

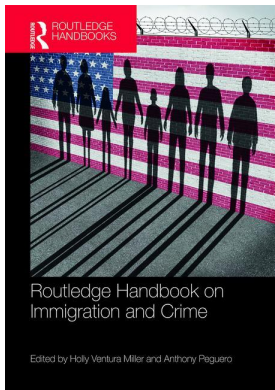
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4

SEGMENTED ASSIMILATION AND CRIME

Rethinking the Relationship Between Assimilation and Crime

Cecilia Chouhy

Introduction

Immigration is one of the most controversial topics in the contemporary political and social debate, both in the U.S. and around the world. The 2016 U.S. Presidential election and the first days of President Trump's administration have clearly illustrated the turmoil surrounding immigration policy (Brown, 2016; Hughey, 2017). It is now perhaps clearer than ever how immigrants often serve as a scapegoat for diverse social ills—from unemployment and national security issues to the decay of “American values.” Of course, this depiction of immigration is hardly new and has been discussed by many scholars in the past (see, e.g., Alba, 2011; Berg, 2009; Byrne & Dixon, 2013; Chavez, 2013; Chebel D'Appollonia, 2012; Chiricos, Stupi, Georgia, Stults, & Gertz, 2014; Hickman & Suttorp, 2008; Sampson, 2008; Stupi et al., 2016; Wang, 2012). Recent studies show that public views on immigration are mixed and that they vary across areas, contexts, individuals, as well as the specific issues at hand (Doherty, Tyson, & Weisel, 2015; Dunaway, Branton, & Abrajano, 2010; Merolla, Ramakrishnan, & Haynes, 2013; Suro, 2009).

Despite the dynamics of public opinion about immigration being complex, the political and social consequences of a widespread representation of immigrants as threats to different aspects of U.S. life are hard to ignore. The portrayal of immigrants as criminals is one of the core elements fueling the contemporary political debate. Epitomized in President Trump's “bad hombres” rhetoric, this image is often used to justify policies aimed at securing the border, conducting mass deportations, and placing broad restrictions on immigration (Brown, 2016; Chiricos et al., 2014; Hughey, 2017; Stupi et al., 2016).

In general, however, the academic literature on immigration has largely underscored the positive social and economic effects of immigration and shown that immigration has generally a crime-reducing effect. At the micro-level, studies have pointed out how first-generation immigrants are less likely to commit crimes than non-immigrants (Bersani, 2014a; Chun & Mobley, 2014; Hernandez, Denton, Macartney, & Blanchard, 2012; Koo, Peguero, & Shekarkhar, 2012). At the macro-level, it has been shown that immigrant enclaves or zones with large proportions of immigrants not only tend to exhibit lower crime rates than non-immigrant communities with similar characteristics but also that they often promote the revitalization of decayed urban areas, which further contributes to reduce

crime (Feldmeyer, 2009; Feldmeyer, Harris, & Scroggins, 2015; Ousey & Kubrin, 2009; Sampson, 2008; Sampson, Morenoff, & Raudenbush, 2005). This negative relationship between immigration and crime—and other outcomes such as health and education—consistently found in the literature has been referred to as the “Immigrant Paradox” or “Latino Paradox” (Bersani, 2014a; Chun & Mobley, 2014; Hernandez et al., 2012; Peguero, 2013; Sampson, 2008; Suárez-Orozco, Rhodes, & Milburn, 2009).

Despite foreign-born individuals tending to be less likely to experience certain negative life outcomes—such as criminal involvement, victimization, low educational attainment, or poor health—their capacity to safeguard their children from these outcomes is less conclusive and seems to vary across contexts and situations. According to several studies, second- and third- generation immigrants exhibit higher levels of criminal and delinquent involvement (Bersani, 2014a, 2014b; Bui, 2012; Chun & Mobley, 2014; Nagasawa, Qian, Wong, & Wong, 2001; Popp & Peguero, 2011) and victimization (Koo et al., 2012; Peguero, 2009) than their first-generation counterparts. These findings point out the complexity and diversity of immigrant families’ trajectories in the U.S. and suggest that research would benefit from a more nuanced understanding of the challenges faced by different generations of immigrants in the U.S.

How—and if—subsequent generations of immigrants become assimilated into U.S. society is crucial to understanding the divergent outcomes experienced by different generations of immigrants. Segmented assimilation theory (Haller, Portes, & Lynch, 2011; Portes, Fernández-Kelly, & Haller, 2005; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Portes & Zhou, 1993) aims at contributing in this regard. In particular, it provides theoretical and empirical clues that allow to better identify the particular contexts that put certain second- and third-generation immigrants at higher risk for engaging in crime, delinquency, or experiencing victimization.

This chapter is organized as follows. The first section presents segmented assimilation theory and shows how it departs from classical views of immigrant assimilation. The following section elaborates on the relationship between segmented assimilation and crime. To do so, it first explores the empirical research on segmented assimilation and crime, conducted at different levels of analysis. Then, it discusses the theoretical links between segmented assimilation theory and criminological theories, suggesting ways in which they can be better articulated. Finally, a brief conclusion is presented.

Understanding Different Immigrant Trajectories: Segmented Assimilation Theory

Segmented assimilation theory proposes a departure from largely held views of assimilation that were predominant in the early immigration literature. To better understand this theoretical development, this section first describes the classic notion of assimilation: straight-line assimilation. Second, it discusses the challenges faced by straight-line assimilation to explain contemporary immigration patterns. Finally, it presents segmented assimilation theory and the updated understanding it provides to the new patterns of assimilation into the U.S.

Straight-Line Assimilation

The idea that immigrant generations would gradually assimilate into the host society dominated the academic literature for most of the 20th century (Zhou, 1997). Rooted in early Chicago School writings describing the assimilation process of different generations of European immigrants, the classical or straight-line assimilation theory offered an optimistic view of the prospects of immigrant children. According to this view, the cultural conflict that emerged from the clash of two different worlds was supposed to fade over generations and result in acculturation and later assimilation. In this process, the distinct ethnic features of a specific immigrant community would get diffused as

second- and third-generation immigrants would adopt mainstream values. Hence, the image was that of a “melting pot” into which subsequent groups of immigrants incorporated, largely abandoning their own cultural traditions (Zhou, 1997). This process also encompassed socioeconomic assimilation through upward mobility (Alba, Kasinitz, & Waters, 2011; Alba & Nee, 2003; Haller et al., 2011; Portes & Zhou, 1993).

Though scholars disagree in terms of the specific mechanisms through which this assimilation would occur and the specific stages involved in this process, it is important to highlight two commonalities of this perspective (Alba & Nee, 2003; Waters, Tran, Kasinitz, & Mollenkopf, 2010; Zhou, 1997). First, as its name entails, assimilation is a pretty much straightforward and linear process that results in the diffusion of ethnic barriers and the incorporation of the ethnic group into mainstream society. The pace at which each ethnic group assimilates may vary but immigrant trajectories follow a convergent pathway that sooner or later results in assimilation. In this scenario, newer generations tend to be more assimilated than their predecessors and their achievements more closely resemble those of the general population.

Second, and also fundamental, assimilation is associated with upward mobility. Assimilation is not only linked with the diffusion of cultural and social barriers. Intermarriage and residential integration will also be accompanied by occupational mobility (Alba et al., 2011; Alba & Nee, 2003; Morenoff & Astor, 2006; Waters et al., 2010). Convergence was achieved because of the universal fulfillment of the American Dream of social mobility. This dream was deemed attainable for successive immigrant generations whose pathways would converge with those of the non-Hispanic white middle-class (Alba & Nee, 2003; Portes & Zhou, 1993).

Understanding the New Wave of Immigrants

The straight-line assimilation perspective was the predominant view of immigration incorporation in the beginning of the 20th century. Its popularity was clearly aligned with its empirical adequacy in depicting the experiences of the successive generations of European immigrants that arrived in the U.S. during that period (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Portes & Zhou, 1993). However, important changes in the immigration pattern since the mid-1960s posed conceptual and empirical challenges to this perspective (Alba & Nee, 2003; Zhou, 1997).

Contemporary immigration is way more heterogeneous in terms of its racial and ethnic composition, legal status, and the human, social, and financial capital immigrants bring to the U.S. than it was before (Alba & Nee, 2003). While early immigrants were predominantly low-skilled rural Europeans, the majority of immigrants in the U.S. nowadays come from Latin America and Asia. These new immigrants differ from their predecessors in terms of their ethnic and racial makeup: they are predominantly non-White. Further, they are also more varied in terms of their education, skills, and their legal status in the U.S. They range from undocumented low-wage workers to high-skilled professionals with specialized legal employment (Miller & Gibson, 2011; Portes, 2007; Portes & Zhou, 1993; Zhou, 1997).

The context of reception is also different that it was and more heterogeneous. Besides differences in legal status, post-1965 immigrants differ also in terms of the level of discrimination they face upon their arrival in the U.S. as well as the strength of their co-ethnic communities and the opportunities and protections they provide (Haller et al., 2011). Further, the economic situation in which contemporary immigrants seek to incorporate is starkly different to the one encountered by their predecessors. The rapid city growth and industrialization that characterized the beginning of the 20th century was a welcoming environment for foreign low-skilled labor and provided avenues for occupational mobility to immigrants and their descendants. Recent immigrants, however, faced the reality of deindustrialization. They arrived in a context characterized by a shortage and pauperization of manufacturing jobs. Employment restructuring shrank the middle-class and created an hourglass

economy that demanded high-skilled professional workers at the top of the job stratification and offered low-skilled menial jobs at the bottom. The negative consequences of deindustrialization were particularly striking in urban settings, where most newly arrived immigrants chose to settle. Predominantly African American inner-city communities entered into a rapid decay in the context of expansion of the so-called “underclass,” a portion of the population excluded from the labor market and increasingly isolated from mainstream society (Portes & Zhou, 1993; Wilson, 1987).

The high level of heterogeneity of the new immigrant population as well as the stark differences in the context of reception they faced—especially the bifurcation of labor market opportunities—produced marked cleavages in the assimilation paths of different types of immigrants. While high-skilled workers were rapidly assimilated into the professional middle-class, very few opportunities for advancement were available for low-skill workers in labor-intensive occupations. The promise of upward mobility and the fulfillment of the “American Dream” became severely thwarted for those immigrants incorporating at the bottom of the occupational stratification and engrossing the lines of the urban underclass (Portes et al., 2005).

Segmented assimilation theory focuses precisely on identifying these different paths (Portes et al., 2005; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Portes & Zhou, 1993; Zhou, 1997). In this quest, it provides an updated framework to understand assimilation that highlights the heterogeneity of both backgrounds and intergenerational trajectories of recently arrived immigrants in the U.S.

Segmented Assimilation Theory

Segmented assimilation theory understands assimilation not as an unequivocal process but as a set of pathways that can be undertaken by different types of immigrants and their successors in a highly stratified and segmented host society. Thus, it sees the story of recently arrived migrants as one of divergent rather than convergent trajectories and, consequently, provides a theoretical framework aiming at accounting for such differences (Alba et al., 2011; Haller et al., 2011). Segmented assimilation theory seeks to unravel the different modes of economic adaptation instead of relying solely on the notion of acculturation to understand assimilation (Zhou, 1997). Acknowledging the diversity of contemporary U.S. society leads to the realization that acculturation may occur in different ways and in different segments of society (Portes & Zhou, 1993). It is not the same to come to share the values and beliefs of the underclass than those of the upper middle-class. For this reason, it becomes crucial to understand the intersection between acculturation and modes of economic adaptation to fully account for different assimilation patterns (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Portes & Zhou, 1993; Zhou, 1997).

Patterns of assimilation. From the combination of economic adaptation and acculturation, it is possible to identify three different assimilation patterns. First, and aligned with classical assimilation theory, there is the upward mobility pathway. This pathway involves progressive acculturation and economic integration of successive generations into middle-class America. An important portion of second-generation immigrants rapidly assimilate into mainstream America. They successfully learn English, do well at school, and adapt to (or adopt) the host culture. Their educational attainment and social and cultural capital allow them to seize the occupational opportunities that become available to them and achieve upward mobility (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Portes & Zhou, 1993; Zhou, 1997).

Second, some second- and third-generation immigrants face a downward mobility pathway. This pathway also involves acculturation but in this case into the underclass. Immigrants who incorporate at the bottom of the occupational ladder face meager chances of mobility and are severely restricted in the types of opportunities for advancement they can open up for their children. They settle mainly in impoverished communities. These are not the highly transient zones in transition portrayed by Burgess (1925) from which immigrants quickly move away. Rather, they tend to be socially isolated

high-poverty minority communities such as those described by Wilson (1987). The children of these immigrants, then, are vulnerable to assimilate into the U.S. underclass. They learn English and adopt the values and beliefs of the urban poor. Second-generation immigrants thus become “Americanized” mainly within the inner-city school they attend and share the same structural barriers and discrimination that poor native minorities face (Portes & Zhou, 1993; Stepick & Stepick, 2010; Zhou, 1997).

Further, this rapid acculturation increases intergenerational conflict. Second-generation immigrants rapidly reject the values, identity, and language of their ethnic community, their parents’ values and beliefs. This process is called “dissonant acculturation.” Parents and children acculturate at difference paces, which generates a rupture in parent-child relationships and undermines parental authority (Portes et al., 2005; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001).

Low educational attainment, frustrated aspirations, the adoption of an oppositional culture, and a problematic relationship with the formal job market become likely life-course outcomes for these second-generation youths. These outcomes consolidate a downward mobility pathway (Portes et al., 2005; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Portes & Zhou, 1993; Zhou, 1997).

Finally, segmented assimilation theory delineates a third assimilation pattern: selective acculturation. This path is characterized by the preservation of key features of immigrants’ ethnic identities accompanied by economic integration. In this case, second-generation immigrants do not become completely “Americanized” but deliberately preserve their ethnic identities and identify strongly with their communities of origin. Preserving their ethnic identity allows them to navigate more successfully the process of acculturation and shields them from some negative aspects of Americanization, particularly within the lower-class strata. Parent-child conflicts that may arise from a rapid rejection of parental values and codes from second generations are minimized. Second-generation immigrants benefit from a less conflictive relationship with their parents, which reduces their chances of dropping out of school and experiencing adverse life outcomes (Haller et al., 2011; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Portes & Zhou, 1993).

The benefits derived from the preservation of their core ethnic identity increases second-generation immigrants’ solidarity ties with their community. Strong bonds with co-ethnics help immigrants’ children benefit from the social and economic capital that such communities frequently provide to their members. Thus, they gain means for economic advancement seldom available to natives of similar socioeconomic status, especially those natives that belong to an ethnic or racial minority (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Portes & Zhou, 1993).

Determinants of the assimilation pattern. Segmented assimilation theory goes beyond delineating different assimilation trajectories for immigrants and their families. Rather, it seeks to also explore the elements that impact the odds of following each of the three pathways of assimilation described and the divergent outcomes each path entails. That is, it deals with the question of why certain immigrants experience downward assimilation while others follow a selective acculturation path and others fully assimilate into the middle-class.

Portes and Zhou (1993) highlight three contextual elements that place second-generation immigrants at risk for downward assimilation: color, location, and absence of mobility ladders. Note that color is in this case understood as a contextual factor, rather than an individual characteristic, because it is society’s racial prejudice and the racial barriers encountered by non-Whites that makes color a risk factor for downward assimilation. The absence of mobility ladders and the proximity to the urban poor also exert a contextual effect on the likelihood of second- and third-generation youth experiencing downward assimilation.

Portes and Rumbaut (2001) further elaborate on the determinants of the divergent assimilation pathways and differentiate three different types of elements that impact immigrants’ outcomes (see also, e.g., Haller et al., 2011; Xie & Greenman, 2005). First, they focus on individual characteristics of immigrants—their human capital—highlighting elements such as education, occupational skills,

wealth, and knowledge of English. In line with classic assimilation theory (Alba & Nee, 2003), segmented assimilation then posits that well-off and skilled families—those with a higher level of human capital and better English skills—will sooner rather than later incorporate into middle-class America and enter a pathway of upward mobility.

Second, the contextual elements previously described by Portes and Zhou (1993) are re-elaborated and classified under the umbrella of “modes of incorporation.” The mode of incorporation varies in three different dimensions: governmental, societal, and communal. The governmental dimension tackles differences in the legal status of immigrants while the societal mainly focuses on the racial prejudice faced by different groups and the barriers that such prejudice pose for immigrants. The communal dimension refers to the characteristics of the co-ethnic community. This is a crucial aspect of segmented assimilation theory that recognizes the key role of immigrant enclaves in opening up opportunities for advancement for immigrants and their families. The strength of the immigrant community in the place where immigrants settle shapes their opportunities and may shield them from experiencing downward mobility, even for those that would be otherwise at risk.

In other words, the prospects of unskilled immigrant workers depend strongly on the existence of a secure community of co-ethnics. Unskilled workers settling in resourceful immigrant enclaves are likely to experience selective acculturation, maintain their bilingualism, and adapt economically to the host society. Thus, they get to protect their children from the potential risks associated with a rapid process of adaptation and acculturation into poor America. Those who settle in places where their co-ethnic community is either weak or inexistent are not so lucky and, absent the buffer provided by such co-ethnic community, become more at risk of experiencing downward assimilation (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001).

Third, Portes and Rumbaut (2001) highlight the role of family characteristics, specifically the composition of the household and the presence of both biological parents in the home. Family structures are shaped by the cultural norms of the countries of origin but also determined by the contexts of incorporation into the host society. Governmental elements may facilitate family reunification while communal characteristics—the co-ethnic community—may provide resources to married families and enforce cultural norms favorable to marriage. Rather than being conceptualized as a pure exogenous factor, family structure is then seen as a somewhat endogenous element that is at least partially shaped by immigrants’ specific mode of incorporation into the host society.

The centrality that segmented assimilation theory gives to the contextual elements—especially the strength of the co-ethnic community but also to race—represents a clear departure from the classic assimilation theory. Thus, segmented assimilation goes beyond enumerating individual-level factors that may operate as barriers to assimilation and upward mobility for immigrants’ second and third generations. Rather, it views assimilation as a segmented process in which the context of reception plays such an important role that may produce divergent pathways of assimilation to otherwise similar immigrants. As Portes and Rumbaut (2001, p. 49) state:

These modes [of incorporation] condition the extent to which immigrant human capital can be brought into play to promote successful economic and social adaptation. No matter how motivated and ambitious immigrants are, their future prospects will be dim if government officials persecute them, natives consistently discriminate against them, and their own community has only minimum resources to offer.

The assimilation path is thus determined by the interaction between individual-level characteristics and the context of reception.

Segmented assimilation also breaks with classic assimilation theory by understanding economic adaptation and acculturation as two distinct processes that do not necessarily go hand in hand.

Acculturation does not necessarily translate into economic success and occupational mobility. On the contrary, for many immigrants, the opposite appears to be the case. Maintaining the values and traditions of their communities of origin is no longer conceptualized as an obstacle to economic advancement but as a protective factor that diminishes the risk of downward assimilation (Portes & Zhou, 1993). The cultural values and the economic resources of the co-ethnic community are in this framework seen as an asset instead of a nuisance.

This revalorization of immigrants' traditions and communities comes to the detriment of an idealized notion of the "melting pot" and of what being "American" entails. Segmented assimilation no longer sees Americanization as normatively good but as an uncertain process that may be beneficial for some aspects, but at the same time increases the risk of negative outcomes for the most vulnerable second- and third-generation immigrants.

Unraveling the Relationship Between Segmented Assimilation and Crime

Segmented assimilation theory emphasizes the important cleavages in the assimilation experiences of different groups of immigrants and the divergent outcomes that stem from these distinct assimilation trajectories. Involvement in crime and delinquency is one important outcome that signals these different paths of assimilation. This section discusses the relationship between segmented assimilation and crime. The first subsection presents empirical studies that explore the relationship between segmented assimilation theory and crime. The second subsection elaborates on the different ways in which segmented assimilation theory and criminological theory can be articulated at the theoretical level.

Empirical Studies of Segmented Assimilation and Crime

Segmented assimilation has been subjected to vast empirical scrutiny. The updated understanding of the differential pathways of assimilation adopted by immigrant families that it provides has been widely used to account for immigrants' differences in various outcomes such as academic attainment (Altschul, Oyserman, & Bybee, 2008; Hirschman, 2001; Xie & Greenman, 2005) or socioeconomic achievement (Neckerman, Carter, & Lee, 1999; Valdez, 2006; Waldinger & Feliciano, 2004; Waters et al., 2010; Zhou & Xiong, 2005). Differences in criminal and delinquent involvement and victimization among successive generations of immigrants have also been explored within the framework of segmented assimilation theory. Indeed, when building and testing segmented assimilation theory, Portes and colleagues (Haller et al., 2011; Portes et al., 2005; Portes & Rumbaut, 2014) conceptualize being arrested or incarcerated as one of the outcomes that signals a downward assimilation path. Haller et al. (2011) show the applicability of segmented assimilation by testing the determinants of downward assimilation in a sample of immigrant youth in Miami and San Diego. In their analysis, they partition downward assimilation in two components: deviant and non-deviant downward assimilation. Their study of the determinants of deviant downward assimilation reveals that family composition is associated with downward assimilation and that the protective effect of having both parents at home is more salient for youth attending low SES schools. Differences in the odds of downward assimilation across immigrants from different national groups are also seen as evidence supporting segmented assimilation.

Despite its growth in recent years, the literature on segmented assimilation and crime is still scarce and scattered. Empirical tests of segmented assimilation theory as they relate to crime tackle different aspects of the theory and translate segmented assimilation into different testable propositions at different levels of analysis. Thus, different elements are seen as evidence of segmented assimilation.

Macro-level studies. At the macro-level, segmented assimilation studies tend to focus on contextualizing the relationship between immigrant concentration and crime rates. In this line, and explicitly testing segmented assimilation theory, Martínez, Lee, and Nielsen (2004) carry out a neighborhood-level

study of the determinants of the occurrence of drug-related homicides in San Diego and Miami, using Census data from 1990. They compare the effects of ethnic composition, low-skill worker concentration, concentration of different waves of immigrants, and the presence ethnic enclaves in both cities. Their findings show that the effect of these variables depends on the particularities of the city and the trajectory of each ethnic community within the city. For example, while minority concentration is not associated with higher likelihood of drug-related violence for any ethnicity in Miami, the concentration of low-skilled Mexicans and South East Asians is associated with higher levels of such violence in San Diego. Further, the concentration of recent immigrants is shown to be important in San Diego but not in Miami, while the presence of 1960s immigrants is negatively associated with drug-related violence in both cities. Ethnic enclaves are not associated with higher crime rates in either city. The fact that the effect of immigrant and ethnic concentration on crime is not homogeneous and that communities that face more challenges or incorporate in particular contexts tend to live in more violent neighborhoods, is then seen as empirical support for segmented assimilation theory.

Nielsen, Lee, and Martínez (2005) conduct a broader study of the determinants of homicides in those two cities, disaggregating the analyses by motive and race/ethnicity and incorporating different theoretical perspectives such as social disorganization theory. Their findings draw attention to the importance of articulating macro-level theories of crime with segmented assimilation theory. Particularly, they show the explanatory power of social disorganization theory to be contingent upon certain contexts. This finding suggests that the racial and immigrant makeup of different communities as well as the social capital they provide should be carefully taken into account when trying to study the effect of community characteristics—such as concentrated disadvantage or immigrant concentration—on crime.

With a less explicit focus on segmented assimilation theory, Ousey and Kubrin (2009) and Feldmeyer et al. (2015; see, also Feldmeyer, 2009) make a similar argument. Both studies highlight the importance of specifying the effects of immigrant concentration in different contexts to account for the importance of the stabilizing role of immigrant enclaves. Thus, while Ousey and Kubrin (2009) underscore the crime-reducing effect of immigration associated with the increased family stability and social capital immigrant communities exhibit, Feldmeyer et al. (2015) show that immigrant segregation increases violence in disadvantaged places but exerts a violence-reducing effect in resourceful areas such as immigrant enclaves.

Micro-level studies. At the micro-level, research has aimed at exploring the individual and contextual factors that influence immigrants' involvement in crime, delinquency, and other types of problematic behavior. At this level, scholars have mainly focused on exploring the role of acculturation as a risk factor for certain groups of immigrants. Generational status is one key variable in many of these studies, mostly seen as indicative of progressive acculturation (Bersani, 2014a, 2014b; Bui, 2012; Chun & Mobley, 2014; Koo et al., 2012; Peguero, 2009, 2013). Thus, studies aim at understanding differences in crime and other behavior across generations by comparing first-, second-, and third-generation immigrants. Findings supporting the immigrant paradox are seen as corroborating the existence of a downward assimilation path that places some second- and third-generation immigrants more at risk of delinquency, crime, or victimization than first-generation immigrants. These studies go further into testing segmented assimilation theory and analyze the differences in the effects of acculturation across different groups and types of immigrants (see, e.g., Bersani, 2014a; Bui, 2012; Chun & Mobley, 2014; Koo et al., 2012; Peguero, 2009).

For example, Bui (2012) tests segmented assimilation comparing the delinquent involvement of different generations of immigrants from different ethnic and racial groups. Her finding of worse outcomes for successive generations of Hispanics but not for non-Hispanics—even after controlling for family background and level of disadvantage—is interpreted as support for segmented assimilation theory. According to Bui (2012), the fact that Hispanics exhibit higher levels of delinquent involvement as they assimilate into the U.S. shows the segmented character of assimilation into U.S. society.

Generational status appears to be a risk factor for Hispanics, who tend to assimilate into the lower strata and face more disadvantageous conditions—discrimination and lack of legal status—than other immigrant groups.

Bersani (2014a), Chun and Mobley (2014), and Nagasawa et al. (2001) argue on a similar vein. Thus, Chun and Mobley (2014) show that while successive generations of immigrants are more at risk of problem behavior than their first-generation counterparts, this increased engagement in problematic behavior was not the same across groups, with minority natives being more at risk of engaging in physical aggression than native non-Hispanic Whites. In their study of Asian Pacific youth, Nagasawa et al. (2001) also found a positive association between generational status and delinquent involvement. Use of English at home—another measure of acculturation—was also associated with higher levels of marijuana use but not with a heightened delinquent involvement. In line with segmented assimilation theory, they find social and human capital to be inversely related to the odds of delinquent involvement and marijuana use. Importantly, they partition their analysis by different national origins to study the interaction between micro and macro effects. As predicted by segmented assimilation theory, the effect of social and human capital is not the same for each group.

Importantly, Bersani's (2014a) study reveals that this increased level of offending observed for second-generation immigrants when compared with their first-generation counterparts does not mean that the children of immigrants are more criminogenic than the rest of the native population. Rather, they "catch up" to the general population in terms of their offending patterns that resemble those of similarly situated non-immigrant youth. However, in another study, Bersani (2014b) compares second-generation immigrants with different subgroups of non-second-generation natives and finds that it is not clear whether the differences between first- and second-generation immigrants in offending are attributable to the causes highlighted by segmented assimilation that places the children of immigrants at a special set of risks for downward assimilation or if they represent just a process of regression to the mean.

Another set of studies has aimed at analyzing the differential vulnerability of successive generations of immigrants to various types of problems at school. In this line, Peguero's (2011) finding that first-generation immigrants engage less in school misbehavior than second-generation immigrants serves as corroborating evidence of the existence of a downward assimilation path. Further, the use of multilevel analysis allows the author to explore the school-level contexts that increase the risk of school misbehavior for different generations of immigrants, highlighting the fact that minority immigrants assimilating in disadvantaged contexts are those more at risk of downward assimilation. The study shows that school disorder increases misbehavior for first- and second-generation immigrants and that school security operates as a protective factor for second-generation immigrants.

Studies of school victimization have also shown the problematic effect of acculturation in certain contexts. Thus, Peguero (2009) finds that immigration status played a role in school victimization. As the children of immigrants assimilate, their likelihood of experiencing violent victimization at school also increases. Further, Koo et al. (2012) show that the relationship between victimization and acculturation is not only contingent upon race and ethnicity but also gender.

Peguero, Shekarkhar, Popp, and Koo's (2015) article explores another important dimension of segmented assimilation theory: the differential social reactions to their actions that immigrants experience. Their findings reveal that second- and third-generation minority children face a disproportionate chance of being disciplined at school, even though they engage in misbehavior at rates similar to other native-born youth. The fact that immigration status interacts with race and ethnicity and increases the likelihood of punishment may be highlighting an important mechanism of downward assimilation that goes beyond actual differences in behavior.

Several studies incorporate alternative measures of acculturation. Martínez's (2006) study of acculturation and substance use relies on a direct measure of parent-child acculturation. Specifically,

he uses an Americanism scale that measures orientations toward language, food, and traditions considered typical of U.S. culture and compares the score of children with those of their parents. Martínez's (2006) findings reveal that differential acculturation—similar to the concept of dissonant acculturation—is associated with higher levels of substance use. Family and cultural stress and parent effectiveness are found to mediate this relationship, in line with what segmented assimilation posits regarding the effects of dissonant acculturation for downward assimilation. Alvarez-Rivera, Nobles, and Lersch (2014) measure acculturation through English proficiency and citizen status and find it associated with higher counts of both felony arrests and convictions. Hong, Merrin, Peguero, Gonzalez-Prendes, and Lee (2016) also measure acculturation through English proficiency and find it to be positively associated with youths' involvement in physical fights.

Cross-level analyses. An important line of research on segmented assimilation and crime has dealt with understanding the interaction between the micro- and macro-level elements articulated by segmented assimilation and crime. In particular, these studies seek to elucidate whether the relationship between acculturation and crime is contingent upon the characteristics of the context in which immigrants assimilate.

This line of inquiry is undertaken by Morenoff and Astor (2006). Analyzing the PHDCN data, their study first shows the negative relationship between three different measures of acculturation—generational status, age at arrival in the U.S. for first-generation immigrants, and linguistic acculturation—and violence. Their findings indicate that acculturation is associated with higher levels of violent behavior in all cases. Second, they use multilevel analysis to unravel the differential effect of neighborhood context for different generations of immigrants. Thus, they find that, as predicted by segmented assimilation theory, residing in a highly disadvantaged neighborhood increases the risk of engaging in criminal behavior only for acculturated immigrants (third-generation) and not for less acculturated immigrants (first- and second-generation). Partial acculturation appears to operate as a safeguard for immigrants and shields them from the negative consequences that may arise from residing in highly disadvantaged communities. The protective effect of immigrant concentration also appears to be contingent upon the level of acculturation. Thus, the authors show that the immigrant community exerts a stronger crime-reducing effect on partially acculturated immigrants (second-generation) than on more acculturated ones. Perhaps surprisingly, immigrant concentration does not seem to affect first-generations' involvement in violent behavior.

Desmond and Kubrin (2009) study the effect of neighborhood concentration of immigrants and non-English speakers on violence for different types of youth using the Add Health data and arrive at similar conclusions. In particular, they find that the protective effects of immigrant concentration are circumscribed to those youth that exhibit lower levels of acculturation and keep a strong bond with their cultures of origin. Asians and, to a lower extent, Hispanic and foreign-born youth, appear to be better protected by residing in an immigrant community.

However, not every study provides evidence of this interaction between community context and acculturation. Gibson and Miller's (2010) findings are less conclusive. Specifically, in their study of Hispanic children and adolescents from the longitudinal PHDCN data, they find that acculturation increases both violent victimization and offending. However, their analysis does not reveal significant neighborhood differences in these outcomes. This finding suggests that neighborhood context was not an important factor for understanding differences in offending behavior and victimization among this sample of youth and that the negative effect of acculturation was the same regardless of the neighborhood context.

Xie and Greenman (2005) analyze the Add Health data and also find little evidence to support the interaction effect between neighborhood context and acculturation posited by segmented assimilation theory. They propose a reformulated version of segmented assimilation theory that understands that the different assimilation paths can be seen as the product of an interaction effect between neighborhood disadvantages and acculturation. According to their view, acculturation would be associated

with better outcomes for immigrants assimilating into middle-class neighborhoods and be indicative of a classical assimilation pathway. For those assimilating into disadvantaged communities, though, full acculturation would be associated with downward assimilation while partial acculturation would exert a protective effect and signal a selective acculturation path. However, their findings do not provide substantial empirical support for this formulation of segmented assimilation theory. In other words, they do not find a statistically significant interaction effect between neighborhood disadvantage and acculturation. Importantly, their findings reveal that acculturated youth assimilating into high-SES neighborhood exhibit increased odds of both beneficial outcomes—such as higher school attainment and lower rates of depression—and at-risk behavior—such as delinquency and substance use. This finding calls into question the interpretation of the positive correlation between acculturation and problem behavior as evidence of a downward assimilation path. Rather, the ambivalent effect of acculturation may indicate that the children of immigrants “catch up” to the wide range of behaviors that are characteristic of American youth, that is, with the “good” and the “bad” of America (see, also, Bersani, 2014a).

Summary. In short, tests of segmented assimilation theory have consistently found support for two different aspects highlighted by the theory. First, at the macro-level, immigrant concentration appears to operate as a protective factor to crime and violence. Further, it seems like the crime-reducing effect of communities with higher proportions of immigrants is not uniform but varies depending on features such as their ethnic and racial makeup or their location (Feldmeyer et al., 2015; Martínez et al., 2004; Nielsen et al., 2005; Ousey & Kubrin, 2009). These differences may be denoting variances in the strength of the co-ethnic community and its capacity to provide resources and opportunities to newly arrived immigrants and their families, in line with what segmented assimilation theory posits with regards to the role of the immigrant community and the benefits that stem from a selective acculturation pathway.

Second, at the individual level, findings consistently show the positive association between generational status and problem behavior, which seems to indicate a deleterious effect of acculturation in regards to the odds of criminal involvement and a different set of problem behaviors (Bersani, 2014a; Bui, 2012; Chun & Mobley, 2014; Koo et al., 2012; Nagasawa et al., 2001; Peguero, 2009; Peguero et al., 2015; Popp & Peguero, 2011). Studies using alternative measures of acculturation seem to corroborate this finding, albeit with less conclusive evidence (Alvarez-Rivera et al., 2014; Hong et al., 2016; Martínez, 2006). Again, in line with segmented assimilation theory, the differential effect of acculturation on distinct groups seems indicative of the fact that risks that stem from acculturation are magnified in specific circumstances. Thus, acculturation seems to be especially deleterious for minority youth.

The literature exploring cross-level interactions is less conclusive. Thus, some studies have shown that acculturation moderates the effect of neighborhood characteristics on crime. Consistent with segmented assimilation theory, the protective effect of immigrant concentration only operates on not fully assimilated individuals (Desmond & Kubrin, 2009; Morenoff & Astor, 2006). Partially acculturated youth are shielded from the negative effects that stem from residing in disadvantaged neighborhoods. Such effects appear to only materialize in fully acculturated youth assimilating more rapidly into the underclass (Morenoff & Astor, 2006). However, other studies have failed to encounter meaningful differences in neighborhood effects across differentially acculturated individuals (Gibson & Miller, 2010; Xie & Greenman, 2005).

Taken together, these findings show the merit of segmented assimilation theory in illuminating the complex set elements that impact assimilation trajectories for successive generations of immigrants. It is clear that the challenges faced by different groups of immigrants are not the same and that such challenges pose differential risks for criminal and other types of problem behavior.

To date, however, studies of segmented assimilation theory and crime seem to have fallen short in terms of testing the subtler mechanisms that, according to segmented assimilation theory, explain

why certain immigrants become more vulnerable to engaging in criminal or delinquent behavior. To better explore these issues, research on segmented assimilation and crime could benefit from a more nuanced theoretical articulation of segmented assimilation and criminological theory. The following section seeks to contribute in this direction.

Segmented Assimilation and Criminological Theory: Bridging Two Perspectives

Mechanisms of downward assimilation. Segmented assimilation theory was not specifically formulated to explain differences in crime outcomes. However, criminal and delinquent involvement is perhaps the clearest manifestation of a downward assimilation path (Haller et al., 2011). In this sense, the mechanisms signaled by segmented assimilation theory to explain why certain individuals experience downward assimilation while others are shielded from undertaking this path, resemble those adopted by different traditions in criminology to explain differences in crime involvement across individuals and groups (Miller & Gibson, 2011).

A close read of segmented assimilation theory from the lens of criminology allows us to visualize the role of differential association/social learning (Akers, 1998; Sutherland & Cressey, 1947), strain (Agnew, 1992; Merton, 1938), and social control (Hirschi, 1969; Kornhauser, 1978). Thus, borrowing the language from criminology, it can be stated that according to Portes and Zhou (1993; see also Portes & Rumbaut, 2001) immigrants enter a downward assimilation path because they differentially associate with people with pro-criminal definitions and may model their behaviors and be differentially reinforced by them. They also suffer the strain of discrimination and joblessness, which block their opportunities and undermine their expectations but not their aspirations. Finally, because of dissonant acculturation—related to acculturating at different paces—they also enter into conflict with their parents, which results in a breakdown of families' capacity to bond with, and to monitor, their children.

At the community level, conceptualizing the strength of the community and its capacity to mobilize resources and social capital and also to exert social control over its members as a protective factor at the community level mirrors the ideas present in collective efficacy theory (Sampson, 2012; Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997). Finally, the adoption of the culture and behavior of the underclass as a response to the structural challenges faced by people living in socially isolated disadvantaged communities has also been discussed by Sampson and Wilson (1995) and by Anderson's (1999) study of the code of the street.

The Chicago School and segmented assimilation. For the reasons stated earlier, segmented assimilation theory can be seen as a sociohistorical explanation of differences in crime involvement among different types of immigrants that stem from differential exposures to well-known criminogenic factors. This is not so different from what Shaw and McKay's (1942) social disorganization theory did to account for differences in crime rates across Chicago neighborhoods in the early part of the 20th century. In fact, their theory was heavily rooted in the historical context of the time and on the then-preponderant notion of assimilation.

At the time of their writing, and particularly in Chicago, immigration was seen as an important factor that shaped the growth of the city. Burgess' (1925) idea of "concentric zones," exemplifies the notion of straight-line assimilation as a process embedded in the ecology of the city. The incorporation and upward mobility of successive immigration groups was part of the socially patterned development of the city. Adjacent to the city center and partially invaded by the expanding business district, the zones in transition provided inexpensive and deteriorated housing that attracted new immigrant groups.

Social disorganization reigned in these zones precisely because of the upward mobility paths that sooner rather than later would open up to immigrants. Because better-off immigrants would readily leave this area, the zone in transition would be consistently inhabited by impoverished and unskilled

workers with limited community ties (Burgess, 1925; Wilcox et al., 2017). Thus, the high transiency, ethnic heterogeneity, and low socioeconomic status of their inhabitants was endemic to the zones in transition (Burgess, 1925; Shaw & McKay, 1942). The state of social disorganization can be thus interpreted as the byproduct of straight-line assimilation, a stable property of the areas but not of its rapidly assimilating dwellers.

It is perhaps not surprising to find parallels between the criticisms social disorganization was subjected to and the move from straight-line assimilation theory to segmented assimilation theory in the immigration literature. The change in context from industrialization to deindustrialization and the deterioration of the standard of living of urban city dwellers undermined the explanatory power of both social disorganization and straight-line assimilation theories. The absence of mobility ladders for both newly arrived immigrants and minority natives that deindustrialization brought changed the landscape of the city. In this context, the dynamic of the city became less about immigrants moving in and out of socially disorganized areas and more about, as Wilson (1987) describes, the persistence of socially isolated communities in which minorities were disproportionately represented, and the challenges faced by their dwellers.

In criminology, these changes in context gave rise to collective efficacy theory, which provided an updated understanding of the structural elements that affected communities' capacity for organization. To capture this new urban makeup, Sampson et al. (1997; see also, Sampson, 1988) draw from Wilson (1987) the notion of concentrated disadvantages. Thus, instead of relying solely on neighborhoods' SES, they focus on neighborhoods' levels of concentrated disadvantages, a measure that captures poverty, unemployment, family disruption, reliance on public assistance, and racial minority concentration (percentage Black). Wilson's depiction of the disadvantaged inner-city ghetto is also borrowed by segmented assimilation theory (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Portes & Zhou, 1993; Zhou, 1997), which sees assimilation into this segment of society as one of the strongest predictors of downward assimilation.

However, collective efficacy and segmented assimilation theory are at odds in their conceptualization of the effect of immigrant concentration on crime. In this sense, collective efficacy's original formulation shows immigrant concentration to be one of the factors that increase crime through the erosion of collective efficacy (Sampson et al., 1997). The idea that immigrant concentration impacts social organization and increases crime is inherited from Shaw and McKay's (1942) original social disorganization theory. Concentrated immigration loses theoretical centrality in collective efficacy theory—and yields null or inconsistent effects in many empirical tests (Morenoff, Sampson, & Raudenbush, 2001; Sampson et al., 2005)—to the extent of being absent from many reformulations of the theory (see Sampson, 2006, 2012). Remarkably, in a more recent piece, Sampson (2008) calls to “rethink the relationship between immigration and crime” and highlights the crime-reducing effect of immigrant concentration in disadvantaged neighborhoods.

In this sense, collective efficacy theory could benefit from the more nuanced understanding of the role of immigrant concentration that segmented assimilation theory provides. According to segmented assimilation theory, immigrant communities differ in their resources, social capital, and organization, which impacts their capacity to shield immigrant families from the potentially deleterious effects of acculturation (Portes & Zhou, 1993). More resourceful communities may offer poor immigrant families the support they need, preserve biparental households, and help them successfully navigate the process of acculturation without experiencing dissonant acculturation. In other words, immigrant concentration does not necessarily equate to low collective efficacy. A more complete understanding of the sociohistorical features that characterize the different immigrant communities across the U.S. would help better specify the equivocal relationship between immigrant concentration and crime.

On the other hand, segmented assimilation theory could draw from criminological theory to better specify and test the causal mechanisms that are hypothesized to increase or decrease the odds

of criminal involvement and other negative outcomes. Similar to Shaw and McKay's (1942) social disorganization theory, segmented assimilation posits different plausible mechanisms that may explain differences in criminal involvement but does not test them. Since Kornhauser's (1978) devastating critique of what she understood as a flawed and inconsistent mixed model, social disorganization theory has been working on better defining and specifying the intervening mechanisms that mediate structural conditions and community-level outcomes. A path for theoretical integration, largely eschewed, is finally being undertaken, with many scholars recognizing the importance of reintroducing cultural aspects to the study of crime (Kubrin & Weitzer, 2003; Matsueda, 2006; Sampson, 2012; Sampson & Wilson, 1995). Segmented assimilation theory could take advantage of the new avenues for theoretical integration that have been recently delineated and embark on this process of theoretical refinement.

Conclusion

Segmented assimilation theory (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Portes & Zhou, 1993; Zhou, 1997) provides an updated framework to understand the varied experiences that shape the assimilation trajectories of the new wave of immigrants. This theory revitalized the discussion on immigrant assimilation in the era of deindustrialization. Central to this perspective is the idea that substantial differences exist across immigrants and their contexts of reception. Different modes of adaptation translate in assimilation into distinct segments of society and divergent outcomes across generations. Thus, the fate of distinct groups of immigrants presents marked cleavages: while some families assimilate into the middle-class and enter an upward mobility pathway, others assimilate into the underclass and experience downward mobility. A third alternative pathway comes from preserving the cultural traditions of their countries of origin and selectively acculturating into the host society. The community of co-ethnics plays a crucial role in this path and conditions the mode of incorporation, being able to shield immigrant children from entering a downward assimilation path.

Studies of segmented assimilation and crime have provided consistent support to the potentially problematic effect of acculturation, especially for immigrants adapting into disadvantaged contexts (Alvarez-Rivera et al., 2014; Bersani, 2014a; Bui, 2012; Chun & Mobley, 2014; Hong et al., 2016; Koo et al., 2012; Martínez, 2006; Nagasawa et al., 2001; Peguero, 2009; Peguero et al., 2015; Popp & Peguero, 2011). Further, and in line with segmented assimilation theory, studies have shown that strong co-ethnic communities tend to protect individuals from engaging in crime and delinquency (Feldmeyer et al., 2015; Martínez et al., 2004; Nielsen et al., 2005; Ousey & Kubrin, 2009). An important finding stemming from research on segmented assimilation and crime is the fact that the effects of factors such as acculturation or immigrant concentration tend to differ across ethnic groups, cities, or communities (Bui, 2012; Martínez et al., 2004; Morenoff & Astor, 2006; Ousey & Kubrin, 2009; Peguero, 2009). In this sense, segmented assimilation theory reminds us of the importance of understanding the specific contexts and segments of the society into which immigrants assimilate and how they condition the assimilation experience of immigrants. Acknowledging that immigrants face different barriers because of their race and legal status, and recognizing the importance of the support provided by some immigrant communities are also paramount.

In the quest to better understand the different vulnerabilities faced by immigrant families with regards to criminal involvement, it is important to better articulate the precepts of segmented assimilation theory with the existing criminological literature. This chapter suggested some directions for integrating these two perspectives. At this point, as suggested by Miller and Gibson (2011), it seems clear that there is much to be gained from the cross-fertilization of both criminology and immigration literatures not only at the empirical but also at the theoretical level.

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