Introduction

There are two competing stories in the literature regarding the life chances of immigrant youth: the dominant theory of segmented assimilation posits that today's immigrant youth are segmented based on their parents' human capital and mode of incorporation. By and large, immigrants from Asia have parents with high human capital and receive a positive reception; thus, their children are poised for upward mobility. On the other hand, a substantial portion of Latin American and Caribbean immigrants, who have parents with low human capital and are negatively received, are bound for downward mobility (Haller et al. 2011: 734; Passel 2009; Bean and Stevens 2003; Zhou et al. 2008). In contrast to segmented assimilation theory, classic and neo-classical assimilation theory highlights a more positive conclusion—that for the most part immigrant youth successfully assimilate to mainstream American society and experience upward mobility compared to their parents, despite different starting points (Gordon 1964, Alba and Nee 2003; Alba et al. 2011).

This paper draws on data regarding the daily lives of young people to help us better answer questions that emerge from these two competing perspectives. In particular, to what degree are youth with immigrant backgrounds assimilating? Is assimilation of youth segmented, with evidence of incorporation of Asian immigrant youth but not those whose parents originate in Latin America? Can we glean any particular assimilation strategies that would help explain the mechanisms that lead to successful assimilation in the adult years?

Background and Related Literature

Immigrant youth are the fastest growing segment of the American population under age 18, representing almost a fourth of American youth (Rumbaut 2005, 2008). On the whole, studies find that second generation immigrants are doing much better than their parents in educational attainment, even when the educational attainment of the first generation is very low. The second generation is also less concentrated in immigrant jobs (Rumbaut and Komaie 2010; Kasinitz et al. 2008; Park and Myers 2010; Smith 2003; Telles and Ortiz 2008). Because some immigrant groups have even better outcomes than native-born whites and all immigrant groups do better than their own parents, some scholars in the classical/neo-classical assimilation camp posit that there is a pattern of "second-generation advantage" (Kasinitz et al. 2008; Alba et al. 2011).

Research also indicates that not all immigrant groups are succeeding in American society. For example, Perlmann (2005) found that while 9% of white males and 16% of black males dropped out of high school in 2000, the rate was 33% for second-generation Mexican-American males. Females of Mexican origin are especially likely to give birth at a young age; 48% give birth before age 24, a figure that exceeds the rate of black females (41%). Mexican and West Indian immigrant males have higher incidents of arrests and incarceration compared to other immigrant groups (Heller et al. 2011). Segmented assimilation scholars argue that these statistics show a pattern of downward mobility for some immigrant groups.

While research on immigrant outcomes is well-developed, there is less data-driven analysis of what mechanisms may lead to either segmented assimilation or second-generation advantage. This paper attempts to help fill this gap by focusing on the time use of immigrant youth compared with their native-born counterparts.

Data and Analysis

This study takes advantage of the first ever time use data in the U.S. with sufficiently large sample sizes to examine differences in teenagers' time allocation by whether or not they have parents who immigrated to the U.S. We use the American Time Use Survey (ATUS), a survey sponsored by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. The ATUS collects nationally representative information on all the activities that took place during a twenty-four hour period in an individual's life—including the time each activity started, the time it ended, the nature of the activity, and where and with whom it took place—thereby providing a comprehensive and contextualized picture of time allocation. During a computer assisted telephone interview, researchers ask respondents what they did between 4:00 a.m. of the previous day and 4 a.m. of the interview day. The diary method has been shown to provide more reliable estimates of time use than stylized questions about time spent performing a certain activity during a reference period (Robinson and Godbey 1999). The ATUS, which has been conducted monthly since 2003, randomly selects Americans age 15 and older from households completing their eighth and final month of the Current Population Survey (CPS).

We analyze ATUS samples from 2003 to 2010, focusing on the 5,198 respondents who were 15-17 years of age at the time of the ATUS and were living with at least one parent. Our sample includes 4,203 youth with a native-born background and 995 with an immigrant background (i.e., the respondent and/or at least one co-resident parent were born outside the U.S.). Native-born youth are disaggregated into Non-Hispanic White, Hispanic, Black, and other. Youth of immigrant households are disaggregated into those of Latin American, Asian, and other origin.

We analyze the time teenagers spend on activities in five major categories, including: paid work, unpaid work in the home (housework and caregiving), personal care (sleep, eating, and grooming activities), free-time activities, and education activities (including studying). To the extent that teens with immigrant backgrounds come from families with lower socioeconomic status than native-born teens, we expect to find higher levels of paid work and caregiving among immigrant teens. Similarly, the lower resources of youth from immigrant households lead us to expect that they will spend less time in school and extracurricular activities. However, the high premium placed on intergenerational mobility may mitigate against this and suggests that we might find higher investment in school-related activities such as time spent studying among youth in immigrant households. We also look for evidence of cultural differences. For example, we examine whether youth with foreign-born parents spend more time with family than teens with native-born parents. Finally, we focus on our sample of youth 995 with immigrant parents to look for group-specific assimilation strategies and evidence of segmented assimilation.

Tentative Conclusions

This paper presents evidence that immigrant youth are successfully assimilating to mainstream American society, if we consider similarity in daily behavior among native-born and immigrant youth an indictor of assimilation. On the whole, native-born and immigrant youth spend their days in remarkably similar ways. Both Latino and Asian immigrant youth, however, spend more time studying and less time in paid employment than native-born youth. This difference may be a specific immigrant strategy, one that can help explain the mechanism by which immigrants achieve educational mobility. These findings support the overall conclusions of the classical and neo-classical assimilation theory.

We also find evidence of segmented assimilation. Even controlling for SES factors, Asian immigrant youth study more than Latino immigrant youth and native-born youth. This may be one mechanism by which immigrant youth experience segmented assimilation, in addition to or in concert with parents' human capital and mode of incorporation.

References

Alba, Richard, Philip Kasinitz, Mary C. Waters. 2011 "The Kids Are (Mostly) Alright: Second-generation assimilation." *Social Forces*, 89(3): 763-774.

Alba, Richard, and Victor Nee. 2003. *Remaking the American Mainstream: Assimilation and Contemporary Immigration*. Harvard University Press.

Bean, Frank D., and Gillian Stevens. 2003. *America's Newcomers and the Dynamics of Diversity*. Russell Sage Foundation.

Gordon, Milton M. 1964. *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion, and National Origins*. Oxford University Press.

Haller, William, Alejandro Portes, Scott M. Lynch. 2011. "Dreams Fulfilled, Dreams Shattered: Determinants of Segmented Assimilation in the Second Generation." *Social Forces*, 89(3): 733-762.

Kasinitz, Philip, John H. Mollenkopf, Mary C. Waters and Jennifer Holdaway. 2008. *Inheriting the City: The Children of Immigrants Come of Age*. Russell Sage Foundation and Harvard University Press.

Park, Julie, and Dowell Myers. 2010. "Intergenerational Mobility in the Post-1965 Immigration Era: Estimates by an Immigrant Generation Cohort Method." *Demography* 47(2):369-92.

Passel, Jeffrey. 2009. "The Economic Downturn and Immigration Trends: What has Happened and How do we Know?" Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center Report.

Perlmann, Joel. 2005. *Italians Then, Mexicans Now: Immigrant Origins and Second Generation Progress 1980-2000*. Russell Sage Foundation and the Levy Institute.

Robinson, J.P., Godbey, J. 1999. *Time for Life*. State College, PA: Pennsylvania state University Press.

Rumbaut, Rubén G. 2005. "Turning Points in the Transition to Adulthood: Determinants of Educational Attainment, Incarceration, and Early Childbearing among Children of Immigrants." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28(6):1041-86.

_____. 2008. "The Coming of the Second Generation: Immigration and Ethnic Mobility in Southern California." *Annals of the Academy of Political and Social Sciences* 620(1):196-236.

Rumbaut, Rubén and G. Komaie. 2010. "Immigration and Adult Transitions." *The Future of Children* 20: 43-66.

Telles, Edward, and Vilma Ortiz. 2008. *Generations of Exclusion: Mexican Americans, Assimilation, and Race.* Russell Sage Foundation.

Zhou, Min, Jennifer Lee, Jody A. Vallejo, Rosaura Tafoya-Estrada and Yang Sao Xiong. 2008. "Success Attained, Deterred, and Denied: Divergent Pathways to Social Mobility in Los Angeles' New Second Generation." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences* 620(1):37-61.