SCHOOL COMPOSITION, SOCIAL ORIGINS, AND THE EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES OF MEXICAN ORIGIN YOUTH


Committee: Charles Hirschman (Chair), John Mark Ellis (GSR), Kyle Crowder, Mark C. Long, Stewart E. Tolnay.

The Mexican origin population is one of the largest and fastest-growing racial/ethnic minority groups in U.S. schools. Mexican origin students are also one of the most educationally disadvantaged subgroups, exhibiting gaps with peers in educational outcomes throughout the schooling pipeline. This dissertation examines the extent to which the racial/ethnic and socioeconomic composition of high schools attended by Mexican origin youth contribute to their disadvantaged educational outcomes. Using data from the Educational Longitudinal Study of 2002, this research evaluates how Mexican origin high school students are distributed across schools by the racial/ethnic and socioeconomic composition of their peers, and assesses how racially/ethnically and socioeconomically isolated school environments impact levels of dropout and school engagement among Mexican origin adolescents. The results show that Mexican origin youth are more racially/ethnically and socioeconomically isolated in schools than both non-Latino white and black students. Mexican origin youth show limited evidence of spatial assimilation across schools by immigrant generational status. However, Mexican origin youth in households with greater socioeconomic resources are enrolled in more racially/ethnically and socioeconomically integrated schools than those in the most impoverished households. Mexican origin high school students that attend racially/ethnically and socioeconomically isolated schools in 10th grade have a greater risk of dropout by 12th grade than those in more integrated schools. These patterns, however, are due to the fact that Mexican origin youth in racially/ethnically and socioeconomically isolated schools exhibit characteristics that place them at a greater risk of dropout, including disadvantaged social origins and low levels of academic achievement in 10th grade. Finally, the analysis of school composition and school engagement patterns reveals an affective-behavioral tradeoff for Mexican origin youth with exposure to non-minority and non-poor youth in schools. Mexican origin youth are significantly less likely to report that they like school as they gain exposure to non-minority students, even net of background confounders. However, they are more involved in school-sponsored activities in schools with more affluent peers. These findings complicate the argument that high-minority, high-poverty schooling contexts are to blame for educational disadvantages among Mexican origin youth.

People Involved: Elizabeth Ackert
Adviser(s): Charles Hirschman, Kyle Crowder, Stewart Tolnay
Status of Research: Completed/published
Research Type: Graduate Dissertations
Related Fields: Children, Youth, and Families, Demography, Education, Immigration, Population, Quantitative Methods, Race and Ethnicity, Social Demography, Social Stratification/Inequality

Department of Sociology · University of Washington · 211 Savery Hall, Box 353340 · Seattle, WA 98195-3340
Main Office: (206) 543-5882 · Student Services: (206) 543-5396 · Fax (206) 543-2516 · Email: uwsoc@uw.edu

Copyright © 2015-2020 University of Washington · Privacy · Terms · Site Map · Contact Us

Source URL: https://soc.washington.edu/research/graduate/school-composition-social-origins-and-educational-outcomes-mexican-origin-youth-0