

# Socioeconomic Attainments and Program Participation Among the Young Adult Children of Immigrants

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## Background

- One-quarter of the U.S. population is an immigrant or the child of immigrants
- Public concerns about economic cost of immigration and reliance on public assistance
- Success or failure of immigrants and their children reflective of the success or failure of U.S. immigration policy
- Existing literature focuses on differences between children of immigrants and children of natives during childhood
  - Children of immigrants more likely to grow up in poverty, be food insecure, and live in a household that receives some form of public assistance

## Why Young Adulthood?

- Do the disparities seen in childhood persist into young adulthood?
- Pre-teens when Welfare Reform was enacted in 1996
  - Still living in the parental home
- Late teens and early 20s during the Great Recession of 2007-2009
  - Preparing to leave the parental home, completing education, and entering the labor force

## Current Study

- Among the young adult population, are the children of immigrants more or less likely to be low-income than the children of natives?
  - Given higher rates of poverty in childhood, the children of immigrants may age into poverty at higher rates than the children of natives
  - High socioeconomic attainments among the children of immigrants may help to offset these effects
- Among the low-income young adult population, are the children of immigrants more or less likely to utilize public assistance?
  - Prior research has been mixed
  - Among low-income households, immigrants are less likely to receive cash assistance and food stamps
- Do the low-income young adult children of immigrants have higher socioeconomic attainments than the children of natives, all else being equal?
  - Immigrant paradox in education
  - Prior research finds children of immigrants achieve parity or higher compared to the children of natives in terms of education
  - Similar labor force outcomes

## Data

- 2012-2016 Current Population Survey, March Annual Social and Economic Supplement
- Limited to citizens only
  - Young Adults Aged 25-29 (N = 30,310)
- Low-Income Subsample, 185% or less of poverty line
  - Young Adults Aged 25-29 (N = 9,315)

## Analytic Strategy

- Logistic regression analyses predicting low-income status (full sample), public assistance use, and socioeconomic attainments (low-income subsample)
- Predicted probabilities of outcomes based on logistic regression analyses controlling for a full set of covariates

## Results

Figure 1. Predicted Probabilities of Low-Income Status of Low-Income Young Adult Citizens by Parental Nativity

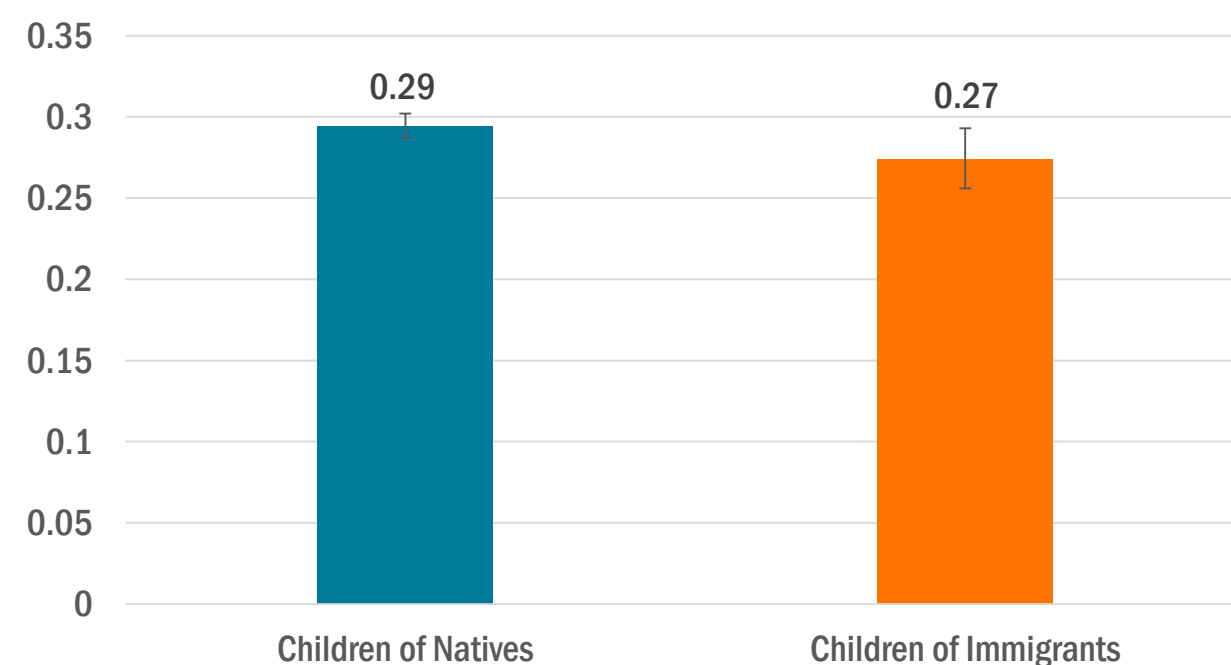


Figure 2. Predicted Probabilities of Public Assistance Receipt of Low-Income Young Adult Citizens by Parental Nativity

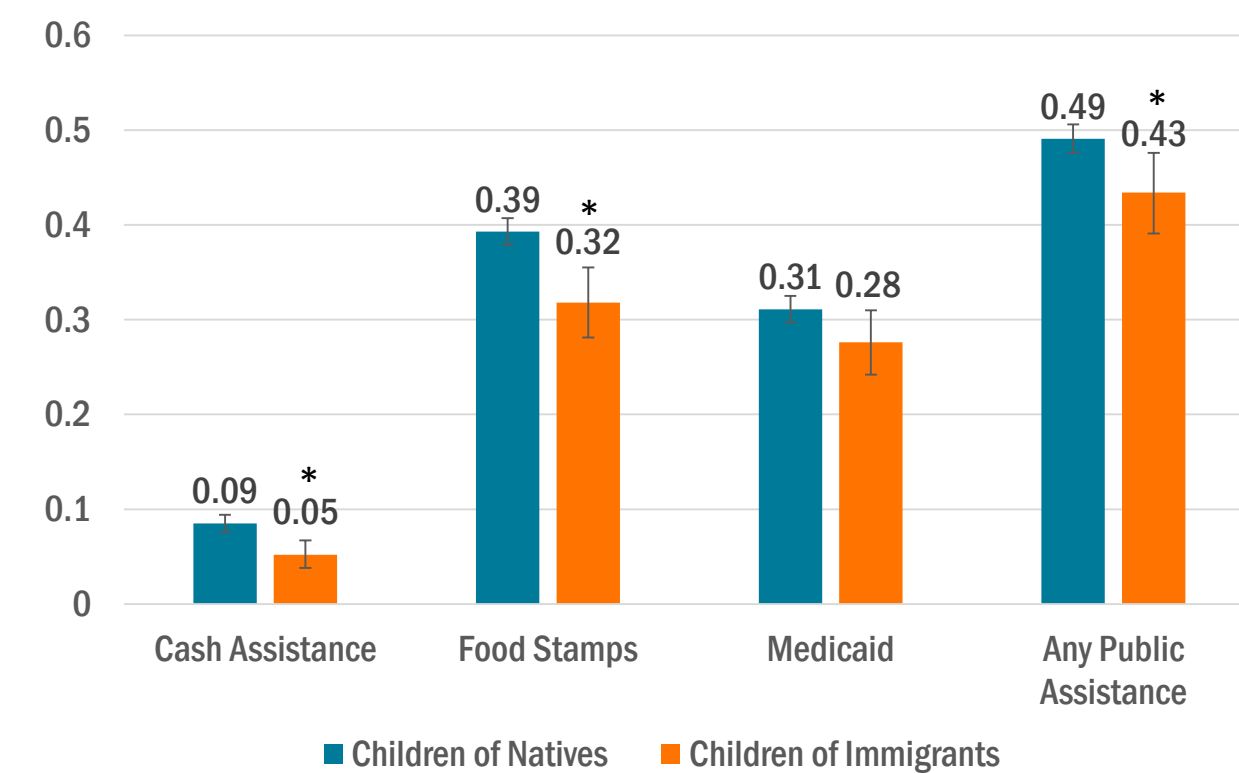
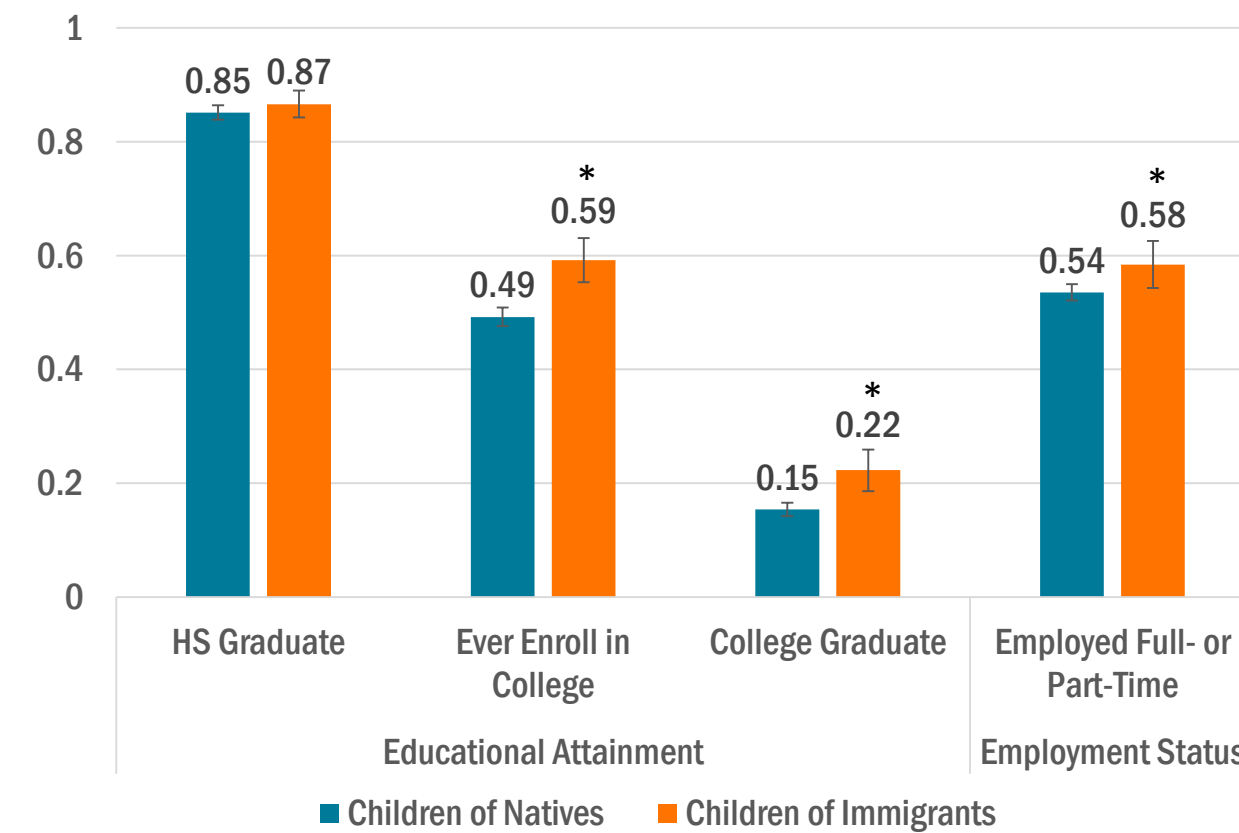


Figure 3. Predicted Probabilities of Socioeconomic Attainments of Low-Income Young Adult Citizens by Parental Nativity



Note: Predicted probabilities contain controls for race/ethnicity, gender, educational attainment (Figures 1 and 2; employment status for Figure 3), marital status, whether the respondent lives in the parental home, and year and state fixed effects  
\* p at least < 0.05

## Results, Cont.

- Young adult children of immigrants are equally likely to be low-income as their peers with native-born parents
- With the exception of Medicaid, low-income young adult children of immigrants are less likely to receive any form of public assistance than the children of natives
- Low-income young adult children of immigrants are similarly likely to graduate from high school as their peers with native-born parents
- Among low-income young adults, children of immigrants are more likely to enroll in college or graduate from college than the children of natives
- Low-income children of immigrants are more likely to be employed full- or part-time than low-income children of natives

## Conclusion

- Higher levels of poverty in childhood may not translate into higher levels of poverty in young adulthood for the children of immigrants
- Among low-income young adults, children of immigrants are less likely to utilize public assistance, with the exception of Medicaid
- Low-income young adult children of immigrants are more likely to achieve higher socioeconomic attainments than their peers with native-born parents