational and, ultimately, the occupational and civic systems of receiving countries has attracted investments by US and European foundations to address issues of immigration, discrimination, and equal opportunity. For example, working in 43 German cities, the Freudenberg Stiftung (Foundation) seeks to improve immigrant students' learning from preschool to secondary schools in low-income neighborhoods with immigrant majorities by partnering with centers for integration, education, and democracy; contributions of local mayors and school headmasters have proven especially important in the effectiveness of these programs. The Robert Bosch Stiftung funds scholarships for gifted immigrant students in Germany so they can become role models for other immigrant youth.

Finally, comparative international research on the adaptation of immigrant youth, such as The Integration of the European Second Generation project (www.tiesproject.eu; e.g., Thompson and Crul 2007), is valuable in mapping similarities and differences across nations. Given current global economic challenges, our next steps will involve how to design and support the bridges described in this paper over the lean years ahead. Strengthening ties both within communities and across them – what Putnam (2000) called *bonding* and *bridging* capital – will be key assets in endeavors to bridge divides and advance immigrant and Latino youth's pathways through the academic pipeline.

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