

BY WILLIAM H. FREY

**Immigration policy** is again a front-burner issue. And, once again, we are bombarded with wildly conflicting arguments about the newcomers' effect on unemployment, wages, tax revenues and the like. But those making the case for less restrictive policies did score a coup recently.



According to a new Census survey, the 30 million second-generation Americans seem well on their way to achieving the American dream. “Gen-2” workers have a median income of \$38,000, compared with \$27,000

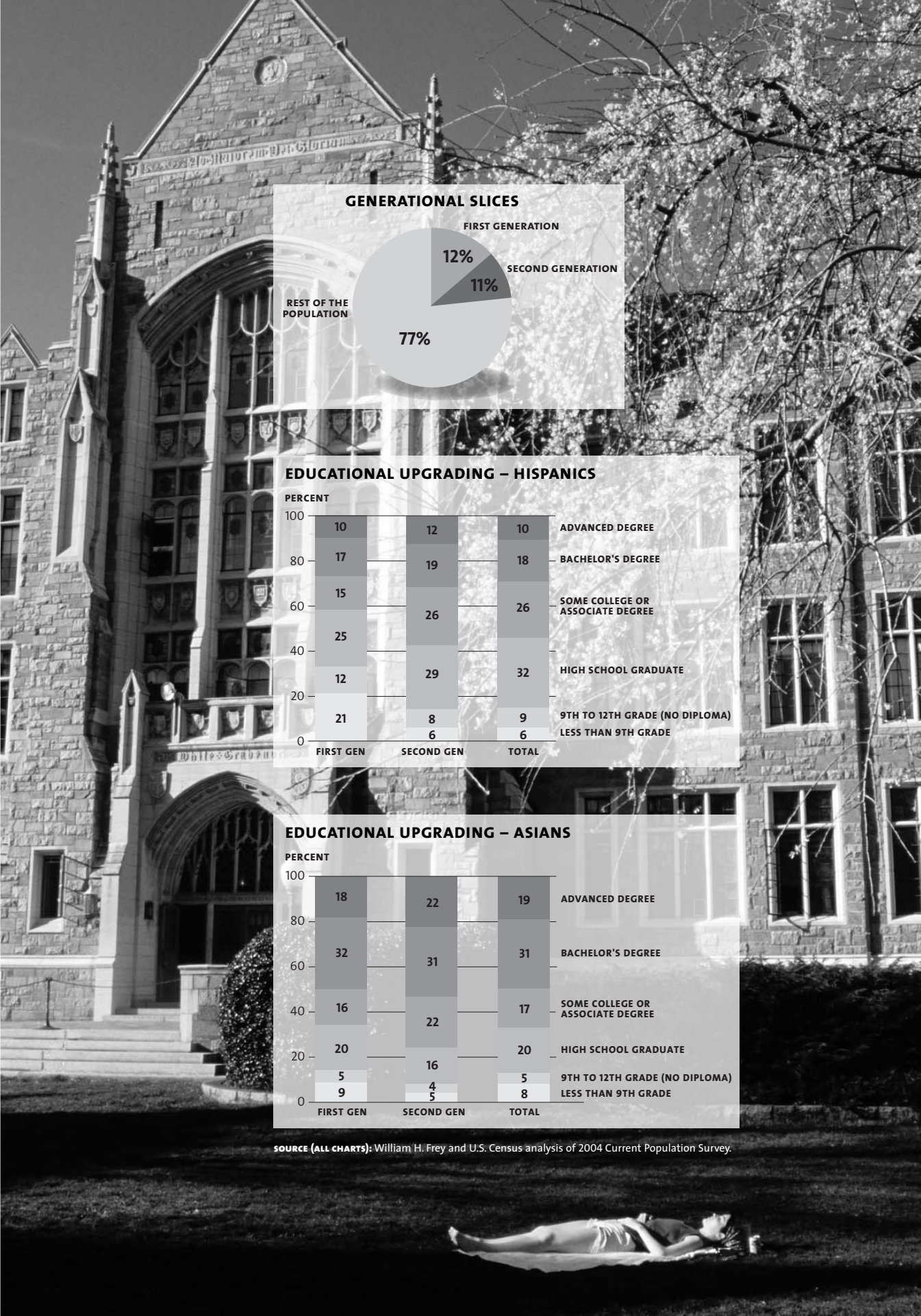
for the foreign-born and \$35,000 for the total workforce. Similarly, Gen-2s have a higher rate of homeownership (80 percent) than the population as a whole (76 percent).

Perhaps most remarkable is the educational attainment of adult Gen-2s. Fully 57 percent have some schooling beyond 12th grade, compared to 42 percent of Gen-1s and 54 percent of the whole population. Moreover,

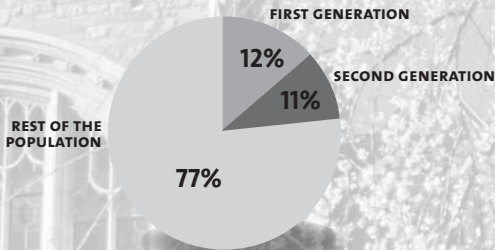
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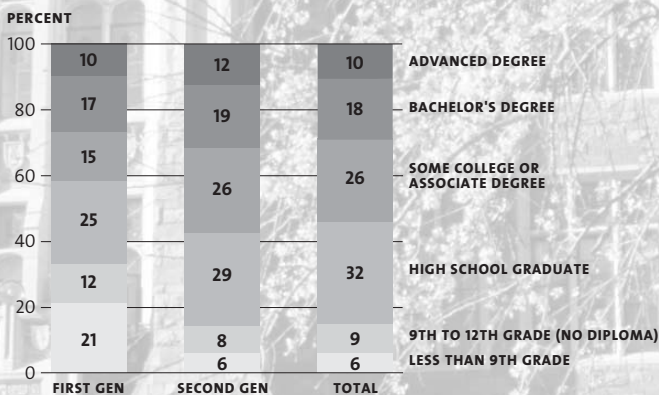
LEFT: GOWEN FRANKEN/CORBIS; RIGHT: @RICHARD T. NOWITZ/CORBIS



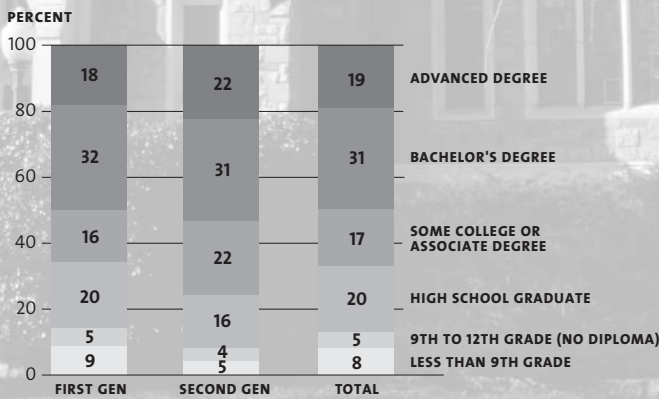
### GENERATIONAL SLICES



### EDUCATIONAL UPGRADING – HISPANICS

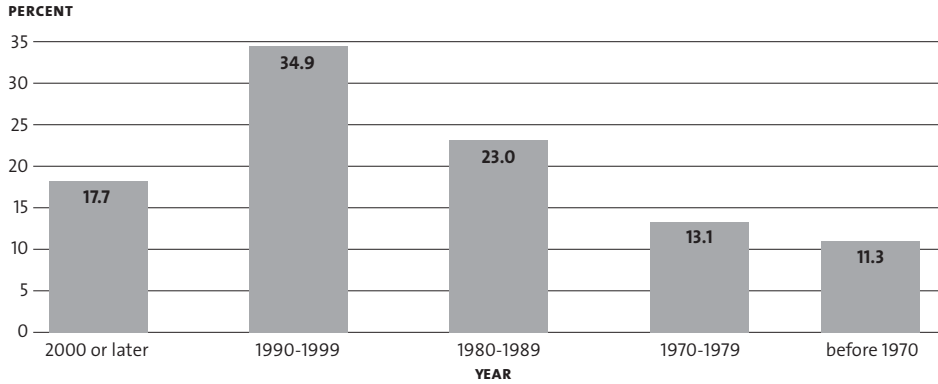


### EDUCATIONAL UPGRADING – ASIANS

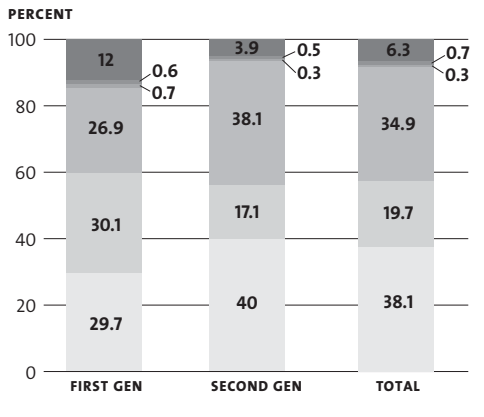


SOURCE (ALL CHARTS): William H. Frey and U.S. Census analysis of 2004 Current Population Survey.

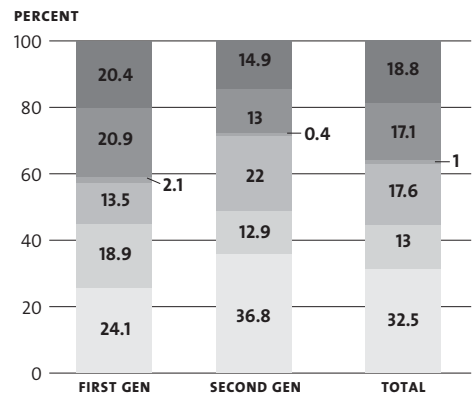
### FIRST GEN YEAR OF ENTRY



### JOB MOBILITY, FEMALES



### JOB MOBILITY, MALES



- PRODUCTION, TRANSPORTATION AND MATERIAL MOVING OCCUPATIONS
- CONSTRUCTION, EXTRACTION AND MAINTENANCE OCCUPATIONS
- FARMING, FISHING AND FORESTRY OCCUPATIONS

- SALES AND OFFICE OCCUPATIONS
- SERVICE OCCUPATIONS
- MANAGEMENT, PROFESSIONAL AND RELATED OCCUPATIONS

only 14 percent are high-school dropouts, compared with one-third of first-generation adults. This contrast is even more dramatic for Hispanics: only 22 percent are dropouts, compared to 54 percent of new Hispanic immigrants. Actually, things are looking pretty good for recent first-generation immigrants, too. Those who arrived after 2000 are better educated than their counterparts in the 1980s and 1990s.

Still, not all the news is rosy. The comparisons here are restricted to adults. But fully half of the Gen-2s are under the age of 21, and many have been raised by immigrants who did not fare well in the rough-and-tumble of American life. This is suggested by current poverty statistics for children, which show that 22 percent of Gen-2 kids live below the poverty line – higher than the national average of 18 percent. **M**

## TRIUMPH OF THE GEN-2s

