Family Resources and Immigrant Youth Job Search

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- Social capital and the job search
  - The structure of social capital
    - Social ties and resources
  - The process of social capital
    - The importance of referrals
    - The importance of requests
- Quantitative and Qualitative Methods

Centrality of Families

- The importance of family as a primary unit of interest in the study of immigration

- Family relationships are central to understanding the experience of immigrant youth
  - The adolescent experience
  - Transition to young adulthood

Family Ties and Job Search

- Are Family ties important for finding work?
- The Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada
  - Random sample of recently settled new immigrants contacted at three time periods over 4 years
  - We are looking particularly at young people (15-29)
  - How exactly did you find your job?
    - Among other options, respondents can choose relatives
    - I look at the first job a respondent obtained since arrival
    - Logistic regression

Family Ties and Job Search

- Some preliminary findings from LSIC
  - Family vs. Friends: Youth are much more likely to use friends rather than family to secure a job
  - Who uses family?
    - Those with family
    - Visible minority youth
    - Those with limited language abilities
  - Young people are less likely to use family
    - Even controlling for a number of alternatives

Social Capital and the Job Search

- Why are family ties under-utilized?
  - Resources
  - Referrals
  - Requests

Resources

- The structure of social capital
  - Value found in relationships themselves
  - Social capital and Resource deficits
    - The value of a tie depends on the resources available within a network
    - Close versus (extensive) relationships
    - Communities with limited resources

Referrals

- The process of social capital
  - Ties with resources provides the outlines for the process of utilizing social capital
  - The importance of referrals
    - A tie to a resource rich network is only valuable if the ties are willing to help
    - Fernandez, Smith on Race and job referrals
    - Reciprocity, obligations, withholding information

Requests

- The process of social capital
  - The importance of requests for help
    - A willingness to refer is only useful when a request has been made
    - What if immigrant youth are not making requests for assistance in the job search?
      - Parenting
      - Striving for independence
      - Seeking own identity

Immigrant Youth Asking for help

- The Immigrant Youth Employment Project
  - Over 80 interviews with newly arrived youth
    - Focus groups and interviews with 2nd generation
  - Four locations (Toronto, Hamilton, Winnipeg, Vancouver) and a variety of cultural backgrounds

Parenting

- Discussion and Decision making
  - Immigrant parents provide global guidance and value directions but maintain separate realms of responsibility
    - "even if I asked them, they're gonna actually ask me, why don't you find out yourself because we don't really know, and we don't have the time because they're working full time too."
    - "I can't say they're familiar with the labour market information, 'cos it's quite specific"

Striving for independence

- Independence and the importance of making it on one's own
  - "yeah, I wanna have my own money so I can buy stuff for myself"
  - "I, as much as possible I want to be able to stand on my own, but right now I'm living with my parents... and I feel like I'm a burden to them because you know, they're actually still adjusting, you know, in Canada"

Seeking own identity

- Finding a first job includes an expression of identity
- Work outside the enclave can reflect the formation of an unique individual identity
  - “working in McDonalds, it pretty much opened my eyes and I find that sometimes people don’t quite understand me because I still had a different mentality coming from my background; but as time went by, we kinda adapted to each other, meaning the people I was working with and me.”

Summing up

- The structure and process of social capital
  - Resources
  - Referrals
  - Requests
- What if immigrant youth are not making requests for assistance in the job search?
  - Parenting
  - Striving for independence
  - Seeking own identity

Thanks!

- Statistics Canada Research Data Centres
- SSHRC/Metropolis