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Intersectional Differences in Segmented Assimilation:

Skill and Gender in the Context of Reception[*]

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Abstract

Purpose

Segmented assimilation theory predicts that contemporary non-white groups follow three patterns of assimilation: mainstream, downward, or delayed. Yet, the homogenous treatment and primacy of ethnicity resigns all group members to a similar fate. Whereas few studies of ethnic incorporation consider both the classed and gendered nature of the labor market, this study investigates the extent to which intersectional group differences within the highly stratified American economy shape segmented assimilation trajectories.

Design/methodology/approach

This study introduces an intersectional approach to segmented assimilation theory. Using the 2000 census, this study examines how within group differences in skill and gender condition the hourly earnings, joblessness and self-employment participation outcomes of five ethnic minority groups from the first to the second generation, compared against US-born, non-Hispanic whites.

Findings

Findings generally support the mainstream assimilation hypothesis for all groups; a downward assimilation trajectory among Chinese men only; and a delayed assimilation trajectory for low-skilled Filipinas and high-skilled Cuban men and women. This study reveals that intra-group differences in skill and gender shape divergent segmented assimilation trajectories among members of the same ethnic group.

Research limitations/implications

This study challenges the emphasis on and primacy of ethnicity in predicting segmented assimilation in favor of an intersectional approach that considers how multiple, interdependent, and intersecting dimensions of identity and not only ethnicity shape the process of economic incorporation among ethnic groups.

Whether and how immigrants and their descendants assimilate remain central questions for social scientists concerned with persistent economic inequality in the United States. Classic assimilation theory details a gradual process of integration into the American "mainstream" as groups adopt the social and cultural values of the host society. Although arguments against this inevitability are as prevalent as the canon itself, Alejandro Portes and colleagues (Portes and Zhou 1993; Zhou 1997; Portes and Rumbaut 2001, 2006) have been at the forefront of a paradigm shift in our understanding of how assimilation applies to contemporary post-1965 immigrants. They argue that today's immigrants face greater challenges to assimilation than yesterday's immigrants because they are non-white and the opportunity structure of the economy has changed. They introduce segmented assimilation theory to capture this contemporary process. This approach predicts two additional patterns: delayed assimilation , or a pattern of assimilation whereby some groups maintain strong coethnic ties within concentrated ethnic communities to facilitate their economic absorption; and downward assimilation, a trajectory of economic decline whereby disadvantaged groups, or those with limited human capital, isolated or weak communities, and a non-white phenotype, may integrate into "permanent poverty and assimilation into the underclass" (Portes and Zhou 1993:82).

Although this approach advances a more complete picture of the complex process of assimilation, the primacy and homogenous treatment of ethnicity overlooks the possibility of intra-group differences in other social group formations, namely class and gender, and their corollary in trajectories of segmented assimilation. In other words, this approach downplays group heterogeneity and implies instead that all members of a given ethnic group confront the same individual, group, and structural conditions and consequently, assimilate in the same way. Accepting this assumption of ethnic uniformity leads researchers to conclude that all members of

a given ethnic group must *either* be assimilating into the mainstream *or* joining the underclass (Neckerman, Carter, and Lee 1999).

Not all members of a given ethnic minority group share in common other dimensions of identity, such as class or gender, which likely contribute to segmented assimilation trajectories in much the same way that ethnic affiliation does. After all, the opportunity structure of the American economy, as one aspect of the context of reception (Portes and Rumbaut 2001), is stratified by both skill and gender, the former of which is conditioned in part on class background (Valdez 2011). Previous studies, however, have given short shrift to the classed and gendered structure of the labor market, or how intersecting dimensions of identity along the lines of class and gender circumscribe the economic integration of ethnic groups within this highly stratified context. In contrast, this study investigates how the low- and high-skilled sectors of the hourglass economy (Portes and Rumbaut 2001) and the gendered labor market (Menjivar 2004; Misra 2003) shape the segmented assimilation patterns of five ethnic minority groups. By acknowledging that coethnics likely face distinct reception contexts in the American economy rooted in class and gender, I attempt to investigate how intersectional and multiple dimensions of identity shape economic assimilation.

Contemporary research observes that distinct aspects of socioeconomic assimilation (e.g. spatial concentration, intermarriage, earnings and the like) often occur in a non-linear, multidimensional, and independent manner (Bean and Stevens 2003; Yinger 1994; Snipp and Hirschman 2004:96; Waters and Jimenez 2005; Zhou and Xiong 2005). In keeping with this previous research I limit my analysis to one aspect of assimilation only: economic assimilation. Following Alba and Nee (1997; 2003), I define economic assimilation as "minority participation in mainstream socioeconomic institutions (e.g., the labor market) *on the basis of parity* with

ethnic-majority individuals of similar socioeconomic origins (1997:836, emphasis added)."

Specifically, I investigate the extent to which three economic indicators of assimilation --

earnings, joblessness, and self-employment participation -- among five ethnic minority groups

converge to those of US-born non-Hispanic whites, from the first to the second generation, by

skill and gender. I argue that the hourglass economy and the gendered labor market condition

different trajectories of assimilation along the lines of skill and gender, even within the same

ethnic group.

Theorizing Segmented Assimilation

Segmented assimilation theory posits that the interaction of individual, group, and

structural conditions combine to determine "into which segment of society a particular [ethnic]

group will assimilate" (Zhou 1997:984). The pattern that emerges for a given ethnic group is

rooted in a combination of factors: micro-level individual characteristics, such as education and

work experience; the "context of reception" which includes mezzo-level factors associated with

group membership, such as "the strength and viability of ethnic communities" (Zhou and Xiong

2005:1123), as well as macro-level conditions such as structural opportunity in the hourglass

economy, which, following global competition in durable goods manufacturing and the

restructuring of the American economy, is characterized by the bifurcated growth of low-skilled

and high-skilled jobs on the one hand, and on the other hand, the net loss of jobs in the "middle,"

such as good paying, blue collar union jobs (Portes and Zhou 1993:82). In this way, individual,

group, and structural factors combine to determine a given ethnic group's economic

incorporation (Portes and Rumbaut 2001; Portes and Zhou 1993; Zhou and Xiong 2005).

To illustrate, one body of research suggests that the Mexican-origin group may

experience downward assimilation (Fernandez-Kelly and Schauffler 1994; Portes and Rumbaut

2001). This group is characterized as one with limited human capital and a "weak" community, in part due to "precarious conditions of arrival and settlement (Portes and Rumbaut 2001:278)." As a low-skilled labor force at the bottom of the hourglass economy, earnings reflect a growing wage gap and economic stagnation (Bean and Stevens 2003; Perlmann 2005; Portes and Zhou 1993). Researchers conclude that as a "highly homogenous and vulnerable" group, the Mexican-origin population is likely to experience downward assimilation (Fernandez-Kelly and Schauffler 1994:678). Recent studies, however, expose the theoretical and empirical limitations associated with an approach that neglects to consider class and gender diversity within the Mexican-origin population.

For example, Valdez (2006) examined the earnings of low- and high-skilled Mexican-origin workers in the Southwest. She found that the earnings of low-skilled Mexicans declined as immigrants resided in the US longer, and were even lower among the US born; however, high-skilled Mexican workers increased their earnings over time and nativity. She concluded that Mexican immigrants confront different reception contexts in the low- and high-skilled labor markets, which likely result in divergent segmented assimilation trajectories. At the other end of the economic spectrum, Zhou and Xiong (2005) exposed the myth of the Asian "model minority" by showing that Asian ethnic groups "tread multiple paths and counteract disadvantages, and even advantages, in multiple ways" (2005:1147). They conceded that favorable individual and group features may "set the stage for a very advantageous context of reception and adaptation," as predicted by segmented assimilation theory; nevertheless, they concluded that the American reception context "shape[s] and even determine[s] to some extent" Asian American life chances (2005:119, 149).

Moreover, gender stratification is a "persistent fact" in the stratified American economy

that shapes the economic incorporation of men and women differently, with regard to occupational segregation, promotion and advancement, and earnings to name a few (Misra 2003). Additionally, gender inequality complicates ethnic minority group incorporation (Bean and Stevens 2003; Menjivar 2000; Waldinger and Feliciano 2004; Xie and Greenman 2005). For example, Menjivar (2000) observed a gendered pattern of Latino/a labor market outcomes. In particular, she found that Central American women outperformed men in employment and earnings. Likewise, Waldinger and Feliciano (2004) observed gender differences in joblessness. They suggested that disadvantaged men displayed an "oppositional culture" that increased their joblessness when compared to women. Black and Shierholz (2006) suspected that an interaction effect explained gender differences in socioeconomic attainment, as they observed higher earnings among high-skilled women than low-skilled women, whereas low-skilled women's earnings outpaced those of similarly-skilled men. Taken together, these studies bolster the claim made by Zhou and Xiong (2005) that the effect of individual and group characteristics on assimilation trajectories are likely mediated by the reception context of the American economy. Following Zhou and Xiong (2005), I argue that macro-level structural forces such as the low- and high-skilled sectors of the hourglass economy and the gender stratified labor market may condition the economic incorporation of low- and high-skilled workers and men and women differently, even among members of the same ethnic group.

This study investigates how, in the context of the stratified American economy, intra-ethnic group differences in skill and gender shape divergent segmented assimilation outcomes. This study expands the scope of previous research in two ways. First, this analysis investigates five of the largest ethnic minority groups in the United States against US-born, non-Hispanic whites. Previous studies typically focus on the outcomes of one or two ethnic minority groups

only, which restricts the scope of their results. Second, this analysis takes seriously the concern that segmented assimilation trajectories may differ between coethnics. Previous research tends to presume a single trajectory of segmented assimilation per ethnic group, which limits segmented assimilation possibilities to one pattern only. In contrast, this study considers the possibility of multiple segmented assimilation trajectories rooted in skill, gender, and (not only) ethnicity. By focusing on five ethnic groups, I am able to assess with confidence the extent to which class and gender variation shape divergent trajectories of segmented assimilation within multiple ethnic groups.

I use three socioeconomic indicators to assess socioeconomic assimilation: workers' hourly earnings, joblessness, and self-employment participation. Together these measures offer a comprehensive assessment of socioeconomic attainment. For the purposes of this research and in keeping with previous research, I apply one measure each to a specific pattern of socioeconomic assimilation associated with the three segmented assimilation trajectories: earnings are typically used as an indicator of mainstream or "Anglo-conformity" assimilation; joblessness is typically used as an indicator of downward assimilation; and self-employment participation, or "ethnic entrepreneurship" is generally used as an indicator of delayed assimilation.

Hypotheses

Mainstream Assimilation: Immigrant groups with favorable individual and group characteristics and a positive context of reception will experience classic economic assimilation. Specifically, the mainstream, or "Anglo conformity" (Zhou 1997) hypothesis predicts that immigrants and their descendants will converge to and eventually reach economic parity with US-born non-Hispanic whites. I extend this hypothesis to consider how intra-group differences in the context

of reception, as circumscribed by skill and gender, affect mainstream assimilation.

Since workers' earnings are a common measure of economic attainment I investigate how skill and gender affect the hourly earnings of first and second generation minority groups against non-Hispanic whites. Given that the high-skilled sector of the hourglass economy provides a more favorable context of reception than the low-skilled sector (Perlmann 2005; Portes and Zhou 1993), I anticipate that the earnings of high-skilled ethnic minorities will converge to those of high-skilled white workers, perhaps to a greater extent than their low-skilled counterparts. Moreover, gender stratification in the labor market may shape the effect of gender on earnings; women's earnings are likely to be lower than men's earnings overall (Misra 2003); at the same time, recent studies show that ethnic minority women's earnings may surpass those of their male counterparts in some cases (Menjivar 2000), and that skill-level may mediate gender disparities further among high-skilled workers (Blank and Shierholz 2006). Mixed earnings findings by gender suggest that this relationship may not always follow the predicted outcome of women earning less, especially across ethnicity and skill. This analysis of the hourly earnings of first and second generation groups by skill and gender will help explain how these intersecting dimensions affect earnings.

Downward Assimilation: Disadvantaged groups with low human capital and an unfavorable reception context are at greater risk for economic decline and joining the underclass, a social class category comprised of persons with weak labor force attachment, i.e., joblessness (Perlmann 2005; Portes and Zhou 1993; Waldinger and Feliciano 2004). An observed increase in joblessness among low-skilled ethnic minorities has been traced back to the 1970s restructuring of the U.S. economy. The emergence of the hourglass economy, characterized by a prevalence of high-skilled jobs at the top of the "hourglass" and low-skilled jobs at the bottom, exacerbated by

a "skills mismatch," whereby low-skilled workers lacked the required skills needed for high skilled, high-paying jobs, increased joblessness among low-skilled workers, especially African-Americans and Puerto Ricans (Browne 2000; Handel 2003; Quillian 2003; Wilson 1996). Likewise, researchers suggest that the disadvantaged Mexican-origin population may also fall into the underclass (Waldinger and Feliciano 2004). Accordingly, I anticipate an increase in joblessness among low-skilled Puerto Ricans and Mexicans from the first to the second generation. Since past studies suggest that joblessness disproportionately affects low-skilled men (Waldinger and Feliciano 2004; Wilson 1996), I expect Puerto Rican and Mexican origin men's joblessness rates to surpass those of their female counterparts. Finally, although the "skills-mismatch" thesis does not apply to high-skilled workers, I compare the jobless outcomes of high-skilled ethnic minorities with whites to assess joblessness across these groups.

Delayed Assimilation: For some groups the maintenance of the coethnic community in the host country provides the basis for the development of ethnic social capital. Social capital, or access to social and economic resources based on ethnic group membership, includes business information networks, access to coethnic labor, and coethnic borrowing or lending (Light and Bonacich 1988; Portes and Rumbaut 2001). Such ethnic based resources facilitate members' economic absorption. By relying on strong coethnic ties and networks, coethnics incorporate into the economy without the loss of ethnicity associated with mainstream assimilation or the vulnerability and isolation associated with downward assimilation (Neckerman, Carter, and Lee 1999; Portes and Zhou 1993). This pattern of incorporation is often ascribed to entrepreneurial ethnic groups, such as the Cubans and Chinese (Zhou 1997:979). These groups boast higher than average rates of self-employment participation, assisted by ethnic social capital. Because the maintenance of ethnicity is central to their economic incorporation, vis-à-vis ethnic

entrepreneurship, such groups are not expected to "assimilate to the mainstream" as their rates of self-employment converge to those of whites. Rather, ethnic entrepreneurship increases as immigrants reside in the US longer (Valdez 2006), and likely intergenerationally, at least in the short term, as coethnics continue to rely on social capital for their economic development (Portes and Rumbaut 2001).

Ethnic groups that are not generally characterized as entrepreneurial, those groups with lower than average rates of self-employment, are not expected to exceed the self-employment participation of US-born whites. Instead, their self-employment rates should demonstrate some measure of convergence to those of whites from the first to the second generation as these groups incorporate into the American economy. With respect to gender and skill, previous research suggests that men generally outperform women in self-employment participation; however, this research rarely considers how skill might alter this effect. Moreover, researchers have observed two contradictory trends: some studies show that higher skills among "human capital migrants" increase self-employment participation (Perlmann 2005), whereas other studies indicate that lower skills promote "survival strategy" enterprise in response to blocked mobility or discrimination in the low wage sector of the labor market (Light and Roach 1996; Portes and Rumbaut 2001; Valdez 2011). This study will adjudicate between such findings and identify the intersecting roles of skill and gender in shaping ethnic enterprise.

Data and Sample

Research on segmented assimilation generally focuses on the "second generation" (those born in the US with at least one foreign-born parent). This research is commonly based on data from the Current Population Survey (CPS), which allows researchers to identify where respondents' parents were born and thus identify the "true" second generation (Farley and Alba

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2002; Waldinger and Feliciano 2004; Waldinger, Lim and Cort 2007). In this analysis I use the 2000 Census (IPUMS). With almost 7 million households surveyed, the Census is the only dataset large enough to provide sufficient counts for this comparative analysis of five ethnic minority groups by skill and gender. Unlike the CPS, the Census does not provide information to determine respondents' parents' place of birth; nevertheless, it is possible to construct a reasonable proxy measure of the second generation (Perlmann 2005), based on a resurrected question (last asked in 1920) that identifies foreign-born respondents' *actual year of arrival* (rather than a range of years) to the United States. By identifying those persons who "…arrived in the United States before their third birthday," Perlmann (2005) confirms that this "1.3 generation" subgroup represents a more than satisfactory proxy that resembles the "true" second generation in essential characteristics, such as English language acquisition, citizenship status, poverty, schooling, and income (Perlmann 2005:143, 149-150). (For an exhaustive study that compares favorably the utility and accuracy of using the 2000 Census to proxy the second generation with the "true" second generation, please see Perlmann 2005). By comparison, pooling four years of CPS data generates 150,000 households only (Perlmann 2005:142).[i] Comparing the sample size and variable limitations of the CPS against the negligible differences in observed outcomes between the "true" and proxy second generation measures, on balance, the 2000 Census offers a reasonable alternative to the CPS that in its favor, makes possible this intersectional analysis.[ii]

This study uses a single cross-section of data to proxy intergenerational outcomes. Previous research suggests that using cross-sectional data in this way may bias results because it assumes that the "quality" of different immigrant cohorts is constant when it may decline over time (Borjas 1985:467). Recent studies, however, observe that although differences in the quality

of immigrants may occur across distinct groups, such differences are not observed within groups (LaLonde and Topel 1991; Valdez 2006). Moreover, related studies using cross-sectional data have successfully replicated the findings of longitudinal research, including an analysis by Valdez (2006) that examined the segmented assimilation outcomes of the Mexican-origin population (Duleep and Regets 1997; Valdez 2006). These studies confirm the suitability of using cross-sectional data for this intra-ethnic group analysis.

The sample includes working-age (18-64 years old) US-born, non-Hispanic whites, and first and second generation Chinese, Filipino, Cuban, Mexican, and Puerto Rican origin men and women from five "gateway" states located across the four regions of the United States: California, Texas, Florida, Illinois, and New York. These states report the highest foreign-born populations in the country, and represent the top five settlement states for the five ethnic groups considered here.[iii] These states and groups were also selected for their longer settlement histories when compared to more recent and smaller ethnic minority groups in the US, and to allow for comparisons with previous research. For example, Puerto Ricans are often characterized as part of the "rainbow underclass" in studies of joblessness and downward assimilation (Perlmann 2005; Waldinger and Feliciano 2004; Wilson 1996); Cuban and Chinese entrepreneurs are characterized as quintessential "ethnic entrepreneurs" (Valdez 2006); and researchers have observed some evidence for and against mainstream assimilation, typically measured using income and earnings (Perlmann 2005; Valdez 2006; Waldinger and Feliciano 2004).

Variable Description

I use the race and Hispanic origin questions to construct the categories of US-born non-Hispanic white, Chinese-origin, Filipino-origin, Mexican-origin, Cuban-origin, and Puerto Rican-origin groups. I use the ancestry and place/country of birth questions to determine

generational status for the ethnic minority groups. Foreign-born respondents are classified by

first and second generation proxy according to the census variable year of immigration, which

refers to the year that the respondent came to live in the United States (Ruggles et al. 2003).[iv]

The second generation proxy is comprised of those foreign-born persons who arrived in the

United States before their third birthday, who, for all intents and purposes were socialized in the

United States, having learned English as toddlers and attended American schools only (Perlmann

2005:143). The first generation includes those foreign-born respondents who arrived in the

United States on or after their third birthday.

The sample is further separated by respondents' gender and skill. In line with previous

research, I identify low-skilled workers simply as those respondents who have received a high-

school diploma or less and high-skilled workers as those who have completed some college or

better (see Reed and Danziger 2007:374; Sachs and Shatz 1996:236). These two categories

roughly correspond to work in the low- or high-skilled sectors of the American hourglass

economy, often associated with the working or middle class, respectively (Sachs and Shatz

1996).

Socioeconomic Status:

I use three economic indicators: workers' hourly earnings, joblessness and self-

employment participation. I measure workers' hourly earnings using the census variables total

personal earned income, which includes earnings from non-farm wages and salary; hours usually

worked; and number of weeks worked among persons who identify as employees. Because

earnings vary at the extremes, I use logged hourly earnings in the analysis. Joblessness represents

those respondents who are work-eligible[v] but who are not working or seeking work. Joblessness

is measured using the census variables employment status and labor force participation. Self-

employment is defined as a dichotomous variable constructed from the variable, *class of worker*, which includes private and government employees, the self-employed, the unemployed and unpaid family workers. A person is classified as self-employed if "self-employed in own incorporated or not incorporated business or professional practice" (coded as 1, otherwise coded as 0) (see Wilson and Portes 1980; Zhou and Logan 1989; Fischer and Massey 2000).

Background Characteristics:

I include a number of influential background characteristics as controls. To capture the process of acculturation which may facilitate a given group members' economic assimilation, I include English language proficiency, citizenship, married status, and age. The acquisition of English among immigrants captures the process of acculturation and facilitates upward mobility (Light and Roach 1996). English proficiency is dummy coded, with the ability to speak English "well" or "very well" coded as one and "not well" or "not at all" coded as zero. Being married reflects one's civil incorporation, while acquiring US citizenship may reflect one's civic or political incorporation (Gordon 1964; Ramakrishnan and Espenshade 2001); both are associated with economic mobility (Valdez 2006). Citizenship status is defined as "US citizen" or "US citizen by naturalization" (coded as 1), or "not a citizen" (coded as 0). Although this latter category combines undocumented immigrants and permanent legal residents, it nevertheless captures the harsher reception context accorded to non-citizens (Kossoudji and Cobb-Clark 2000). Finally, I include age and age-squared (the latter to adjust for confounding influences), industry, region, puma, and state, to control for geographic differences in the economy.

Additional "context of reception" variables are included in specific analyses. I include a measure of public sector employment in the analysis of hourly earnings. Public sector employment is referred to as the "economic mainstream" (Waldinger, Lim and Cort 2007:18),

since it is likely to provide more equitable earnings for immigrants, ethnic and racial minorities and women than the non-public sector (Waldinger, Lim and Cort 2007). In the analysis of joblessness, I include a measure of the percent decline in manufacturing in a given Public Use Microdata Area (PUMA; a concentrated geographic area used by the census bureau that does not cross state or county boundaries and consists of 100,000 or more residents). Declining manufacturing, or deindustrialization, is associated with the "skills-mismatch" thesis, which predicts an increase in joblessness among disadvantaged groups associated with the hourglass economy (Wilson 1996). Following Waldinger and Feliciano (2004), I include a control for the presence of a child or children under the age of 5 in the household for women only, which has been shown to affect their joblessness rates. Finally, I include a proxy measure of ethnic cohesion in the analysis of self-employment, as measured by the percentage of coethnic concentration in a given respondent's PUMA, since geographic ethnic concentration facilitates enterprise for some groups (Portes and Rumbaut 2001). Table 1 presents the descriptive characteristics of the sample.

I conduct three separate regression analyses to investigate the effect of ethnicity, skill, and gender on three economic indicators to assess segmented assimilation pathways. The first model of each analysis examines the effect of ethnicity by first and second generation only. The second model of each analysis introduces background characteristics and the context of reception variables.

Table 1

Findings

Hourly Earnings:

All things being equal, first generation ethnic minority men earn less than their non-

Hispanic white counterparts (Table 2 Model II). Only three groups reach parity in earnings with those of white men: low-skilled Mexican-origin men and high-skilled Chinese and Cuban-origin men. By the second generation, however, the earnings of all ethnic minority groups reach parity with or exceed those of white men, net of the controls. In particular, two low-skilled groups, Chinese and Cuban-origin men, earn more than their white male counterparts, whereas three high-skilled groups, Filipino, Cuban, and Mexican-origin men earn more than similarly skilled whites.

** Table 2**

Like low-skilled men, most low-skilled first generation women earn less than their white female counterparts; only low-skilled first generation Filipinas earn as much as white women. Among high-skilled women, first generation Chinese and Filipina-origin women earn more than white women, whereas first generation Cuban-origin women reach parity. Only first generation high-skilled Mexican and Puerto Rican-origin women earn less than similarly-skilled white women. By the second generation, however, ethnic minority women earn the same as, or better than, US-born white women. Specifically, high-skilled Cuban and Mexican women, like their male counterparts, earn more than white women; all other groups are not markedly different from whites. Overall, these findings suggest that from the first to the second generation, earnings improve for both ethnic minority men and women, although there are some ethnic group differences by skill-level and gender. For example high-skilled second generation Filipino men and low-skilled second generation Filipinas earn more than their white counterparts; however, high-skilled second generation Filipina women and low-skilled Filipino men reach parity only. And although low-skilled Mexican-origin men and women reach earnings parity with US-born whites, high-skilled Mexican-origin men and women exceed the earnings of whites. Notably, the

second generation Cuban-origin population consistently outperforms US-born whites, regardless

of skill or gender. Findings confirm that the hourly earnings of men and women within the same

ethnic minority group may differ based on skill-level, and that this relationship may not always

or typically benefit men only. For the most part, however, ethnic minority earnings converge to

those of US-born whites from the first to the second generation, in keeping with the mainstream

assimilation hypothesis.

Joblessness:

** Table 3**

Net of the controls, the odds of being jobless are higher for first generation ethnic

minority men than non-Hispanic whites with one exception: low-skilled first generation Chinese

men are less likely to be jobless than whites. By the second generation, however, these findings

have reversed, as second generation Chinese men are the sole group to report higher odds of

being jobless than whites, regardless of skill (Table 3). Otherwise, and by the second generation,

most ethnic minority groups are not markedly different from whites in their odds of being

jobless; only low-skilled Cuban and high skilled Filipino-origin men are markedly less likely to

be jobless than their white counterparts.

Like their male counterparts, first generation low-skilled Chinese women report lower

odds of joblessness than US-born whites. For all other first generation women, the odds of being

jobless are generally higher than those of US-born white women. By the second generation,

however, most ethnic minority women have reached parity with whites. Only three low skilled

groups (Cubans, Mexicans, and Puerto Ricans) and one high skilled group (Mexicans), report

lower odds of being jobless than those of white women. Notably, these findings suggest that

differences by skill and gender are often observed between coethnics. For example, the

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differences between Chinese and Mexican men and women, regardless of skill, or the differences between low- and high-skilled Filipinos, regardless of gender. That said there are some coethnics that follow similar trends across skill and gender. Specifically, low-skilled Cubans, high-skilled Cubans, low-skilled Filipinos/as, and high-skilled Puerto Ricans, all report similar odds of being jobless; findings that suggest these groups face similar contexts of reception by skill and gender. Overall, findings confirm the downward assimilation hypothesis for Chinese men only, but reject support for this hypothesis for the anticipated groups, namely, Puerto Rican and Mexican men, groups that instead demonstrate parity with white men from the first to the second generation.

Table 4

Self-Employment Participation

Among men, the odds of being self-employed are higher for first generation Chinese and Cuban-origin men, or groups characterized as "entrepreneurial," in keeping with the delayed assimilation hypothesis; nevertheless, this trend is not observed for all coethnic group members. Only low-skilled first generation Cuban and Chinese-origin men exceed the self-employment odds of whites. Otherwise, the odds of being self-employed among first generation ethnic minority men are generally lower than US-born whites, although high-skilled first generation Cuban and Mexican-origin men reach parity with whites. By the second generation, however, most ethnic minority men's odds are not significantly different from those of whites, with the exception of high-skilled Mexican origin men, whose odds decrease from the first to the second generation. Moreover, only high-skilled second generation Cuban men surpass US-born whites in self-employment participation.

For women, the odds of being self-employed are lower among first generation ethnic minority groups than whites, with two exceptions: Mexican-origin women are as likely to be

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self-employed as white women, regardless of skill; and, like their Chinese male counterparts, first generation low-skilled Chinese-origin women surpass whites in their odds of being self-employed. For the second generation groups, most women reach parity with US-born white women in their odds of being self-employed. Only low-skilled Filipina and high-skilled Cuban-origin women exceed the self-employment odds of US-born white women. The observation that self-employment odds increase for high-skilled Cuban men and women from the first to the second generation is consistent with the delayed assimilation hypothesis, although this trend is not observed for their low-skilled counterparts. And although low-skilled Filipinas demonstrate a delayed assimilation trajectory, this group is largely ignored by the ethnic entrepreneurship literature. Finally, the anticipated finding that Chinese-origin groups would also demonstrate a delayed assimilation pattern is not supported.

Discussion

Consistent with the predictions of mainstream assimilation, I find that the earnings of most minority groups converge to or exceed those of US-born whites from the first to the second generation, net of the controls. Although there are some intra-group differences by gender, in general these findings suggest that the earnings of ethnic minority groups display a pattern that is consistent with the mainstream "Anglo-conformity" trajectory of assimilation.

In contrast to the mainstream assimilation hypothesis, the downward assimilation premise predicts an inevitable social and economic decline from the first to the second generation for some disadvantaged groups, such as the Mexican-origin and Puerto Rican groups. Findings reveal that although low-skilled first generation ethnic minority groups are more likely to be jobless than the second generation, these groups generally reach parity or better when compared to low-skilled US-born whites. Similarly, first generation high-skilled groups are also more

likely to be jobless than their non-Hispanic white counterparts; nevertheless, by the second

generation their odds are not markedly different from, or fall below, those of US-born whites.

Chinese-origin men are the one exception to this trend, as their odds of being jobless increase

from the first to the second generation and are significantly higher than whites. Although it is

unlikely that the "skills mismatch" thesis applies to this high-skilled group (as it typically

pertains to those low-skilled individuals who do not qualify for existing high-skilled sector jobs

in their area), findings suggest that high-skilled Chinese men likely have a harder time finding or

keeping work than their female counterparts or white men (Cha 2007). Chinese men may

experience vulnerability in the labor market, which is consistent with the predictions of

downward assimilation. Conspicuously, this hypothesis is typically applied to low-skilled Puerto

Rican-origin and Mexican-origin men; yet, these groups do not demonstrate an increase in

joblessness from the first to the second generation. Instead, low-skilled (and high-skilled) second

generation Mexican and Puerto Rican men reach parity with whites. Moreover, Mexican women

and low-skilled Puerto Rican women report a lower prevalence of joblessness, whereas high-

skilled Puerto Rican women are not markedly different from white women. These findings

suggest that Mexican and Puerto Rican women outperform their male counterparts, and suggest

further, that Mexican and Puerto Rican groups do not experience an increase in joblessness,

against the downward assimilation hypothesis.

Finally, most first generation groups report lower odds of being self-employed than

whites, with the exception of low-skilled Chinese-origin men and women and low-skilled

Cuban-origin men, who report higher odds. Yet, by the second generation, most of these groups

have reached parity with whites. There are three exceptions to this trend: low-skilled second

generation Filipinas and high-skilled second generation Cuban-origin men and women are the

only groups for whom self-employment exceeds that of non-Hispanic whites. Although these modest findings provide some support for the delayed assimilation perspective, which predicts that entrepreneurial ethnic groups such as Chinese and Cuban origin groups will demonstrate an increase in self-employment participation from one generation to the next, these findings also challenge the presumed uniform pattern that is typically ascribed to all members of "entrepreneurial" ethnic groups, regardless of skill and gender. Rather and for the Cuban case, it appears that what is characterized as delayed assimilation among all coethnics may be better understood with a consideration of class background and gender, as high-skilled Cubans engage in self-employment significantly, but low-skilled Cubans do not, whereas low-skilled Filipina women engage in self-employment to a greater extent than their male or higher skilled counterparts. Self-employment is often associated with higher earnings and upward mobility (Portes and Bach 1985; Portes and Zhou 1993); therefore, it is likely that self-employment provides high-skilled Cuban men with higher earnings than their wage-worker counterparts. Previous research, however, also suggests that low-skilled self-employment may be a "survival strategy," or a last-ditch effort to find work in the absence of work in the general labor market (Light and Roach 1993; Ramirez and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2012). This form of self-employment may not generate higher earnings, per se, but may provide a job for otherwise unemployed or underemployed low-skilled Filipinas. On balance, the delayed assimilation hypothesis finds some support, although a consideration of gender and skill is needed to explain divergent outcomes that are not explained with a consideration of ethnicity alone.

Conclusion

Portes and Zhou (1993) argue that contemporary non-white immigrant groups face greater challenges to mainstream assimilation than those of the past. In a society where race

matters, immigrants of today are unable to shed their "racial uniform" as quickly or as easily as yesterday's Southern, Central, and Eastern European immigrants were allowed to shed theirs (Alba and Nee 2003; Roediger 1991). Additionally, economic restructuring has produced an "hourglass economy," characterized by a growing low-skilled service sector, a shrinking (durable goods) manufacturing sector, and a competitive high-skilled, technology and professional service sector. Although jobs at the bottom and at the top remain plentiful, the "narrowing middle" forces occupational segregation and constrains intergenerational mobility, especially among ethnic minority groups (Portes and Rumbaut 2001).

Under these conditions segmented assimilation theory "attempts to explain what determines into which segment of American society a particular *group* may assimilate" (Zhou 1997:984, emphasis added). That approach considers how individual, group, and contextual factors combine to determine the process of assimilation for a given ethnic group. For some ethnic minority groups, favorable individual and group characteristics in the context of a positive societal reception facilitate economic progress through mainstream or delayed assimilation (Portes and Rumbaut 2001:281). For others, individual and group disadvantages are exacerbated by a negative reception context; these groups risk socioeconomic decline, or what has been termed "downward assimilation" (Portes and Rumbaut 2001; Portes and Zhou 1993; Zhou 1997). With the consideration of social and contextual factors that have been too long neglected, segmented assimilation theory offers a more comprehensive approach than the classical account for post-1965 immigrants. Yet, the continued elevation and uniform treatment of ethnicity overlooks the possibility of intra-group differences in these conditions and their corollary in patterns of segmented assimilation.

Based on the premise that 1) aspects of assimilation, from earnings to intermarriage, are

multidimensional and rarely uniform (Snipp and Hirschman 2004; Yinger 1994; Zhou and Xiong 2005); 2) ethnic groups are heterogeneous with regard to members' intersectional social locations, which vary with respect to skill and gender; and 3) economic assimilation takes place within the context of the hourglass economy, which is stratified by skill and gender; this study challenges the monolithic treatment of ethnicity by investigating whether or to what extent intersectional social locations, as measured by intra-group differences in skill and gender affect the segmented assimilation trajectories of five of the largest ethnic minority groups who live and work in five traditional gateway states.

By and large, findings show that all ethnic minority groups, net of the controls, reach parity or better in earnings from the first to the second generation, in keeping with the predictions of mainstream assimilation hypothesis. And although women generally earn less than men overall, there are some low-skilled groups who earn more than white women (i.e., Filipina, Cuban, and Puerto Rican women), whereas their male counterparts reach earnings parity only with white men. These findings are in keeping with similar findings by Menjivar (2004), who shows that low-skilled Central American women in Los Angeles found work quicker and earned more money than their male counterparts. In sum, and regardless of gender or skill, ethnic minority groups are making economic progress, as measured by hourly earnings. Furthermore, findings suggest that the downward assimilation hypothesis may apply to some ethnic minority groups, although a concern for skill and gender provides a clearer picture than the consideration of ethnicity alone. Specifically, Chinese men, regardless of skill, are the sole group to report greater odds of being jobless than whites from the first to the second generation. These findings suggest that Chinese men in particular, may face greater uncertainty in the American economy. Although low-skilled Chinese men may be experiencing downward assimilation, as indicated by

the "skills mismatch" thesis (Browne 2000), the increase in joblessness among high-skilled Chinese men is not consistent with this explanation, as high skilled men presumably have the requisite skills necessarily to land a job. More likely, this group is simply having greater difficulty finding or keeping work than their female counterparts, the other ethnic minority groups considered here, and whites. This conclusion suggests that gender may influence markedly the context of reception in the stratified American labor market for the Chinese-origin population. Notably, this analysis does not provide evidence in favor of a downward assimilation trajectory for Puerto Rican or Mexican-origin groups; findings suggest that although these groups experience joblessness in the first generation, by the second generation their labor force participation is the same as the other groups considered here. These findings call into question previous research that suggests Puerto Ricans and perhaps Mexicans are disproportionately disadvantaged in the American labor market, or are particularly vulnerable to socioeconomic decline and a trajectory of downward assimilation (Fernandez-Kelly and Schauffler 2004).

Finally, findings reveal some evidence of a delayed assimilation pattern of economic incorporation, as high-skilled Cuban men and women and low-skilled Filipina women exceed whites' odds of being self-employed from the first to the second generation. Findings suggest that high-skilled Cubans and low-skilled Filipinas may rely on coethnics to facilitate entrepreneurship intergenerationally, as an avenue of economic integration or a strategy of survival, respectively. Importantly, however, these findings also show that ethnicity alone does not explain this outcome. The consideration of skill and gender complicates the ethnic entrepreneurship approach, which tends to see ethnic groups as homogenous and rates of self-employment as similar across all members, when skill and gender may condition, in part, the self-employment outcomes of ethnic group members differently. In sum, findings suggest that

the intersection of skill and gender shape different trajectories of segmented assimilation for some ethnic groups. Consequently, it is crucial to consider not only ethnicity, but also multiple dimensions of identity and social group membership in studies of segmented assimilation, which likely map onto different reception contexts in the highly stratified American economy.

      The segmented assimilation framework has been challenged by some who question whether the hourglass economy disproportionately and negatively affects minority groups (Perlmann and Waldinger 1997; Waldinger and Perlmann 1998). Although this study reveals that most groups demonstrate mainstream assimilation, in support of that claim, the additional consideration of skill and gender provides a more complete picture, as distinct ethnic minority groups' trajectories of assimilation are not uniform when these factors are considered. That said there is some evidence of intra-group differences in joblessness and self-employment, indicators of downward assimilation and delayed assimilation, respectively. Findings offer some support for these trajectories, but also point to the need to go beyond a consideration of ethnicity alone. Overall, this study refines the theoretical assumptions of segmented assimilation by taking seriously the context of reception, specifically how the hourglass economy and the gendered labor market condition the segmented assimilation trajectories of five ethnic groups along the lines of skill and gender. Findings substantiate the need to consider how multiple and intersecting dimensions of identity combine to shape divergent intra-group segmented assimilation trajectories.

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Intersectional Differences in Segmented Assimilation

Table 1: Variable Means for US-born Non-Hispanic Whites and First and Second Generation Minority Groups in Five Gateway States, Aged 18-64 in 2000

	Non-Hispanic White		Chinese				Filipino			
	Men	Women	Men		Women		Men		Women	
	US-born	US-born	1st Gen	2nd Gen	1st Gen	2nd Gen	1st Gen	2nd Gen	1st Gen	2nd Gen
Education										
High School or Less	44.56	43.48	36.79	22.45	39.3	18.16	27.44	28.4	23.29	24.69
Some College or More	55.44	56.52	63.21	77.55	60.7	81.84	72.56	71.6	76.71	75.31
Not in Laborforce	8.84	11.59	11.52	16.42	13.31	10.33	14.44	11.50	14.95	14.21
Age	40.84	40.56	40.86	28.36	39.91	27.86	41.68	29.36	42.10	29.17
Speaks English	99.7	99.69	73.20	98.13	71.92	98.66	95.86	97.74	96.56	99.29
Poverty	383.52	370.24	348.52	358.13	354.37	351.59	381.87	389.41	384.23	385.81
Citizenship Status	100	100	57.84	87.53	62.57	87.95	64.92	91.46	65.99	87.74
Married	58.83	53.60	66.01	24.74	62.32	29.25	62.25	32.58	60.64	38.72
Region:										
West	18.65	18.35	46.50	55.92	48.50	58.13	68.70	66.30	63.92	65.41
North	20.41	20.92	29.41	26.80	28.66	25.07	12.52	10.10	13.02	10.72
Midwest	27.69	27.92	8.65	7.48	8.07	5.20	7.18	8.27	8.31	10.35
South	33.25	32.81	15.44	9.80	14.77	11.60	11.60	15.33	14.74	13.52
Earnings:										
Hourly	20.50	13.70	19.49	16.92	14.95	14.22	16.69	15.79	16.18	13.74
Logged Hourly	2.58	2.23	2.51	2.33	2.28	2.21	2.50	2.35	2.46	2.28
Unweighted N	730,886	663,337	15,698	481	14,719	523	12,379	574	15,306	563

Source: 2000 5% IPUMS, US Bureau of the Census. "--" is not applicable.

Intersectional Differences in Segmented Assimilation

Cuban				Mexican				Puerto Rican			
Men		Women		Men		Women		Men		Women	
1st Gen	2nd	1st Gen	2nd Gen	1st Gen	2nd Gen	1st Gen	2nd Gen	1st Gen	2nd Gen	1st Gen	2nd Gen
59.12	36.14	55.61	35.68	87.74	68.28	82.99	64.01	64.13	60.25	53.06	58.33
40.88	63.86	44.39	64.32	12.26	31.72	17.01	35.99	35.87	39.75	46.94	41.67
19.79	7.43	18.85	10.39	20.28	15.53	24.14	17.13	17.26	13.56	18.22	14.67
45.73	35.92	45.08	35.48	35.43	30.99	36.80	31.44	42.8	38.98	42.53	39.50
66.24	98.18	70.86	99.16	51.45	90.91	53.24	96.27	88.70	98.30	90.21	99.00
326.88	386.69	330.14	379.54	220.46	276.47	229.50	285.85	312.05	341.46	315.90	330.64
56.79	83.50	67.21	85.09	25.81	55.18	34.51	60.53	97.34	98.31	98.33	99.83
65.12	60.56	59.02	59.97	55.38	45.65	56.99	48.23	54.76	49.92	50.73	46.17
5.93	7.40	5.37	6.26	50.21	54.77	54.65	57.75	4.92	7.35	5.05	5.04
9.83	12.05	10.50	11.06	3.56	1.50	2.92	1.40	47.26	50.56	48.96	55.10
2.04	3.15	1.52	1.89	10.29	8.65	9.90	7.67	7.76	9.30	6.71	8.59
82.20	77.40	82.61	80.79	35.94	35.08	32.52	33.18	40.06	32.79	39.29	31.27
16.16	22.42	12.53	16.08	10.41	12.09	8.01	9.95	14.89	16.23	12.40	12.80
2.38	2.72	2.14	2.45	2.03	2.14	1.68	1.92	2.35	2.42	2.14	2.21
9,215	606	7,480	597	48,792	1,816	25,343	1,553	5,186	649	4,374	600

Intersectional Differences in Segmented Assimilation

Table 2   Estimates of Hourly Earnings among First and Second Generation Groups by Skill and Gender, Against US-born Non-Hispanic Whites

	Men				Women			
	Low-Skilled		High-Skilled		Low-Skilled		High-Skilled	
	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II
Chinese								
1st generation	-.299***	-.250***	.092***	-.013	-.125***	-.055***	.161***	.043***
2nd generation	-.079	.299***	-.284***	.017	.112	.031	-.201***	.014
Filipino								
1st generation	-.026	-.042**	-.169***	-.210***	.020	.011	.144***	.016*
2nd generation	-.228**	.001	-.043	.230***	.011	.237**	-.138***	.051
Cuban								
1st generation	-.070***	-.051***	-.091***	-.027	-.048**	-.043**	-.029	.004
2nd generation	.169**	.161**	.185***	.132***	.282***	.209***	.142**	.106**
Mexican								
1st Generation	-.283***	-.001	-.392***	-.125***	-.334***	-.024***	-.310***	-.118***
2nd generation	.040	-.010	.167***	.118***	.201***	.056	.153***	.142***
Puerto Rican								
1st Generation	-.002	-.064***	-.184***	-.091***	-.018	-.054**	-.091***	-.083***
2nd generation	.049	.080	.131*	.093	.222***	.149**	.037	.024
Intercept	2.269***	-.431***	2.852***	-1.473***	2.013***	-.662***	2.535***	-1.442***
R2	.008	.258	.003	.294	.006	.185	.002	.232
F-value	385.51	4497.46	146.6	5300.50	224.28	2408.26	109.55	3839.89
Unweighted N	465373		458088		381229		457042	

Source: 2000 5% IPUMS, US Census Bureau. Model II includes the following controls: age, age squared, married, citizen, English proficient, region (1=West), public sector job. *p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001.

Intersectional Differences in Segmented Assimilation

Table 3   Odds Ratios of Joblessness among First and Second Generation Groups by Skill and Gender, Against US-born Non-Hispanic Whites

	Men				Women			
	Low-Skilled		High-Skilled		Low-Skilled		High-Skilled	
	Model 1	Model II	Model I	Model II	Model 1	Model II	Model I	Model II
Chinese								
1st Generation	.962	.817***	1.206***	1.245***	.935*	.719***	1.254***	1.122***
2nd Generation	2.241***	2.251***	1.856***	1.406*	.874	1.201	.754*	.827
Filipino								
1st Generation	1.247***	1.213***	1.555***	1.445***	1.026	.932	1.091***	.978
2nd Generation	.879	.841	.624**	.633*	1.064	1.083	.790	.837
Cuban								
1st Generation	1.757***	1.804***	1.554***	1.246***	1.369***	1.220***	1.244***	.954
2nd Generation	.444***	.592**	.374***	.683	.419***	.515***	.785	1.088
Mexican								
1st Generation	1.349***	1.156***	1.689***	1.249***	1.639***	1.084***	1.979***	1.270***
2nd Generation	.748***	.865	.732*	.872	.671***	.846*	.598***	.698**
Puerto Rican								
1st Generation	1.579***	1.381***	1.621***	1.576***	1.556***	1.494***	1.406***	1.387***
2nd Generation	.838	.961	.827	.837	.649***	.752*	.818	.864
Intercept	-1.529***	1.021***	-2.234***	5.456	-1.197***	1.493***	-1.710***	3.513***
Unweighted N	598819		517758		533363		555252	

Source: 2000 5% IPUMS, US Census. Model II includes: age, age^2, %manufacturing/PUMA, region (1=West), presence of children >5 in the home (for women only). *p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001.

Intersectional Differences in Segmented Assimilation

Table 4: Odds Ratios of Self-Employment among Minority Group Generations, Against US-born Non-Hispanic Whites

	Men				Women			
	Low-Skilled		High-Skilled		Low-Skilled		High-Skilled	
	Model 1	Model II	Model 1	Model II	Model 1	Model II	Model I	Model II
Chinese								
1st Generation	1.228***	1.450***	.752***	.889**	1.207***	1.209***	.996	.804***
2nd Generation	.470*	1.029	.801	1.214	.324*	.743	.412**	.624
Filipino								
1st Generation	.299***	.390***	.412***	.483***	.558***	.522***	.519***	.499***
2nd Generation	.331	.517	.449*	.855	1.325	2.544**	.331*	.599
Cuban								
1st Generation	1.794***	1.527***	.1.290***	.967	1.123*	.857*	.931	.703**
2nd Generation	.780	.959	.966	1.482*	.939	1.458	1.258	1.723*
Mexican								
1st Generation	.632***	.851	.799***	1.017	1.050	.964	.938	1.005
2nd Generation	.893	1.040	.518**	.599*	.520***	.788	.610	.898
Puerto Rican								
1st Generation	.481***	.486***	.595***	.714**	.637***	.694***	.519***	.610**
2nd Generation	1.367	1.415	.928	.706	.907	.979	1.006	.995
Intercept	-2.096***	-7.214***	-1.699***	-8.456***	-2.568***	-5.464***	-2.434***	-8.513***
	679670		334446		573302		321369	

Source: 2000 5% IPUMS, US Census. Model II & III includes: age, age^2, %ethnic group/PUMA, region, industry, puma, state, educ. *p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001.

[i] I conducted preliminary analyses (available upon request) with pooled data from alternating years (1990 – 2006) of the CPS (as it is a rotating panel whereby half of the households interviewed are included in adjacent years). This analysis did not provide sufficient sample sizes for many of the groups (by skill and gender) considered here. For example, these combined data sets include only 8 Chinese, 14 Filipino, and 17 Cuban low-skilled second generation men who reported earnings.

[ii] In preliminary analysis using the CPS, I investigated the hourly earnings of 1st and 2nd generation Mexicans, by skill and gender (the only group with a sufficient sample size), against Whites. These findings are generally consistent with those presented here (available on request). For a detailed analysis that demonstrates the adequacy of using the second generation proxy, see Perlmann (2005: 142-156).

[iii]Ethnic/racial groups were selected using the Hispanic origin and race census questions. The 2000 census allowed respondents to report more than one race category; those few who did so are excluded.

[iv] In 2000, the census question asked when the respondent *came to live* in the United States; this is more readily interpreted as the cumulative number of years residing in the US.

[v] Work eligible includes persons of working age without a disability that prevents work, who are not enrolled in school, and for women, who do not have children under age 5 at home.