



ELSEVIER

Contents lists available at [SciVerse ScienceDirect](http://SciVerse.ScienceDirect.com)

Advances in Life Course Research

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/alcr

Adolescent behavior and achievement, social capital, and the timing of geographic mobility



Brian Joseph Gillespie

Department of Sociology, University of California, Irvine, 3151 Social Science Plaza, Irvine, CA 92697-5100, USA

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 12 December 2012

Received in revised form 17 May 2013

Accepted 1 July 2013

Keywords:

Academic achievement

Behavior problems

Geographic mobility

Life course

Residential mobility

Social capital

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the relationship between geographic mobility and adolescent academic achievement and behavior problems. Specifically, it addresses how the effects of moving differ by age and how social capital moderates the impact of moving on children (aged 6 to 15). Children's behavior problems and academic achievement test scores were compared across four survey waves of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (2000, 2002, 2004, and 2006) and matched to data from their mothers' reports from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979. The findings indicate that the negative behavioral effects of geographic mobility on adolescents are most pronounced for individuals relocating to a new city, county, or state as opposed to those moving locally (i.e., within the same city). Furthermore, as suggested by a life-course perspective, the negative effects of moving on behavior problems decrease as children get older. The results also show that several social capital factors moderate the effects of moving on behavior but not achievement.

© 2013 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Past research has shown that moving is detrimental for children (Hagan, MacMillan, & Wheaton, 1996; Rumberger & Larson, 1998; Scanlon & Devine, 2001). Research focuses on two specific outcomes of mobility on children: academic achievement and behavior problems. Scholars have consistently found that compared with non-mobile children, mobile children experience significantly more behavior problems (Haynie, South, & Bose, 2006; Simpson & Fowler, 1994) as well as negative academic outcomes, such as dropping out (Hofferth, Boisjoly, & Duncan, 1998; South, Haynie, & Bose, 2005), decreased academic performance (Ingersoll, Scamman, & Eckerling, 1989; Tucker, Marx, & Long, 1998; Wood, Halfon, Scarlata, Newacheck, & Nessim, 1993), and grade retention (Simpson & Fowler, 1994).

One possible reason given for the differences in outcomes between mobile and non-mobile children is the loss of social capital experienced by both the child and the parents in the move (Coleman, 1988; Pettit & McLanahan,

2003; Pribesh & Downey, 1999; Stack, 1994; Gillespie, *in press*). Household characteristics that predict selection into migration can complicate the picture, as moves can be instigated by family disruptions, such as divorce (Astone & McLanahan, 1994; Norford & Medway, 2002; Tucker et al., 1998), and employment changes (Brett, 1982) that negatively affect child outcomes. Research has shown that the impact of important life events, such as parental divorce (Perry-Jenkins, Repetti, & Crouter, 2000) and parent entrance into the work force (Cooksey, Menaghan, & Jekielek, 1997), depends largely on when they occur in the child's life. Moving, like other important child events, might also have distinct effects depending on how old the child is at the time.

This paper makes several contributions. Unlike prior studies of the effects of geographic mobility on child outcomes, it explicitly considers differences by age of the child. Age interactions are included to determine whether moving has more pronounced negative effects on the behavior and achievement levels of older or younger children. Further, this study clarifies the academic and behavioral effects of geographic mobility on children by

E-mail address: bgillespie@uci.edu.

including measures for social capital before and after a move. Specifically, mother and child data from four waves of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth are matched to examine the effects of mobility on child outcomes and to test the extent to which they can be explained by changes in social capital and in individual as well as household characteristics.

1. Theoretical background

Research on the effects of geographic mobility on child outcomes has, for the most part, shown that moving is harmful for children (Humke & Schaefer, 1995; South & Haynie, 2004; Gillespie and Bostean, *in press*). For instance, Hendershott (1989) and Norford and Medway (2002) found that moving increases behavior problems in children. Others have found a significant relationship between geographic mobility and dropping out of school (Coleman, 1988; Hagan et al., 1996). Ingersoll et al. (1989) as well as Pribesh and Downey (1999) found significant effects of geographic mobility on poor academic performance and other researchers (McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994; Astone & McLanahan, 1994) have found that moving is also correlated with school drop-out and low educational attainment net of selection into moving. Outside of individual and household predictors, such as marital disruption (Madigan & Hogan, 1991), the major debates on geographic mobility and child outcomes have centered largely on social capital, the quality and quantity of one's interpersonal relations.

Coleman's (1988) work on social capital has inspired scholars to view where a person lives as promoting the formation and maintenance of social ties that are paramount to a child's ability to excel in educational settings. Coleman's key point is that interactions within and outside of the household (e.g., among children, parents, teachers, schools, and community) are resources that provide children with assets that increase their abilities, achievement-levels, and general welfare. Social interactions among parents (parent–community closure), between parent and child (intergenerational closure), and among children (child–community closure) provide pathways to socialize, facilitate control, share information and resources, and establish and reinforce norms and expectations. These important social and community ties are broken when a family relocates, resulting in a loss of social capital. Negative effects may be even worse when families relocate repeatedly: “. . . for families that have moved often, the social relations that constitute social capital are broken at each move” (Coleman, 1988, p. 113).

With the notable exception of Gasper, DeLuca, and Estacion (2010), the literature has generally supported Coleman's (1988) claim. Gasper et al. (2010) found that the association between behavior problems and geographic mobility across city, county, or state lines is mostly due to selection into moving based on preexisting characteristics of mobile individuals and families. They found that geographically mobile children are usually poorer and have lower academic achievement than non-mobile children (which also puts them at risk for behavior problems). South and colleagues (South & Haynie, 2004;

South et al., 2005) found that social capital has limited predictive effects on the educational attainment of high schoolers who change residences or schools versus those who do not. Children who move are more likely than children who do not move to make friends who negatively affect their educational performance and aspirations. In light of this mixed evidence, comparative research needs to explore how geographic mobility is associated with different adolescent outcome domains using consistent measures.

It is well established that parent community and school involvement has a positive influence on adolescent academic (Epstein & Sanders, 2002; Grolnick & Ryan, 1989) and behavioral (Domina, 2005) outcomes. Parental involvement leads to richer social networks, but also greater information passing and greater knowledge of children's academic and behavioral well-being (Spera, 2005). Social capital is not only reflected in the parent–school relationship but also in the parent's knowledge of their child's social network. Muller (1998) found that children scored higher on achievement tests if their parents were acquainted with their friends. These children also receive better grades in school (Crouter, MacDermid, McHale, & Perry-Jenkins, 1990). Geographic mobility, however, runs the risk of damaging these beneficial relationships. In fact, Pettit and McLanahan (2003) found that geographic mobility is associated with a reduced likelihood of parents talking with the parents of their children's friends.

Research on the effects of the parent–child relationship (intergenerational closure) on adolescent outcomes has shown that high quality intergenerational relationships are beneficial for children. Aseltine, Gore, and Colten (1998) found a significant relationship between parent–child closeness and decreased depression and externalizing behavior problems in children. Others (Conger, Ge, Elder, Lorenz, & Simons, 1994) found that positive parent–child relationships buffer the negative emotional and behavioral effects of a disruptive event, divorce, on children. Of course, the stressful act of moving might also undermine the parent–child relationship in many ways. Moving results in decreased parent engagement (Pettit & McLanahan, 2003), changes in activities and routines (Brett, 1982), a breach in the strength of social ties (Coleman, 1988). As such, the parent–child relationship may be jeopardized by a move. However, the parent–child relationship (arguably the “closure” left most intact after a move) may also buffer the negative effects of moving on children.

Lastly, research on the importance of social capital in adolescence (child–community closure) has focused on the many positive social and emotional benefits of having friends during childhood (Ahn, 2012). Several reasons have been advanced for why friendships are more important in late adolescence than in earlier childhood. Douvan and Adelson (1966) argue that the value of friendship is to minimize the tumult that accompanies the onset of puberty. Berndt (1982) disagrees and hypothesizes that cognitive growth facilitates better understanding of sharing and reciprocity in friendships. Both agree that friendship is an important social qualifier for adolescents,

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/10296813>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/10296813>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)