

Review of “Assimilation Effects beyond the Labor Markets: Time Allocations of Mexican Immigrants to the U.S.”- Andres J. Vargas & Manuel Chavez  
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American Society of Hispanic Economists’  
“Hispanic Economic Issues”  
Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta  
Friday, November 19, 2010

This paper adds empirical insights to the literature on the assimilation of Mexican immigrants in the U.S. The paper uses an interesting data set on time usage by immigrants and does an effective job of showing how different immigrant cohorts change their time usage shares (across work, sleep, and other activities) as their lives progress in the U.S.

My major observations regarding this paper as its stands are as follows.

1. The paper makes a strong assumption about the marital outcomes of Mexican immigrants to the U.S. It explicitly assumes that marriages take place between like immigrant cohorts.

- It might be important to establish the timing of marriages to justify the household production conceptualization the authors use and,
- Do the authors have any evidence to support this strong assumption? How do the conceptual implications change if, for example, a significant number of marriages in the sample are recent and they are between a spouse who recently migrated to the U.S. and a spouse who has lived in the U.S. for many years or was born in this country?
- It would be interesting to see some evidence to support this strong assumption. One potential source to find some evidence in this regard would be to consider the rich literature on endogamy and exogamy rates between Mexican immigrants and other populations in the U.S.

2. Following from this latter point, the paper could be enhanced by considering some of the empirical and theoretical findings outside of the economics literature. One case in point: the findings from this paper indicate that the sleeping patterns of Mexican immigrants differ from those of U.S. White and Black natives and that these differences dwindle as these immigrants assimilate in the U.S.

- A simple perusal of the literature finds interesting related work.
- For example, a recent paper by Lauren Hale and Estela Rivero-Fuentes in the September 2009 issue of *Journal of Immigrant Minority Health* is on Mexican immigrant sleeping patterns. They use the National Health Interview Survey and find that Mexican Americans are more likely to be “short sleepers” than their Mexican Immigrant counterparts. They conclude that this could be related to the higher incidence of smoking and stress levels of Mexican Americans.

- They go on to discuss important policy implications from these results. While this is one (of potentially many) examples of studies outside of the economics literature, it does suggest that scholars are offering interesting insights that might help the authors propose sources for their findings and to some extent the policy implications of these.

3. The authors allude to the Borjas-Chiswick immigrant selectivity debate.

- The recent contributions by Chiquiar and Hanson (*JPE* 2005) and Orrenius and Zavodny (*J. Dev Econ* 2005) should also fit into the motivation of the paper.
- More generally, and related to this selectivity issue, are the time use patterns of Mexican immigrants in the U.S. (particularly those of the most recent immigrants) similar to those of Mexican nationals in general?
- Again, a review of literature to shed light on this point might add to the current draft of this paper.

4. A more complete reporting of the empirical results would be useful to understand how other human variables impact the time allocation choice.

- The empirical specification states that a variety of regressors are used (age, region, etc.) but the results are not reported.
- Using the household production function, are there some other controls, say the relative earnings of husbands to wives, important in the discussion of these results?
- A closer fit between the primary findings of the study and the household production function theory would be generally useful.

## 5. Other minor comments:

- While the authors show some differences in time-use patterns between the second and third generation immigrants (although the third generation is not technically an immigrant population), it would be useful to elaborate on why these two populations should be distinguished ex-ante from each other.
- The authors note that only one member of the household is surveyed in the ATUS. The sample-summary statistics table has a distribution of wives and husbands surveyed. Any insights on why these distributions vary across groups?
- Can additional empirical analysis be conducted to identify the time usage patterns of alternative Mexican immigrant family structures such as divorced/widowed individuals or those with adult children?

- The “Other” time-usage category is quite large relative to the listed categories (see Table 1).  
What is contained in this category? To the extent that this information exists, is it possible to report some other interesting findings?