

## **VID Colloquium**

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Vienna Institute of Demography  
Welthandelsplatz 2 / Level 2  
Nathan Keyfitz Library  
1020 Vienna

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Pennsylvania State University, United States

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11:00 - 12:00 am

### **"Third Generation Delay Among Mexican-Americans"**

Concerns about Mexican-Americans' prospects for successful integration are fueled by the phenomenon of third generation delay or decline in educational attainment. This refers to a pattern in which the educational attainment of Mexican-Americans follows a nonlinear pattern across generations, whereby the 1st generation has lower educational attainment than the 2nd generation, but the 3rd-or-higher generation has similar or lower attainment than the 2nd generation. We question whether third-generation delay is real, and thus a reliable assimilation barometer for current generations of Mexican-Americans, or whether, instead, it is the result of historical factors and attendant data artifacts. By using demographic simulation models, we demonstrate how confounding factors like ethnic attrition, educational differences in fertility, and rising educational attainments among new immigrants "produces" the appearance of third generational delay. We also quantify the extent that historical patterns of blocked intergenerational mobility account for the relatively low educational attainments among the third or higher generation of Mexican Americans. We find that third-or-higher generational delay among Mexican-Americans can be mostly explained by confounding factors and historical patterns of blocked mobility and that very little can be explained by contemporary disadvantages in opportunities for upward mobility.

#### **About the presenter**

Jennifer Van Hook is Professor of Sociology and Demography at the Pennsylvania State University, Director of the Population Research Institute, and non-resident fellow at the Migration Policy Institute. She has expertise in the demographics of immigrant populations and the socioeconomic integration of immigrants and their children. In one stream of research, she uses demographic methods to estimate the size, characteristics, and dynamics of the unauthorized foreign-born population. In a different stream of research, she focuses on the health and well-being of immigrants and their children.