



Immigrants and Gender Roles: Assimilation vs. Culture

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Julian Simon (1932-1998)



“Optimistic Economist”

New York Times (Feb 12, 1998)

- “The essence of Mr. Simon's view of man and the future is contained in two predictions for the next century and any century thereafter...in "The State of Humanity," (Cato Institute).”
 - "First, humanity's condition will improve in just about every material way.
 - Second, humans will continue to sit around complaining about everything getting worse.”

--New York Times (Feb 12, 1998)

Overview

- I examine the relationship between gender roles in immigrant source countries and immigrant and second generation behavior here in the US
- Highlight Assimilation vs. Culture
- Draw on:
 - Immigrants: Blau, Kahn, and Papps (2011); and Blau and Kahn (2013)
 - Across generations (Blau, Kahn, Liu, and Papps 2013)

Context and Motivation: Immigration

- Increase in immigration
 - Foreign-born share: 4.8% (1970) => 12.9% 2010
- Shift in source countries
 - 70.4% from Europe or North America (1970)
 - 81.3% from Asia or Latin America (2010)
- Between 1990 and 2008, the share of U.S. children who were immigrants or had an immigrant parent increased from 13 to 23 percent

Context and Motivation: Immigration

- Immigrants now come from countries with a more traditional gender division of labor than before
 - Lower female labor force participation rates
 - Higher birthrates
- Mirroring this, there is a growing gap between the labor supply of native and immigrant women since 1980

Questions

- Are immigrant-native differences related to source country characteristics?
- What happens to the time pattern of this gap—do immigrant women assimilate?
- Do immigrant generation differences carry over to the second generation, or do second generation women fully assimilate to native labor supply levels?

Context and Motivation: the Role of Culture

- ***culture*** = the impact of preferences and beliefs developed in a different time or place on current economic behavior (Fernández 2008)
- Growing area of research in economics
- Gives insight into the formation of tastes and preferences—gets inside the “black box”
- Also interest in the role of ethnic or ***social capital*** in affecting worker skills (Borjas 1992)

Context and Motivation: the Role of Culture


- Earlier work suggests a role of culture (source country characteristics) in the gender roles (labor supply and fertility) of
 - immigrants (Blau 1992; Antecol 2000)
 - Second generation (Fernández and Fogli 2009; Fernández and Fogli 2006)

= > looking at immigrant assimilation—over time in the US and across immigrant generations may be a useful way to study the long-term impact of cultural factors

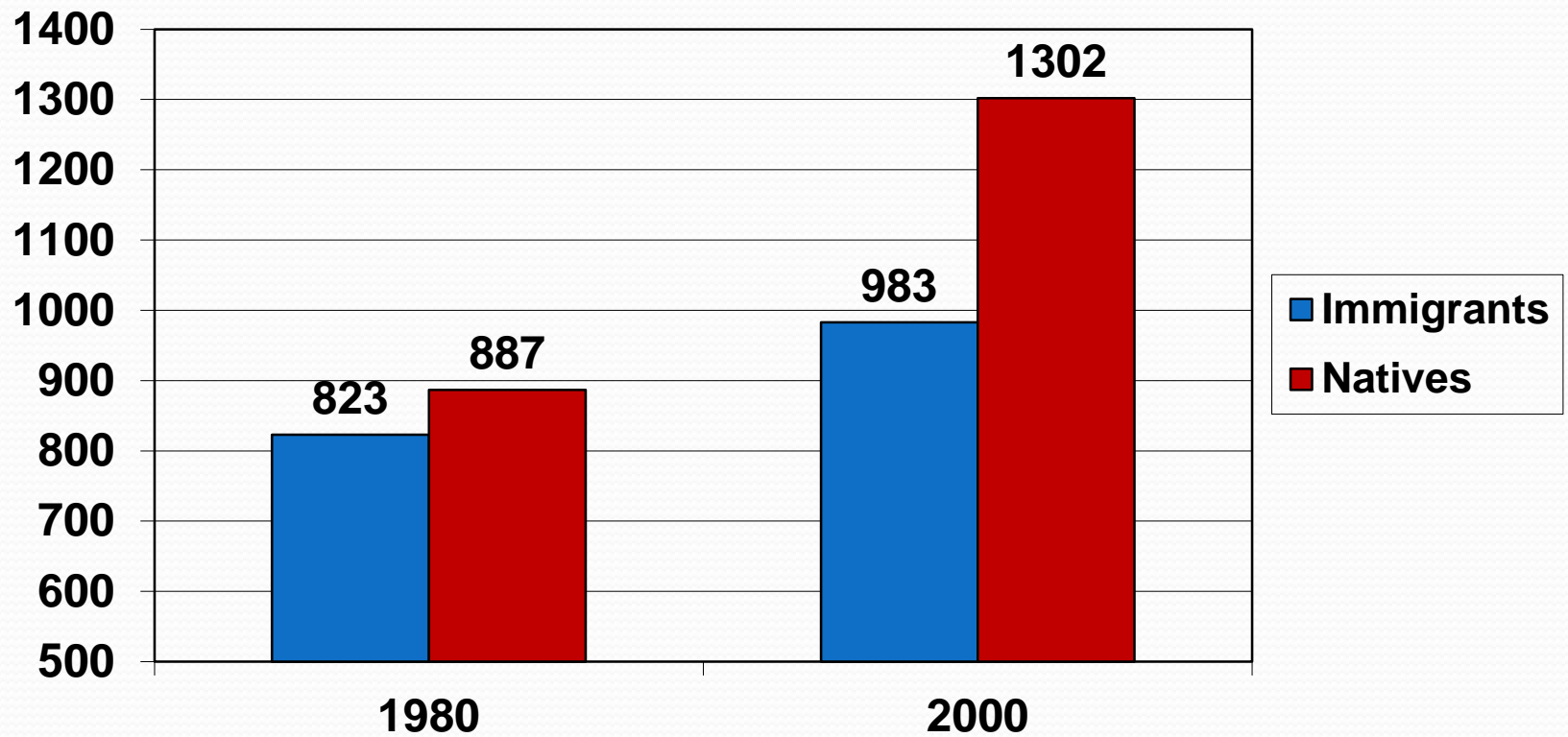
The Immigrant Generation

Blau, Kahn, and Papps (2011)

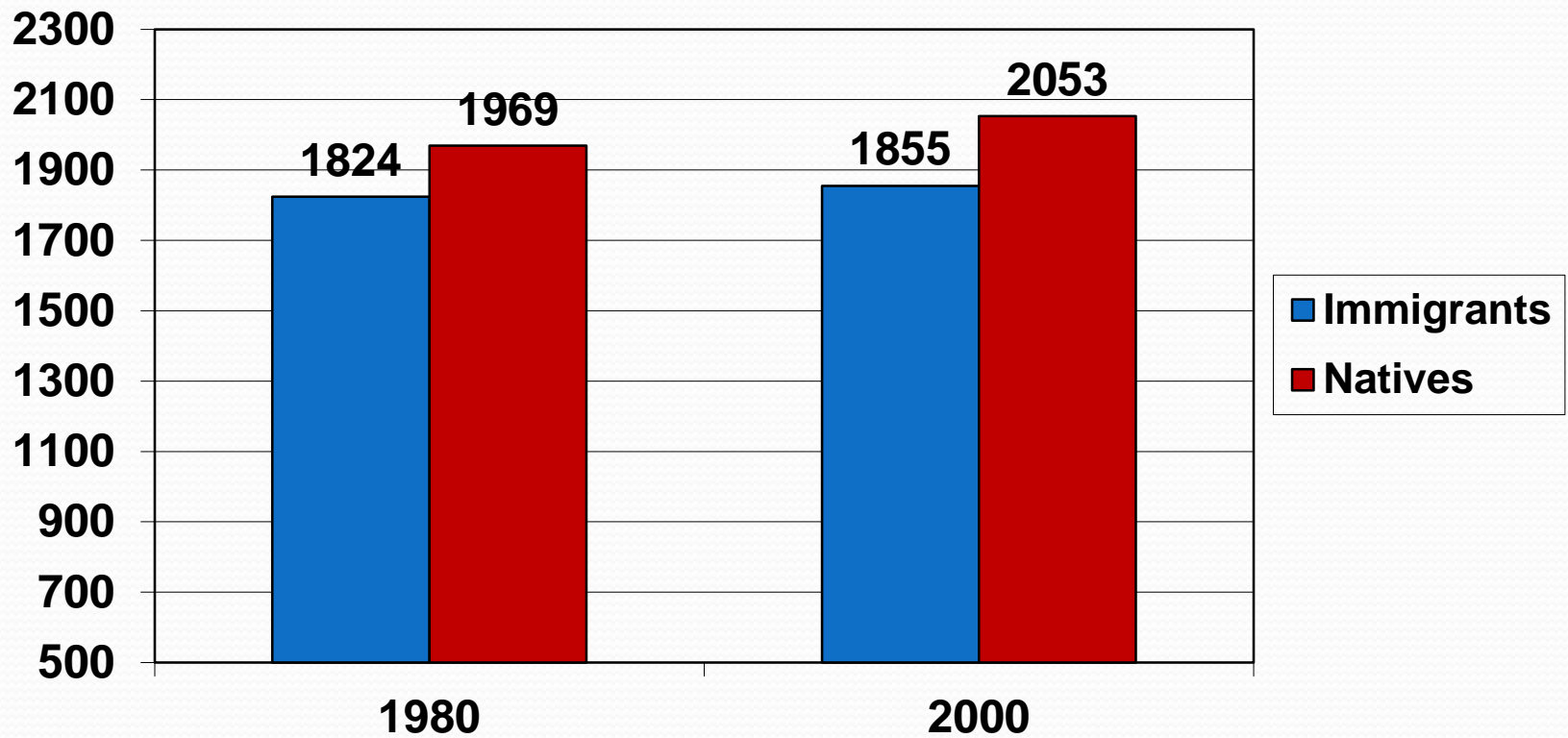
- The focus here is on the impact of traditional gender roles in immigrant source countries on the **assimilation** of **married** immigrant women's labor supply
 - **Assimilation profile** sheds light on what happens as women are exposed to US labor market conditions and social norms
 - Standard expectation—upward sloping due to disruption, job search, time need to accumulate country-specific human capital, etc.
 - Also, for married women: tied movers; visa problems

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- We ask if there are different assimilation patterns for immigrants from **high** or **low** female participation source countries
 - Main findings:
 - Source country female participation rates do affect immigrant women's labor supply behavior in the US
 - These effects are persistent over time in the US
 - BUT there is considerable assimilation to US patterns for all groups

Annual Work Hours, Women



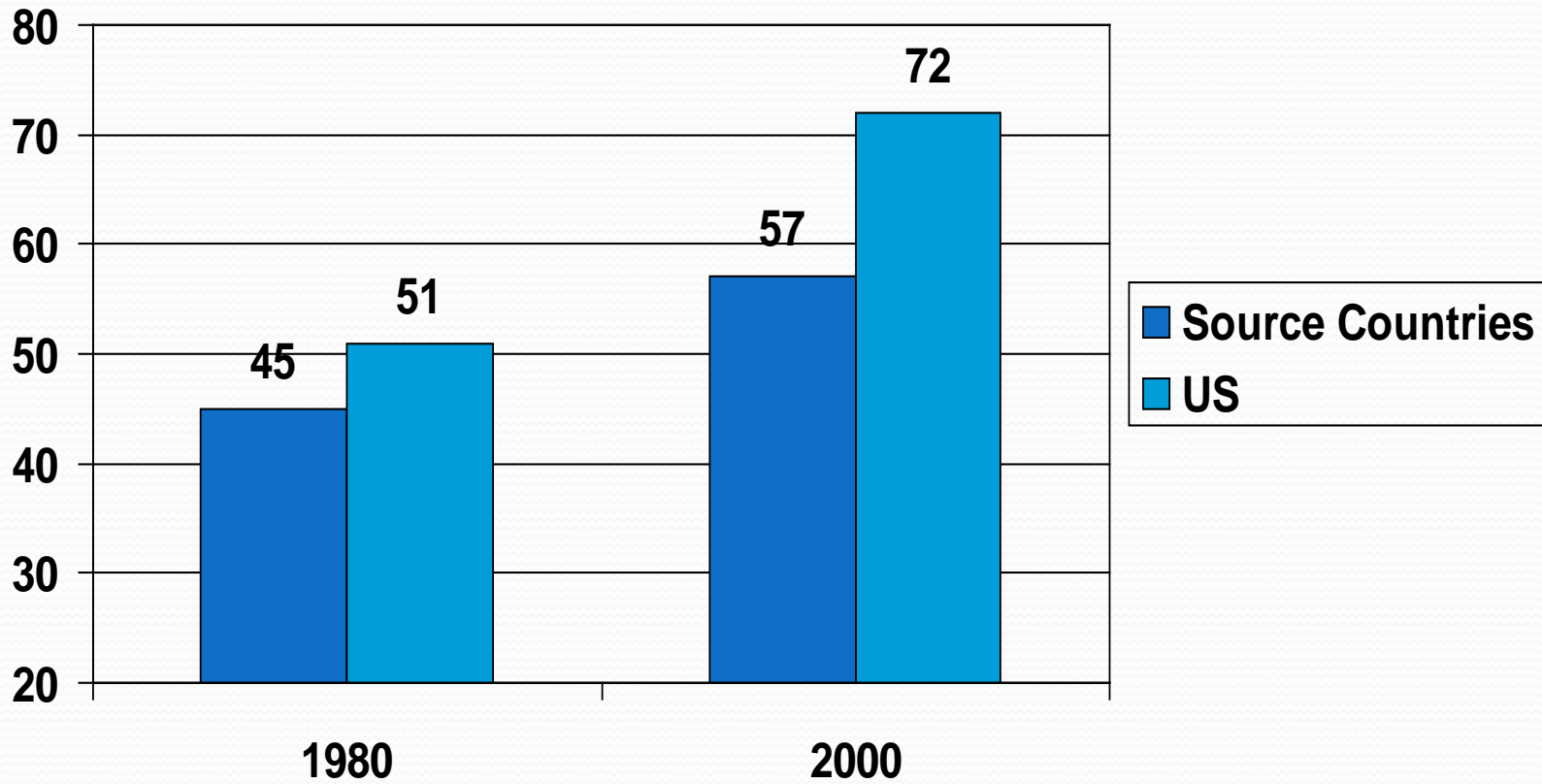
Annual Work Hours, Men



- Do source country vs US characteristics show a similar **growing labor supply gap**?
- Compare source country and US characteristics at time of immigrant arrival

Female Activity Rate Ratio F/M (%)

(At Immigrant Arrival)



Data and Estimation

- Pool the sample across three Census years (1980, 1990, 2000)
- Allows us to follow immigrant cohorts over time and estimate assimilation effects (Borjas 1985)
- Merge in source country data based on country of origin and date of arrival (based on cross-country, time series data set we assembled)
- Focus on adult immigrants
- Control for other factors that might influence labor supply

Controls for Source Country

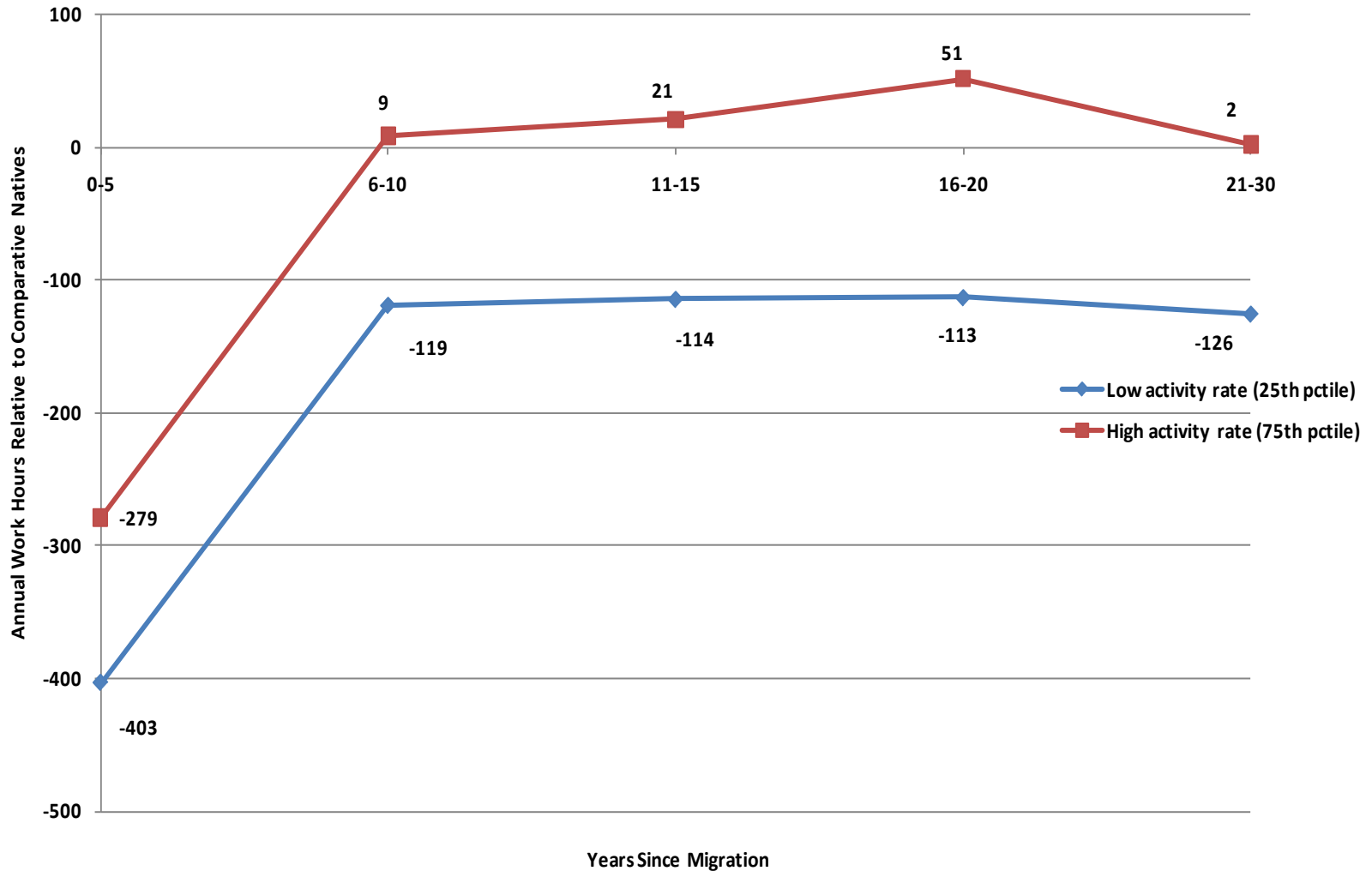
Characteristics:

- **Female Activity Rate/Male Activity Rate**
- Completed Fertility
- GDP per capita
- Refugee Percentage
- English-speaking country
- English an official language
- Gender-specific primary and secondary school enrollment rates
- Distance to the United States

Controls for Individual Characteristics:

- Woman and spouse:
 - age, age squared,
 - education dummies,
 - race/Hispanic origin dummies,
 - ysm-education dummies;
 - Census region dummies, state dummies for largest immigrant states (CA, NY, FL, IL, NJ, TX)

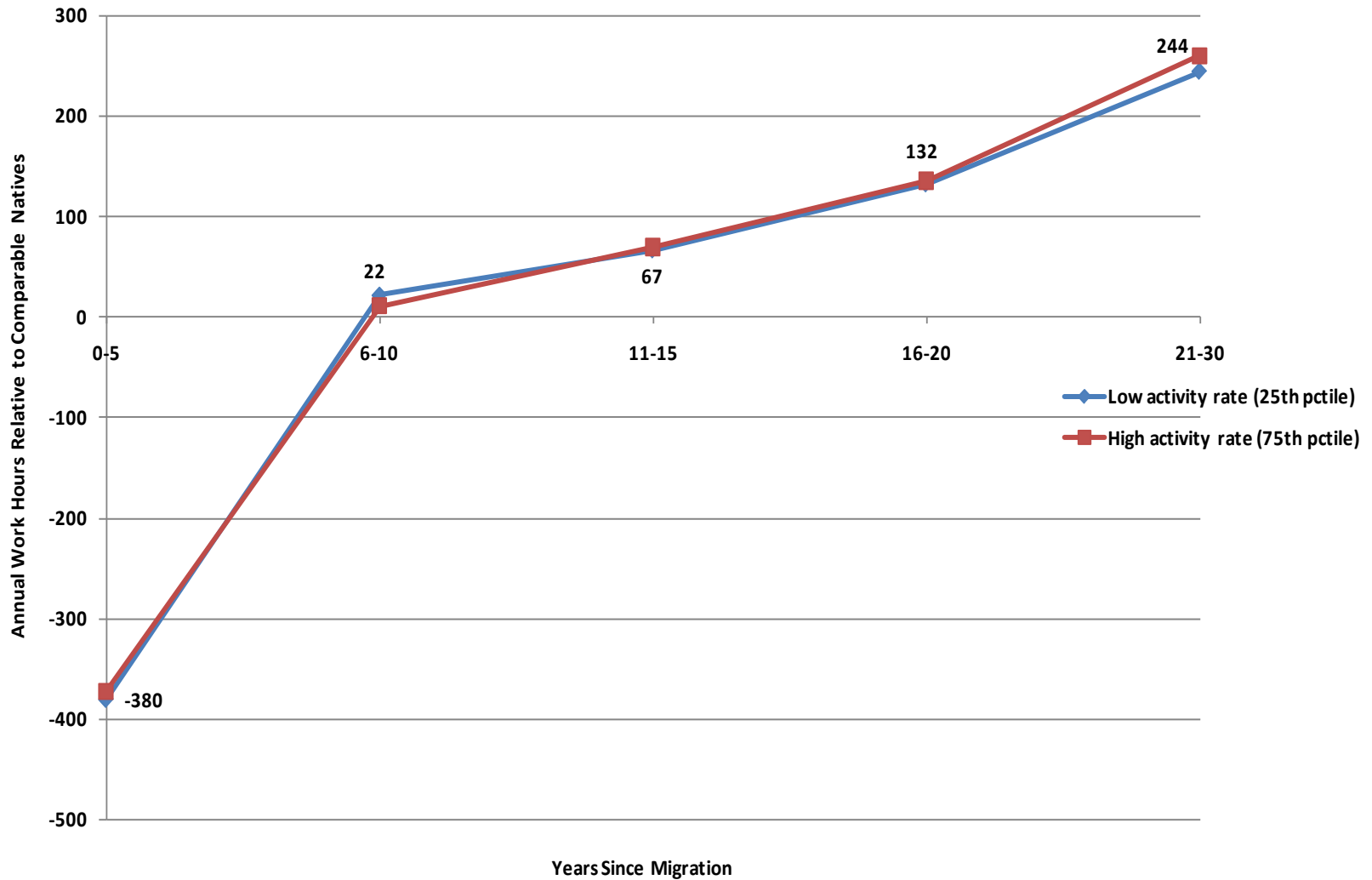
Annual Work Hours, Married Immigrant Women (Relative to Natives)



Is this due to culture: additional evidence

- Evidence on the **assimilation process—persistent effects** suggest cultural factors important
- Examine the effect of female labor force participation in the source country on immigrant **male** labor supply in the US (falsification test)

Annual Work Hours, Married Immigrant Men (Relative to Natives)



Is this due to culture: additional evidence

- Investigate the impact of source country female participation of immigrant men on the labor supply behavior of their **native-born wives**
- Distinguish effects of **wife's vs husband's** source country characteristics

Is this due to culture: additional evidence

Blau and Kahn (2013)

- Use the New Immigrant Survey
- Address two additional questions
 - Is it culture or labor force experience prior to migration?
 - Is it culture or social capital?

Is this due to culture: additional evidence

- Is it culture or labor force experience *prior* to migration?
 - Labor force experience *prior* to migration does increase US labor supply
 - But even controlling for whether or not woman worked prior to immigration, virtually all (90%) of the effect of source country female participation rate remains
 - Own pre-migration labor supply and source country female participation rate negatively interact in affecting US labor supply and US wages: *source country environment and the individual's own work experience act as substitutes*

Is this due to culture: additional evidence

- Is it culture or social capital?
 - **Social capital:** social interactions or community-level characteristics that *enhance skills and wages*; may take the form of role models, expectations, behavioral norms, and interpersonal networks (Dasgupta 2008, Borjas 1992, Coleman 1988, and Wilson 1987)
 - **Culture:** “systematic differences in *preferences and beliefs* across either socially or geographically differentiated groups” that affect behavior (Fernandez and Fogli 2009)

Is this due to culture: additional evidence

- Our findings suggest that most (86-95%) of the effect of source country female labor supply on US labor supply operates through a shift in the labor supply function; the rest is due to wages
- Roughly correlate social capital with wage effects (Fernandez and Fogli 2009)
 - Culture is more important than social capital


The Second Generation

(Blau, Kahn, Liu, and Papps 2013)

- The focus here is on the impact of immigrant parental behavior on second generation behavior => intergenerational assimilation process
- Look at second generation women's **labor supply**, **fertility**, and education
- **Second generation**= US born individual who has at least one immigrant parent

The Second Generation

- **Data** on second generation from **1995-2011 March CPS**
- We don't have actual data on parents and children, rather we look at the impact on the second generation of the behavior of the parental generation of immigrants
- **1970-2000 Censuses** used to locate likely parents of the CPS second generation women, matching on parents' country(ies) of birth and age of CPS respondent

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- Look at the relationship between second generation education, fertility and labor supply to immigrant generation means from previous Censuses
 - Also control for respondent's age and (in some specifications) marital status, education, and state of residence, and race/ethnicity



=>Overall, results are consistent with an impact of culture but also of considerable assimilation across immigrant generations

- For education, father's effect larger than mother's effect (possibly reflects socio-economic status)
- For fertility and female labor supply, mother's effect larger than the father's effect (possible role model effects)

Regression Results for **Women**

	Education	Fertility	Annual Hours
Mother's Source Country:			
Female Number of Children	-0.908*** (0.251)	0.324** (0.132)	-27.652 (81.023)
Female Years of Schooling	0.031 (0.035)	0.013 (0.016)	-9.163 (9.657)
Female Annual Work Hours	0.050* (0.030)	-0.035*** (0.013)	0.314*** (0.077)
Father's Source Country:			
Female Number of Children	-0.258 (0.350)	0.079 (0.130)	88.788 (67.338)
Male Years of Schooling	0.265*** (0.033)	-0.041*** (0.014)	22.582*** (7.690)
Female Annual Work Hours	-0.016 (0.038)	0.005 (0.014)	0.157** (0.063)
r squared	0.128	0.093	0.008
N	34,141	34,141	34,141

Regression Results for Men

	Education	Annual Hrs
Mother's Source Country:		
Female Number of Children	-1.222*** (0.248)	-166.278** (81.106)
Female Years of Schooling	0.005 (0.033)	1.118 (10.431)
Female Annual Work Hours	-0.003 (0.029)	-0.007 (0.084)
Father's Source Country:		
Female Number of Children	0.146 (0.350)	11.318 (88.165)
Male Years of Schooling	0.302*** (0.032)	10.319 (8.086)
Female Annual Work Hours	0.027 (0.036)	0.055 (0.094)
r squared	0.126	0.037
N	31,160	31,160

Regression Results for Immigrant Source Country Characteristics

(Controlling for GDP per cap and Primary and Secondary Female Enrollment Rates)

	Number of Children		Annual Hours	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Mother's Source Country:				
Fertility	0.046* (0.024)	0.016 (0.021)		8.474 (14.392)
Labor Force Participation Rate Ratio		-0.597*** (0.169)	223.791** (105.795)	249.033** (111.500)
Father's Source Country:				
Fertility	0.009 (0.021)	0.003 (0.020)		17.857* (10.042)
Labor Force Participation Rate Ratio		-0.112 (0.168)	40.763 (84.811)	87.191 (86.863)
r squared	0.082	0.084	0.005	0.005
N	34,141	34,141	34,141	34,141

Conclusions

- We find evidence that immigrant source country gender roles influence immigrant and second generation women's behavior in the US
 - ⇒ Culture matters for economic behavior
- There is also considerable evidence of assimilation
 - Immigrant women narrow the labor supply gap with native-born women with time in the US
 - Transmission coefficients for immigrant to second generation education, labor supply, and fertility are considerably less than 1

Conclusions

- Moreover, recent trends imply that native-immigrant differences in fertility and labor supply will shrink
 - World-wide declines in fertility
 - US women's labor force participation rates appear to have plateaued since the mid-1990s
- => Immigrant source countries getting more similar to the US in terms of fertility and female participation