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AGE AT IMMIGRANT ARRIVAL AND CAREER MOBILITY:  
EVIDENCE FROM VIETNAMESE REFUGEE MIGRATION  
AND THE AMERASIAN HOMECOMING ACT

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and the Amerasian Homecoming Act

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**ABSTRACT**

We study the long-term career mobility of young immigrants, mostly refugees, from Vietnam who moved to the US during 1989-1995. This migration wave was sparked by unexpected events, culminating in the 1987 Amerasian Homecoming Act. Characteristics of the wave minimized selection effects regarding who migrated. Small differences in the age at arrival, specifically being 14-17 years old on entry compared to 18-21, resulted in substantial differences in future economic outcomes. Using Census Bureau data, we characterize the different career profiles of young vs. older immigrants, and we quantify explanatory factors like education, language fluency, and persistence from initial employers.

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# 1 Introduction

The economic assimilation of immigrants into the labor markets of receiving countries is important for both the prosperity of the immigrants and their families and for the firms and communities that surround them. Language fluency, education/skill credentials, and cultural distance shape outcomes at the individual level (e.g., Ansala et al., 2020, 2022; Arendt et al., 2021). Immigrants may also face barriers like occupational licensing or, commonly in the case of refugees, wholesale restrictions on work authorizations (e.g., Chin and Cortes, 2015). The depth and traits of existing migrant co-national populations further influence job choices of new arrivals (e.g., Edin et al., 2003; Beaman, 2012).

This study quantifies the importance of age at arrival for long-term economic outcomes, contrasting immigrants arriving from Vietnam as young teens (14-17 years old) versus a bit older (18-21) during the 1989-1995 period. These individuals came from very challenging conditions in Vietnam and faced continued hardship in America upon arrival. Yet, they mostly prospered, especially the youngest arrivals. We build a new data platform using administrative records to characterize the long-term economic consequences and career profiles linked to age at arrival. Our ability to separate age-at-arrival effects during teen years is novel, and we provide new comparisons of the relative importance of educational attainment, language fluency, and initial conditions for future career trajectories.

The 1989-1995 period marked the third and final wave of mass immigration from Vietnam to America that followed from the 1987 Amerasian Homecoming Act (AHA). Amerasians are defined as those born in Vietnam to a mother from Vietnam and a US service member or civilian father stationed there during the Vietnam War. During the war and for years after, neither the United States nor Vietnam took responsibility for the well-being of Amerasians. Very few were initially able to migrate to America, as many fathers did not know of the children, nor claim them if they did. Amerasians also frequently suffered from prejudice and poverty in Vietnam due to their partial American parentage, being dismissed by some as “dust of life” (Bui Doi) or “children of the dust” (Lamb, 2009). A series of unlikely events following from a single photograph, however, culminated in the AHA legislation that facilitated the mass migration of more than 25,000 Amerasians and 70,000 accompanying relatives starting in late 1988 and being mostly complete by 1995 (Lee, 2015). Expectations for their future prospects were low, with a *Los Angeles Times* article in 1989 poignantly headlined: “Most of them are

unwanted, jobless and homeless, but children of U.S. servicemen still hope for a better life in the land of their fathers: Amerasians: Vietnam’s misbegotten legacy.” (Esper, 1989). Section 2 discusses the AHA-linked immigration wave, supplemented by Online Appendix A.

Section 3 describes our data. Our sample includes immigrants from Vietnam to America who arrived during the 1989-1995 period and with birth years consistent with the AHA requirements. These individuals are identified using information collected in the Decennial Censuses and the American Community Surveys (ACS). In addition to Amerasians, this sample captures siblings allowed to migrate with the Amerasians. It also includes similarly aged individuals being admitted from Vietnam during the wave under other visa categories, the majority of whom were admitted as refugees. For ease of reference, we label this 1989-1995 group hereafter as “AHA immigrants”. Descriptive statistics from the 1990 Census show that young and older arrivals have comparable (and very poor) initial living conditions. By fortuitous coincidence of timing, AHA-linked migration also occurred at the same time that the Longitudinal Employer Household Dynamics (LEHD) Database commenced. We link these arrivals at the person level into the LEHD from the early 1990s to 2014 to characterize career trajectories.

Section 4 describes our empirical approach that contrasts the future outcomes of those arriving as young teens (14-17 years old) versus a bit older (18-21). Features of the AHA minimize selection effects regarding migration choices, especially immigration for schooling. Most of our analyses use repeated cross-sections available with public data, a synthetic cohort technique launched by Cortes (2004). We also provide comparisons to natives of similar ages and to other immigrant groups arriving from comparable countries.

Sections 5-7 quantify that small differences in age at arrival matter greatly for future economic outcomes. AHA immigrants arriving at ages 14-17 achieve the same college completion rates as US natives and mostly similar income levels over the next three decades, whereas those arriving at ages 18-21 improve but retain long-term gaps in language fluency, education, and incomes. Consistent with removing selection effects, these patterns are quite different than what one observes using raw contemporaneous migration from countries similar to Vietnam, where older arrivals typically perform as well as or better than young arrivals. The LEHD further describes career trajectories, such as young arrivals being more likely to work in large firms, and we discuss some additional social outcomes like marriage patterns.

Section 8 evaluates the mechanisms behind these results. Wage gains for the young arrivals

are due to being in higher wage occupational groups versus differences within occupations. Levels of language fluency and education explain over half of the career variation between young and older arrivals, with mediation analyses particularly emphasizing the role of education. Indeed, language fluency and education explain most of the variation for those arriving age 16 and older, while the largest advantages for the youngest arrivals are only partially accounted for. There is a smaller role for the traits of an individual’s first employer, evidence of hysteresis. While local conditions matter for overall assimilation, they do not explain much of the age-related differential.

A substantial literature considers how the arrival ages of migrants shape outcomes in their host country (Chiswick, 1978; Friedberg, 1992, 2000). Age at arrival is frequently linked to language acquisition (e.g., Bleakley and Chin, 2004, 2010), and refugees often have a greater incentive to learn a host country’s language given their inability to immediately return to their origin country (e.g., Arendt et al., 2021; Foged et al., 2022; Abramitzky et al., 2023). A second, complementary channel links age at arrival to education (e.g., Böhlmark, 2008; Evans and Fitzgerald, 2017; Ansala et al., 2020). Additional work describes the longitudinal career paths of refugees, along with other migrants, and the role of factors like initial location in shaping these trajectories (e.g., Chiswick et al., 2005; Capps et al., 2015). Social capital and access to networks are important (e.g., Edin et al., 2003; Beaman, 2012; Dagnelie et al., 2019; Buggle et al., 2023; Kerr and Mandorff, 2023), and recent work has begun using firm-level and employer-employee data to understand these patterns (e.g., Andersson et al., 2014; Åslund et al., 2014; Kerr and Kerr, 2021; Arellano-Bover and San, 2023).<sup>1</sup>

Our work contributes in several ways. While causal links between age at arrival, language skills, and educational attainment have been established, the emphasis of the literature has been on younger ages than the critical teen years that we study. Neal (2018) shows that the window for investing in skills that enable effective learning (distinct from productive skills) closes around age 17. These types of skills are essential for economic integration, but evidence for them is obscured in self-selected migration data due to moves typically linked to high school or college attendance. Our AHA-linked setting provides a special laboratory for disentangling these effects given the size of the migration wave and the extent to which the unexpected opportunity was almost universally taken.

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<sup>1</sup>Online Appendix B describes this literature in greater detail. Important reviews with respect to refugees include Chin and Cortes (2015), Brell et al. (2020), and Hatton (2020).

Second, the link of the synthetic cohorts into 20+ years of true longitudinal data from the employer-employee records affords a much deeper insight into the career profiles that sit behind the earnings gaps measured in the household surveys. Arellano-Bover and San (2023) is the only study that we are aware of that covers a similarly long span. We can additionally measure the extent to which individual human capital (education, language proficiency) versus other initial conditions (e.g., traits of first employer, being located in one of 55 cluster site cities that first welcomed AHA immigrants) explains the later career profiles and the realized upward mobility. This approach can be useful for studying other migration waves (e.g., former Yugoslavia, Iraq, Myanmar), as well as for other purposes with data recorded in the household surveys.

Finally, and most simply, Vietnam was the largest source country of refugees to the United States during the final decades of the 20th century. This study provides one of the first analyses of the labor market outcomes for this group, providing a useful case study for other cases of large-scale migration waves under dire circumstances, which unfortunately remain far too common and may even increase with looming challenges like climate change.

## **2 Amerasian Homecoming Act and Immigration from Vietnam**

This section provides a short description of the exceptional story of the AHA legislation and the third wave of immigration from Vietnam to America. Online Appendix A provides a detailed account and references.

The Vietnam War led to three large waves of migration to the United States. The first spike was in 1975 as the war ended, and the second surge came with the 1979 Orderly Departure Program. As relations between the United States and Vietnam further deteriorated during the 1980s, immigration declined substantially. A series of unlikely and unexpected events, centering on Amerasians, sparked a final wave from 1989-1995. Panel A of Figure 1 shows these three waves as present in the 2015-2019 American Community Survey through years of arrival.

Following the war, Amerasians faced very rough conditions. They were often treated as outcasts in Vietnam, visible reminders of the war. Many Amerasians survived with their mothers on the fringes of Vietnam's conservative society; others were abandoned. The United States also turned its back on the Amerasians, in large part because few US fathers knew

of and/or would claim them. Vietnam argued the children were American citizens, were not discriminated against, and should not be viewed as political refugees. For its part, the United States refused them citizenship (which, in contrast to Vietnam's patrilineal society, focuses more on the mother's citizenship) and erected barriers to prevent large-scale migration. The total immigration prior to the AHA is estimated at 6,000 Amerasians and 11,000 relatives (Esper, 1989).

Le Van Minh's photo, however, changed the lives of many. In October 1985, Audrey Tiernan photographed Minh, an abandoned Amerasian stricken with polio, in Ho Chi Minh City. Appendix Figure 1 shows Tiernan's photo and later pictures of Minh. This photo was published alongside an article about the plight of Amerasians in the New York newspaper *Newsday*. Upset, four students from Huntington High School in Long Island circulated a petition in 1986 to bring Minh to the United States for medical attention, ultimately collecting 27,000 signatures. The students asked their Democratic congressman, Representative Robert Mrazek, for help. In 1987, Mrazek flew to Ho Chi Minh City with the goal of helping Minh. Yet, Mrazek was overwhelmed once he saw how many Amerasians were experiencing similar hardships. Lamb (2009) noted: "Some called him "Daddy." They tugged at his hand to direct him to the shuttered church where they lived. Another 60 or 70 Amerasians were camped in the yard. The refrain Mrazek kept hearing was, "I want to go to the land of my father.""

Deeply moved, Mrazek worked with Republican Senator John McCain to introduce the bipartisan AHA legislation. With very limited legislative review<sup>2</sup>, the AHA was passed by Congress in 1987, took effect in March 1988, and was fully implemented by 1989. It allowed Amerasians born during 1962-1975 to migrate to America. The law was to expire in two years, but it was later extended. The AHA led to a third migration wave, with one source at the time estimating 20,000 Amerasians and 50,000 family members resettled during 1989-1993 alone (Branigin, 1993). Panel B of Figure 1 shows official counts of Amerasian arrivals.

Critical changes embedded in the AHA unlocked the third wave. Whereas prior policies only

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<sup>2</sup>Rep. Mrazek recounted in Thomas (2021): "I drafted the entire piece of legislation, which included a several hundred million dollar appropriation for the transition program in the Philippines, with just my personal staff and the assistance of the House Legislative Counsel. Before its passage in the continuing resolution of 1987, the bill received no public hearings or other serious consideration in the House or Senate. ... the Amerasian Homecoming Act was passed in spite of opposition by the State Department of the Reagan administration, the House Judiciary Committee (the committee responsible for immigration legislation), and the Senate Judiciary committee. However, it was reviewed by the many nongovernmental agencies that would have to play a role in finding landing spots in the United States for thousands of families, and they were enthusiastic."

allowed an Amerasian to migrate as an individual and required a US sponsor, the AHA allowed the full migration of the Amerasian’s family and did not require a US sponsor. Additionally, the AHA dropped requirements of documentation to prove US parentage, with many cases being processed using physical facial features only. In early years of the program, an estimated 95% of applications were approved. While the law did not officially declare Amerasians to be refugees, it provided them similar types of assistance. This included upfront travel assistance provided by the International Organization for Migration, eliminating financial barriers.

Most Amerasians applying under the AHA program were very poor, spoke little English, and had limited education. If accepted and lacking a US sponsor, as most migrants were, they were sent to the Philippines Refugee Processing Center near Morong, Bataan, Philippines for a six-month program on the English language and a “Cultural Orientation” program (GAO, 1994). Afterwards, the Amerasian and accompanying family members moved to resettlement centers in one of 55 cluster site cities across the United States, where a resettlement agency assisted with short-term housing, administrative appointments with banks and government departments, school enrollment, and training and welfare assistance while adults searched for jobs. Appendix Figure 2 shows a map of some resettlement centers located outside of California.

Some reports suggest that all but approximately 400 Amerasians ultimately migrated to the United States (Isenberg, 2020). While this figure is impossible to know precisely, the consensus view is that the vast majority of Amerasians took advantage of the opportunity. The improved relations allowed US officials to have a presence in Vietnam to interview Amerasians. The changing attitudes of America towards Vietnam with the AHA also provided for a final surge of refugee-based admissions. Rep. Mrazek described the period as a “mass exodus” (Thomas, 2021). After 1995, refugees admissions from Vietnam precipitously declined.

## **3 Data**

### **3.1 Public Data Sources**

Our primary data come from the public-use files of the 1990 and 2000 Decennial Censuses and the 2005-2019 American Community Surveys (ACS) (Ruggles, 2021). We consider individuals born in Vietnam during AHA-eligible years who arrived during the 1989-1995 period. We further require immigrants be 14-21 years old at arrival. The youngest possible migrant with the AHA program would have been 14 years old, and we exclude those over age 21 at arrival to



focus on youth making education and career choices. Our primary analyses compare “young arrivals” (14-17 years old) with “older arrivals” (18-21 years old).<sup>3</sup>

These samples encompass Amerasians, their accompanying siblings of similar ages, and other youth arrivals from Vietnam during the surge period. Using population weights, we follow approximately 60,000 immigrants from the surge, which is an expected size for the overall inflow in this age range. The data do not contain visa information to distinguish among these cases, and conditioning on a known US father would not be helpful as very few Amerasians were re-united. Regardless, the non-Amerasian youth from Vietnam faced quite similar conditions. Calculations using State Department arrivals data suggest that two-thirds of all immigration during 1989-1995 from Vietnam was Amerasian- or refugee-based, and this is likely a lower bound for 14-21 year olds given the AHA program’s structure.

Online Appendix C and Appendix Table 1 use the 1990 Decennial Census to describe the earliest AHA arrivals and their living conditions. Only half of AHA immigrants report speaking English well, and the young AHA immigrants have on average one year less of schooling than older arrivals. Both groups are living in very poor households, averaging about half of the typical household incomes of their metropolitan areas and much higher rates of welfare dependency (4.5x for young arrivals, and 2x for older arrivals). Members of the households in which the AHA immigrants live have similarly low levels of education, English fluency, and employment rates. The family structures are also similar, excepting the young arrivals have a 9% higher likelihood of living with a social or biological mother, and confirm that very few AHA immigrants were reunited with a father. Finally, and in line with random assignment, there are almost no differences between the groups in terms of their locations, including being in an AHA cluster site. These patterns corroborate the dire initial conditions of AHA immigrants evident in other sources, and they suggest that young arrivals tended to face equal or more challenging conditions than their older peers.

### **3.2 Confidential Employer-Employee Data**

To supplement and enrich the public data, we utilize the confidential Longitudinal Employer Household Dynamics (LEHD) database. The LEHD is constructed by the Census Bureau

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<sup>3</sup>The future education attainment and income levels of immigrants arriving at age 22 and older during the 1989-1995 window are lower than the levels of those who migrated at age 21 or younger. While accompanying family members could be younger than 14, we do not analyze them in this paper.

from state-level quarterly filings by employers for the administration of state unemployment insurance (UI) benefit programs. Records identify each paid employee at an establishment and the employee’s quarterly compensation; employees with multiple jobs are recorded separately by each firm. The data longitudinally follow establishments and employees. We have access to the data for 23 states/DC for this project, including states like California and Texas that received many AHA immigrants.<sup>4</sup> Our data extend through 2014, with start dates varying by state beginning in the early 1990s.

The person-level characteristics available in the LEHD include age, gender, race, place of birth, and citizenship status. The employment history files provide job-level earnings of each worker within the covered states, and a national indicator file contains the quarterly employment status of individuals across all US states. Using unique person identifiers, we merge the 2000 Decennial Census and the ACS into the LEHD. This merger identifies the AHA immigrants among the LEHD records, and with this link established, we can follow them across their careers. For the LEHD work, we only compare young and older arrivals. Natives and other immigrants are used to calculate the traits of the establishments, but they do not feature in our regression samples. Our sample captures 110,000 person-year observations of AHA immigrants across the full span of the LEHD, and 8,500 unique individuals when we focus on the 2000-2014 career profiles.<sup>5</sup>

## 4 Empirical Approach

Our primary analyses consider repeated cross-sections of data. The unexpected nature of the third wave and the low barriers for Amerasians and their families minimize selection effects that are common when youth decide to migrate. Upon arrival, these immigrants held many traits common with refugees, but they gained immediate and unrestricted access to US schools and the labor market. Additionally, as very few anticipated returning to Vietnam, they had a strong incentive to assimilate into the US labor market. These features of the AHA wave and our panel data also minimize any selection effects that tend to plague cross-section studies of

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<sup>4</sup>Covered states include Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Delaware, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Maryland, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and Washington, as well as Washington D.C.

<sup>5</sup>Census Bureau disclosure requires observation counts be rounded, and all reported numbers are likewise rounded to a maximum of four significant digits. We exclude job observations with less than \$250 in quarterly earnings. We also drop a small number of records of individuals who are 17 and younger at time of employment, beginning their careers at age 18.

immigrant assimilation (Rho and Sanders, 2021).

We accordingly analyze each time period separately, often combining estimates across periods into figures. The baseline regression for a given period takes the form for person  $i$  living in state  $s$ ,

$$Y_{i,s} = \eta_s + \beta X_i + \gamma_1(0,1)YoungAHA_i + \gamma_2(0,1)OlderAHA_i + \epsilon_{i,s} \quad (1)$$

where  $YoungAHA_i$  is an indicator variable for AHA immigrant aged 14-17 at arrival and  $OlderAHA_i$  is an indicator variable for AHA immigrant aged 18-21 at arrival. The  $\beta$ ,  $\gamma_1$  and  $\gamma_2$  coefficients are estimated period-by-period, although for ease of notation we do not include time subscripts in equation (1). We include state fixed effects  $\eta_s$  in estimations to account for the greater representation of AHA immigrants in cluster-receiving states, especially California. We cluster standard errors by state.

The  $X_i$  controls include a linear age term and an indicator variable for gender. Our young versus older arrival framework focuses on age-at-arrival effects after partialing out simple linear differences captured by the age control. We later show robustness to dropping the age control or modelling age in other ways. Time effects are implicitly accounted for by our analyses being conducted period-by-period, and we treat the whole AHA episode as a single arrival cohort.

The reference group in these estimations is native-born individuals of similar ages. Thus, the  $\gamma_1$  and  $\gamma_2$  coefficients compare how the young and older arrivals, respectively, are performing compared to natives. These coefficients are, by themselves, intrinsically interesting given that they model the assimilation on economic and social dimensions of a large immigration wave that contained limited selection biases in terms of who chose to come to the United States or to stay. While Section 2's historical record suggests we should not claim zero bias, the setting is arguably as good as it gets for a migration wave of this scale.

Ultimately, though, we will turn our attention to the difference between young and older arrivals, which in specification (1) would be  $\gamma_1 - \gamma_2$ . This difference can be viewed as causal for age-at-arrival effects under less restrictive conditions. We must assert, for example, that there are no selection differences in Vietnam between young and older individuals in terms of selecting to migrate to the United States, that spatial sorting is effectively random, and that they did not bring important skill differences beyond what we can measure in terms of fluency and education (e.g., Dustmann and Görlach, 2015). Again, we deem the historical record on these features to be quite promising, if not perfect. Whereas the base  $\gamma_1$  and  $\gamma_2$  patterns will

be shaped by features of the AHA wave (e.g., the distance of the Vietnamese language from English; whether the immigrants settled into booming or stagnant cities), the age-at-arrival effects will be much more generalizable due to the differencing.

While participation was near universal, it is nonetheless important to contemplate what selection features might still remain. We demonstrate later that migration for older arrivals is typically positively selected due to migration for schooling in America. To the degree that our data capture some of this effect in addition to our focal AHA wave, this would lead to a positive selection on older arrivals. On the other hand, older arrivals could be negatively selected to the degree that some declined to emigrate under the AHA program because they had an established life in Vietnam that they did not want to uproot. For young arrivals, the primary potential selection appears to be efforts to place children into families that had an AHA-eligible child so that the placed child could also come to America as an accompanying sibling. To the degree that these efforts to latch onto the AHA program focused on more talented children, positive selection would be possible.

## 5 Effects of Age at Arrival on Language Fluency and Education

Figure 2 provides a visual representation of fluency and education trajectories across the 2000 Decennial Censuses and the 2005-2009, 2010-2014, and 2015-2019 ACS waves.<sup>6</sup> Panel A models as the outcome variable an indicator variable for speaking English well, which virtually all US-born natives do. Both young and older AHA immigrants begin with almost a 50% lower likelihood of speaking English well. By 2000, when AHA immigrants are 25-32 years old, the language gaps for young and older AHA immigrants have diminished to about 20% and 33%, respectively. These gaps further shrink at a slow pace through the end of the sample, when most young AHA immigrants are in their mid 40s. For reference, the ages of AHA immigrants included in this study are reported below the horizontal axis in each panel.

Panel B considers reported years of schooling. The 1990 point is included for completeness, with the young AHA having modestly higher relative education than the older AHA immigrants, with both groups falling below the US-born average. More interesting is the divergence that follows. Young AHA immigrants almost close the gap to US natives, hovering at about

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<sup>6</sup>Appendix Table 2 provides descriptive values for Figures 2-5, and Appendix Tables 3-4b record observation counts, coefficients, and standard errors.

0.2 years less, whereas the older AHA immigrants lose ground and typically show more than a year's gap.

Panels C and D of Figure 2 continue by showing the share who completed high school (Grade 12 of schooling) and those who completed college education (defined to be 4+ years of college education in our data).<sup>7</sup> For high school completion, there is a 9% lower rate for the young AHA immigrants and a 20% lower rate for the older AHA immigrants in 2000. The differences between these groups and to similarly aged US natives are significant. For the AHA immigrants who complete high school, a disproportionate share go on to complete college. Thus, the college completion rate of the young AHA immigrants is quite similar to US natives, while the older AHA group lags by about 14%.<sup>8</sup>

Figure 3 extends this analysis by modifying the baseline specification (1) to introduce a third indicator variable for US-born minorities (including Asian Americans). The United States has long struggled with persistent racial education and income gaps, and so a comparison across white and non-white native groups provides further context for understanding AHA outcomes. In these expanded estimations, the omitted reference group becomes white US natives, whereas our prior estimations modelled all US natives as the reference group.

We also expand the sample by including a comparison group of immigrants who are of the same birth years and time arrivals to America as the AHA immigrants, but who have entered through more typical channels (often in pursuit of high school or college educations). We consider immigrants from 25 countries with a non-English primary native language and with GDPs per capita in 1988 that fell within 70% of Vietnam as measured by the World Bank.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup>Beyond fluency and years of schooling, 1990 values are dummied out given that features like college completion rates or wage incomes have little meaning/comparability at that early point.

<sup>8</sup>During the 2000-2019 period, 3.6% and 7.1% of young and older AHA immigrants report "N/A or no schooling" to the educ variable in IPUMS, compared to 0.5% of similarly aged US natives. For our analysis of years of education, we felt more secure excluding these cases versus inferring a zero value. The alternative approach to infer zero years of schooling would further increase the measured gaps of AHA immigrants to US natives to be 0.6 and 1.9 years for young and older arrivals, respectively. For our binary metrics of educational attainment in Panel C and D, we modeled these individuals as not completing high school nor college. This slight difference in approach leads to small sample count differences across education outcomes.

<sup>9</sup>The list of countries and their percentage sample composition, aggregating over years: The Philippines (25.88), India (20.66), China (17.26), Haiti (9.49), Nicaragua (5.71), Pakistan (5.70), Guyana/British Guiana (4.98), Indonesia (2.11), Nigeria (1.95), Ghana (1.49), Egypt/United Arab Rep. (1.22), Kenya (1.10), Sri Lanka/Ceylon (0.70), Albania (0.67), Sudan (0.32), Uganda (0.24), Gambia (0.20), Guinea (0.11), Zambia (0.08), Togo (0.06), Bhutan (0.02), Kiribati (0.01), Rwanda (0.01), Madagascar (0.01), and Central African Republic (0.01). Five additional countries—Benin, Burkina Faso, Lesotho, Niger, and Solomon Islands—satisfied the conditions of similarity to Vietnam but did not have an immigrant to the United States that would have matched an AHA immigrant in terms of birth year and year of arrival.

We include a fourth indicator variable to measure their outcomes.

The future education and income levels achieved by non-Vietnamese immigrants contemporaneous to the AHA surge is comparable to and perhaps even exceeds the levels of white US natives. This is not too surprising given that many of these immigrants have self-selected to come to the United States for education and possible future employment (e.g., Dillon et al., 2025). They frequently come from wealthier backgrounds in their home countries. Appendix Figure 3 further shows that the outcomes of older arrivals within this peer country group are at or above the outcomes for young arrivals, the opposite of the pattern observed for the AHA-linked inflows.

For the AHA-linked admissions, which came from poorer baseline conditions in Vietnam, the young AHA immigrant outcomes sit in between those of the US-born whites and the US-born minorities. The older AHA immigrants tend to have lower educational attainment than US minorities, especially for finishing high school, but the income levels of the two groups ultimately track together closely.

Before proceeding, we reflect upon these education results. IPUMS data do not measure the accumulated quality of education for an individual, just the reported years of schooling. It is quite likely that 12 years of schooling for an AHA immigrant, being split across Vietnam and America, provided a lower skill base for the US labor market than 12 years of schooling by a typical US native. Consistent with this, language proficiency gaps are larger than schooling gaps. We will also soon observe that the wage gaps for AHA immigrants relative to US natives typically exceed what economists estimate as the return to an additional year of schooling. These interpretation questions only relate to comparability to US natives; the very sizable gaps that open up between the young and older AHA immigrations are not affected.

## 6 Effects of Age at Arrival on Wages and Incomes

Figure 4 turns to wage incomes, continuing to use specification (1). Panel A includes all individuals with non-missing wage records, allowing for zero wages. Panel B considers log wages that are conditional on employment. Sizable gaps exist in 2000 for both immigrant groups relative to US natives. By 2005-2009, much of the gap has closed for the young AHA immigrants, while the wage gap for older AHA immigrants widens. The young AHA immigrants are even briefly measured to be at parity to US natives in a log specification given the reduced emphasis

on the very top incomes. Post 2010, both AHA immigration groups lose ground relative to the incomes of US natives. Nominal wages for the young and older AHA immigrants continue to rise during the 2010s, but they do not keep pace with the averages of US natives. In 2015-2019, young AHA immigrants earn about 11% less than US natives and older AHA immigrants earn 24% less. Panels C and D show similar patterns when looking at total incomes.

These results are robust to a variety of specification checks: using person weights from IPUMS, focusing just on arrivals by 1991, dropping controls, and similar. Figure 5, complemented by age-of-arrival break-outs in Appendix Figure 4, again shows that the outcomes for immigrants from peer countries to Vietnam look different from what we observe with the AHA immigration wave. Without correcting for selection, the bias is to estimate significantly stronger earnings outcomes and to obscure the age-at-arrival effect.

To summarize outcomes and document results that will be useful when considering mechanisms in Section 8, Table 1 reports regressions that retain just the AHA immigrants in the 2015-2019 ACS files. We estimate a simplified regression that compares the young AHA immigrants to the older ones,

$$Y_{i,s} = \eta_s + \beta X_i + \gamma(0,1)YoungAHA_i + \epsilon_{i,s}. \quad (2)$$

Each row and column in Table 1 reports the  $\gamma$  coefficient and standard error from a separate regression. This  $\gamma$  coefficient is comparable to the  $\gamma_1 - \gamma_2$  difference described in Section 4. It measures age-at-arrival effects after we have conditioned covariates to be just among the AHA immigrant population. The first four rows document English language fluency and education, rows 5-7 consider employment status, and rows 8-11 consider incomes. These results are very similar to those shown in Figures 2 and 4, with any small differences deriving from covariates like state fixed effects adjusting for the sample being restricted to AHA immigrants.

Column 2 next repeats the regressions in rows 5-11 with added controls for English language fluency, completing high school, and completing college. These controls can explain the majority of the young arrival difference, a feature that we return to in Section 8. Online Appendix D extends Table 1 to document a full battery of economic and social outcomes with the 2015-2019 ACS files. While young and older arrivals are equally likely to be married, the young arrivals are more likely to have married a college graduate and non-Vietnamese spouse. They also live in higher valued properties, but we do not observe material differences in their

residential locations. We also use this sample in Appendix Tables 5-8 to show the robustness to alternative specification designs and finer-grained age-at-arrival bins.

In summary, despite being well into their teen years, small differences in arrival age among AHA immigrants had significant impact on their educational attainment and subsequent labor market earnings. The assimilation of the youngest group is indeed quite remarkable. When first observed in 1990, the young AHA immigrants lived in households with incomes 44.9% of the local MSA average, compared to 54.2% for older AHA immigrants. Both groups were exceptionally poor. By 2015-2019, the young AHA immigrants are in households earning 101.7% of their MSA's average, compared to 88.3% for older AHA immigrants. While both groups showed strong growth, the young AHA immigrants did materially better.

## 7 Effects of Age at Arrival on Career Trajectories

Online Appendix E provides an extended discussion of the careers exhibited by young versus older AHA arrivals in the confidential Census Bureau data, and we summarize a few highlights here. Appendix Table 9 first confirms that the LEHD shows annual earnings differences between young and older AHA immigrants comparable to Figure 4. The earnings dynamic, now measured at the individual level rather than through repeated cross-sections, is quite similar. Older AHA immigrants initially earn more in the 1990s, but young arrivals surpass them by the early 2000s. We also show that these patterns are robust to isolating individuals who first appeared in the LEHD in a cluster site and within three years of arrival to America. These individuals are very likely to have been part of the AHA legislation, providing confidence in our overall estimation approach.

Table 2 documents regressions with the LEHD of the form,

$$Y_i^{00-14} = \eta_s^{00} + \beta X_i + \gamma(0,1)YoungAHA_i + \epsilon_{i,s}. \quad (3)$$

Each row presents the  $\gamma$  coefficients from regressions with the indicated outcome variable  $Y_i^{00-14}$ . The base specification in Column 1 compares young arrivals to the older ones, conditional on gender, a linear age term, and fixed effects for the state where we first observe an individual in the LEHD in 2000 or afterwards. The means of outcome variables for the two groups are displayed in the last two columns of the table.

The first row shows that young arrivals display 12% more quarters of employment during



2000-2014. Moreover, the next rows show that the composition of this employment is different. We model firms through the State Employer Identification Numbers (SEINs) in the LEHD. Young arrivals spend more of their careers in large firms and in firms with average wages higher than their state’s median. By contrast, the older arrivals spend more of their time in small firms, firms with an immigrant from Vietnam as the top earner, or in firms in the nail care sector (where Vietnamese workers play a large role). There are no differences in the likelihood of young arrivals being the top earner in the establishment, a signal of likely entrepreneurship. These patterns capture that some of the differential between young and older arrivals comes through the former’s higher likelihood of being employed in better establishments that are less connected to co-nationals.

The second grouping of rows provides further insight on conditions of the job using continuous variables. Row 10 confirms that when employed, the young arrivals have higher quarterly earnings. The quarterly estimate of \$2,289 compares well to the 2015-2019 annual difference of \$6,734 measured in the ACS. The young arrivals tend to be 4.5% higher in the wage distribution of their establishment compared to older arrivals. Young arrivals also have a lower share of their co-workers being fellow immigrants from Vietnam.

Appendix Tables 10 and 11 provide adjusted R-squared values for these estimations and also additional outcome variables. Over the period, the young arrivals achieve their higher earnings mostly through steady incremental advancement. Young arrivals have modestly more years in which their wage income grows by 20% or more compared to prior years, but they have substantially fewer years where they experience sizable earnings declines or missing employment. Young arrivals shift over time to higher wage establishments, but this growth is a tenth of the within-person earning growth.

Column 2 next incorporates the language fluency and education of individuals as additional explanatory variables. The  $\gamma$  coefficient typically diminishes by half compared to Column 1, and the adjusted  $R^2$  values also rise by 0.046 on average. The third column further adds controls for the initial conditions of the individuals. We introduce an additional indicator variable for whether an individual was first observed in a city hosting a cluster site; we likewise control for whether an individual’s first LEHD job (including those before 2000) was in a small firm (under 50 employees) that had a top earner from Vietnam, a small firm with a top earner not from Vietnam, a larger firm with a top earner from Vietnam, or otherwise. These controls

explain a bit more of the variation (an average increment of 0.026 in adjusted  $R^2$  value, as shown in Appendix Table 11), consistent with persistence of initial conditions.<sup>10</sup>

## 8 Mechanisms for Age-at-Arrival Effects

Building on the prior three sections, we close the paper with a greater consideration of the roles of language fluency, education, and initial conditions in explaining differences in career outcomes for young versus older AHA immigrants. We first provide some additional descriptive features and then examine the wage gains through Gelbach (2016) decompositions and mediation analyses.<sup>11</sup>

To provide context, Figure 6 plots the share of young and older AHA individuals in 2015-2019 by the deciles of the US income distribution (natives included). Reflecting that these individuals still earn less than the US average, both distributions have an excess mass at below-median incomes. The relative gains for the young AHA immigrants compared to older arrivals came by shifting some of this below-median mass into the top three deciles. These distributions suggest that the relative gains of young arrivals came through a higher likelihood of achieving careers with above-average outcomes, versus a small number of extremely high outcomes.

Table 3 next documents the occupational distribution of young and older AHA immigrants in 2015-2019. Panel A shows that young AHA immigrants are less likely to be employed in service- and production-related occupations and instead are disproportionately in occupations related to computers, engineering, and health care. Within these 12 broad occupational groups, the wages of the young and older AHA immigrants are typically quite similar, with older immigrants having a higher average in about half of the groups. Thus, the overall wage advantage of young AHA immigrants comes from being disproportionately in higher wage occupational groups rather than from differences within the occupational groups. The remaining panels provide additional views of detailed occupations. Young immigrants have greater representation in roles like engineers, technicians, pharmacists, teachers, and dentists, and are less likely to be

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<sup>10</sup> Arellano-Bover (2024) quantifies the general career benefits to starting with a large firm.

<sup>11</sup> It is possible that greater rates of disability resulting from longer exposure to the trauma of the Vietnam War might be another mechanism/channel for explaining lower future economic outcomes for older arrivals. While we are not able to test this hypothesis in a comprehensive manner, the American Community Survey's disability questions provide some evidence. Older arrivals do not report in 2015-2019 that they have any greater difficulty than younger arrivals for cognitive, ambulatory, independent-living, self-care, vision, and hearing tasks.

in the nail care sector or working as stockers. Looking at detailed job titles, young immigrants are modestly more likely to be in the ten titles that include the phrase “supervisor” or the 20 titles that include “manager” or “chief executive officer”.

These career features suggest that core skills, like language fluency and education levels, may account for much or all of the young versus older arrival difference. Table 4 returns to the wage analysis of the 2015-2019 ACS to more formally test this explanatory power. The first two rows repeat the  $\gamma$  coefficients from Table 1 for wage outcomes with and without the language fluency and education controls, respectively. We remarked earlier that the  $\gamma$  coefficients sharply decline with these controls, which provides initial evidence of their role. Table 4 continues by reporting a Gelbach (2016) decomposition and a mediation analysis with respect to English language fluency, high school completion, and college completion.<sup>12</sup> Education levels account for about 80% of the mediation effect with respect to wage differences, with college completion being particularly important for the higher wage outcomes of the young arrivals. This pattern is representative for other outcomes as well, with education usually holding more explanatory power than language fluency for the advantages obtained by young arrivals.

Table 5 conducts the Gelbach decomposition with respect to LEHD earnings of the explanatory power of language fluency, education levels, being in a cluster site, and type of initial employer. Education levels again provide strong explanatory power, with some additional role ascribed to type of first employer. We do not generally observe a role for geographic location. Using data from the 2000 Census, the traits of the MSA where an AHA immigrant lived in 1995 do not predict much in terms of fluency, education and income in 2000. The one exception, which falls just short of being statistically significant at a 90% level, is state compulsory education requirements. An additional year of compulsory education for an AHA immigrant’s state in 1995 is associated with a 2% increase in both English language fluency and likelihood of finishing high school. Spatial traits in 1995 do not predict later college completion.

In summary, Figure 6 and Table 3 suggest the economic gains for the young arrivals compared to older peers came by a higher likelihood they entered higher-wage occupation groups and achieved earnings around the 8th decile of the US earnings distribution. Differences in education levels hold the most explanatory power for this shift. Appendix Tables 7 and 8 provide one additional nuance. Language fluency and education levels can explain most of the

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<sup>12</sup>The Baron and Kenny (1986) approach that directly compares coefficients with and without controls is simple and intuitive, but it can be misleading under some conditions (e.g., Schuler et al. 2024).

wage and social differences among those arriving between 16 and 21 years old. By contrast, while these variables matter for those arriving at 14-15 years old, there is a greater unexplained component. This suggests a greater capacity in early teenage years to assimilate, although our data cannot separate among potential root causes (e.g., more years of schooling in America could bring non-linear returns in cognitive skills, social and cultural skills, or both).

## 9 Conclusions

The Amerasian Homecoming Act of 1987 changed the lives of many. Most of the young individuals who migrated from Vietnam to America during 1989-1995 left from and arrived into very poor conditions. Yet, with limited prospect (or desire) to return migrate, AHA arrivals had strong incentives to invest in their integration into the US labor market.

Decades later, in his foreword for Thomas (2021), the AHA’s architect Representative Robert Mrazek expressed some surprise at what had transpired: “A year after passage of the Amerasian Homecoming Act, I began to receive annual reports from the State Department on the practical results of this mass exodus, and I came to wonder if my work to pass the legislation had made a meaningful difference in their lives. ... It was only in 2010, when a journalist named David Lamb contacted me to say that he was researching and writing a lengthy piece for Smithsonian magazine on the current status of Amerasians, that I learned of the many success stories, the thousands who had completed their education and gone on to have happy and productive lives.”

In his recollection, Rep. Mrazek also noted the heart of the issue investigated in this study. “When I first became aware of the issue in November 1986, the average age of the Amerasians in Vietnam was nearly seventeen. I felt strongly that if they weren’t able to come to the United States within a few years, they would reach adulthood and their chances of adapting to a new country would be significantly more difficult.”

Our study quantifies just how much Rep. Mrazek’s intuition held true. In doing so, it also contributes to the existing economics literature on age-at-arrival effects by showing how the gradient for upward mobility persists into the teen years. The strong tilt in future economic outcomes towards young arrivals suggests policy makers should be careful about the length of time spent in the migration process. For example, the AHA migration process included six months spent in the Philippines on language training and cultural assimilation. While our

variation does not allow us to evaluate the effectiveness of this approach directly, our results speak to an important opportunity cost in terms of delayed arrival into America. This delay may be inconsequential for a young child or an adult, but it could make a big difference for the future of a teenager. While every mass migration wave carries its own unique features, recognition of this sensitive period can aid in policy design to provide additional supports for those arriving a bit older.

While this paper emphasizes the importance of age at arrival, both groups from Vietnam gained tremendously as a consequence of migration. Indeed, the older arrivals achieved education and income levels that are today comparable to US-born minorities of a similar age. Future work could look at factors that explain this overall level of success by comparing the AHA-linked immigrants with similarly aged peers from other refugee waves to uncover policies or conditions that shape the overall success of the wave. Several features of the AHA wave – the permanent nature of the move, the settlement assistance and immediate work authorization provided, the partial US parentage even if fathers were not reunited with children, and more – could play important roles. We also hope further research continues to discern how immigrants achieve economic integration and upward mobility through the structures of the firms that employ them.

## Data Availability

Public-use data and replication code are available at Kerr (2025). For Census Bureau analyses, replication code is also available at Kerr (2025). <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/7LGF DY>.

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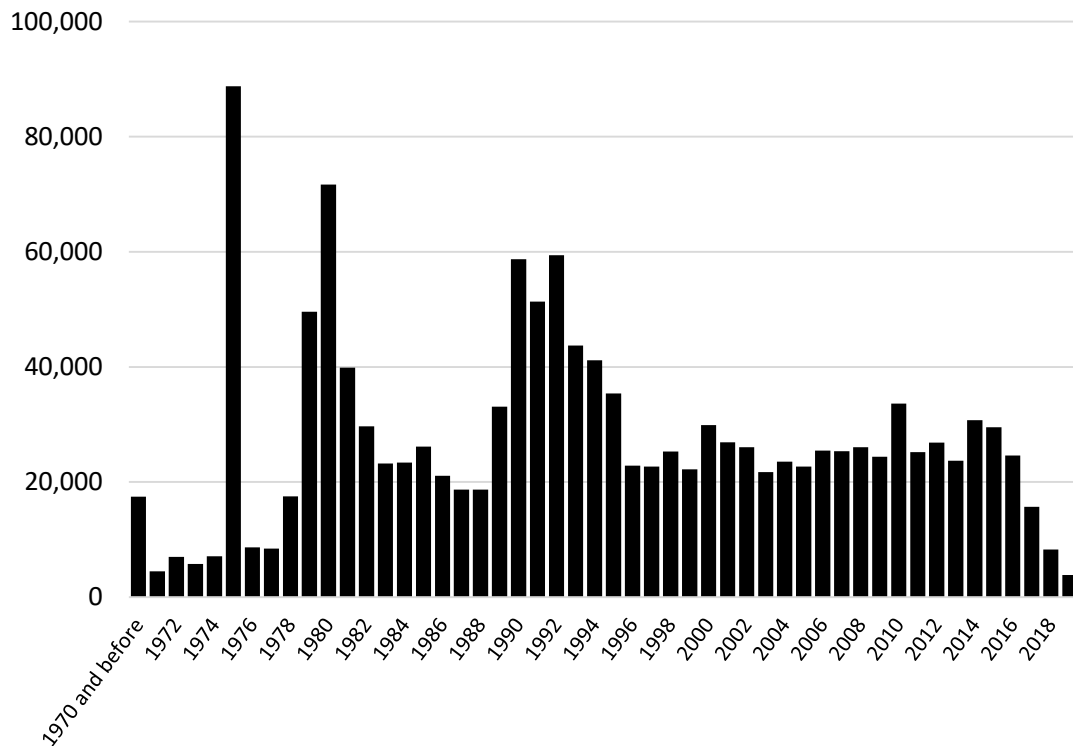
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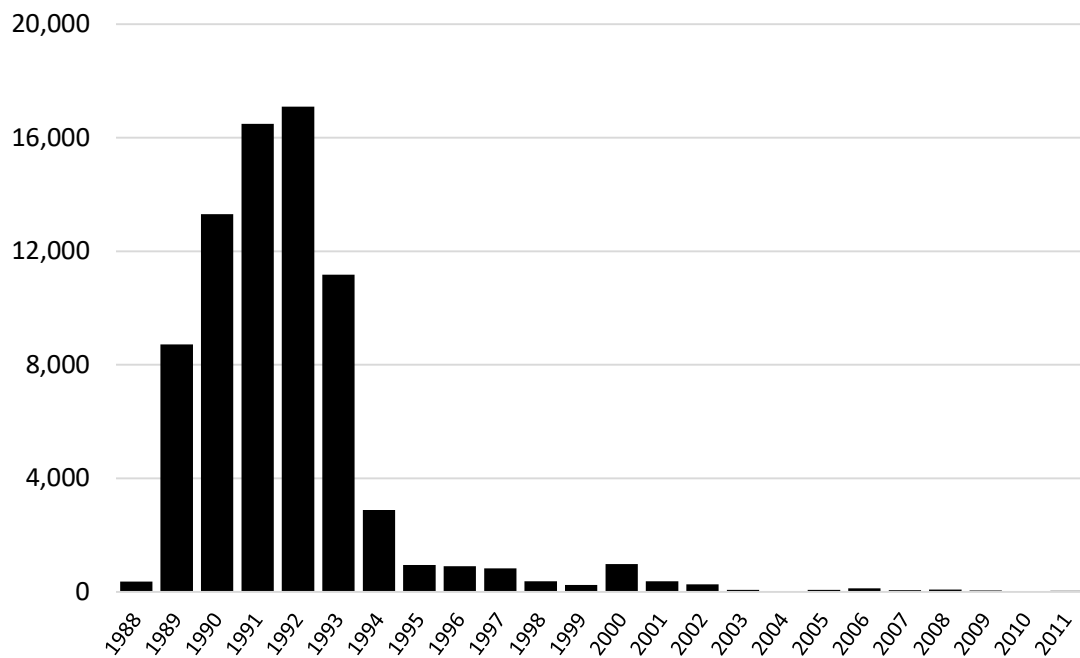


## Figure 1: Immigration from Vietnam to America

### A. Arrival dates of immigrants from Vietnam as present in 2015-2019 ACS

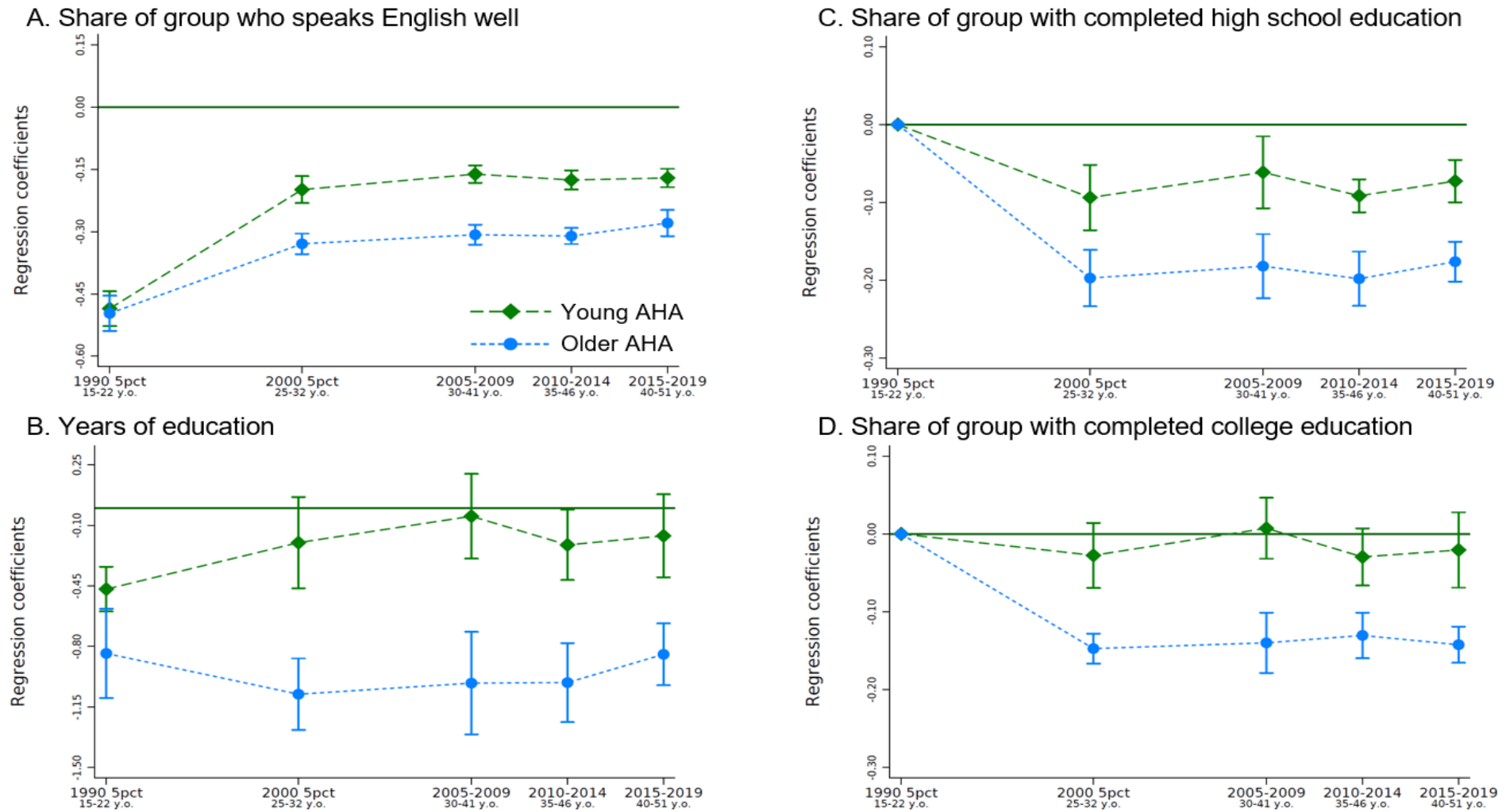


### B. Official count of Amerasian arrivals



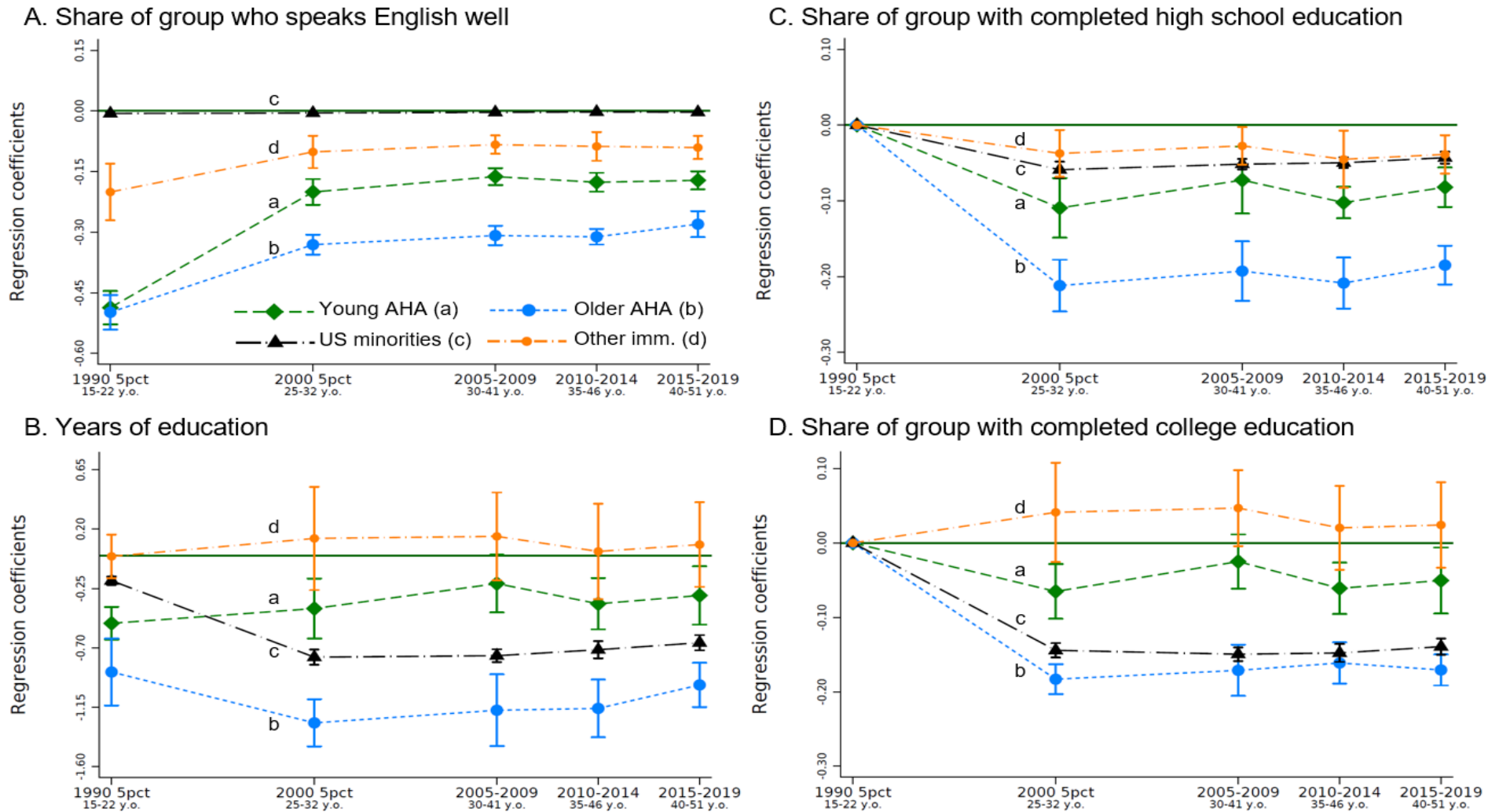
Notes: Figure shows data on immigration from Vietnam during the period of the 1987 Amerasian Homecoming Act. Panel A shows arrival years of immigrants from Vietnam surveyed in 2015-2019 ACS. Our focus is on the 1989-1995 immigrant arrivals sparked in part by the 1987 legislation. Panel B shows assembled data on Amerasian arrivals as recorded in government documents from Office of Refugee Resettlement Reports and Secretary of State Refugee admissions reports.

Figure 2: Language proficiency and education of young versus older AHA arrivals relative to all US natives



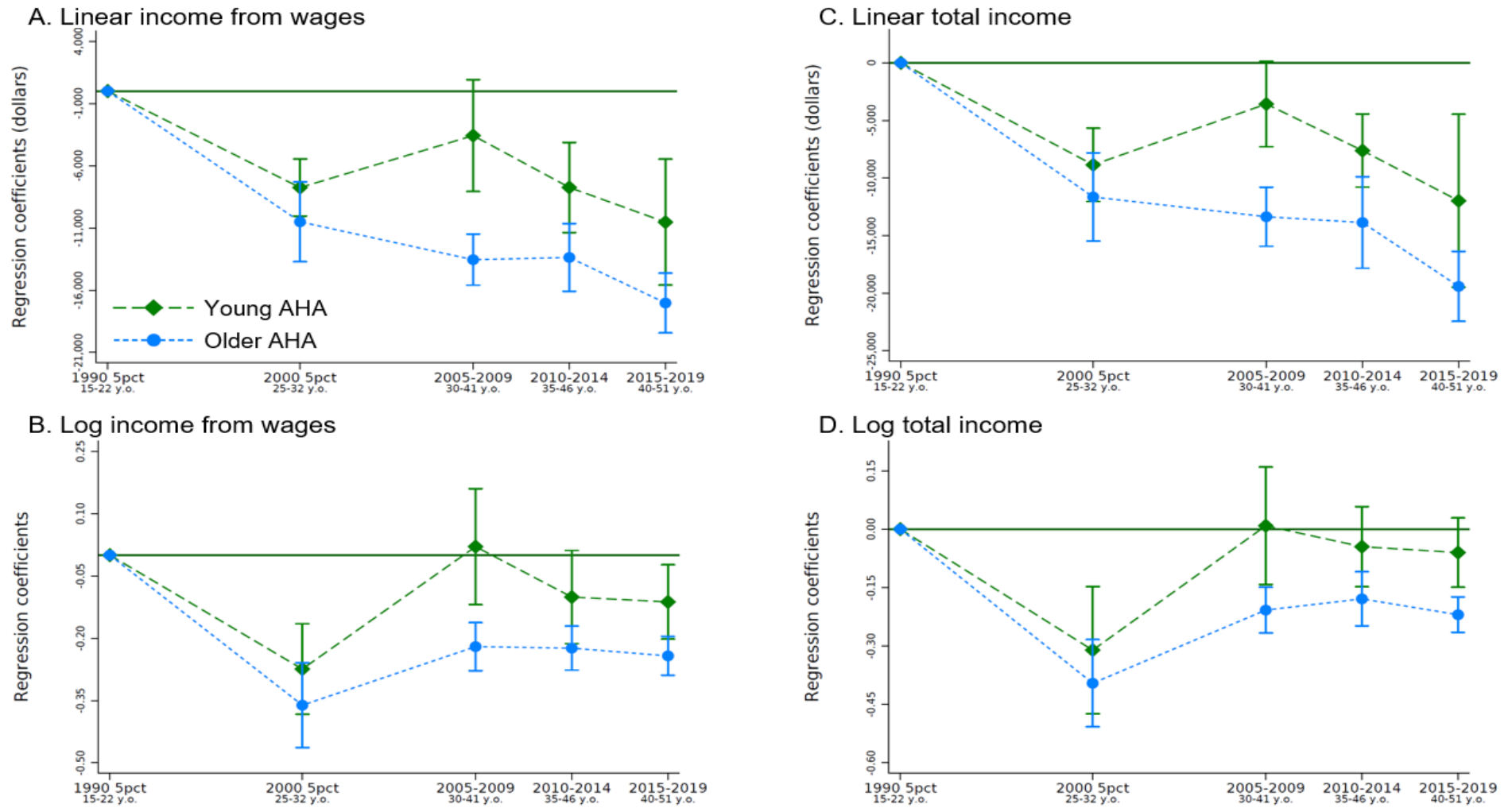
Notes: Figure shows the language fluency and education levels of AHA immigrants from Vietnam who arrived during 1989-1995 period compared to US natives of the same age. Young and older arrivals are those aged 14-17 and 18-21 years old, respectively, at arrival. Young arrivals achieve higher levels of fluency and education than older arrivals. Data combine Decennial Censuses from 1990, 2000, and the 2005-2009, 2010-2014, and 2015-2019 American Community Surveys. Ages of the sample in each time period are included in text below x-axis. Coefficients for young and older arrivals are measured relative to US natives. Regression controls include gender control, a linear age term, and state fixed effects. Regressions are unweighted and report 95 percentile confidence intervals with standard errors clustered by state. Observation counts for young AHA immigrants are 358, 755, 705, 786, and 716 for 1990, 2000, 2009, 2014, and 2019, respectively. During 2000-2019 period, the group represented an average population of 16,863. Counts for older AHA immigrants are 537, 2286, 2127, 2208, and 2208, respectively, representing an average 2000-2019 population of 49,951. Counts in Panel B are slightly lower due to excluding non-responses. Appendix Table 3 provides observation counts and represented population sizes by series and year. Appendix Table 4a reports regression coefficients and standard errors.

Figure 3: Extended analysis of language proficiency and education levels relative to white US natives



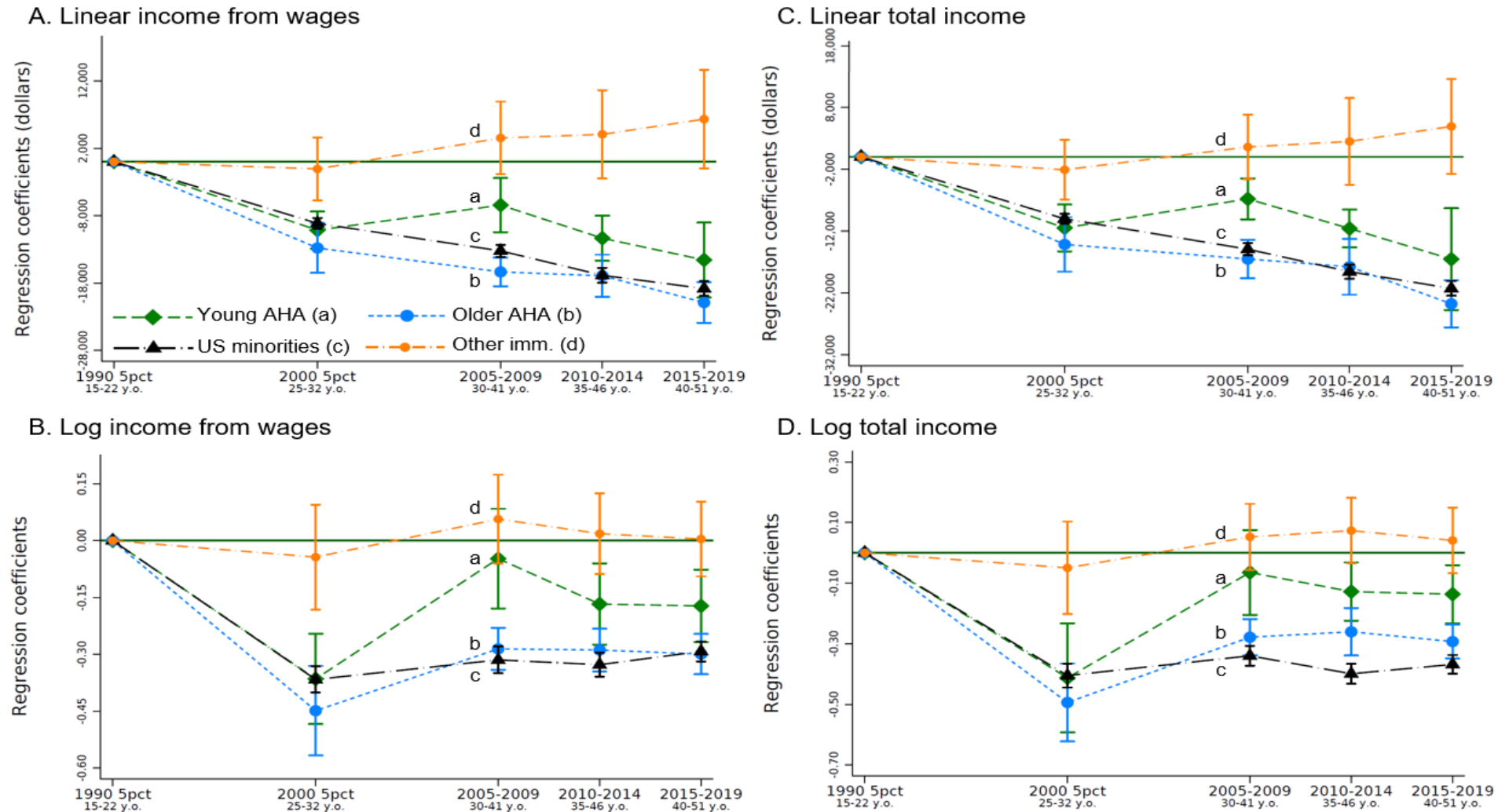
Notes: See Figure 2. These estimations model separate effects for non-white US-born minorities and for non-Vietnamese immigrants of comparable age. The reference group in these graphs is white US natives of similar ages as AHA immigrants. The non-Vietnamese immigrant comparison group includes immigrants to the United States at the same time and age range as the AHA wave from 25 countries of similar 1988 GDP per capita to Vietnam and having a non-English native language (e.g., the Philippines, India, China, Haiti). Differences between the AHA immigrants and those from peer countries reflect in part selection effects in the latter data of those migrating to the United States for schooling. Observation counts for young and older Vietnamese immigrants average 741 and 2207 during 2000-2019, as detailed in Figure 2. Observation counts for white US natives, minority US natives, and non-Vietnamese immigrants average 988,860, 215,487, and 6596 during 2000-2019. Appendix Table 3 provides observation counts and represented population sizes by series and year. Appendix Table 4b reports regression coefficients and standard errors.

Figure 4: Wages and income of young versus older AHA arrivals relative to all US natives



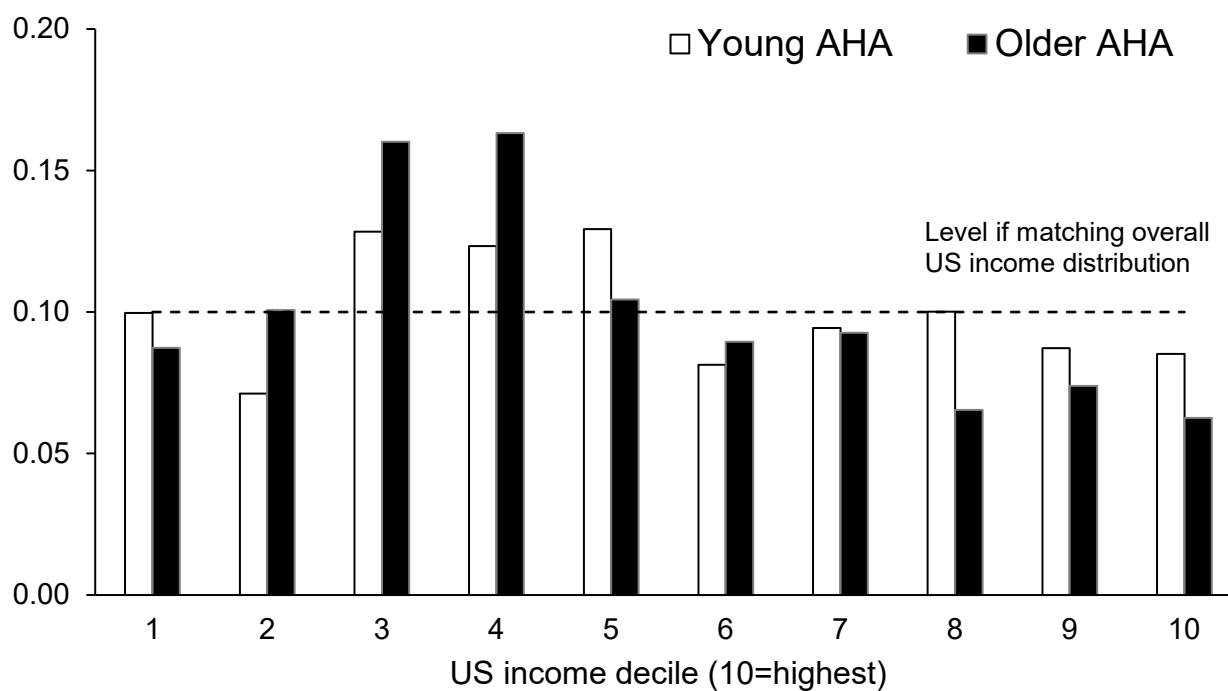
Notes: Figure shows the wage and total incomes of AHA immigrants from Vietnam who arrived during 1989-1995 period compared to US natives of the same age. Young and older arrivals are those aged 14-17 and 18-21 years old, respectively, at arrival. Young arrivals achieve higher levels wage and total incomes than older arrivals. Data combine Decennial Censuses from 1990, 2000, and the 2005-2009, 2010-2014, and 2015-2019 American Community Surveys. Ages of the sample in each time period are included in text below x-axis. Coefficients for young and older arrivals are measured relative to US natives. Regression controls include gender control, a linear age term, and state fixed effects. Regressions are unweighted and report 95 percentile confidence intervals with standard errors clustered by state. Observation counts for young AHA immigrants are 358, 755, 705, 786, and 716 for 1990, 2000, 2009, 2014, and 2019, respectively. During 2000-2019 period, the group represented an average population of 16,863. Counts for older AHA immigrants are 537, 2286, 2127, 2208, and 2208, respectively, representing an average 2000-2019 population of 49,951. Counts in Panel B and D are lower due to log transformation excluding zero-valued responses. Appendix Table 3 provides observation counts and represented population sizes by series and year. Appendix Table 4a reports regression coefficients and standard errors.

Figure 5: Extended analysis of wages and income relative to white US natives



Notes: See Figure 4. These estimations model separate effects for non-white US-born minorities and for non-Vietnamese immigrants of comparable age. The reference group in these graphs is white US natives of similar ages as AHA immigrants. The non-Vietnamese immigrant comparison group includes immigrants to the United States at the same time and age range as the AHA wave from 25 countries of similar 1988 GDP per capita to Vietnam and having a non-English native language (e.g., the Philippines, India, China, Haiti). Differences between the AHA immigrants and those from peer countries reflect in part selection effects in the latter data of those migrating to the United States for schooling. Observation counts for young and older Vietnamese immigrants average 741 and 2207 during 2000-2019, as detailed in Figure 4. Observation counts for white US natives, minority US natives, and non-Vietnamese immigrants average 988,860, 215,487, and 6596 during 2000-2019. Appendix Table 3 provides observation counts and represented population sizes by series and year. Appendix Table 4b reports regression coefficients and standard errors.

Figure 6: Distribution by US income deciles in 2015-2019



Notes: Figure shows distributions of young and older arrivals by income decile in 2015-2019 American Community Survey. Young arrivals show a higher mass in the 8th-10th deciles and lower mass in the 2nd-4th deciles compared to older arrivals. Observation counts for young and older AHA immigrants are 716 and 2208, respectively.

Table 1: Regressions of young versus older AHA immigrant arrivals using 2015-2019 ACS

		Regressions with base controls		Regressions adding controls for education and fluency		n	Mean values	
		Coeff.	SE	Coeff.	SE		Young	Older
		(1)		(2)		(3)	(4)	(5)
1	(0,1) Speaks English well	0.092	(0.018) ***	n.a.		2924	82.40%	71.60%
2	Years of education	0.611	(0.096) ***	n.a.		2661	13.89	13.18
3	(0,1) High school completion	0.086	(0.013) ***	n.a.		2924	87.29%	77.04%
4	(0,1) College completion	0.097	(0.023) ***	n.a.		2924	38.27%	25.68%
5	(0,1) Employed	-0.006	(0.024)	-0.019	(0.028)	2924	82.26%	83.83%
6	(0,1) Unemployed	-0.008	(0.004) *	-0.007	(0.005)	2924	1.68%	2.31%
7	(0,1) Not in labor force	0.014	(0.022)	0.026	(0.025)	2924	16.06%	13.86%
8	Total personal income (2021\$)	\$7323	(2908) **	\$1831	(3638)	2924	\$53,682	\$46,435
9	Log total personal income	0.131	(0.041) ***	0.009	(0.051)	2652	10.6	10.4
10	Wage and salary income	\$6734	(2108) ***	\$1203	(2248)	2924	\$48,242	\$41,496
11	Log wage and salary income	0.115	(0.040) ***	-0.011	(0.054)	2251	10.7	10.5

Notes: Table reports regression results using the 2015-2019 ACS files. Each row and column provides a separate estimation. The coefficients and standard errors in Column 1 are from an indicator variable for a young AHA immigrant arrival in 1989-1995 at 14-17 years old compared to the reference category of those arriving at 18-21 years old. Base controls include state fixed effects, gender, and a linear term in age. Column 2 adds in education and fluency controls. Education controls include indicator variables for completing high school and college. Fluency control is an indicator variable for speaking English well. Regressions are unweighted and report standard errors clustered by state. \*\*\* = 1%, \*\* = 5%, and \* = 10% statistical significance. Appendix Table 5 provides adjusted R-squared values for these estimations and also additional outcome variables. Appendix Tables 6-8 provide extensions.

Table 2: Regressions for young versus older AHA immigrant arrivals using 2000-2014 LEHD

	Regressions with base controls		Regressions adding controls for education and fluency		Regressions adding controls for education, fluency, initial city being cluster site, and traits of initial employer		Mean values	
	Coeff.	SE	Coeff.	SE	Coeff.	SE	Young	Older
	(1)		(2)		(3)		(4)	(5)
1 Share of quarters employed in LEHD	0.1229	(0.010) ***	0.0982	(0.007) ***	0.0960	(0.006) ***	68.6%	66.5%
2 ... in SEINs of 0-20 employees	-0.0269	(0.011) **	0.0039	(0.007)	0.0119	(0.006) **	23.6%	27.7%
3 ... in SEINs of 21-1000 employees	-0.0407	(0.011) ***	-0.0329	(0.008) ***	-0.0359	(0.008) ***	42.7%	45.6%
4 ... in SEINs of 1001+ employees	0.0676	(0.010) ***	0.0289	(0.008) ***	0.0240	(0.010) **	33.7%	26.8%
5 ... in SEINs that are high-tech NAICS (NSF definition)	-0.0084	(0.008)	-0.0298	(0.008) ***	-0.0321	(0.008) ***	23.3%	23.0%
6 ... in SEINs in NAICS 812113 (nail care)	-0.0174	(0.004) ***	-0.0012	(0.005)	0.0012	(0.006)	5.3%	8.1%
7 ... in SEINs that have mean wages higher than state median	0.0626	(0.016) ***	0.0193	(0.011) *	0.0136	(0.008) *	79.2%	72.3%
8 ... in SEINs where focal individual is top earner	0.0012	(0.007)	0.0085	(0.005) *	0.0105	(0.004) **	6.0%	7.4%
9 ... in SEINs where a co-ethnic individual is top earner	-0.0242	(0.012) **	0.0090	(0.007)	0.0154	(0.004) ***	17.4%	20.9%
10 Average quarterly earnings when employed	\$2,289	(243) ***	\$1,008	(119) ***	\$949	(113) ***	\$10,170	\$8,722
11 ... Log average quarterly earnings when employed	0.2662	(0.036) ***	0.1287	(0.018) ***	0.1204	(0.014) ***	8.79	8.64
12 ... Average percentile of person in SEIN wage distr.	4.492	(0.331) ***	3.284	(0.235) ***	3.251	(0.239) ***	49.35	47.59
13 Average share of employees who are co-ethnic	-0.0521	(0.012) ***	-0.0158	(0.006) **	-0.0106	(0.003) ***	19.3%	24.4%

Notes: Table reports regression results that aggregate 2000-2014 Longitudinal Employer Household Dynamics (LEHD) files. Each row and column provides a separate estimation. SEIN is a state employer identification number that is used to model firms in the LEHD. Estimations contain 8,500 observations (rounded per Census Bureau disclosure requirements). The coefficients and standard errors in Column 1 are from an indicator variable for a young arrival in 1989-1995 at 14-17 years old, compared to the reference category of those arriving at 18-21 years old. Base controls include state fixed effects of the first LEHD state observed for an individual at or after 2000, gender, and a linear term in age. Columns 2 and 3 add additional control variables. Education controls include indicator variables for completing high school and college. Fluency control is an indicator variable for speaking English well. The control for initial city being cluster site is measured through the LEHD. Controls for traits of initial employer include indicator variables for small Vietnamese-led firm, large Vietnamese-led firm, and small non-Vietnamese-led firm (with large non-Vietnamese-led firm being omitted category). Regressions are unweighted and report standard errors clustered by state. Included establishment-worker observations must exceed \$250 in quarterly earnings and be the primary job of the individual. Appendix Tables 10 and 11 provide adjusted R-squared values for these estimations and also additional outcome variables. Disclosure conducted under FSRDC Project Number 1571. (CBDRB-FY23-P1571-R10504).



Table 3: Occupations of young and older AHA immigrants in 2015-2019 ACS

		Young	Older	Differential
		(1)	(2)	(3)
A. Percent distribution over broad occupational categories				
1	Computer, Engineering, and Science	16.37	12.85	3.52
2	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	7.63	4.23	3.40
3	Sales and Related	6.26	4.27	1.99
4	Education, Legal, Comm. Service, Arts, Media	3.86	2.45	1.41
5	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	3.50	2.75	0.75
6	Office and Administrative Support	6.11	5.53	0.58
7	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	0.44	0.44	-
8	Management, Business, and Financial	9.51	9.69	(0.18)
9	Construction and Extraction	1.54	2.60	(1.06)
10	Transportation and Material Moving	2.96	4.24	(1.28)
11	Production	12.47	16.88	(4.41)
12	Service	29.36	34.07	(4.71)
B. Detailed occupations with highest over-representation of young arrivals				
13	Civil engineers	1.99	0.60	1.39
14	Automotive service technicians and mechanics	1.89	0.70	1.19
15	Pharmacists	2.04	1.02	1.02
16	Elementary and middle school teachers	1.18	0.19	0.99
17	Shipping, receiving, and inventory clerks	1.27	0.30	0.97
C. Detailed occupations with highest under-representation of young arrivals				
18	Manicurists and pedicurists	16.84	20.14	(3.30)
19	Stockers and order fillers	0.00	0.94	(0.94)
20	Other personal appearance workers	0.20	1.04	(0.84)
21	Carpenters	0.39	1.12	(0.73)
22	Laborers and freight, stock, and material movers, hand	0.15	0.85	(0.70)
D. Detailed occupations with supervisory or managerial key words				
23	10 occupations related to first-line supervisors	5.23	4.52	0.71
24	20 occupations related to management	5.36	4.92	0.44

Notes: Table compares occupations of employed AHA immigrants in 2015-2019. Compared to older arrivals, young arrivals are more likely to be working in occupations related to computers/engineering, healthcare, sales, and education and less likely to be engaged in personal services, especially those related to nail care. Observation counts for young and older AHA immigrants are 589 (representing 13,412 immigrants using person weights) and 1851 (representing 41,359 immigrants using person weights), respectively. Calculated values use person weights.

Table 4: Gelbach decomposition and mediation analysis of ACS wage and salary income 2015-2019

		Log wage and salary	Linear wage and salary
		(1)	(2)
1	Base young coefficient without fluency and education levels	0.115 (0.040)	\$6734 (2108)
2	Young coefficient including fluency and education levels	-0.011 (0.054)	\$1203 (2248)
Gelbach decomposition of difference			
3	Linear difference of 1 and 2	0.126 (0.025)	\$5531 (1371)
4	Share attributed to English language fluency	0.028 (0.013), 22%	\$890 (342), 16%
5	Share attributed to high school and college completions	0.098 (0.015), 78%	\$4641 (1103), 84%
Mediation analysis of explanatory variables in isolation			
6	Young coefficient when including English language fluency	0.056 (0.056)	\$4436 (2286)
7	Share of young coefficient attributed to mediated indirect effects	53%	40%
8	Young coefficient when including high school completion	0.070 (0.045)	\$4658 (2085)
9	Share of young coefficient attributed to mediated indirect effects	39%	34%
10	Young coefficient when including college completion	0.019 (0.044)	\$2168 (2036)
11	Share of young coefficient attributed to mediated indirect effects	77%	71%

Notes: See Table 1. This table considers the explanatory power of English language fluency and education levels for the observed 2015-2019 wage differences between young and older AHA arrivals. The first two rows repeat the regression coefficients and standard errors from Table 1. Rows 3-5 perform a Gelbach decomposition of the conditional wage difference into the portions attributed to English language fluency versus education levels. Rows 6-11 similarly undertake a mediation analysis of explanatory variables in isolation. Education levels have the most explanatory power. Observation counts for Columns 1 and 2 are 2251 and 2924, respectively.

Table 5: Gelbach decomposition of LEHD earnings 2000-2014

		Log average quarterly earnings when employed	Linear average quarterly earnings when employed
		(1)	(2)
1	Base young coefficient without controls	0.266 (0.036)	\$2289 (243)
2	Young coefficient including controls	0.120 (0.014)	\$949 (113)
Gelbach decomposition of difference			
3	Linear difference of 1 and 2	0.146 (0.025)	\$1340 (216)
4	Share attributed to English language fluency	0.014 (0.002), 10%	\$140 (24), 10%
5	Share attributed to high school and college completions	0.116 (0.020), 79%	\$1088 (162), 81%
6	Share attributed to being first observed in cluster site	0.000 (0.000), 0%	\$0 (0), 0%
7	Share attributed to traits of first employer	0.016 (0.006), 11%	\$112 (52), 8%

Notes: See Table 2. This table considers the explanatory power of English language fluency, education levels, being first observed in an AHA cluster site, and traits of initial employer for the observed 2000-2014 earnings differences between young and older AHA arrivals in the LEHD. The first two rows repeat the regression coefficients and standard errors from Table 2. Rows 3-7 perform a Gelbach decomposition of the conditional earnings difference. Education levels have the most explanatory power. Estimations contain 8,500 observations (rounded per Census Bureau disclosure requirements). Disclosure conducted under FSRDC Project Number 1571. (CBDRB-FY23-P1571-R11724).

ONLINE APPENDIX

Age at Immigrant Arrival and Career Mobility:  
Evidence from Vietnamese Refugee Migration and the  
Amerasian Homecoming Act

Fall 2025\*

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\*The research in this paper was conducted while the authors were Special Sworn Status researchers of the U.S. Census Bureau. Any views expressed are those of the authors and not those of the U.S. Census Bureau. The Census Bureau has reviewed this data product to ensure appropriate access, use, and disclosure avoidance protection of the confidential source data used to produce this product. This research was performed at a Federal Statistical Research Data Center under FSRDC Project Number 1571. (CBDRB-FY23-P1571-R10504, R11656, R11724). This research uses data from the Census Bureau's Longitudinal Employer Household Dynamics Program, which was partially supported by the following National Science Foundation Grants SES-9978093, SES-0339191 and ITR-0427889; National Institute on Aging Grant AG018854; and grants from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation.

## Appendix A: The Amerasian Homecoming Act

The Vietnam War and its aftermath led to the displacement of millions within Vietnam and across Southeast Asia. Despite this refugee crisis, few Vietnamese were allowed to migrate to America. As Saigon fell to North Vietnamese forces in April 1975, the US government passed the Indochina Migration and Refugee Act, a two-year evacuation and resettlement program facilitating a first wave of 130,000 Southeast Asian refugees to America, of which approximately 120,000 were from Vietnam (Ong Hing, 1997). As that program ended and hundreds of thousands of “boat people” continued to seek escape from Vietnam by sea, with estimates suggesting 10%-50% of them perishing during the journey (Wain, 1981; Zhou and Bankston, 2000), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees worked with Vietnam’s government to develop the 1979 Orderly Departure Program (ODP). The ODP launched a second and larger wave of Vietnamese migration to America.

Within this humanitarian tragedy, the “Amerasians” held a contested and neglected place. Amerasians are the sons and daughters of US service members and civilian personnel in Southeast Asia during the war period.<sup>1</sup> As the war drew on, many US service members formed relationships with Vietnamese women. Some of these relationships were loving and long-term; others were transactional. Many relationships resulted in children, some unknown to their fathers. Portraits of these relationships in popular US media ranged from the musical *Miss Saigon* to the Stanley Kubrick film *Full Metal Jacket*. See Doan (2017) for discussion of the portrayal of the Amerasian story.

From a young age, Amerasians and their mothers were often treated as outcasts in Vietnam. As Amerasians were mostly born to non-Asian white or black fathers, the “otherness” of Amerasian children was often visible to an ethnically homogeneous Vietnamese public. Some Amerasians were seen as visible reminders of their mothers’ lack of chastity, a value prized in Vietnamese society, and others as markers of relationships with the wartime enemy of North Vietnam. One Vietnamese saying proclaimed, “Children without a father are like a home without a roof” (Isenberg, 2020), and many sayings about the Amerasians were much worse.

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<sup>1</sup>Excepting where otherwise noted, we use the term Amerasian just with respect to those from Vietnam. The official definition of Amerasian on the 2021 instructions form I-360 by the US Citizenship and Immigration Service is “born in Korea, Vietnam, Laos, Kampuchea [Cambodia], or Thailand after December 31, 1950, and before October 22, 1982, and was fathered by a U.S. citizen.” (Source: <https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/forms/i-360instr.pdf>). Others have also used the term to include children of US service members in the Philippines and Japan.

Many Amerasians who lived with their mothers survived on the fringes of society; others were abandoned. Yet, few Amerasians made it to America during and immediately after the war, first and foremost because few US fathers knew of and/or would claim them.

Early interventions like 1975's "Operation Babylift" transported between 2,000 and 3,000 Amerasians out of Vietnam (Sachs, 2011), a tiny share of Amerasians born during the period of heavy US involvement in Vietnam. To a large degree, both Vietnam and the United States turned their back on the Amerasians in Vietnam except when using them for political negotiations.<sup>2</sup> Vietnam argued the children were American citizens, were not discriminated against, and should not be viewed as political refugees. The ODP only applied to refugees, and it did not initially include Amerasians as American family members or those with "close ties" to the United States. Amerasians were eventually included under the "close ties" category of the ODP, and Congress passed the Amerasian Immigration Act (AIA) in 1982 to grant immigration priority to the children of American fathers in Vietnam and four other Southeast Asian countries, but this too had limited impact (Robear, 1989).

One estimate placed the total immigration from ODP and the AIA at approximately 6,000 Amerasians and 11,000 relatives (Esper, 1989). Uptake was limited due to significant restrictions on accompanying relatives, with the AIA for example not permitting biological mothers to accompany admitted Amerasians, and the challenges of proving parenthood by a US service member. Many Amerasians did not know who their father was, and other families had destroyed evidence of their connection to US service members, including photographs and letters, as the Communists moved south and took power. Thomas (2019) further notes that many US veterans feared passage of the AIA and its potential implications for them. As relations between the United States and Vietnam further deteriorated during the 1980s and the ODP program was suspended, immigration hit new lows following the second wave and very little migration of Amerasians occurred (Robear, 1989; Thomas, 2021).

Le Van Minh's photo, however, would change the lives of many, sparking American support for Amerasian immigration. In October 1985, photographer Audrey Tiernan was working in Ho Chi Minh City for *Newsday*, a daily newspaper that mostly circulated in Long Island, NY. Tiernan felt a tug on her pant leg. "I thought it was a dog or a cat," she recalled. "I looked

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<sup>2</sup> "The care and welfare of these unfortunate children ... has never been and is not now considered an area of government responsibility" – the US Defense Department 1970. "Our society does not need these bad elements" – the Vietnamese director of social welfare in Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon) a decade later. Source: Lamb (2009).

down and there was Minh. It broke my heart.”<sup>3</sup> Minh was one of many Amerasians living on the streets, ridiculed like other Amerasians for having different skin colors and American-looking features. He had been stricken by polio and abandoned by his mother at age 10. He spent days begging on the streets with a friend and nights sleeping in an alleyway. Minh reached out to Tiernan, selling a flower he had created from the wrappers of cigarette packs.<sup>4</sup>

Tiernan’s photo of Minh was printed in newspapers and broadcasted in TV specials about the plight of Amerasians. Appendix Figure 1 shows Tiernan’s photo and later pictures of Minh. As news and images of the condition of Amerasian children spread around the United States, Americans began agitating for support of these children, seen by some as having been abandoned by the United States upon its withdrawal from Vietnam. Motivated by Tiernan’s photo, four students from Huntington High School in Long Island began to circulate a petition in 1986 to bring Minh to the United States for medical attention. The students ultimately collected 27,000 signatures and asked their Democratic congressman, Representative Robert Mrazek, for help. Mrazek was an alumnus of Huntington High School with no prior connections to immigration policy.

In 1987, Mrazek flew to Ho Chi Minh City with the goal of helping Minh come to the United States for medical care. Yet, Mrazek was overwhelmed once he saw how many Amerasians were experiencing similar hardships to those of Minh. Lamb (2009) noted: “Some called him “Daddy.” They tugged at his hand to direct him to the shuttered church where they lived. Another 60 or 70 Amerasians were camped in the yard. The refrain Mrazek kept hearing was, “I want to go to the land of my father.”” Mrazek was able to secure Minh’s migration to the United States, where he stayed with foster parents in Centerport, NY, and received medical treatment. Mrazek told the high school students who had created the petition that they were “bringing Le out of a life of misery to a new life in America” (Virag, 1987). As an adult, Minh moved to San Jose and worked as a newspaper distributor (Lamb, 2009).

Deeply moved by the experience, Mrazek worked with Republican Senator John McCain to introduce bipartisan legislation titled the Amerasian Homecoming Act (AHA). The AHA

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<sup>3</sup>The next three paragraphs pull extensively from Lamb (2009) “Children of the Vietnam War”. Source: <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/travel/children-of-the-vietnam-war-131207347/>

<sup>4</sup>Minh was born in September 1971 in Cam Ranh, the site of a US naval base. Minh’s American father “Joe” was a corporal in the US Army and spoke Vietnamese and his mother, Le Thi Ba, was a cook in the mess hall. According to Le Thi Ba, she dated Joe for over a year and he was present at Minh’s birth. They lost contact after the Viet Cong invaded the area and she fled to Saigon with Minh (Luo, 2000).

was passed by Congress in 1987, took effect in March 1988, and was fully implemented by 1989 (Congress.gov). Despite its significant change in policy, the legislation received limited review due to it being contained in a Continuing Resolution required for approval of the federal budget (Thomas, 2021). Thomas (2021, p. 210) described the reaction of Rep. Ron Mazzoli, chairman of Immigration Subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee: “When it appeared in the House as part of the appropriation bill, Mrazek faced harsh criticism from a furious Mazzoli, who assailed a bill created by a single member of the House that never had hearings and diverged from the policy standards for U.S. relations with Vietnam. However, Mazzoli could not remove the provision without rejecting the entire continuing resolution.”

The AHA allowed Amerasians fathered by US service members in Vietnam during the years 1962-1975 to migrate to America. Critically, the AHA also allowed the immigration of immediate relatives of the Amerasian and reduced documentation requirements, lowering the earlier barriers to mobility. While the law did not officially declare Amerasians to be refugees, it provided them similar types of assistance. This included upfront travel assistance provided by the International Organization for Migration to eliminate financial barriers. The law initially was set to expire in two years, but it was later extended through Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Acts of 1990 and 1991.

The AHA led to a third surge of immigration from Vietnam, with one source at the time estimating 20,000 Amerasians and 50,000 family members resettled during 1989-1993 (Branning, 1993). The US State Department reported that over 10,000 Amerasian visas were issued in 1989 alone (US State Department Report, 2013), and another source placed the number at 19,000 Amerasian visas (Lakshmanan, 2003). While it was possible to migrate under AHA during 1988, the slower implementation meant only 364 admissions (inclusive of accompanying family members) occurred. The figures for 1989 and 1990 were 8,721 and 13,307 respectively.

For this early period, it has been estimated that 95% of all Amerasian applicants and their relatives were granted admission, with a peak arrival year of 1992. Following Congressional concern that up to 17% of accompanying family members for Amerasians were fraudulent (i.e., pretending to be the sister or mother of the Amerasian applicant), the GAO reported to Congress that the rejection rate of applicants rose from 20% in 1991 to 80% in 1992 (GAO, 1992).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>At a seminar presentation of this paper, an Amerasian provided an anecdote of some orphaned Amerasians being adopted for the purpose of gaining access to America as an accompanying family member.



The count of AHA admissions would further reach about 25,000 Amerasians and about 60,000 relatives by 2009. Exact figures are not known due to limited data from the time period, but 21,000-30,000 Amerasians and 55,000-70,000 accompanying relatives appear to the authors to be close to the consensus.<sup>6</sup> Over 93% of visas and admissions credited to AHA in government documents happen during 1989-1995 (Office of Refugee Resettlement reports, Secretary of State Refugee Admissions reports).

Most Amerasians applying under the AHA program were very poor, spoke little to no English, and had limited education. Chuong and Van (1994) surveyed 275 Amerasians who had settled into California by 1991 about their backgrounds. Only seven of these migrants knew their fathers. Prior to departure for America, 59% indicated they did not know any English, and most of the rest had poor English language skills. More than 30% had three years or fewer of schooling, and 75% had eight years or less.

The AHA procedure included several resettlement steps. Amerasians and family members first applied in Vietnam.<sup>7</sup> If accepted and lacking a US sponsor, as most migrants were, they were sent to the Philippines Refugee Processing Center near Morong, Bataan, Philippines for a six-month program on the English language and a “Cultural Orientation” program (GAO, 1992). Anecdotal accounts also suggest some workplace training such as a McDonalds counter being built to model fast food service work. In cases where the migrant had an American sponsor and living arrangement established in the United States, they might have been able to go directly to their sponsored arrangement. Government reports differ on this detail, but, regardless, sponsored cases were rare.

Afterwards, the Amerasian and accompanying family members were sent to resettlement centers in one of 55 cluster site cities across the United States, where a resettlement agency assisted with the settling of Amerasian children and families through the provision of short-term housing, administrative appointments with banks and government departments, school enrollment, and training and welfare assistance while adults searched for jobs. Appendix Figure 2 shows a map of some of the resettlement centers that was included in a 1989 Department of

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<sup>6</sup>Sources include: <https://travel.state.gov/content/dam/visas/Statistics/AnnualReports/FY2013AnnualReport/FY13AnnualReport-TableX.pdf>; <https://immigrationtounitedstates.org/337-amerAsian-homecoming-act-of-1987.html>

<sup>7</sup>The Vietnamese government informed Amerasians about the program, with final interviews held in Ho Chi Minh City by US officials. While efforts were made to reach all candidates, a 1992 review found gaps in awareness of the program in rural and mountainous regions. Dell and Queruben (2018) document how US military approaches during the war shaped regional views of the United States.

State report. Some centers, including all the centers in California, are not shown.<sup>8</sup>

Life was not easy for Amerasians in the United States. One estimate suggests 14% of Amerasians attempted suicide (Thomas, 2021). Seen as different from both Vietnamese and Americans, the discrimination experienced in Vietnam displayed in different ways in the United States (Mullan et al., 2002). This was evidenced even through the AHA, which deemed Amerasians not to be citizens by birth, as is typical for children born to Americans, but as a separate category that was not given full rights. Ranard and Gilzow (1989) and Chuong and Van (1994) note the federal government provided resettlement centers with limited funds of \$35,000 each, but the centers had personnel experienced in resettling Amerasians.<sup>9</sup> AHA inflows had measurable but small relative sizes to the new host city, on the order of 0.05% of the city's population in the 2000 Decennial Census.

Some reports suggest that all but approximately 400 Amerasians ultimately migrated to the United States (Isenberg, 2020). While this is impossible to know precisely, the consensus is the vast majority of Amerasians took advantage of the opportunity. Some Amerasians who had successfully been processed for migration near the start of the AHA program reported in interviews that they knew of Amerasians who had not applied due to interference by Vietnamese officials and costs, including travelling to Ho Chi Minh City for interviews, getting government documents, and paying bribes (GAO, 1992). While most applicants lacked documentation that proved their American paternity, immigration officers often accepted applicants with physical features like hair, eye shape, and skin color that suggested they could be Amerasian (Thomas, 2021). With the AHA passage and the momentum that followed, both the United States and Vietnam increasingly approved of Amerasians being in the United States.

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<sup>8</sup>An example of a 1991 article about a Brooklyn, NY, center: <https://www.nytimes.com/1991/04/18/garden/sheltering-children-of-the-vietnam-war.html>

<sup>9</sup>Tien and Hunthausen (1990) describe in detail a refugee resettlement center in Tacoma. Once Amerasians and their families arrived, they were taken to a house by the program's office, where they could live for 2-4 weeks while long-term housing arrangements were made. In that 2-4 week period, they were further taken to: the bank to cash the reception and placement grant check they received; the social security office to get social security cards; the health department to get a health screening; the licensing department to get an alien identification card; an English as Second Language class to enroll adults for English classes; the school administration building to enroll students for public school; and the welfare office to apply for refugee assistance. The process was described as a "blur of forms" that produced information overload. Public assistance was available for 12 months only. A 1994 GAO report on Amerasian resettlement stated that around 65% of families had found work.

## Appendix B: Extended Literature Review

Starting with Chiswick (1978), a vast literature considers the arrival and assimilation of immigrants and refugees into host countries and their workplaces. Our work most closely builds upon studies examining the impact of age at arrival for migrant outcomes, the roles of language proficiency and education in achieving assimilation into the labor market, and the entry points and career paths of immigrants through firm-level data.

A first literature considers how the arrival ages of migrants shape outcomes in their host country. Immigrants arriving at younger ages typically achieve better later-life outcomes (Friedberg, 1992, 2000), including educational attainment, acculturation, and health. Studies find that younger arrivals become more proficient in the host country language, with subsequent implications for careers (e.g., Myers et al., 2009; Heath and Kilpi-Jakonen, 2012). Chiswick and Miller (2002) describe the complementarity of language skills with other forms of human capital. Central to this literature, Bleakley and Chin (2004, 2010) find that children who arrive in the United States at younger ages, when English language acquisition is easier, display higher future rates of intermarriage and less ethnic enclave residence. Language proficiency has been in turn linked to the labor market success of migrants (e.g., Dustmann and Fabbri, 2003).

For refugees in particular, Chiswick et al. (2006) find that refugees have the lowest English language proficiency among immigrants. However, refugees often have greater incentive to learn English because they are unable to immediately return to their origin country (Chin and Cortes, 2015; Abramitzky et al., 2023). Arendt et al. (2021) and Foged et al. (2022) use discontinuities in programs available to refugees in Denmark for learning the Danish language to establish causally the beneficial impacts of language proficiency for immigrants and their children. Federman et al. (2006) measure how state-level English language proficiency requirements shape the degree to which Vietnamese refugee manicurists take up work.

A second, complementary channel links immigrant age at arrival to education outcomes. Böhlmark (2008) finds that declines in Sweden for school performance begin after arrival ages of nine years old, and Ansala et al. (2020) use sibling comparisons among immigrants to Finland to establish a causal role for the age at arrival. Evans and Fitzgerald (2017) find that refugee children who enter the United States before age 14 have similar educational outcomes as their native counterparts, while those entering at age 18 and older have poorer outcomes. These

studies consistently find weakening education outcomes with older age at arrival, especially after age ten or so, and particularly adverse effects for context- and language-specific studies.<sup>10</sup>

The importance of an individual’s age when moving for subsequent human capital development is also exhibited in two complementary research spaces. Abramitzky et al. (2021) find that the children of immigrants in the United States show stronger upward mobility than their native counterparts, suggesting children have more time to make their human capital transferable and undergo linguistic integration before entering the labor market. In the context of domestic mobility, Chetty et al. (2016) and Chetty and Hendren (2018) conclude that moving children from a high- to a low-poverty neighborhood before age 13 increases college attendance and earnings and reduces single parenthood rates. See also Chyn (2018) and Deutscher (2020).

A third literature considers the longitudinal career paths of refugees, along with other migrants, and the role of factors like initial location in shaping these trajectories (e.g., Chiswick et al., 2005; Capps et al., 2015). In the US context, Cortes (2004) pioneered using synthetic cohorts across repeated cross-sections captured by household surveys to study refugee career profiles. Comparative and historical work includes Bevelander and Pendakur (2012), Abramitzky and Boustan (2017, 2022), and Ansala et al. (2022). Important reviews of this literature with respect to refugees include Chin and Cortes (2015), Brell et al. (2020), and Hatton (2020). As we are studying migrants who arrive at age 21 or younger and are provided complete work authorization, our setting will not consider important themes for adult assimilation like occupational downgrading, recognition of credentials, and visa restrictions.

Social capital and access to networks are important. Edin et al. (2003) show that refugees in Sweden assigned to live in areas where their ethnic concentration is greater had higher earnings than refugees assigned elsewhere. Similar effects were noted for early Vietnamese refugees in the United States (e.g., Finnan, 1982; Starr and Roberts, 1982). In a later study, Beaman (2012) finds that there is lower occupational mobility and earnings potential when a high concentration of refugees in the same network are resettled in the same area at the same time. These weaker outcomes are due to higher competition among the similar refugees. In contrast, there is higher occupational mobility and earning potential when a refugee is

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<sup>10</sup>Related studies for education include Friedberg (1992, 2000), Gonzalez (2003), Chiswick and DebBurman (2004), Cortes (2006), Ohinata and Ours (2012), and Hermansen (2017). Åslund et al. (2015) and Alexander and Ward (2018) compare siblings for age-at-arrival identification. Bacolod and Rangel (2017) study age at arrival and distinctiveness of migrant occupations/tasks compared to natives. See also Stiefel et al. (2010), Beck et al. (2012), and Zhang and Ye (2017).

resettled in an area where there are more tenured members of their network already resettled there. Similarly, Dagnelie et al. (2019) shows that refugees found jobs more quickly when they were settled into US locations where a large number of their compatriots were business owners rather than employees.<sup>11,12</sup>

Finally, a young but rapidly growing literature uses firm-level and employer-employee data to consider first jobs and career trajectories over firms. This research finds high rates of immigrant workers matching into firms with other immigrants, but is inconclusive on whether this is beneficial in the long-term.<sup>13</sup> In the United States, Garcia-Perez (2011) shows that small firms are especially likely to hire immigrants. Kerr and Kerr (2021) observe co-national hiring was highest (at 45%) among businesses with five or more employees that were led by Vietnamese immigrants. Ethnic communities and networks play an important role.<sup>14</sup> Arellano-Bover and San (2023) consider the unconstrained assimilation of Jews migrating from the former Soviet Union to Israel using employer-employee data and AKM methodologies.

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<sup>11</sup>Studies of the implications of refugees for local labor markets include Del Carpio and Wagner (2015), Tumen (2016), Clemens and Hunt (2019), Van Der Werf (2021), and Mayda et al. (2022). Hamalainen and Sarvimaki (2016) consider labor market policies and integration. We also relate to a vast literature on the economic opportunity associated with international migration (e.g., Borjas, 1994; Clemens, 2011; Docquier and Rapoport, 2012).

<sup>12</sup>Buggle et al. (2023) develop a structural model where networks can have push and pull influences on refugee migration decisions from difficult settings.

<sup>13</sup>For example, den Butter et al. (2007), Hellerstein and Neumark (2008), Andersson Joona and Wadensjö (2009), Garcia-Perez (2011), Hellerstein et al. (2011), Nicodemo and Nicolini (2012), Andersson et al. (2014), Åslund et al. (2014), Tomaskovic-Devey et al. (2015), Daunfeldt and Fergin-Wennberg (2018), Hammarstedt and Miao (2020), Ansala et al. (2020), Orefice and Peri (2020), Burstein et al. (2020), and Kerr and Kerr (2021). Brinatti and Morales (2023) more generally consider welfare consequences from differences over firms in their relative rates of employing immigrants.

<sup>14</sup>For example, Portes and Wilson (1980), Munshi (2003), Kalnins and Chung (2006), Fairlie et al. (2010), Patel and Vella (2013), and Kerr and Mandorff (2023).

## Appendix C: Analysis using 1990 Decennial Census

The 1990 Decennial Census provides evidence on the initial conditions for the AHA immigrants arriving in the United States during 1987-1990.<sup>15</sup> Being soon after the AHA immigration process began, the 1990 Census only captures the earliest arrivals. It is nonetheless quite useful for corroborating the initial conditions of AHA immigrants evident from other sources, setting the stage for and lending credibility to the career trajectories that we measure with similar techniques for later years. Additionally, we observe that young arrivals tended to face equally or more challenging conditions than their older peers, suggesting later career advantages are not due to a head start upon arrival into the country.

Appendix Table 1 shows panels for personal traits, family traits, and location traits. In Panel A, only half of the AHA immigrants speak English well, and the young AHA immigrants have fewer years of schooling.<sup>16</sup> About 37.9% of the older AHA immigrants have entered the labor force, with an effective unemployment rate above 15%, while only 6.9% of the young AHA immigrants are seeking work.

Panel B presents the living conditions of the households, which in some cases contain more than one family unit. AHA immigrants are living in poor households. Households for young and older AHA immigrants average 44.9% and 54.2%, respectively, of the average household incomes of their metropolitan areas.<sup>17</sup> Older AHA immigrants have higher household incomes and home values, although only the former is statistically significant. (Dollar values are converted to 2021 levels.) Reports of welfare support in rows 10 and 12 also suggest young AHA immigrants are living in tougher conditions. Young AHA immigrants are 4.5x more likely to be in households receiving welfare support than others in their surrounding cities, compared to 2x more likely for the older AHA immigrants.

Rows 14-21 show that the households are of similar size and that the heads of households have similarly low levels of education, English fluency, and employment rates. The latter

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<sup>15</sup>Unlike the ACS and the 2000 Decennial Census where we can restrict to the AHA immigrants arriving in 1989 and later, the 1990 Census only recorded the arrival range 1987-1990.

<sup>16</sup>Young AHA immigrants have 1.2 years less schooling than older AHA immigrants in the 1990 Census. In the 1990 value for Figure 2 of the main text, young AHA immigrants sit slightly above older arrivals. This is a consequence of the linear age term in specification (1) of the main text that controls for the typical education acquired with age. Younger US natives also have obtained fewer years of schooling than their older peers in 1990, as most are still completing their schooling.

<sup>17</sup>For comparability on initial conditions, these estimates exclude the focal AHA individual's earnings where they exist. The values are \$44,205 and \$57,424 for young and older immigrants, respectively, without these exclusions (46.3% and 59.4% of the MSA average).

similarity is important for the primary analyses, as it confirms that the young AHA immigrants are not sorted into households with a stronger observable tendency toward education. If anything, the families of young AHA exhibit less fluency and lower education attainment. No young AHA immigrants are declared heads of household in the 1990 Census, while about 4% of older AHA immigrants are.

With caution, rows 22-30 in Panel B describe household structure. Census enumerators assign relationships within the family unit being surveyed and do not know biological relationships. Thus, a designated “mother” can be a biological mother, a stepmother via marriage, or an unmarried individual/partner who the enumerator assigns as a mother relationship for an individual. The same ambiguity is true for “father”, which is especially important in the AHA immigrant context. Stepfathers could migrate with an Amerasian stepchild. We do not present these figures as representing biological relationships, only to observe whether the adult composition of the AHA households for young versus older immigrants shows significant differences.

Young AHA immigrants are 9% more likely to be living with a social or biological mother, while the presence of a father is 4% more likely. These differences are mostly explained by older AHA immigrants being 6% less likely to live in households where an adult over the age of 30 is present. Finally, only 1% of the young and old AHA immigrants are living in a household with a father present who is a US-born native and Vietnam War veteran. These shares match the broad understanding that very few AHA immigrants joined a US-native father, suggesting their future assimilation is best thought of as assimilation of young immigrants from rather difficult circumstances than the reuniting of families.

Panel C presents traits of the locations where the family is living. 79% and 83% of young and older AHA immigrants, respectively, are living in cities with AHA cluster sites. There are practically no differences between the typical economic conditions surrounding young and older AHA immigrants. The coethnic marriage rates by Vietnamese immigrants to other Vietnamese in the MSAs housing the young and older AHA immigrants are also the same. The last row shows the young and older AHA immigrants are equally likely to be residing in the Public Use Micro Area (PUMA) part of their MSA that holds the largest percent of Vietnamese (restricted to MSAs with five or more identified PUMAs). The similarity suggests that residential segregation is not different for the young vs. older AHA immigrants. In short,

young and older AHA immigrants appear almost randomly assigned over locations.



## Appendix D: Analysis using 2015-2019 ACS

Appendix Tables 5-8 report analyses using the 2015-2019 ACS files. Rows 1-11 of Appendix Table 5 are the same as Table 1, with the Adjusted  $R^2$  values also provided. Row 12 shows that marriage is equally likely for the young and older AHA immigrants by 2015-2019.<sup>18</sup> Interestingly, aligned with their own higher education levels, we measure the young AHA immigrants are 6.6% more likely to have married a college graduate. They are also 4.2% more likely to have married a non-Vietnamese spouse and 2.0% more likely to have married a US native. These latter two results are suggestive of young AHA immigrants integrating more in terms of marriage outcomes, although we view them cautiously because the values for periods before 2015-2019 are more volatile than our core findings using education and income measures.

Regressions 16-21 consider living conditions. While home ownership is equally likely, young AHA immigrants own higher-valued properties. Among renters, it also appears that the young AHA immigrants might be occupying higher-priced units. The final two rows suggest that despite these differences, young AHA immigrants are not disproportionately living outside the PUMA of their MSA which houses the most Vietnamese nor living in PUMAs with significantly different Vietnamese concentration per capita. These latter estimations are again restricted to MSAs with five or more PUMAs.

These results are quite robust. Appendix Table 6 shows the differentials are very similar when dropping state fixed effects (to allow for endogenous spatial choices<sup>19</sup>) or including MSA fixed effects (to narrow peer comparisons). They are also robust to variations in whether we include an age control or how it is modeled. Weighting individuals also produces very similar outcomes.

Columns 4-6 of Appendix Table 5 provide specifications with additional indicator variables for English language fluency, completing high school, and completing college, discussed in detail in Section 8 of the paper. The  $\gamma$  coefficients are often half or less of their values in Column

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<sup>18</sup>Marriage can be estimated in two ways in IPUMS. We use the spouse identifier for this purpose to align with the variations that follow. Results are similar however marriage is defined.

<sup>19</sup>In the 2000 Census, young AHA arrivals are slightly more likely to move MSAs from 1995 to 2000 than older arrivals (15.5% vs 15.1%). The most common move corridors are across nearby MSAs, such as moving from San Jose to Oakland. Mobility of AHA immigrants is modestly towards MSAs with more Vietnamese immigrants, and college degree attainment is correlated with being in MSAs in 2000 with higher shares of college degree holders among the local population. Beyond these features, mobility patterns are not systematically linked to MSA population, home values, average wage levels, etc. In general, MSA traits have very little explanatory power for AHA success as a whole and for differentials between young and older arrivals.

1, and the Adjusted  $R^2$  values rise significantly (on average, by 0.058). Most estimates are no longer statistically different from zero.

While our main estimates focus on a young vs. older comparison, Appendix Tables 7 and 8 disaggregate our sample into four age-at-arrival bins: 14-15, 16-17, 18-19, and 20-21 years old. We model separate indicator variables for the first three categories, with 20-21 serving as the reference category. Appendix Table 7 studies the base regression similar to Columns 1-3 of Appendix Table 5. Effects are almost always monotonic in the age at arrival. Those arriving at 14-15 years old stand out even compared to those arriving at 16-17 years old. While sometimes precisely estimated, differences between those 18-19 and 20-21 years old at arrival are modest. The pattern of coefficients across ages of arrival again suggests the greater importance of educational attainment compared to fluency for wage outcomes, as the steeper drop in educational levels with age at arrival more closely parallel the wage differences. In Appendix Table 8, we add the fluency and education controls. These attributes explain most of the wage and social differences for those arriving at 16-17 years old compared to 18-19 years old or the reference category of 20-21 years old. By contrast, while the differentials diminish in size, the explanatory power of education and fluency is weaker for the future outcomes of those arriving at 14-15 years old.

## Appendix E: Analysis using LEHD Employer-Employee Data

Appendix Table 9 commences by quantifying annual wage income differentials between young and older AHA arrivals among those employed. While the specification is conceptually quite similar to that used with the public data, for disclosure reasons we report results developed with a stacked regression that groups all years together and interacts controls with indicators for the time periods. The sample size is significantly larger in these estimations than in the public files because we can follow all identified AHA individuals over time.

Columns 1 and 2 show that the older AHA immigrants initially earn more in wages in the 1990s, but that the young arrivals soon surpass them. The wage differentials emerge by the early 2000s and are relatively flat thereafter. These results allow for individuals to enter and leave the sample, and we find similar outcomes when restricting on those with work careers starting in the early 1990s. Some of the largest AHA immigrant receiving states have early start dates, making our analysis quite robust to these considerations.

Columns 3 and 4 take advantage of the LEHD’s career histories to isolate immigrants who are most likely to have been admitted specifically under the AHA legislation (vs. other refugee categories) by keeping immigrants who first appeared in the LEHD in a cluster site and within three years of arrival to America. The latter condition limits likely internal mobility after arrival, but it also comes at a cost of excluding some individuals seeking higher education. About half of the sample meets these conditions, and we find quite similar wage trajectories when studying them. This comparability provides confidence in our overall estimation approach.

Appendix Tables 10 and 11 analyze the career histories of AHA immigrants across 2000-2014. We commence the characterization of careers in 2000 for two reasons. First, AHA immigrants in 2000 are 25-32 years old, resulting in most having completed their schooling investments. Additionally, the records for LEHD states begin at different points, and the 2000 start date affords a full sample. Rows 1-13 are the same as Table 2, with the Adjusted  $R^2$  values also provided. Rows 16-22 quantify the dynamics of careers that were described in the main text.

Additional analyses examined co-ethnic employers in more detail. Appendix Table 12 lists major industries where we observe abnormally high co-ethnic employment shares (e.g., nail salons, dentist and physician offices, restaurants, auto repair, etc.). We also note some examples where many AHA immigrants are employed but without evidence of strong co-ethnic

employment (e.g., hospitals, computer equipment). The AHA immigrants working in co-ethnic firms earn less, are less fluent in English, and are less likely to obtain a college education. In line with other results from the AHA experience that have shown limited dependence on geography, the relative rate of joining co-ethnic firms does depend significantly on the overall size and density of Vietnamese activity in area.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>We do not find a strong relationship between the rate of joining a co-ethnic firm and a county's population, Vietnamese population share, immigrant population share, average household income, and college education share. Of these, co-ethnic employment shares show only a weak, positive association with county household income levels, perhaps indicative of greater local demand for personal services like nail salons.

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## Appendix Figure 1: Photos of Le Van Minh

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Audrey Tiernan's *Newsday* photo, 1985



Le Van Minh as an adult living in  
San Jose, CA

Le Van Minh with Rep. Bob  
Mrazek upon arrival in Long Island,  
NY



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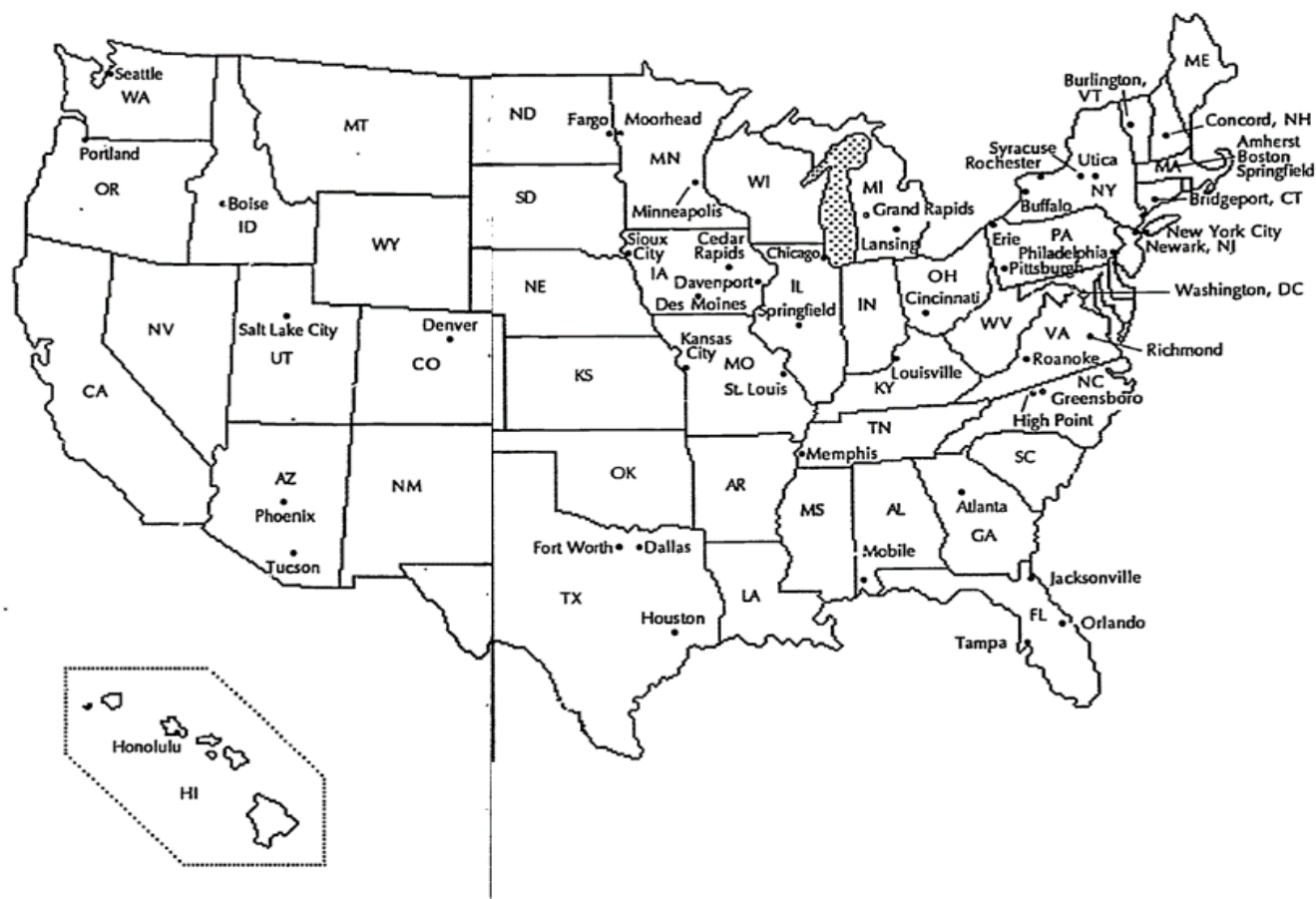
Sources: Photos by Catherine Karnow (bottom right) and Audrey Tiernan (other three). Photos included in *Newsday* (1986), *Virag* (1987) and *Lamb* (2009).

Appendix Figure 2: 1989 map of Amerasian cluster sites

Amerasian Cluster Sites in the U.S., by State

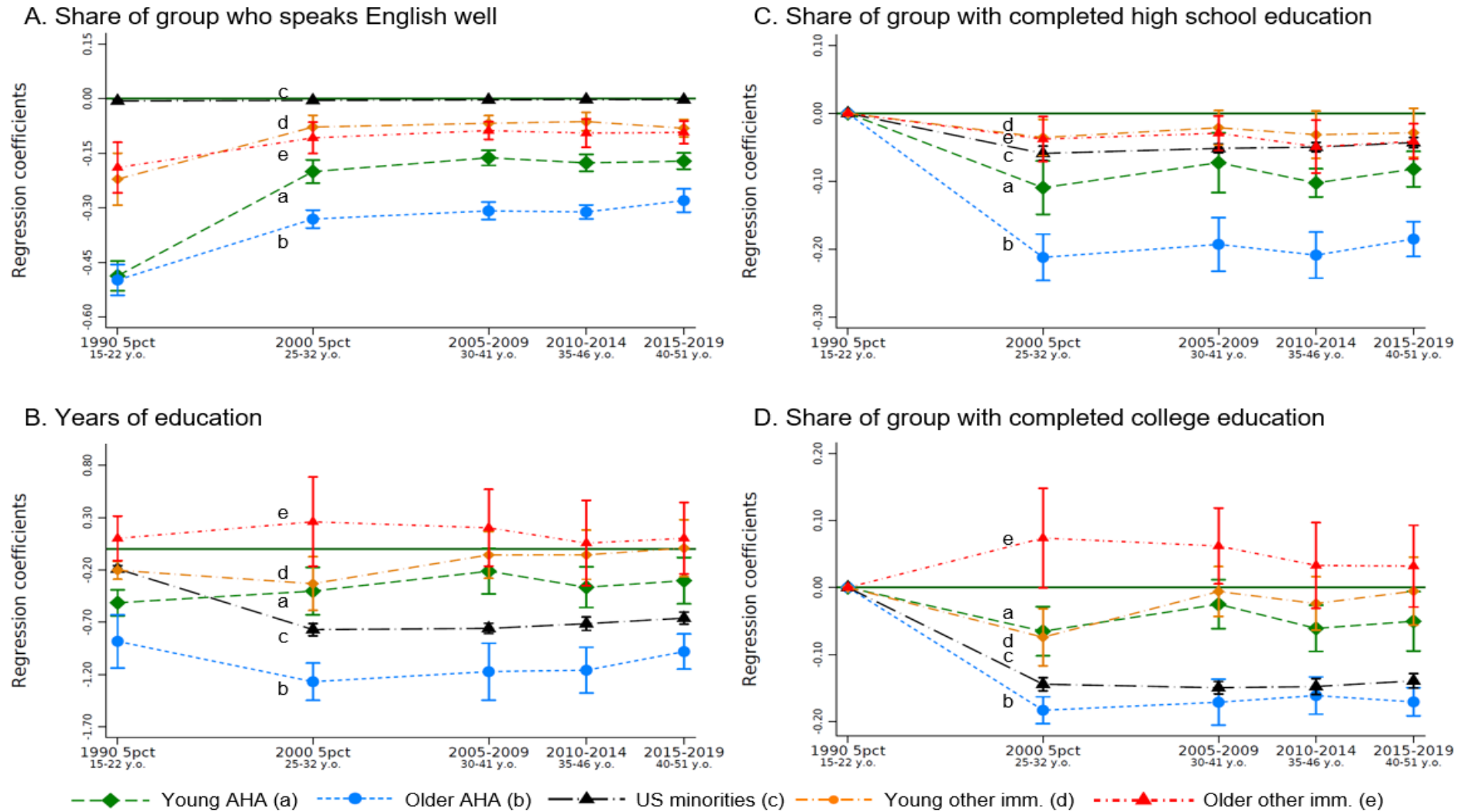
Alabama: Mobile  
 Arizona: Phoenix, Tucson  
 Colorado: Denver  
 Connecticut: Bridgeport  
 Florida: Jacksonville, Orlando, Tampa  
 Georgia: Atlanta  
 Hawaii: Honolulu  
 Idaho: Boise  
 Iowa: Cedar Rapids, Davenport,  
 Des Moines, Sioux City  
 Illinois: Chicago, Springfield  
 Kentucky: Louisville  
 Massachusetts: Amherst, Boston,  
 Springfield  
 Michigan: Grand Rapids, Lansing  
 Minnesota: Minneapolis, Moorhead  
 Missouri: St. Louis, Kansas City  
 New Hampshire: Concord  
 New Jersey: Newark  
 New York: Buffalo, New York City,  
 Rochester, Syracuse, Utica  
 North Carolina: Greensboro, High Point  
 North Dakota: Fargo  
 Ohio: Cincinnati  
 Oregon: Portland  
 Pennsylvania: Erie, Philadelphia,  
 Pittsburgh  
 Tennessee: Memphis  
 Texas: Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston  
 Utah: Salt Lake City  
 Virginia: Richmond, Roanoke  
 Vermont: Burlington  
 Washington: Seattle  
 Washington, D.C. area

Source: Bureau for Refugee Programs,  
 U.S. Dept. of State, 6/2/89



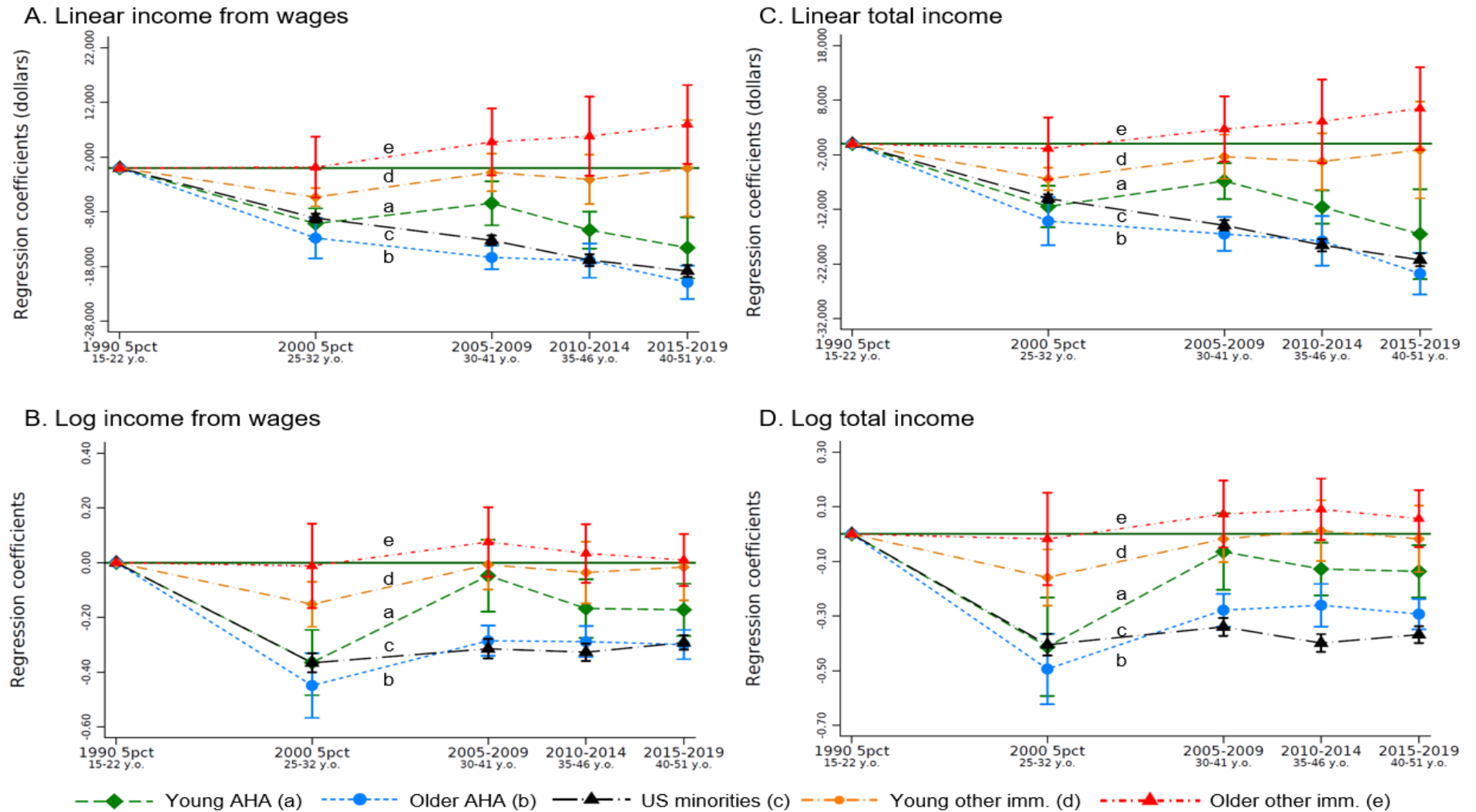
Notes: Map taken from Bureau of Refugee Programs, US Department of State 1989. Some cluster sites, including all sites in California, are not included.

Appendix Figure 3: Figure 3 with age at arrival split for non-Vietnamese immigrant comparison group



Notes: See Figure 3. This analysis divides the non-Vietnamese immigrant comparison group into young (age-at-arrival of 14-17) and older (18-21) arrivals.

Appendix Figure 4: Figure 5 with age at arrival split for non-Vietnamese immigrant comparison group



Notes: See Figure 5. This analysis divides the non-Vietnamese immigrant comparison group into young (age-at-arrival of 14-17) and older (18-21) arrivals.



Appendix Table 1: Comparison of young and older AHA immigrants in 1990 Census

		Young	Older	p-value
		(1)	(2)	(3)
A. Personal traits				
1	Share who speaks English well	50.41%	50.50%	0.981
2	Years of education	9.64	10.87	0.000
3	Share employed	4.16%	31.96%	0.000
4	Share unemployed	2.77%	5.93%	0.054
5	Share not in labor force	93.07%	62.10%	0.000
B. Family traits				
6	Average total household income (2021\$)	\$42,874	\$52,456	0.011
7	...relative to MSA average shown in Panel C	44.89%	54.21%	
8	Average home value	\$265,957	\$296,711	0.154
9	...relative to MSA average shown in Panel C	73.05%	79.31%	
10	Average welfare support	\$1,007	\$444	0.032
11	...relative to MSA average shown in Panel C	258.78%	116.06%	
12	Share obtaining welfare support	14.58%	6.49%	0.002
13	...relative to MSA average shown in Panel C	451.58%	202.97%	
14	Avg. number of people in family unit	5.23	5.13	0.635
15	Share group quarters	1.74%	2.65%	0.415
16	Share head of households in family with trait:			
17	...less than high-school education	39.60%	34.87%	0.183
18	...high-school / some college	47.15%	50.21%	0.404
19	...college degree	11.51%	12.27%	0.761
20	...speaks English well	45.85%	50.37%	0.221
21	...in labor force and employed	54.58%	58.11%	0.329
22	Share of households with the trait:			
23	...Mother is present (social or biological)	61.70%	52.28%	0.009
24	...Father is present (social or biological)	52.93%	48.53%	0.228
25	...Own siblings are present (social or biological)	60.85%	54.19%	0.071
26	...US-born native as head or spouse of head	8.10%	4.69%	0.117
27	...Father is US-born native and Vietnam War veteran	1.07%	0.62%	0.500
28	...Adult over age 30 is present	89.37%	83.44%	0.024
29	Father's age range	[22,71]	[22,72]	
30	Mother's age range	[24,66]	[28,68]	
C. Location traits of MSA				
31	Population	4,822,049	4,910,300	0.788
32	Share in AHA cluster site	78.68%	83.04%	0.149
33	Avg. household income	\$95,517	\$96,756	0.214
34	Avg. wage earnings	\$33,844	\$34,348	0.204
35	Avg. home value	\$364,060	\$374,106	0.376
36	Avg. welfare support	\$389	\$383	0.657
37	Share obtaining welfare support	3.23%	3.20%	0.677
38	Share of age 21+ who are college educated	24.25%	24.79%	0.200
39	Share in California	44.34%	44.22%	0.972
40	Share of VNM immigr. married to VNM	85.17%	85.35%	0.847
41	Resides in PUMA with most Vietnamese	22.86%	24.13%	0.722

Notes: Table compares traits of 358 young immigrants (representing 7,300 immigrants using person weights) in 1990 Census who arrived in the United States at 14-17 years old compared to 537 older immigrants (representing 10,851 immigrants using person weights) who arrived at 18-21 years old. Tabulated values use survey weights. Dollar values have been converted into 2021 equivalent figures. Total household income in Row 6 excludes any earning from focal AHA individual.

Appendix Table 2: Descriptive values on key economic variables

	Young AHA	Older AHA	US Natives	US White Natives	US Minority Natives	25 Country Comparison
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
A. Speaks English well						
1990	50.41%	50.50%	99.20%	99.33%	98.68%	79.58%
2000	79.29%	66.11%	99.44%	99.55%	99.05%	89.61%
2005-9	83.08%	67.94%	99.61%	99.68%	99.31%	90.73%
2010-4	82.74%	68.00%	99.70%	99.74%	99.52%	90.86%
2015-9	83.15%	72.13%	99.68%	99.73%	99.47%	90.79%
B. Years of education						
1990	9.64	10.87	11.28	11.34	11.05	11.31
2000	13.05	12.23	13.27	13.44	12.65	13.69
2005-9	13.54	12.57	13.51	13.66	12.95	13.96
2010-4	13.56	12.70	13.71	13.83	13.24	14.02
2015-9	13.68	13.07	13.83	13.94	13.38	14.19
C. High school completion						
1990	3.07%	41.50%	54.38%	55.69%	49.30%	54.90%
2000	82.61%	71.88%	91.72%	93.02%	87.04%	89.93%
2005-9	88.11%	75.32%	93.07%	94.06%	89.29%	92.85%
2010-4	84.92%	73.63%	93.65%	94.42%	90.63%	90.87%
2015-9	86.24%	77.35%	94.21%	94.87%	91.56%	91.84%
D. College completion						
1990	0.00%	0.00%	1.94%	2.21%	0.92%	3.21%
2000	24.51%	14.00%	28.34%	31.58%	16.71%	37.51%
2005-9	34.99%	20.64%	32.27%	35.22%	20.95%	42.73%
2010-4	32.47%	21.61%	33.24%	35.84%	22.98%	41.42%
2015-9	35.75%	23.57%	35.55%	38.01%	25.72%	44.15%
E. Wage and salary income						
1990	\$247	\$3,455	\$8,925	\$9,504	\$6,651	\$5,416
2000	\$26,939	\$26,544	\$37,362	\$39,489	\$29,721	\$39,203
2005-9	\$41,169	\$34,008	\$45,369	\$47,985	\$35,357	\$53,791
2010-4	\$41,902	\$37,312	\$47,741	\$50,629	\$36,328	\$58,321
2015-9	\$46,866	\$40,742	\$53,180	\$56,473	\$40,016	\$65,951
F. Log wage and salary income for employed						
1990	13.46	16.70	16.89	16.95	16.60	16.83
2000	15.04	15.02	15.44	15.52	15.12	15.51
2005-9	12.43	12.31	12.44	12.50	12.18	12.64
2010-4	11.59	11.47	11.65	11.71	11.42	11.82
2015-9	10.63	10.50	10.70	10.75	10.49	10.81
G. Share receiving welfare support						
1990	14.58%	6.49%	2.58%	1.80%	5.61%	0.73%
2000	2.41%	3.71%	2.73%	1.89%	5.73%	1.37%
2005-9	1.25%	1.90%	1.86%	1.39%	3.65%	0.73%
2010-4	2.12%	1.46%	2.01%	1.64%	3.50%	0.82%
2015-9	0.97%	1.33%	1.51%	1.25%	2.55%	0.91%

Notes: Calculated from IPUMS data.

Appendix Table 3: Observation counts and representative populations for Figures 2-5

	1990 Census		2000 Census		2005-2009 ACS		2010-2014 ACS		2015-2019 ACS		Average 2000-2019	
	Obs	Pop	Obs	Pop	Obs	Pop	Obs	Pop	Obs	Pop	Obs	Pop
<b>Full Sample (used for Speaks English well, completed high school education, completed college education, linear income from wages, and linear total income):</b>												
Young AHA immigrants	358	7,300	755	16,698	705	16,190	786	18,591	716	15,973	741	16,863
Older AHA immigrants	537	10,851	2,286	50,279	2,127	50,549	2,208	50,204	2,208	48,770	2,207	49,951
White US natives	1,043,510	20,763,106	971,013	19,753,594	984,076	19,943,498	988,463	19,984,742	1,011,889	19,735,690	988,860	19,854,381
Minority US natives	244,907	5,346,331	248,882	5,497,011	202,915	5,208,920	212,062	5,057,005	202,089	4,936,155	216,487	5,174,773
Non-Vietnamese immigrants	3,148	68,099	7,031	159,161	6,349	148,887	6,468	152,491	6,534	148,037	6,596	152,144
<b>Years of education (excluding the “N/A or no schooling” responses):</b>												
Young AHA immigrants	355	7,267	727	16,061	690	15,915	744	17,764	678	15,313	710	16,263
Older AHA immigrants	516	10,513	2,161	47,193	1,992	47,677	2,024	46,544	1,983	44,193	2,040	46,402
White US natives	1,041,136	20,716,160	967,929	19,693,611	981,055	19,879,594	983,007	19,897,200	1,004,795	19,625,137	984,197	19,773,886
Minority US natives	243,622	5,318,408	247,067	5,458,843	201,675	5,179,177	209,895	5,019,119	199,474	4,887,228	214,528	5,136,092
Non-Vietnamese immigrants	3,120	67,512	6,924	156,656	6,278	147,384	6,316	150,046	6,345	144,356	6,466	149,611
<b>Log income from wages:</b>												
Young AHA immigrants	n.a.		580	12,878	562	12,590	608	14,535	558	12,687	577	13,173
Older AHA immigrants			1,788	39,634	1,626	38,351	1,692	38,727	1,693	37,921	1,700	38,658
White US natives			828,254	16,963,713	807,357	16,319,941	780,022	15,806,238	805,658	15,714,561	805,323	16,201,113
Minority US natives			198,877	4,415,391	160,129	4,129,900	151,078	3,737,923	146,612	3,697,356	164,174	3,995,143
Non-Vietnamese immigrants			5,685	128,489	5,259	123,125	5,303	125,213	5,430	122,682	5,419	124,877
<b>Log total income:</b>												
Young AHA immigrants	n.a.		642	14,264	644	14,771	721	17,337	644	14,531	663	15,226
Older AHA immigrants			1,977	43,740	1,914	45,724	2,009	46,101	2,008	44,813	1,977	45,095
White US natives			893,457	18,221,465	901,393	18,276,957	895,336	18,136,673	924,306	18,052,200	903,623	18,171,824
Minority US natives			219,406	4,855,903	182,396	4,710,441	182,884	4,471,100	176,720	4,410,343	190,352	4,611,947
Non-Vietnamese immigrants			6,005	135,619	5,666	132,471	5,768	136,307	5,934	134,495	5,843	134,723

Notes: Table reports observation counts and representative populations for Figures 2-5. Counts for years of education are slightly lower than the full sample due to our exclusion of non-responses on the question. See footnote 8 in main paper. Counts for log wage and total income levels are conditional on positive values.

Appendix Table 4a: Coefficients for Figures 2 and 4

	Young AHA	Older AHA
	(1)	(2)
A. Speaks English well		
1990	-0.485 (0.021)	-0.497 (0.021)
2000	-0.199 (0.016)	-0.329 (0.012)
2005-9	-0.162 (0.010)	-0.308 (0.012)
2010-4	-0.176 (0.012)	-0.311 (0.010)
2015-9	-0.171 (0.011)	-0.279 (0.016)
B. Years of education		
1990	-0.469 (0.064)	-0.840 (0.128)
2000	-0.200 (0.131)	-1.076 (0.103)
2005-9	-0.048 (0.122)	-1.012 (0.148)
2010-4	-0.213 (0.101)	-1.009 (0.114)
2015-9	-0.161 (0.119)	-0.846 (0.089)
C. High school completion		
2000	-0.094 (0.021)	-0.197 (0.018)
2005-9	-0.061 (0.023)	-0.182 (0.021)
2010-4	-0.091 (0.011)	-0.198 (0.017)
2015-9	-0.073 (0.014)	-0.176 (0.013)
D. College completion		
2000	-0.028 (0.021)	-0.147 (0.010)
2005-9	0.007 (0.020)	-0.140 (0.019)
2010-4	-0.030 (0.018)	-0.130 (0.015)
2015-9	-0.021 (0.024)	-0.142 (0.012)
E. Wage and salary income		
2000	-\$7,752 (1142)	-\$10,502 (1597)
2005-9	-\$3,575 (2237)	-\$13,548 (1022)
2010-4	-\$7,742 (1803)	-\$13,369 (1354)
2015-9	-\$10,530 (2522)	-\$17,027 (1196)
F. Log wage and salary income for employed		
2000	-0.274 (0.054)	-0.361 (0.051)
2005-9	0.021 (0.070)	-0.220 (0.029)
2010-4	-0.101 (0.056)	-0.224 (0.026)
2015-9	-0.113 (0.044)	-0.243 (0.023)
G. Total income		
2000	-\$8,854 (1584)	-\$11,644 (1904)
2005-9	-\$3,575 (1846)	-\$13,361 (1278)
2010-4	-\$7,618 (1577)	-\$13,859 (1977)
2015-9	-\$11,975 (3736)	-\$19,406 (1513)
H. Log total income		
2000	-0.311 (0.081)	-0.396 (0.056)
2005-9	0.009 (0.075)	-0.208 (0.029)
2010-4	-0.045 (0.051)	-0.179 (0.035)
2015-9	-0.060 (0.044)	-0.220 (0.023)

Notes: See Figures 2 and 4.



Appendix Table 4b: Coefficients for Figures 3 and 5

	Young AHA	Older AHA	US Minorities	Comp. Group
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
A. Speaks English well				
1990	-0.487 (0.021)	-0.498 (0.021)	-0.006 (0.001)	-0.201 (0.035)
2000	-0.200 (0.016)	-0.331 (0.012)	-0.005 (0.001)	-0.101 (0.020)
2005-9	-0.163 (0.010)	-0.308 (0.012)	-0.003 (0.000)	-0.084 (0.011)
2010-4	-0.176 (0.012)	-0.311 (0.010)	-0.002 (0.001)	-0.088 (0.018)
2015-9	-0.172 (0.011)	-0.280 (0.016)	-0.003 (0.001)	-0.091 (0.014)
B. Years of education				
1990	-0.514 (0.062)	-0.883 (0.126)	-0.191 (0.016)	-0.006 (0.082)
2000	-0.402 (0.113)	-1.268 (0.089)	-0.770 (0.029)	0.130 (0.195)
2005-9	-0.212 (0.109)	-1.172 (0.135)	-0.759 (0.024)	0.145 (0.166)
2010-4	-0.365 (0.097)	-1.158 (0.109)	-0.714 (0.032)	0.031 (0.180)
2015-9	-0.303 (0.110)	-0.980 (0.084)	-0.661 (0.029)	0.083 (0.160)
C. High school completion				
2000	-0.109 (0.020)	-0.212 (0.017)	-0.059 (0.005)	-0.037 (0.015)
2005-9	-0.073 (0.022)	-0.193 (0.020)	-0.052 (0.003)	-0.028 (0.012)
2010-4	-0.102 (0.010)	-0.209 (0.017)	-0.050 (0.003)	-0.045 (0.019)
2015-9	-0.082 (0.013)	-0.185 (0.013)	-0.043 (0.004)	-0.039 (0.013)
D. College completion				
2000	-0.065 (0.018)	-0.183 (0.010)	-0.144 (0.005)	0.041 (0.033)
2005-9	-0.025 (0.018)	-0.171 (0.017)	-0.150 (0.005)	0.047 (0.025)
2010-4	-0.061 (0.017)	-0.161 (0.014)	-0.148 (0.006)	0.020 (0.028)
2015-9	-0.050 (0.022)	-0.171 (0.010)	-0.139 (0.005)	0.024 (0.029)
E. Wage and salary income				
2000	-\$10,145 (1,380)	-\$12,788 (1,841)	-\$9,136 (391)	-\$1,061 (2,315)
2005-9	-\$6,432 (2,009)	-\$16,337 (1,060)	-\$13,219 (445)	\$3,531 (2,684)
2010-4	-\$11,338 (1,677)	-\$16,910 (1,555)	-\$16,835 (541)	\$4,069 (3,264)
2015-9	-\$14,567 (2,769)	-\$20,880 (1,503)	-\$18,813 (547)	\$6,326 (3,637)
F. Log wage and salary income for employed				
2000	-0.365 (0.059)	-0.449 (0.059)	-0.366 (0.017)	-0.044 (0.069)
2005-9	-0.048 (0.066)	-0.285 (0.028)	-0.315 (0.018)	0.057 (0.058)
2010-4	-0.167 (0.053)	-0.289 (0.028)	-0.327 (0.016)	0.018 (0.053)
2015-9	-0.172 (0.048)	-0.299 (0.027)	-0.292 (0.013)	0.004 (0.049)
G. Total income				
2000	-\$11,477 (1,881)	-\$14,148 (2,191)	-\$10,015 (391)	-\$2,093 (2,401)
2005-9	-\$6,796 (1,641)	-\$16,502 (1,544)	-\$14,917 (471)	\$1,598 (2,587)
2010-4	-\$11,574 (1,518)	-\$17,755 (2,248)	-\$18,544 (565)	\$2,489 (3,485)
2015-9	-\$16,521 (4,098)	-\$23,744 (1,900)	-\$21,252 (590)	\$4,921 (3,810)
H. Log total income				
2000	-0.412 (0.090)	-0.494 (0.064)	-0.405 (0.020)	-0.050 (0.076)
2005-9	-0.065 (0.070)	-0.278 (0.030)	-0.340 (0.016)	0.053 (0.054)
2010-4	-0.128 (0.048)	-0.260 (0.039)	-0.399 (0.016)	0.073 (0.054)
2015-9	-0.136 (0.048)	-0.293 (0.028)	-0.368 (0.015)	0.041 (0.054)

Notes: See Figures 3 and 5.

Appendix Table 5: Extensions on Table 1's outcomes using the 2015-2019 American Community Survey

		Regressions with base controls			Regressions adding controls for education and fluency			n	Mean values	
		Coeff.	SE	Adj R2	Coeff.	SE	Adj R2		Young	Older
		(1)				(2)		(3)	(4)	(5)
1	(0,1) Speaks English well	0.092	(0.018) ***	0.020	n.a.			2924	82.40%	71.60%
2	Years of education	0.611	(0.096) ***	0.052	n.a.			2661	13.89	13.18
3	(0,1) High school completion	0.086	(0.013) ***	0.025	n.a.			2924	87.29%	77.04%
4	(0,1) College completion	0.097	(0.023) ***	0.046	n.a.			2924	38.27%	25.68%
5	(0,1) Employed	-0.006	(0.024)	0.018	-0.019	(0.028)	0.033	2924	82.26%	83.83%
6	(0,1) Unemployed	-0.008	(0.004) *	-0.004	-0.007	(0.005)	-0.004	2924	1.68%	2.31%
7	(0,1) Not in labor force	0.014	(0.022)	0.029	0.026	(0.025)	0.044	2924	16.06%	13.86%
8	Total personal income (2021\$)	\$7323	(2908) **	0.046	\$1831	(3638)	0.210	2924	\$53,682	\$46,435
9	Log total personal income	0.131	(0.041) ***	0.039	0.009	(0.051)	0.192	2652	10.6	10.4
10	Wage and salary income	\$6734	(2108) ***	0.048	\$1203	(2248)	0.222	2924	\$48,242	\$41,496
11	Log wage and salary income	0.115	(0.040) ***	0.047	-0.011	(0.054)	0.233	2251	10.7	10.5
12	(0,1) Married	0.019	(0.018)	0.005	0.004	(0.016)	0.019	2924	76.12%	74.00%
13	...To college-educated spouse	0.066	(0.022) ***	0.016	0.018	(0.029)	0.189	2924	30.59%	22.37%
15	...To non-Vietnamese spouse	0.042	(0.012) ***	0.007	0.032	(0.012) **	0.020	2924	12.29%	8.79%
14	...To US-native spouse	0.020	(0.010) *	0.016	0.013	(0.010)	0.027	2924	5.45%	4.35%
16	(0,1) Home ownership	0.005	(0.025)	0.022	-0.018	(0.032)	0.066	2875	83.31%	83.53%
17	Home value	\$69,617	(17741) ***	0.246	\$48,378	(14175) ***	0.287	2400	\$461,634	\$418,578
18	Log home value	0.095	(0.033) ***	0.276	0.039	(0.032)	0.322	2400	12.73	12.69
19	Monthly gross rent paid	\$70.0	(38.5) *	0.107	\$48.4	(51.1)	0.124	439	\$1,577	\$1,490
20	(0,1) Resides in PUMA with most VNM	-0.028	(0.029)	0.024	-0.025	(0.029)	0.027	2645	16.28%	18.46%
21	Per capita share of Vietnamese in PUMA	-0.001	(0.002)	0.525	-0.001	(0.001)	0.525	2645	14.17%	13.18%

Notes: See Table 1.

Appendix Table 6: Additional specifications with 2015-2019 American Community Survey

		Regressions using MSA FE instead of state FE		Regressions without state FE		Regressions without linear age control		Regressions with age <sup>2</sup> term added to the existing linear age control	
		(1)		(2)		(3)		(4)	
1	(0,1) Speaks English well	0.091***	(0.018)	0.091***	(0.018)	0.108***	(0.020)	0.094***	(0.019)
2	Years of education	0.620***	(0.119)	0.686***	(0.085)	0.640***	(0.074)	0.612***	(0.096)
3	(0,1) High school completion	0.087***	(0.014)	0.089***	(0.013)	0.101***	(0.010)	0.086***	(0.013)
4	(0,1) College completion	0.100***	(0.024)	0.109***	(0.021)	0.116***	(0.018)	0.097***	(0.023)
5	(0,1) Employed	-0.004	(0.020)	-0.011	(0.023)	-0.015	(0.024)	-0.006	(0.023)
6	(0,1) Unemployed	-0.007	(0.006)	-0.007	(0.004)	-0.007*	(0.004)	-0.008*	(0.004)
7	(0,1) Not in labor force	0.011	(0.017)	0.018	(0.021)	0.022	(0.023)	0.014	(0.021)
8	Total personal income (2021\$)	\$7,401***	(\$2,562)	\$7,615***	(\$2,832)	\$6,589**	(\$2,944)	\$7,311**	(\$2,922)
9	Log total personal income	0.124**	(0.050)	0.131***	(0.040)	0.152***	(0.039)	0.130***	(0.042)
10	Wage and salary income	\$7,159***	(\$2,731)	\$7,069***	(\$2,108)	\$5,998***	(\$2,102)	\$6,709***	(\$2,130)
11	Log wage and salary income	0.105*	(0.054)	0.123***	(0.039)	0.116***	(0.036)	0.114***	(0.040)
12	(0,1) Married	0.012	(0.021)	0.021	(0.018)	0.017	(0.016)	0.018	(0.019)
13	...To college-educated spouse	0.060**	(0.024)	0.072***	(0.022)	0.078***	(0.020)	0.066***	(0.022)
15	...To non-Vietnamese spouse	0.037***	(0.013)	0.037***	(0.013)	0.039***	(0.012)	0.042***	(0.013)
14	...To US-native spouse	0.013	(0.010)	0.017*	(0.010)	0.014	(0.008)	0.020*	(0.010)
16	(0,1) Home ownership	0.007	(0.019)	0.001	(0.026)	0.002	(0.020)	0.005	(0.025)
17	Home value	\$68,231***	(\$17,247)	\$73,769***	(\$21,205)	\$39,452***	(\$12,795)	\$69,383***	(\$17,711)
18	Log home value	0.077*	(0.041)	0.109***	(0.028)	0.031	(0.035)	0.095***	(0.033)
19	Monthly gross rent paid	\$70.7	(\$194.0)	\$95.8**	(\$39.8)	\$70.7*	(\$40.9)	\$86.4**	(\$35.6)
20	(0,1) Resides in PUMA with most VNM	-0.024	(0.023)	-0.034	(0.025)	-0.017	(0.027)	-0.028	(0.029)
21	Per capita share of Vietnamese in PUMA	n.a.		0.010***	(0.003)	-0.000	(0.001)	-0.002	(0.002)

Notes: See Table 1 and Appendix Table 5. The sample count declines by 10 in Column 1 due to dropping individuals not in an MSA.

Appendix Table 7: Base analysis using disaggregated age at arrival bins compared to immigrants 20-21 years old at arrival

		14-15 years old at arrival		16-17 years old at arrival		18-19 years old at arrival		Adj R2	n
		Coeff.	SE	Coeff.	SE	Coeff.	SE		
1	(0,1) Speaks English well	0.151	(0.022) ***	0.112	(0.016) ***	0.050	(0.016) ***	0.022	2924
2	Years of education	1.004	(0.191) ***	0.596	(0.117) ***	0.115	(0.070)	0.053	2661
3	(0,1) High school completion	0.179	(0.029) ***	0.094	(0.022) ***	0.043	(0.021) **	0.028	2924
4	(0,1) College completion	0.141	(0.044) ***	0.103	(0.030) ***	0.024	(0.017)	0.046	2924
5	(0,1) Employed	0.032	(0.023)	-0.017	(0.022)	-0.004	(0.021)	0.019	2924
6	(0,1) Unemployed	-0.007	(0.006)	-0.002	(0.004)	0.009	(0.007)	-0.004	2924
7	(0,1) Not in labor force	-0.026	(0.022)	0.020	(0.022)	-0.005	(0.015)	0.029	2924
8	Total personal income (2021\$)	\$17,297	(4072) ***	\$8,234	(3350) **	\$4,836	(1890) **	0.048	2924
9	Log total personal income	0.302	(0.062) ***	0.146	(0.056) **	0.082	(0.035) **	0.040	2652
10	Wage and salary income	\$17,028	(4729) ***	\$7,067	(2514) ***	\$4,100	(1713) **	0.050	2924
11	Log wage and salary income	0.385	(0.079) ***	0.125	(0.053) **	0.109	(0.044) **	0.051	2251
12	(0,1) Married	0.006	(0.034)	0.027	(0.022)	0.007	(0.013)	0.004	2924
13	...To college-educated spouse	0.099	(0.048) **	0.061	(0.023) ***	0.005	(0.012)	0.016	2924
15	...To non-Vietnamese spouse	0.073	(0.030) **	0.032	(0.014) **	-0.003	(0.013)	0.007	2924
14	...To US-native spouse	0.053	(0.024) **	0.004	(0.009)	-0.012	(0.008)	0.018	2924
16	(0,1) Home ownership	-0.014	(0.021)	-0.004	(0.022)	-0.019	(0.019)	0.022	2875
17	Home value	\$135,436	(30059) ***	\$70,236	(18009) ***	\$24,524	(14714)	0.248	2400
18	Log home value	0.203	(0.075) ***	0.102	(0.030) ***	0.048	(0.019) **	0.277	2400
19	Monthly gross rent paid	\$67.2	(178.6)	\$100.3	(41.4) **	\$38.7	(60.8)	0.103	439
20	(0,1) Resides in PUMA with most VNM	-0.027	(0.033)	-0.028	(0.037)	-0.000	(0.015)	0.023	2645
21	Per capita share of Vietnamese in PUMA	0.009	(0.002) ***	0.000	(0.001)	0.006	(0.002) **	0.525	2645

Notes: See Column 1 of Appendix Table 5. Table reports baseline regression results using four age-at-arrival bins. All columns in the row are from the same estimation. Individuals arriving aged 20-21 are the reference category.

Appendix Table 8: Appendix Table 7 adding controls for education and fluency

		14-15 years old at arrival		16-17 years old at arrival		18-19 years old at arrival		Adj R2	n
		Coeff.	SE	Coeff.	SE	Coeff.	SE		
1	(0,1) Speaks English well	n.a.							
2	Years of education	n.a.							
3	(0,1) High school completion	n.a.							
4	(0,1) College completion	n.a.							
5	(0,1) Employed	0.008	(0.027)	-0.032	(0.026)	-0.010	(0.019)	0.033	2924
6	(0,1) Unemployed	-0.006	(0.006)	-0.001	(0.004)	0.009	(0.007)	-0.004	2924
7	(0,1) Not in labor force	-0.003	(0.025)	0.033	(0.025)	0.001	(0.013)	0.044	2924
8	Total personal income (2021\$)	\$8913	(3651) **	\$2269	(4127)	\$3069	(1519) **	0.211	2924
9	Log total personal income	0.100	(0.047) **	0.008	(0.062)	0.030	(0.030)	0.192	2652
10	Wage and salary income	\$8564	(3682) **	\$1083	(2909)	\$2351	(1521)	0.222	2924
11	Log wage and salary income	0.165	(0.063) **	-0.015	(0.063)	0.054	(0.039)	0.234	2251
12	(0,1) Married	-0.021	(0.035)	0.010	(0.020)	0.000	(0.014)	0.018	2924
13	...To college-educated spouse	0.023	(0.055)	0.009	(0.031)	-0.011	(0.015)	0.189	2924
15	...To non-Vietnamese spouse	0.056	(0.031) *	0.021	(0.013)	-0.007	(0.012)	0.020	2924
14	...To US-native spouse	0.042	(0.024) *	-0.004	(0.009)	-0.014	(0.008) *	0.029	2924
16	(0,1) Home ownership	-0.055	(0.023) **	-0.030	(0.030)	-0.030	(0.017) *	0.067	2875
17	Home value	\$99,174	(30790) ***	\$46,324	(15391) ***	\$14,727	(15219)	0.288	2400
18	Log home value	0.102	(0.073)	0.037	(0.030)	0.019	(0.020)	0.322	2400
19	Monthly gross rent paid	\$25.0	(198.6)	\$82.0	(53.1)	\$35.4	(61.4)	0.120	439
20	(0,1) Resides in PUMA with most VNM	-0.025	(0.033)	-0.025	(0.037)	-0.000	(0.015)	0.026	2645
21	Per capita share of Vietnamese in PUMA	0.010	(0.003) ***	0.001	(0.001)	0.006	(0.002) **	0.525	2645

Notes: See Appendix Table 7. Table reports regressions adding controls for education and fluency while using four age-at-arrival bins. All columns in the row are from the same estimation. Individuals arriving aged 20-21 are the reference category.

Appendix Table 9: Dynamic wage analysis in LEHD

	Full sample regression with basic controls		Column 1 with education x year and language fluency x year controls		Sample with LEHD start within 3 years of arrival in US and first located in cluster city		Column 3 with education x year and language fluency x year controls	
	(1)		(2)		(3)		(4)	
A. Log annual earnings among employed across all jobs								
(0,1) Young arrival x								
1993-1994	-0.215	(0.091) **	-0.152	(0.100)	-0.129	(0.125)	-0.070	(0.131)
1995-1999	-0.046	(0.027) *	-0.024	(0.029)	-0.030	(0.031)	0.018	(0.026)
2000-2004	0.191	(0.036) ***	0.101	(0.025) ***	0.316	(0.062) ***	0.236	(0.051) ***
2005-2009	0.175	(0.029) ***	0.061	(0.023) ***	0.256	(0.057) ***	0.125	(0.043) ***
2010-2014	0.152	(0.025) ***	0.025	(0.017)	0.207	(0.074) ***	0.067	(0.062)
Adjusted R2	0.297		0.366		0.344		0.400	
B. Raw annual earnings among employed in constant 2014 dollars								
(0,1) Young arrival x								
1993-1994	-\$817	(301) ***	-\$455	(345)	\$33	(289)	\$107	(322)
1995-1999	\$366	(322)	\$208	(401)	\$860	(256) ***	\$764	(280) ***
2000-2004	\$5,183	(537) ***	\$2,602	(298) ***	\$5,666	(1253) ***	\$5,216	(1132) ***
2005-2009	\$6,881	(599) ***	\$2,483	(370) ***	\$5,389	(1708) ***	\$4,630	(1592) ***
2010-2014	\$6,795	(829) ***	\$928	(467) **	\$2,874	(2683)	\$1,978	(2570)
Adjusted R2	0.270		0.436		0.444		0.458	

Notes: Data combines LEHD files from 1993-2014. The sample is limited to immigrants arriving at ages 14-21, living in an LEHD state where data is available by 1993, and currently earning at least \$250 per quarter in their main job. Coefficients for young arrivals (interacted with year dummies) are measured relative to older arrivals. Regression controls include gender (interacted with year dummies), a linear age term (interacted with year dummies), and state x year fixed effects. Regressions are unweighted and cluster standard errors by state. In Columns 2 and 4, education (high school and college dummies) and language fluency are measured only at the time of an individual's response in Census or ACS. Columns 1 and 2 contain 110,000 observations; Columns 3 and 4 contain 50,500 observations (rounded per Census Bureau disclosure requirements). In Panel B, values above the 99th percentile are top-coded to the percentile value. Disclosure conducted under FSRDC Project Number 1571. (CBDRB-FY23-P1571-R10504).

Appendix Table 10: Extensions on Table 2's career histories using 2000-2014 LEHD

	Regressions with base controls			Mean values	
	Coeff.	SE	Adj R2	Young	Older
	(1)			(2)	(3)
1 Share of quarters employed in LEHD	0.1229	(0.010) ***	0.223	68.6%	66.5%
2 ... in SEINs of 0-20 employees	-0.0269	(0.011) **	0.030	23.6%	27.7%
3 ... in SEINs of 21-1000 employees	-0.0407	(0.011) ***	0.021	42.7%	45.6%
4 ... in SEINs of 1001+ employees	0.0676	(0.010) ***	0.021	33.7%	26.8%
5 ... in SEINs that are high-tech NAICS (NSF definition)	-0.0084	(0.008)	0.042	23.3%	23.0%
6 ... in SEINs in NAICS 812113 (nail care)	-0.0174	(0.004) ***	0.033	5.3%	8.1%
7 ... in SEINs that have mean wages higher than state median	0.0626	(0.016) ***	0.060	79.2%	72.3%
8 ... in SEINs where focal individual is top earner	0.0012	(0.007)	0.024	6.0%	7.4%
9 ... in SEINs where a co-ethnic individual is top earner	-0.0242	(0.012) **	0.038	17.4%	20.9%
10 Average quarterly earnings when employed	\$2,289	(243) ***	0.055	\$10,170	\$8,722
11 ... Log average quarterly earnings when employed	0.2662	(0.036) ***	0.078	8.79	8.64
12 ... Average percentile of person in SEIN wage distribution	4.492	(0.331) ***	0.053	49.35	47.59
13 Average share of employees who are co-ethnic	-0.0521	(0.012) ***	0.053	19.3%	24.4%
14 Total number of SEINs worked for during period	0.2503	(0.090) ***	0.035	3.17	3.02
15 ... Average quarterly duration of employment at SEIN	1.561	(0.290) ***	0.032	15.69	15.92
16 Percentage change in earnings for 2012-14 vs. 2000-02	0.4930	(0.044) ***	0.015	1.262	0.9373
17 Share of times when annual earnings change is					
18 ... below -20%	-0.0279	(0.004) ***	0.053	13.3%	13.9%
19 ... above +20%	0.0254	(0.004) ***	0.028	21.4%	20.3%
20 ... between -20% and +20%	0.0576	(0.004) ***	0.062	43.1%	41.7%
21 ... missing because gap between spells > 1 year	-0.0550	(0.005) ***	0.064	22.2%	24.1%
22 Percentage change in SEIN wage for 2012-12 vs. 2000-02	0.0697	(0.010) ***	0.007	19.8%	15.5%

Notes: See Table 2. The 2012-14 vs. 2000-02 changes are top-coded at the 99th percentile. Disclosure conducted under FSRDC Project Number 1571. (CBDRB-FY23-P1571-R10504).

Appendix Table 11: Extensions on Table 2's career histories using 2000-2014 LEHD

		Regressions with base controls			Regressions adding controls for education and fluency			Regressions adding controls for education, fluency, initial city being cluster site, and traits of initial employer		
		Coeff.	SE	Adj R2	Coeff.	SE	Adj R2	Coeff.	SE	Adj R2
		(1)			(2)			(3)		
1	Share of quarters employed in LEHD	0.1229	(0.010) ***	0.223	0.0982	(0.007) ***	0.257	0.0960	(0.006) ***	0.266
2	... in SEINs of 0-20 employees	-0.0269	(0.011) **	0.030	0.0039	(0.007)	0.077	0.0119	(0.006) **	0.170
3	... in SEINs of 21-1000 employees	-0.0407	(0.011) ***	0.021	-0.0329	(0.008) ***	0.023	-0.0359	(0.008) ***	0.046
4	... in SEINs of 1001+ employees	0.0676	(0.010) ***	0.021	0.0289	(0.008) ***	0.090	0.0240	(0.010) **	0.116
5	... in SEINs that are high-tech NAICS (NSF definition)	-0.0084	(0.008)	0.042	-0.0298	(0.008) ***	0.073	-0.0321	(0.008) ***	0.070
6	... in SEINs in NAICS 812113 (nail care)	-0.0174	(0.004) ***	0.033	-0.0012	(0.005)	0.059	0.0012	(0.006)	0.115
7	... in SEINs that have mean wages higher than state median	0.0626	(0.016) ***	0.060	0.0193	(0.011) *	0.144	0.0136	(0.008) *	0.193
8	... in SEINs where focal individual is top earner	0.0012	(0.007)	0.024	0.0085	(0.005) *	0.037	0.0105	(0.004) **	0.072
9	... in SEINs where a co-ethnic individual is top earner	-0.0242	(0.012) **	0.038	0.0090	(0.007)	0.098	0.0154	(0.004) ***	0.205
10	Average quarterly earnings when employed	\$2,289	(243) ***	0.055	\$1,008	(119) ***	0.239	\$949	(113) ***	0.249
11	... Log average quarterly earnings when employed	0.2662	(0.036) ***	0.078	0.1287	(0.018) ***	0.243	0.1204	(0.014) ***	0.261
12	... Average percentile of person in SEIN wage distr.	4.492	(0.331) ***	0.053	3.284	(0.235) ***	0.077	3.251	(0.239) ***	0.078
13	Average share of employees who are co-ethnic	-0.0521	(0.012) ***	0.053	-0.0158	(0.006) **	0.158	-0.0106	(0.003) ***	0.249
14	Total number of SEINs worked for during period	0.2503	(0.090) ***	0.035	0.1889	(0.103) *	0.042	0.1828	(0.102) *	0.046
15	... Average quarterly duration of employment at SEIN	1.561	(0.290) ***	0.032	1.182	(0.396) ***	0.036	1.136	(0.439) ***	0.039
16	Percentage change in earnings for 2012-14 vs. 2000-02	0.4930	(0.044) ***	0.015	0.3377	(0.041) ***	0.042	0.3332	(0.041) ***	0.043
17	Share of times when annual earnings change is									
18	... below -20%	-0.0279	(0.004) ***	0.053	-0.0219	(0.004) ***	0.066	-0.0218	(0.004) ***	0.066
19	... above +20%	0.0254	(0.004) ***	0.028	0.0247	(0.005) ***	0.028	0.0248	(0.005) ***	0.028
20	... between -20% and +20%	0.0576	(0.004) ***	0.062	0.0371	(0.005) ***	0.098	0.0350	(0.005) ***	0.107
21	... missing because gap between spells > 1 year	-0.0550	(0.005) ***	0.064	-0.0398	(0.006) ***	0.086	-0.0380	(0.005) ***	0.096
22	Percentage change in SEIN wage for 2012-12 vs. 2000-02	0.0697	(0.010) ***	0.007	0.0411	(0.011) ***	0.017	0.0420	(0.012) ***	0.017

Notes: See Table 2 and Appendix Table 10. Disclosure conducted under FSRDC Project Number 1571. (CBDRB-FY23-P1571-R10504).



Appendix Table 12: Industries with high AHA representation

		Total AHA employment	Co-ethnic employment
1	NAICS 3152: Cut & Sew Apparel	+***	+***
2	NAICS 3341: Computer Equipment	+***	+
3	NAICS 3342: Communications Equipment	+***	+
4	NAICS 3344: Semiconductors	+***	+***
5	NAICS 3345: Instruments Manufacturing	+***	+
6	NAICS 3364: Aerospace Products	+***	+
7	NAICS 4451: Grocery Stores	+***	+***
8	NAICS 5415: Computer Systems	+***	+***
9	NAICS 5613: Employment Services	+***	+***
10	NAICS 6211: Physician's Offices	+**	+***
11	NAICS 6212: Dentist Offices	+	+***
12	NAICS 6221: Hospitals	+***	+
13	NAICS 7225: Restaurants	+***	+***
14	NAICS 8111: Auto Repair Shops	+**	+***
15	NAICS 8121: Other Personal Services	+***	+***
16	NAICS 812113: Nail Salons	+***	+***
17	NAICS 8141: Private Households	+	+***

Notes: Table reports a sign and significance disclosure on AHA industry distribution in the LEHD. Industries not listed are the reference group. Disclosure conducted under FSRDC Project Number 1571. (CBDRB-FY23-P1571-R11656).