

Book Notes

IMMIGRANTS RAISING CITIZENS: UNDOCUMENTED PARENTS AND THEIR YOUNG CHILDREN

by Hirokazu Yoshikawa

New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2011. 196 pp. \$29.95 (hardcover).

Immigrants Raising Citizens begins on the A train, a popular rail line that weaves through much of New York City and the communities of the immigrants in Hirokazu Yoshikawa's new book. In addition to riding the same train, these immigrants share similar aspirations of a better life for themselves and their children. For many, a range of factors will influence the trajectory and attainment of these aspirations, but Yoshikawa examines an overlooked mediator: the legal status of immigrant parents.

The national debate on immigration policy often views undocumented immigrants as law breakers and low-skilled labor, but many are also parents of U.S.-born citizens who share the same legal rights as their documented counterparts. In fact, nearly four million children have been born in the United States to undocumented parents. Yoshikawa explores this paradox of undocumented parents raising U.S. citizens and how parental legal status may affect the development of children above and beyond the effects of commonly cited factors like low parental education and poverty. The author frames the early childhood development and the education of these children as an issue of national interest, not only in terms of equity but also as an important investment in the country's economic and social prosperity.

The opening scene on the A train sets up a similar methodological journey to unravel the effects of undocumented parental status on U.S.-born children. It brings together a theoretical and empirical narrative supported by ethnographic and quantitative data. The longitudinal study is ongoing, but the book is based on data from a birth cohort of 380 infants from African American, Chinese, Dominican, and Mexican families followed through age three. In addition to data from parent surveys and child assessments, field researchers conducted interviews and participant observations with an in-depth sample of twenty-three families at fourteen-, twenty-four-, and thirty-six-month time points, providing a detailed perspective into the lives of documented and undocumented immigrants. Although participants in the in-depth sample were open about their documentation status to field researchers, the surveys could not ask about documentation directly. The robustness of the quantitative findings thus depends on the researchers' use of a proxy for documenta-

ing citizens, one that Yoshikawa frames in terms of the legal rights of children and their future contributions to society. Unfortunately, the author avoids more recent discussions on immigrant children who are *not* U.S. citizens living in the country. While writing about this topic opens up more difficult conversations about immigration policy, if the focus is on potential contributions to society, the developmental needs of all children—documented and undocumented—demand similar attention and care.

N.C.

BALANCING ACTS: YOUTH CULTURE IN THE GLOBAL CITY

by Natasha K. Warikoo

Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011. 248 pp. \$21.95.

Balancing Acts: Youth Culture in the Global City is an exploration of the lives of second-generation immigrant youth in two ethnically diverse schools in New York and London. Natasha K. Warikoo carefully explains how youths' baggy pants, latest sneakers and trainers, and rap music do not signal a rejection of school culture and a lack of motivation to succeed in school. Rather, she explains, most youth do have a desire to succeed in school, *and* through music and dress they signal their adherence to youth cultural norms. Based on her dissertation research, Warikoo has written a book that is deeply respectful of the young people she studied. *Balancing Acts* gives parents, teachers, teacher educators, youth program directors, and others interested in youth an opportunity to understand, from the youths' perspective, the complexities of negotiating relationships in school, with friends, and with family.

Readers learn quickly that the information in the book is from an in-depth and comprehensive study with ethnographic, interview, and survey data collected during the 2003–2004 school year. However, Warikoo skillfully provides the readers with just enough research and background to support the well-chosen quotes from youth and to move the readers toward a deep understanding of these young people. We see these youth as complex people—people who can fight, skip school, and talk back to teachers while simultaneously voicing motivation to succeed in school and, in many cases, to pursue higher education. Warikoo shows us through the young people's own explanations that these behaviors are not in opposition to one another, and she shows us how a "peer status explanation" (p. 109) allows us to understand how these youth balance their desire and attempt to succeed in school while working to maintain and excel in their peer relationships.

Although we are given information from surveys, it is the youth voices that will stick with readers. For example, at the same time that we hear about a young person fighting, we hear logical explanations that show the students' skillful negotiation between youth culture and behavior that is accepted by adults. Robert, a high school student in Queens whose parents are African