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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

Resegmenting Assimilation: Analyzing Second Generation Education from a Binational
Perspective

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of Master
of Arts

in

Latin American Studies (International Migration)

by

Travis Scott Silva

Committee in charge:

Professor April Linton, Chair
Professor Wayne Cornelius
Professor Hugh Mehan

2010

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The Thesis of Travis Scott Silva is approved and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

Chair

University of California, San Diego

2010

To all my students, most especially C.L, J.C., Lil' L, and "The Purps."

I learned far more from you than you likely learned from me.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Research projects are never the fruit of only one person's labor, and this thesis is no exception. From academic colleagues to personal friends, the support and assistance of many has been invaluable – without it I'm not sure I would have ever finished.

First and foremost, I owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to the people of Tlacuitapa whose thoughtful responses inform this project. Specific people did more than answer our questions. Gloria Ulloa helped convince sometimes skeptical interviewees in California to answer our occasionally invasive questions. The warm support and hospitality of Jesús and Yolanda García and their children, Jesús Jr. and Teresa, simply made this thesis better – their specific contribution could not be overstated.

Unfunded projects do not happen. I was fortunate to receive financial support from three generous sources: the Tinker Foundation, the Institute for International, Comparative, and Area Studies at UC San Diego, and the University of California's Latino Studies Research Initiative. I acknowledge with a deep sense of gratitude the assistance of these organizations.

The Mexican Migration Field Research Project at UC San Diego also greatly assisted this project. I thank all my colleagues on the 2009-2010 field MMFRP team for their hard work in the field. The leadership of Rafeal Alarcón, Leah Muse-Orlinoff, Jonathan Hicken, and Sam Bazzi helped guide this year's MMFRP and the eventual direction of my research. I would especially like to thank my two partners in crime, Emily Puhl and Luz María García García, for their work on our forthcoming "MMFRP

chapter.” Several tables from that publication are contained in Chapters 3 and 4, and I gratefully acknowledge Emily and Luz’s permission to reproduce them here.

Several members of the faculty and staff have supported this endeavor. Director Christine Hunefeldt has been a welcome cheerleader for us masters students during our two years at the Center for Iberian and Latin American Studies at UC San Diego. David Fitzgerald provided thoughtful feedback to Chapter 5 and has encouraged me to become a sophisticated student of immigration throughout my three stints with MMFRP. Ana Minvielle, Erin Burgoon, and Janice Pezolli provided enormously helpful administrative support during long absences from San Diego.

I could not have assembled a stronger committee to assist me in bringing this project to fruition. I thank Bud Mehan for his friendly chats and for introducing me to the sociology of education. “Profe” Wayne Cornelius’s contribution to my academic growth could not be overstated. I would not be interested in immigration, enrolled in graduate school, or moving onto law school without his warm friendship and steadfast support. I am thankful to have been one of the many students touched by Profe’s kind mentorship over the past five years. Likewise, April Linton has contributed to this project in too many ways to mention. In addition to teaching me essentially everything I know about statistics, her comments and revisions at each stage of this project – from seedling to full blossom – have been incredibly instructive. I thank each of these three professors for agreeing to supervise this project.

Finally, friends and family have been very supportive throughout the last two years. The friendship of fellow graduate students Karen Longenecker, Normita Rodriguez, Georgia Hartman, Kelly & Sara Nielsen, Joan Donovan, Sarah Baitzel,

David Keyes, Emily Puhl, and Micah Gell-Redman among many others has been the highlight of my final two years at UC San Diego. Old friends, especially Sapna Iyer and Camille Ricketts, have sustained me through brief (but all too frequent) periods of thesis-induced insanity. Most importantly the loving support of my family, particularly my awe-inspiring parents, can be described by one word: essential. To the extent I have accomplished anything at all, it is a product of being a member of a most wonderful, warm, and caring family.

Tables 3.2 and 3.3 are reproduced from “Equal Hopes, Disparate Outcomes: Education in an Immigrant Community” by Travis Silva, Luz María García García, and Emily Puhl in *Recession Without Borders: Mexican Migrants Confront the Economic Downturn* edited by David FitzGerald, Rafael Alarcón Acosta, and Leah Muse-Orlinoff. The thesis author is the primary author of this chapter.

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Resegmenting Assimilation: Analyzing Second Generation Education from a Binational Perspective

by

Travis Scott Silva

Master of Arts in Latin American Studies (International Migration)

University of California, San Diego, 2010

Professor April Linton, Chair

This thesis analyzes the educational aspirations and outcomes among people associated with Tlacuitapa, a small Mexican town with a long history of immigration to the United States. Second generation Tlacuitapenses raised and educated in the United States are compared to similarly aged co-ethnics who grew up in the origin community. Results indicate that Tlacuitapenses set high educational goals for themselves regardless of where they live, though aspirations are slightly higher in the United States. However, despite having similar educational goals as their counterparts in Mexico, respondents

educated north of the border finish far more years of school even when controlling for age and parents' education. Follow-up interviews isolate two features of the Tlacuitapa community in the United States that explain this variation. First, high documentation and employment rates among immigrant parents from Tlacuitapa create favorable economic conditions that provide educational opportunities for their children. Second, much of the Tlacuitapa second generation participates in “safe harbors” – high school programs that facilitate student enrollment and advancement.

The term “Tlacuitapense exceptionalism” is used to describe the relative economic and legal stability of the Tlacuitapense immigrant generation and the comparatively high college participation and completion rates of the second generation. This exceptionalism challenges the causal mechanisms that undergird the downward assimilation model proposed by Portes and Zhou, who do not consider several key determinants of educational success in articulating segmented assimilation theory. The thesis calls for a “resegmentation” of assimilation theory with a stronger focus on class and documentation distinctions.

1. Introduction

[I want] to go to high school in Guadalajara...because I have aunts there who can help me...economically. Here, you have to pay for the bus, tuition, and books. And after high school? I want to keep studying at the university. I'm interested in psychology, but also pediatrics. I like working and being with kids.

-Linda, a 15 year old middle school student in Mexico

My parents, they're the ones who motivated me. I know, I have like friends and relatives and when I talk to them they don't really have much support from their parents, and I was lucky because I have that....I am considering going to graduate school in international relations. That's one option. Another option is law school. But the main one that I've had since I've been in high school is working at the Department of State, take the foreign service exam, and work either in the translation office or consular affairs, something that has to do with that.

- Eréndira, a 20 year-old Mexican-American college student

Though they've probably never met, Linda and Eréndira are similar in many ways. Both aim to be the first in their families to graduate from college. Both have supportive parents who have made significant sacrifices for their daughters' educations. And both share a common bond with same small town in the highlands of Jalisco, Mexico – Tlacuitapa.

Linda lives in Tlacuitapa, a rural community in Mexico with a strong culture of immigration to the United States. If she does finish high school and college, Linda will be among the tiny minority of people raised in her hometown who complete either level of school. Tlacuitapa has no high school. As Linda plans to do, students from Tlacuitapa must travel to an urban center to pursue schooling after the ninth grade.

By contrast, Eréndira grew up in Indio, California, where her parents settled after immigrating from Tlacuitapa in the 1970s. She and her two older siblings grew up

near their neighborhood high school, which was twice named a California Distinguished School. Her brother and sister were able to start their postsecondary careers at a local community college before transferring to campuses of the University of California. Eréndira chose to enroll at Berkeley as a freshman.

Though Linda and Eréndira's parents all grew up in Tlacuitapa, the two girls were raised in very different places. Eréndira's pathway into college was – at least when compared to the challenges confronting Linda – significantly facilitated by her parents' choice to immigrate to the United States. This study analyzes the impact of immigration on the educational aspirations and attainment of people who are in some way linked to Tlacuitapa.

This comparison is necessarily binational and uses an expansive conceptualization of “Tlacuitapa” to include that town's satellite communities in the United States. I broadly define “Tlacuitapenses” (the Spanish word for people from Tlacuitapa) to include all people who were born in, or who have at least one parent born in, the town. Likewise, the Tlacuitapense community consists not only of the town itself, but also those Tlacuitapenses living in U.S. destination communities. By comparing similarly aged Tlacuitapense youth in both countries, we may begin to determine how the lives of second generation youth would be different if their parents had never decided to emigrate from Tlacuitapa.

Comparing the educational aspirations and attainment of Tlacuitapenses in the United States and Mexico reveals a story of converging dreams but disparate outcomes. Regardless of where they live, Tlacuitapense students set high educational goals for themselves. Virtually all say they want to complete high school and most state they seek

to finish college. Aspirations are slightly higher among Tlacuitapense youth who live in the United States; this difference is largely a function of improved educational infrastructure in American urban centers compared to the Mexican countryside.

Though Tlacuitapenses in both countries share high hopes for their futures, educational outcomes are bifurcated by country. Tlacuitapenses educated in the United States finish far more years of school than their co-ethnics educated in Mexico. In American destination communities, Tlacuitapenses grow up near schools (including college) and have high participation rates in “safe harbors,” features of the educational system that directly or indirectly encourage academic engagement among at-risk youth. The powerful combination of these two factors – proximity to schools and participation in safe harbors – facilitate the educational attainment of U.S. educated Tlacuitapenses relative to those who “stayed behind” in Mexico.

Tlacuitapa and its Satellite Communities

Tlacuitapa lies about half an hour from the nearest city, Lagos de Moreno, in the northeast portion of Jalisco that separates Aguascalientes and León. The town’s socially conservative mestizo population is overwhelmingly Catholic. The local economy is stagnant. There is a small shoe factory that employs mostly young girls, but residents complain of low wages and long hours, and the factory is not considered by residents to be a desirable place to work. Nearly everyone else in the town is employed in agriculture or dairy ranching. As these activities have become less and less competitive

in rural Jalisco (Cantú et al. 2007), Tlacuitapa has increasingly relied on its traditional – and primary – export: people.

During most of the year, Tlacuitapa is a sleepy town. *Hijos ausentes*, or the town's absent sons and daughters, labor in the United States. Many families have reunified north of the border, leaving many elderly and a few mothers caring for small the most visible residents of the town. It is not a complete ghost town – there are economically active men in Tlacuitapa – but four generations of migration to the United States have left the town depopulated and dependent on remittances from the north.

Tlacuitapenses have been migrating to the United States for four generations (Cornelius et al. 2009). The most established satellite community is in the San Francisco Bay Area communities of Union City and Hayward and throughout this thesis, the term “Bay Area” is used to refer to those Tlacuitapense families that reside in these two towns. Tlacuitapenses have lived in these two cities long enough to witness and participate in massive shifts in the local economies. Up until the 1970s, both towns were primarily agricultural. Manufacturing entered in the 1970s and 1980s but began to decay as the Bay Area transitioned to a service and technology based economy in the 1990s. Today, most Tlacuitapenses in the Bay Area arrived decades ago. They generally are legal permanent residents or naturalized citizens, and there is a substantial second generation in the Bay Area.

In recent years Oklahoma City has become the largest Tlacuitapense destination community in the United States. The Tlacuitapense community in the Sooner State is more heterogeneous than in the Bay Area. Some reunified families and second generation youth are well-established, but many single men and undocumented

Tlacuitapenses live and work in the state's capital city. In both California and Oklahoma, male migrants are concentrated in construction jobs and have been heavily impacted by the "Great Recession," the term I use to refer to the global economic downturn that began in 2007 and has continued through 2010.

Other smaller enclaves of Tlacuitapenses exist. Eréndira's parents immigrated three decades ago to California's Coachella Valley where they own a small business. Tlacuitapenses have established sizeable enclaves Los Angeles, Las Vegas, Chicago, Houston, and Detroit, and rural communities in Oregon and Washington state. These communities represent both traditional and "new" destinations for Mexican immigrants in the United States.

Educational Opportunities For Tlacuitapenses

This study compares educational outcomes among Tlacuitapenses using country as the primary axis of differentiation. Chapters 3 and 4 in particular discuss the educational infrastructure – the schools – that is available to the Tlacuitapense community in Mexico and in the United States. This section gives a detailed description of this infrastructure.

Schools In Jalisco

Tlacuitapa has one kindergarten, one primary school, and one *telesecundaria*.¹ The schools' predominant characteristic was their smallness; the *telesecundaria* had 45 total students, or about 15 in each of the three grades. Classes in the *primaria* were even smaller at approximately nine students per class. Nearly all teachers were experienced educators. Two middle school teachers had seven years experience, the other over 20. The majority of the classroom teachers at the elementary school had logged double digit years of service, though a few were substantially younger. The buildings were relatively well maintained, but lacked many resources commonly found in the United States. Neither school had Internet access. One middle school teacher confessed to me in January, 2010 that the math books for her students still had not arrived for the 2009-2010 school year. At both schools, I met dedicated teachers who were doing what they could to educate their students without resources that are considered critical both in the United States and in Mexico.

The biggest distinction between the two schools was their location. The *primaria* is just three blocks west of the main plaza and located on road that connects Tlacuitapa to the nearby highway. By contrast, the *telesecundaria* was far on the on the eastern periphery, across from the shoe factory, and a significant walk from the town center. The middle school's location left it removed from the daily life of the town.

As with many small communities in rural Mexico, there is no high school in Tlacuitapa. There are two *preparatorias*, covering what would be grades 10-12 in the

¹ A *telesecundaria* is a middle school, corresponding to grades 7-9 in the United States, where teachers are responsible for instruction in all subjects with the help of remotely broadcast lessons transmitted by satellite.

United States, within a commutable distance: one in Unión de San Antonio, the seat of a rural county by the same name, and another about a half an hour away in Lagos de Moreno. Although Unión de San Antonio physically closer to Tlacuitapa than Lagos, no paved road connects Unión and Tlacuitapa. I did not meet any student who attended high school in Unión, though I was told that one or two do so. Several Tlacuitapenses commute to school in Lagos everyday despite having to secure and pay for daily transportation to (or less frequently, room and board in) Lagos de Moreno.

Lagos de Moreno also houses an extension campus of the University of Guadalajara. The extension campus does grant bachelors degrees, called a *licenciatura* in Mexico, but only offers a limited selection of academic specializations. The closest full-scale university campuses are located in León, about 45 minutes away, and in Mexico's second city, Guadalajara, which is situated about 2.5 away by bus.

Schools in the Bay Area and Oklahoma City

Tlacuitapense youth are concentrated in two American destination communities: the Bay Area cities of Hayward and Union City and Oklahoma City. These two locations share very similar educational infrastructures. Elementary, middle, and high schools are integrated into the neighborhoods where Tlacuitapense immigrant families live. During the course of our fieldwork, several interviewees were pleased that their children only had to walk down the street to get to school. In each of the two major destination communities, Tlacuitapense youth are concentrated in one particular high school. The demographics of both are discussed at length in Chapter 5.

Colleges and universities are a feature of Tlacuitapense destination communities. Many Tlacuitapense youth in the Bay Area enroll at Chabot and Ohlone Colleges, two year community colleges that offer vocational training and prepare students for transfer to bachelors degree granting institutions. Hayward houses the main campus of CSU East Bay, and three other major public universities are accessible by public transportation in under an hour. Oklahoma City houses the state's second largest community college, and the flagship campus of the University of Oklahoma is located in a nearby suburb. Unlike their co-ethnics in growing up in Tlacuitapa, respondents raised in the United States grew up in close proximity to neighborhood high schools and postsecondary institutions.

Data Collection and Presentation

This project is based on data collected by the Mexican Migration Field Research Program at UC San Diego. In January, 2010, I accompanied a MMFRP field research team to Tlacuitapa, Jalisco, where we spent two weeks administering surveys (see Appendix C for survey questions). We conducted our fieldwork during the town fiestas because many U.S. based immigrants visit their hometown during this period; this fact allowed us to interview many U.S. resident Tlacuitapenses. I remained for an additional week after the MMFRP team left during which time I interviewed high school students and observed classes in the local middle school.

Smaller field teams visited each of the two largest Tlacuitapense destination communities, Oklahoma City and the Bay Area, for five days in February, 2010. I

accompanied the Bay Area team, and stayed there for about a month after they departed. The focus of the field team deployments was to continue administering the survey instrument to Tlacuitapenses. In Tlacuitapa and the Bay Area, I joined the team and administered the questionnaire to Tlacuitapenses irrespective of how any individual respondent could inform this project. But in each case, I shifted my focus once the team left. Following the quantitative work, I focused on school observations and semi-structured interviews with Tlacuitapense youth and parents. A list of these semi-structured interviews is presented in Appendix B.²

In total, the MMFRP field team administered 830 closed-response surveys. 21 open-ended interviews about education were also conducted. Our protocol was simple: we interviewed everyone we could who fit into at least one of these three categories: 1) people who had been resident in Tlacuitapa for at least 3 months, 2) people born in Tlacuitapa, and 3) the children of any person meeting the second criterion. This third category is expansive. The inclusion of the Tlacuitapense second generation, regardless of where they reside or where they were born, informs this thesis in particular; without this data few quantitative claims could be made.

In an effort to interview as many people as possible, MMFRP uses a snowball sample to identify and approach potential interviewees. Snowball samples produce data quickly, but they do not select respondents randomly. This fact should always be kept in mind when interpreting the data presented in this thesis. Appendix A contains further

² MMFRP is organized into teams; I was a member of the education team along with Emily Puhl and Luz María García García. Emily and Luz María also conducted semi-structured interviews, some of which are included in this thesis. Appendix B clearly lists the name of the person conducting each interview. Additionally, Emily, Luz María, and I are co-authoring a forthcoming book chapter about education in Tlacuitapa, and several of the tables in that chapter are reproduced in Chapters 3 and 4. In each case, authorship is acknowledged and permission to reproduce has been granted.

reflection on the fieldwork experience, discusses possible bias in the sample, and considers the implications of the data collection protocol on the validity of this study.

In Chapter 3 I begin to present this empirical evidence as I argue that Tlacuitapenses in Mexico and in the United States have high educational aspirations. Though youth in the United States do set their goals slightly higher, most youth surveyed want to complete college and join the ranks of the professional middle class. The slight difference in aspirations is attributed to the fact that youth in the United States tended to be more informed about the entry requirements for professional occupations and thus realistically believed that they could attain such positions. Their proximity to high schools, colleges, and universities painted education as a “visible option” for these students.

Chapter 4 presents data about the educational attainment of Tlacuitapenses. While Tlacuitapense youth have similar educational goals, those educated in the United States finish far more years of school. The disparity is due to the relative availability of schools in the destination communities and Tlacuitapense participation in programs that promote advancement in the educational system.

In Chapter 5, I discuss how the results of this research inform theory. Tlacuitapa is a particular community. Outcomes among the Tlacuitapense second generation, which I define throughout as all Tlacuitapenses born in the United States, are not representative of the Mexican-American second generation as a whole. Historical particularities of the Tlacuitapense community in the United States insulate second generation youth from the negative experience of urban life. By and large

Tlacuitapenses are undergoing selective acculturation and remain upbeat about their economic integration into the United States.

But before turning to the empirical foundations of this study, I survey relevant literature in Chapter 2. I present major threads of research in three distinct areas: assimilation theory, educational inequality, and the nexus between education and emigration in Mexico. I draw on each of these fields in developing a framework for comparing the aspirations and attainment of Tlacuitapense youth.

2. Merging Current Scholarship

Education has been studied from every angle, from above and below, in many countries, through the lens of nearly every discipline, and from the perspective of parents, students, and teachers. In this chapter, I divide dominant trends in the literature into three sections while paying particular attention to scholarship lying at the nexus of immigration and education. I first review several influential assimilation theories before turning my attention to research on educational inequality in the United States. I admit that the distinction between these two categories may be somewhat arbitrary, but such a framework will ultimately facilitate understanding the theoretical orientation of my research project. Following the first two sections, which focus on the United States, I move onto a brief discussion of the linkage between immigration and education in Mexico.

Assimilation: Education as a Metric

Writing about African-American students who actively resist participating in school, John Ogbu (1986, 1991) differentiates between “involuntary minorities” and “immigrant minorities.” Immigrant minorities have affirmatively chosen to come to the United States, oftentimes bringing with them memories of violent, dangerous, or impoverished homelands. By comparing their countries of origin to the United States, immigrants form a dual frame of reference that allows them to appreciate the perceived meritocratic nature of the U.S. educational system (Suarez-Orozco 1989). In short,

immigrant minorities take an instrumental view of education in the United States – an understanding that with education should come economic mobility.

By contrast, Ogbu argues that involuntary minorities, such as Native Americans and the descendents of African slaves in the U.S., are influenced by discrimination and the “glass ceiling” that characterize the historical economic experiences of these groups. Disbelieving that education will serve as a vehicle for upwards mobility, involuntary minorities adopt an “oppositional culture” that specifically devalues the role of the school. Involuntary minority children are more likely to behave in a way disapproved by the educational establishment and seek economic opportunities outside of the mainstream (e.g. gang activity). Lacking a foreign reference point and knowing only generations of disadvantage in the United States, this group denies the achievement ideology behind and meritocratic nature of the American Dream (Ogbu 1991).

Ogbu’s collaborator Maria Matute-Bianchi complicates Ogbu’s framework with regard to Mexican-origin students through her work at “Field High School” in California. She argues that among 1.0 and 1.5 generation Mexican teenagers (respectively called “recent Mexican immigrants” and “Mexico-oriented students”), fidelity to the immigrant family positively influences students’ attitudes and achievement in school even while language barriers restrict outcomes for recent immigrant children. Students with close ties to Mexico have a “dual frame of reference” that allows them to compare their life in the U.S. not only to those around them, but also to what their lives would be in Mexico. This group does not adopt the oppositional attitudes associated with Ogbu’s involuntary minority groups.

Matute-Bianchi juxtaposes the immigrant minority student groups with two others: the “Chicanos” and “Cholos” of Field High. These students, whose parents and oftentimes grandparents were born in the U.S., were unsuccessful in school, do not view education as a vehicle for upwards mobility, and some engage in illegal activity. In short, they are a part of Ogbu’s oppositional culture. A long family history in the United States marked by generations of economic and social exclusion moves these students decisively into the involuntary minority column and demonstrates how oppositional attitudes can arise among Mexican-descent students.

Straddling the line between Ogbu’s two groups was a group Matute-Bianchi referred to as the “Mexican-American” students of Field High. Rejecting both the Mexico-centric identity of the 1.0 and 1.5 generation students and the oppositional attitudes of their Chicano and Cholo peers, the Mexican-Americans live with one foot in each world. They neither fit into the involuntary nor the immigrant minority categories developed by Ogbu. Matute-Bianchi’s Mexican-Americans are not monolithic; in fact, there is tremendous variation within the group. Some are “Hispanic” in surname only while others are bilingual. The students in this category, however, are ultimately united by two critical characteristics: exposure to economically mobile adults and a belief in the educational system.

At Field High, the most successful Mexican-origin students came from the “Mexican-oriented” (or 1.5 generation) group and (more commonly) from the Mexican-American group. Students with the highest GPAs were able to blend family experience in the U.S. and the hopeful mindset of their immigrant parents and grandparents into a recipe for academic success and, Matute-Bianchi reasonably predicts, future economic

success and social mobility. The Field High study illustrates points that will ultimately be critical to theoretical framing of my research project. First, the “Mexican-origin” population in the United States does not fit neatly into Ogbu’s dichotomous framework, as the diversity of experience in the United States varies widely among *Mexicanos* in this country. Second, the academically successful students at Field High emerged precisely in the nebulous space between immigrant and involuntary minorities. I will discuss these two findings along with my work in Tlacuitapa at length in Chapter 5.

Ogbu and Matute-Bianchi look specifically at education as a vehicle for the economic incorporation or exclusion of minority groups. *Assimilation* includes economic incorporation but extends to other social indicators as well. Concern for immigrant assimilation lies in the crucible of American sociology. Scholars who formed the Chicago school in the 1920s were very concerned with how immigrants “became American” during the first half of the twentieth century (see Park 1928 and Park & Burgess 1921 for initial discussion). Several decades later, Milton Gordon (1964) became the most prominent proponent of what came to be called straight-line assimilation; a model that describes how newcomers might come to shed their immigrant identities and be integrated into wider American society. Many now accept that southern and eastern European immigrants assimilated “in a straight line” so that the grandchildren of immigrants were fully “here” even though their grandparents were born “there” (Perlmann 2005). Straight-line assimilation assumes all immigrants follow a linear path to the American Dream by the third generation.

Most scholars of immigration incorporation recognize that straight-line assimilation loses its explanatory power in the post 1965 immigration paradigm. Some,

however, seek to modify and apply the framework to contemporary Latino immigrants. Taking Gans's (1992) "bumpy-line" approach as a point of departure, Bean and Stevens (2003) argue that it will take Mexican-origin immigrants five or six generations to fully assimilate because of structural impediments. Perlmann (2005) concurs with this conclusion in his book *Italians Then, Mexicans Now*. Relying exclusively on a quantitative framework, Perlman argues that immigrant generation effects and socioeconomic status cannot entirely account for the slow assimilation of Mexican-origin people in the United States. He concludes that other, unquantifiable barriers may exist that might slow the incorporation of Mexican-American families into the mainstream.

Segmented Assimilation & Latino Students

Rejecting the universal application of linear assimilation, Alejandro Portes and colleagues argue assimilation is qualitatively different for the predominately Asian and Latino immigrants of the post-1965 era and develop an alternative framework known as segmented assimilation to describe the different "pathways" today's immigrants follow as they "become American." Portes and Rumbaut (2006) argue that segmented assimilation theory allows for immigrant groups to be incorporated into American society in three different ways. The first path, consonant assimilation, closely resembles the straight-line assimilation model proposed by Gibson and predicts a relatively smooth ride for immigrant families into the American mainstream. A more novel path, selective acculturation, allows for economic mobility within an immigrant enclave.

Ethnic solidarity, minority owned business opportunities, and a large population of co-ethnics can produce a situation in which immigrants can move “up” in American without really leaving the ethnic enclave. It is the final “option” of the segmented assimilation theory, dissonant acculturation, which has generated significant controversy.

Immigrant groups undergoing dissonant acculturation will enter “permanent poverty and assimilat[e] into the underclass,” where opportunities for upwards mobility are in reality or at least in perception restricted (Portes and Zhou 1993 pg. 82). By living alongside disadvantaged co-ethnics and other disadvantaged minority groups, particularly in urban ghettos, children and grandchildren of immigrants come to be unconvinced in the power of the American Dream and adopt oppositional attitudes that further hinder mainstream educational attainment and economic progress (Portes and Rumbaut 2006).

Phenotypical differences and a segmented labor market distinguish both the immigrants themselves and the society they enter from the situation facing the predominately southern and eastern Europeans of the so-called “third-wave” of immigration; this distinction is what necessitates the more complex segmented assimilation framework. Portes and Zhou (1993) argue that the context of an immigrant group’s reception helps determine the extent to which they will climb the American social, educational, and economic ladders. Context of reception has three components: a) government policy toward the entry of an immigrant group, b) society’s reception of the group, and c) the strength and magnitude of the reception of group co-ethnics. More favorable responses from co-ethnics, the larger society, and the government will lead to

more positive outcomes – either selective or consonant acculturation. Conversely, a more negative response from these groups increases the likelihood of dissonant acculturation (Portes and Zhou 1993).

Using downward acculturation as a point of departure, Telles and Ortiz (2008) argue that U.S. born Mexico origin children are disadvantaged by a public school system that fails Latino students. Compared to the 1.5 and 2.0 generations, these authors claim that successive generations of Mexico-origin students have a lower high school completion rate and fewer overall years of educational attainment. Echoing Bourdieu, Telles and Ortiz claim that that middle and upper class Mexico origin parents are able to transmit their status to their children, but that the children of lower status parents are unable to climb the socioeconomic ladder, a particularly important distinction given what Borjas (1985, 1999) calls the low socio-economic “quality” of Mexican migrants in the United States. Unlike earlier waves of European immigrants, the third and fourth generations are unable to use public education as a vehicle for upwards mobility as public schools racialize Mexico origin youth (and Latinos more generally) and serve as an institutional impediment to social mobility (Telles and Ortiz 2008).

A Reorientation of the Assimilation Debates

Tomás Jiménez and David FitzGerald (2007) argue that scholarship ignoring the reality of the opportunity structure in origin communities largely miss the point of immigration. A focus on the oftentimes miniscule (or misinterpreted) intergenerational declines in the educational attainment of Mexican-Americans obfuscates the enormous differences between origin and destination communities. According to Jiménez and

FitzGerald, immigrants measure their own progress using their home communities, not the relative success of other segments of American society, as a referent. Any discussion of the progress of Mexican-Americans should, at a minimum, consider the (lack of) opportunities available “back home” to properly contextualize the achievements of the second generation in comparison to their “stay at home” co-ethnics in the origin community.

Jiménez and FitzGerald’s “Reorientation” framework is a departure from the debates over directionality and small attainment differences, but it risks overlooking the structurally imbedded discrimination in the American opportunity structure discussed by Telles and Ortiz. If, though, this weakness is kept in mind, the reorientation framework can be a useful tool for analyzing how the immigrant experience impacts educational outcomes in immigrant communities. I will return to the dialogue between the reorientation framework on one hand and the assimilation scholarship of Portes, Ogbu, and Matute-Bianchi as I contextualize this study’s findings in Chapter 5.

Educational Inequality in the United States

The achievement gap predicted by the dissonant acculturation model is often cited in academic and policy debates. On the 2002 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) literacy tests, only 14% of Latino fourth graders scored at or above grade level (NCES 2003). In 2000, the drop-out rate among Latino teenagers *born in the United States* was 15 percent, nearly double the rate for whites; the rate was significantly higher among immigrant Latinos (Fry 2003). In 2000 (prior to changes in

the test), white and Latino students on average scored 1,058 and 928, respectively, on the SAT. Students self-select when taking the SAT; only those seeking college admission would be motivated to complete the exam, making the 130 point gap even more startling. Among adults ages 18-24, 66.9% of whites but only 53.1% of Latinos attend college (Harvey 2002) and Latinos are only half as likely to earn a four-year degree as whites (Fry 2004). In both absolute and relative terms, the achievement gap is wide.

While the magnitude of the problem is troubling, its scale is perhaps even more startling. There are presently about 10 million Hispanic students in the United States public schools. In 2008, they accounted for one in five of all schoolchildren, up from one in eight in 1990 (Fry and Gonzales 2008). During the 2004-2005 school year, 46.0 percent of California's, 44.7 percent of Texas's, and 38.2 percent of Arizona's public school pupils were identified as Hispanic (author's calculations using NCES 2009). Moreover, a significant Latino population is not unique to the Southwest; between 2000 and 2007 14 "new destination" states saw their Hispanic populations grow by 50 percent or more (Pew Hispanic 2009).¹ These states have little history working with Latino students, yet the population of Latino pupils is about to explode throughout the Midwest and South.

Within the sociology of education, this attainment gap between low-income children of color and their more affluent white (and sometimes Asian) peers is attributed to two different mechanisms – economic and cultural – that lead to social

¹ These states are: Alaska, Arkansas, Georgia, Iowa, Kentucky, Maryland, Minnesota, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Carolina, South Carolina, South Dakota, and West Virginia. With the arguable exception of Nevada, these states had very low Hispanic populations in the 1990s.

reproduction in schools. Drawing from Mehan's (2008) review of the sociology of education, I will first discuss how low-income students, and Latino students in particular, are disadvantaged by the economic structure of K-12 education in the United States. I will then discuss how structural barriers to job attainment negatively impact student aspirations and aid students in arriving at their own marginalization.

Structural Inequality

Bowles and Gintis (1976) argue that schools match students to careers on the basis of class – not merit. Affluent parents living in affluent neighborhoods send their children to equally affluent, high-performing schools. Poor parents, whose own low levels of human capital inhibit vertical economic mobility, live in less affluent neighborhoods. Low-income children attend under-resourced schools that frequently fail to impart the high-demand skill sets and knowledge to pupils. This cycle prepares the children of managers to manage and the children of laborers to labor.

How, in practical everyday terms, does this sorting by class happen? The simple answer, according to Bowles and Gintis and their disciples, lies in a school resource differential. Students attending high-poverty schools are twice as likely to have a newly credentialed teacher leading their classrooms and are less likely to have access to the Advanced Placement classes that are so vital for entrance to prestigious colleges and universities (Mehan and Grimes 1999). English language learners are more likely to have un- or mis-credentialed teachers (Jerald 2002). The gap between poor and affluent children can easily be explained by the cumulative finding: students educated in the urban core are at a disadvantage before they walk through the schoolhouse gate.

Resource deficits are useful when evaluating differing outcomes in America's *de facto* segregated schools. But even in schools that educate different status students, the powerful effects of tracking sort students by race and class. Tracking occurs when

Students from low-income or ethnic-minority backgrounds are more likely to be assigned to low-ability groups within classroom, vocational tracks, or special educational programs, whereas students from more well-to-do background or white (and Asian) students are more likely to be placed in high ability groups, college-preparatory classes, or gifted and talented classes (Cicourel and Mehan 1985; Oakes 1985/2005; quoted from Mehan 2008).

This undemocratic sorting of students begins to explain the statistics presented at the beginning of this section; a substantial portion of the achievement gap can be accounted for by the systematic failure to properly cultivate and challenge the academic abilities of low-income students and students of color. Structure, however, can be mediated by variations in culture, a subject also heavily studied by scholars of education.

Culture and Inequality

Social capital is the idea that high status parents are able to transmit information, values, and knowledge valued by the economic mainstream (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977; Bourdieu 1985). Economically and socially successful parents are able to help their children navigate through the hidden curriculum of the educational system and demonstrate cultural competency in a way acceptable to other successful people. Institutional actors have high levels of social capital, which they can share or withhold from youth (Stanton-Salazar 2000). Institutional actors can “compensate”; in the case of

low-income students, whose parents are less likely to have high levels of social capital, institutional actors can overcome this deficit by linking students with the knowledge needed for educational success.

Institutional actors such as teachers and guidance counselors can have formal roles in a child's life. But they can also be informal – extended family (particularly older members of the student's generation), community leaders, friends' parents – all can be mentors for low-status children. Institutional actors assist children by providing information and linking them to “insider networks” that can facilitate social movement.

Institutional actors play a role in the “untracking” the educational trajectories of low-status students. “Untracking” or “detracking” refer to conscious attempts to link specifically designed programs and institutions with low-income students and students of color who can break cyclical social inequality. Programs such as PUENTE and AVID in California have shown to be effective in assisting such students through high school and placing them in colleges and universities (Mehan et al. 1996; McClure et al. 2006; Portes and Fernandez-Kelly 2008). In addition to providing a rigorous curriculum for educationally disadvantaged students, untracked and detracked programs seek to link students with to influential “institutional actors” with high levels of social capital.

Latino Students and Educational Aspirations

Students also play an important role in their own educational outcomes, and thus in explaining the achievement gap. Three important studies inform the link between culture, aspirations, and educational attainment. Foley (1979) and MacLeod (1995) argue that youth weigh the costs and benefits of conforming to mainstream

expectations. If adolescents believe that school participation will boost their future economic chances, they are more likely to “toe the line” in a way reminiscent of Ogbu’s immigrant minority children. Conversely, and similar to “involuntary minorities,” youth who do not see a link between mainstream attitudes and behaviors begin to oppose the hegemonic mainstream. These students participate less in school and are more likely to drop-out of high school.

Foley (1990) adds race and ethnicity into the mix. Writing about a community divided along white-Mexican racial lines, he finds that Mexican-American youth who have not seen economically successful Latinos disbelieve the link between doing well in school on one hand and economic success on the other and are more likely to sabotage their education. The ethnographies that link students’ economic perceptions, their realistic educational expectations, and their oppositional behaviors suggest that students reacting to and possibly resisting the concerns raised by Bowles and Gintis and Bourdieu – that the educational system is set up to reproduce social inequality. While such an explanation cannot be used to absolve youth of responsibility for their actions, it begins to explain the mechanisms behind deterministic theories such as dissonant acculturation.

Scholars writing in response to Ogbu and segmented assimilation stress intra-group differences when discussing race and educational aspirations (Arbona 1995, Perry 2002). Sellers (1997) points out that minority students form their racial identities along many dimensions. Carter (2005) writes that the youth she worked with have high aspirations to finish both high school and college and possess overall optimistic attitudes about school and education. The difference, she argues, is how children of

color relate to schools that reward students imbued with cultural capital and who conform to middle class social norms. Students who either adopt “mainstream” mannerisms or “code-switch” between school and home cultures have higher expectations (not necessarily aspirations) and eventual graduate rates.²

Three important intra-group distinctions populate the literature analyzing Latino aspirations in the U.S. educational system: gender, documentation status, and language ability. Among the children of post-1965 immigrants, girls tend to outperform boys in the K-12 system (Portes and Rumbaut 2001, Lopez 2000, Lopez 2003) and Latino boys enroll in college at lower rates than co-ethnic girls (HERI 2008). At the same time, Latinas may be more likely to pursue traditionally female careers such as teaching or nursing due to the influence of strongly defined gender roles imputed onto Latinas from a young age (Hill et al. 2003). In that nurses and teachers must have college degrees, this final point illustrates how the interaction between gender and both career and educational aspirations can be complicated.

Documentation status also mediates aspirations. Compared to even other Latino groups, Mexican students are less likely to be documented. Lopez and Stanton-Salazar (2001) suggest that documentation status and negative stereotypes of Mexican students can impact students on both the individual and school levels; this may account for a significant portion the achievement gap for Latinos. Lopez (2009) finds that foreign-born Latinos have lower educational aspirations compared to native born co-ethnics;

² Some of the strategies mentioned by Carter include: eschewing vernacular for standard middle-class English, keeping white friends and/or avoiding co-ethnic friends, strategic music and clothing selection, and attitudes towards teachers and authority figures. “Cultural mainstreamers” entirely adopt middle class practices in these areas while “cultural straddlers” are able to employ them strategically. Wholesale rejection of any middle class values or practices characterized the “noncompliant believers” who chose not to forsake their ethnic identity.

foreign-born students are more likely to merely finish high school or enroll in a trade school while significantly more U.S. born Latinos seek bachelors degrees.

Education and Immigration in Mexico

This research project is not about education in Mexico; it is a comparative study of educational aspirations and attainment among immigrant families in Mexico and the United States. In this section, I briefly review some of the literature that explicitly links education and immigration in ways that are applicable to this study. The impact of cultural remittances on education is relevant to this project and I focus on the small amount of research that has been written in this area.

Economic migrants remit money back to their home community. There is little evidence that remittances increase educational attainment in rural communities such as Mexico; in fact, it can depress attainment among high school aged youth (McKenzie and Rapoport 2009, Sawyer 2009; Sawyer et al. 2009). But financial capital is not the only remittance that crosses international boundaries. Ideas, values, and knowledge can also move from country to country as “cultural remittances,” and the impact of these transfers on education is less clear. Cultural remittances are most common in communities with long-standing ties to the United States – so-called “traditional sending communities.”

Towns with substantial and significant historical (“traditional”) immigration to the United States develop a “culture of immigration” (Cornelius 1975; see later Massey 2003). Youth in such communities are raised in close contact with immigration and its

effects on town life. Family members (especially males) are frequently absent, a situation that has been linked to behavior and academic problems among youth (Lahaie et al 2009). When these men return to the town, they bring with them much more than money. They also showcase new ways of speaking, dressing, and relating to friends, family and potential mates. These new behaviors are financed by comparatively higher wages earned in the United States. Higher wages and a new *norteco* lifestyle draw are attractive to many youth, who follow their fathers, uncles, and brothers to the United States (Alarcón 1991). The normalization of immigration as a local expectation becomes the imputed occupational aspiration of youth.

There is some evidence that students growing up in a strong culture of migration have lower their educational aspirations. Kandel and Kao (2000, 2001) find that an increased aspiration to migrate, an important social expectation within the culture of migration, is linked to decreased aspirations to attend college. Highlighting the complicated interplay between immigration and education in origin communities, Kandel and Kao also find that among youth who live part of the year in the United States have higher grades and educational aspirations when at school in back home in Mexico. Children's educational trajectories can be pulled in different ways in communities with a strong culture of migration such as Tlacuitapa; precisely this interplay will be discussed in chapters 3 and 4.

Each of the following chapters draws on different sections of the literature presented in this section. A larger discussion with assimilation theory and the work of John Ogbu and his associates is deferred to Chapter 5, in which I will draw upon the

findings from Tlacuitapa to make a larger point about the prospects for the assimilation of second generation Mexican-Americans. The theoretical discussion in Chapter 5 is underpinned by the empirical findings about aspirations and attainment, which are presented in the two intervening chapters.

3. Converging Dreams

Every child has an opinion about school. Some like school, others do not; a few would go to school forever if they could while many others only arrive at the schoolhouse gate every morning at the persistent direction of their parents. Several different factors cause tremendous variation within children's attitudes toward education. This chapter asks how much of this variation is attributable to immigration.

Using country of residence as the primary axis of differentiation, this section argues first that, irrespective of location, educational aspirations among Tlacuitapense youth are high. Quantitative evidence establishes that virtually all students want to finish high school and strong majorities would like to finish college. In both countries students were asked how far they would like to progress in school: the median response in Mexican and the United States was a bachelors degree.

At the same time, students in the United States do articulate slightly higher aspirations than their co-ethnics in Jalisco. Qualitative evidence suggests two reasons behind the slightly higher educational dreams of U.S.-based Tlacuitapenses. First, U.S. based respondents have more access to schools, both the K-12 system and higher education. While this largely facilitates attainment, it also has a positive impact on aspirations, as educational opportunities become visible (rather than hidden) realities for students north of the border. Second, respondents in the United States are "socially proximate" to middle-class professionals. Exposure to white collar occupations is key: as youth become interested in high-skill/high-wage they also set educational goals aligned with the entry requirement into the middle class.

Aspirations Compared

MMFRP interviewed 87 people who currently identify themselves as students. Nine of these were age 30 or older and were presumably attending adult school, English classes, or some similar educational opportunity for adults. The goals and educational needs of adult learners differ enough from those of children and young adults who have continued directly (or almost directly) from high school to college that their educational aspirations and attainment should be considered separately. For the purposes of defining “current students” in this chapter and the next, I consider the 78 respondents between the ages 15 and 29 who are still studying.¹

Thirty-seven of these students live in Tlacuitapa and 39 in the United States. U.S.-resident students were mainly split between Oklahoma and California, though others live in Illinois, Texas, Nevada, Oregon, and Utah. Table 3.1 presents comparative statistics about these students’ educational aims. All U.S. resident and virtually all Mexico resident students set a goal that included high school graduation, and many set their sights higher. The median response to the question “How far would you like to go in school?” corresponds with bachelors degree completion, but a smaller percentage of respondents in Mexico aim to finish college. This difference is not, however,

¹ MMFRP only asks current students their educational aspirations. It would be optimal to ask all people between the ages of 15-29 the same question, but several constraints made such a question impractical in the field. The data from current students is skewed, then, to only those people with the resources needed to finance their studies. MMFRP interviewed 91 U.S. residents between 15-29; 43% of them are currently students. 222 Mexican residents of the same age cohort were interviewed; only 17 percent of these respondents are in school. See Appendix A for further discussion of how the sampling protocol may lead to skewed results.

statistically significant due to the relatively small number of observations and wide standard deviations in the response variable.

Table 3.1: Respondents' Educational Goals by Country of Residence

	Mexico	United States
Median Aspired Grade	16.0	16.0
Percent Wanting to Finish High School	100	92.3
Percent Wanting to Finish College	88.4	74.4

Difference of means tests insignificant for latter two comparisons.

Though students tend overstate their educational goals in surveys (Kao and Tienda 1997), the point here is not to analyze the aspiration per se but rather to compare how responses might differ across countries. Though slightly more students in the United States want to finish high school and college, the difference with Mexico is not statistically significant. Among members of the research community, aspirations are no higher in the United States than they are in Mexico.

Country of residence is just one factor that may explain how students articulate their educational goals. Table 3.2 contains descriptive statistics for the regression models presented in Table 3.3. The regression model seeks to explain variation in the answer to the question “How far would you like to go in school?” by controlling for gender and parental education. Two independent variables, country of residence and the “wealth index,” measure, respectively the impact of immigration and socio-economic status. To calculate the wealth index, we asked each respondent about the material possessions they had in their household. We converted the responses into an index that

is comparable both across countries and across MMFRP research communities in Mexico. The wealth index is a household-level variable and a rough proxy for socio-economic status.

Table 3.2: Descriptive Statistics of Attainment Variables

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation	n
Dependent Variable					
highest aspired grade	9	21	16.47	2.58	73
Independent Variable					
male	0	1	0.36	-	76
mother's education	0	12	7.11	3.34	70
father's education	0	21	6.56	4.21	66
country of residence	0	1	0.51	-	76
wealth index	0	1	0.80	0.168	76

Notes: Valid n=62

Given the low number of observations in each model, even lower levels of significance are noteworthy, and so the $p < 0.10$ significance level is included in the regression models. Model I indicates that male interviewees have substantially lower aspirations than female respondents and that mothers' education level is positively related to educational aspirations. Each of these independent variables is significant at the 0.05 level. Fathers' educational level is insignificant.

Table 3.3: Unstandardized Coefficients for OLS regression of Educational Aspirations on Selected Variables (n=62)

Variable	I	II	III
male	-1.295 *	-1.390 *	-1.412 *
	<i>.628</i>	<i>.618</i>	<i>.598</i>
Mom's education	.225 *	.186 #	.109
	<i>.099</i>	<i>.099</i>	<i>.102</i>
Dad's education	-.002	.009	.022
	<i>.077</i>	<i>.076</i>	<i>.073</i>
Country of Residence	-	1.144 #	.181
		<i>.613</i>	<i>.733</i>
Wealth Index	-	-	5.319 *
			<i>2.383</i>
Constant	15.261 ***	14.937 ***	11.592 ***
	<i>.788</i>	<i>.791</i>	<i>1.682</i>
Adj. R2	.087	.123	.180
F	2.957 *	3.180 *	3.715 **
n	62	62	62

Notes: # p<0.1; * p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001 (two-tailed tests).
Standard error is shown in italics

Model II adds country of residence to the calculus. The gender and mother's education variables remain significant, though mother's education drop to the 0.1 significance level. The country of residence variable is also significant at the 0.1 level and indicates that students in the United States have higher aspirations than their co-ethnics in Tlacuitapa. This seems to belie the claim made in Table 3.1; namely that where respondents live is not associated with aspirations.

Model III resolves the disconnect between these findings. Gender remains significant, but mother's education falls out in this final model. The country of residence variable becomes non-significant once the wealth index is added.

Socioeconomic status mediates country of residence. The relationship is discussed below, but the statistical interplay between socio-economic status and country of residence is telling. As mentioned, the (adjusted R-squared) fit statistic for Model III is nearly 50% higher than in Model II. This gain is particularly notable given the relatively low number of observations.

Only two variables, gender and wealth, are significant in the final analysis. Their standardized beta coefficients (-0.275 and 0.347, respectively) determine the relative strength of each independent variable. These beta scores signify that in an absolute sense both variables explain a substantial portion of the variation in Tlacuitapense aspirations, but that the wealth index is relatively more predictive than gender. To fully understand the interaction between socioeconomic status and aspirations, the variable's construction and interpretation is presented below.

The standardized wealth index is a score on a 0-1 scale. Among the 62 students whose responses are reported in Table 3.3, wealth scores "clump" at three points: 0.58, 0.71, and 0.96. Table 3.4 uses these three data points to illustrate the impact of socioeconomic status on aspirations. For each wealth data point, the unstandardized beta for wealth index is multiplied by the wealth score and then added to the constant (for boys, the constant minus the unstandardized beta score for gender). This table provides a rough estimation of how socioeconomic status mediates educational aspirations for respondents.

Table 3.4: Impact of Wealth Score on Aspirations (Model III)

Wealth Score	Aspiration for Girls	Aspiration for Boys
0.58	14.68	13.27
0.71	15.37	13.96
0.96	16.70	15.29

*Notes: Constant for girls=11.592; adjusted constant for boys=10.180.
Wealth unstandardized beta=5.319*

For both male and female respondents the dependent variable, educational aspiration, varies about two years between the lowest and highest wealth score clusters. Girls' average answer is above 16 (corresponding to completing a bachelors degree) only at the highest wealth score. Though boys consistently have mean scores that surpass high school attainment, they only *approach* bachelors degree completion at the highest wealth score cluster. Tables 3.3 and 3.4 demonstrate the significant importance of the wealth index, a proxy for socio-economic status. Interviews with Tlacuitapenses and more nuanced statistical findings begin to explain why socioeconomic status mediates aspiration formation.

Explaining the Variation in Aspirations: Proximity

Socioeconomic status shares a positive, linear association with student aspirations. The causal mechanisms underlying this relationship in the Tlacuitapenses community can be explained by a single word: proximity. Access to financial resources brings Tlacuitapense youth into close *physical proximity* with educational infrastructure.

Slightly more latent is the cultural advantage enjoyed by students of a higher socioeconomic status. Students coming from families with more community ties enjoy close *social proximity* to white-collar, middle class professionals. The influence of these high-skill/high-wage workers also works to raise aspirations among Tlacuitapense youth. This section reviews how socioeconomic status – operating under these two conceptualizations of “proximity” – mediates educational and occupation aspiration formation.

Physical Proximity to Schools

Students in Tlacuitapa are physically distant from schools (see Chapter 1 for further description). The middle school in the town is small and under-resourced. The nearest high school and college are a forty-five minute drive away in Lagos de Moreno. Many families in Tlacuitapa do not possess a vehicle or other means to transport students to schools in Lagos. In the United States, high schools and colleges are well integrated into Oklahoma City and the Bay Area. Families tend to have cars and public transportation is an option for those who must rely on it.

Table 3.5: Is school quality or a lack of schools an obstacle for you in your education?

(n=76)

	yes	no	n
Mexico	49%	51%	37
US	15%	85%	39

Pearson's Chi2=9.732; p=0.002

Table 3.5 shows a cross-tabulation of student responses to a question about educational obstacles. Half of the students in Mexico, but only a handful in the United States identify a lack of schools or poor school quality when answering this question. Students' perceptions about the availability of schools match the description sketched out in Chapter 1; namely that high school and college cannot be accessed from Tlacuitapa while students living in the United States live near high schools and postsecondary institutions.

The availability of schools and financial concerns are linked. When asking students about educational barriers they face, many cited financial concerns as an obstacle they personally confront. Table 3.6 shows the frequency of this response by country. A bare majority of students in Mexico, but only a third of students in the United States, mention their family's financial situation as a barrier to their own education.

Table 3.6: Is a lack of financial resources an obstacle for you in your education? (n=76)

	yes	no	n
Mexico	57%	43%	37
US	33%	67%	39

Pearson's Chi2=4.214; p=0.040

For students in Mexico, a lack of family resources and an absence of schools for a two-step challenge: students must *first* raise the funds to pay for the transportation to Lagos, *then* find the money to pay for tuition, books, and supplies at both the high school and college levels. Some relatively wealthy families in Tlacuitapa are able to

fund transportation to Lagos for school, but poorer families are not. Contrast this with the situation in the United States where schools are close by and students of all socioeconomic levels at least public transportation (see page 52 for further discussion).

The disparity in infrastructure is illustrated in yet another statistical finding. We asked students two related questions about their educational plans. We first asked how far they thought they would go in school, then we asked how far they would like to go. These are called the “expectations” and “aspirations” questions, respectively. A comparison of these numbers tells us the impact of access to infrastructure on educational aspirations.

Table 3.7: "Expectation-Attainment" Gap (n=71)

Mexico	US
1.424	0.474

Two tailed significance test, p=0.039

The majority of students gave the same answer to both the expectation and aspiration questions, but many students did articulate a difference. Subtracting “expectations” from “aspirations,” yields a “gap” variable for each respondent. Table 3.7 shows a statistical representation of this differential. Students in Mexico perceive a statistically significant gap between their aspirations and expectations that is nearly three times as large as the gap among their co-ethnics in the United States. This gap variable indicates a large amount of pessimism among students in Mexico; this will be discussed at length in the discussion section.

Social Proximity to Adults in Mexico

Students growing up in Tlacuitapa are not around professionals, union members, or economically active people with potential occupational mobility. The town is rural, and its local, agriculture-based economy is largely stagnant. The fathers of current students are overwhelmingly employed in two sectors: agriculture and construction. Except for those who own the means of production, most men have casual (though potentially stable) relationships with their employers. The majority of women are *amas de casa*, roughly translated as housewives, who are not formally employed. Few professionals live in the town and those who do work in Lagos de Moreno as there is no sustained need for lawyers, accountants, and the like in the town. In short, children in the town are not exposed to high-skill, high-wage jobs.

Manuel is in the last year of middle school in Tlacuitapa. His family owns two businesses, forms part of the Tlacuitapa's middle class, and is well-connected throughout the town. Two of Manuel's three older siblings live in the United States, including one who finished three out of four years of university studies before emigrating. Manuel wants to continue onto high school at the end of the year but is unsure that he'll be able to do so because of his grades (he has roughly the equivalent of a C-average). Of all the students finishing middle school, Manuel is the only with a well-defined "Plan B" – if he is not accepted into high school, he will work in the family business.

We asked Manuel how many professionals he knew in the town.² He replies:

² Emily Puhl conducted this interview.

M: I know maybe two or three people (who are professionals) but they don't have the opportunity to work as professionals and so they work in something else they shouldn't be doing, that they didn't study for. For example, one college graduate has a supply store. Another is a college graduate and has a taco stand.

EP: So are there any jobs here for those who finished college?

M: Many jobs? Well, no. I mean, if there were, they would do what they learned to do.

Other interviewees, both adult and adolescent, cited the same number of *licenciados*, or college graduates – 2 or 3 – as Manuel.³ Manuel's interview indicates two critical points. First, there are few college graduates living in Tlacuitapa. Recalling the importance of institutional actors in the preceding chapter (Stanton-Salazar 2000), few people in Tlacuitapa have the cultural capital necessary to serve as a mentor for the town's youth.

The college graduates living in Tlacuitapa do not have high-skill/high-wage jobs. This second point is critical. There are many stores and taco stands in Tlacuitapa; working in these jobs does not require a college education. When youth survey occupational outcomes for the town's adults, they see that the college graduates do not enjoy an obvious relative advantage because of their educational credentials. They do not have aunts and uncles, parents and cousins working in the town as lawyers, doctors, or accountants. These two facts combine to produce an outcome that depresses aspirations: youth in Tlacuitapa do not see – and thus do not perceive – a demonstrated connection between education, high-skill jobs, and commensurately high wages.

³ There are a few teachers and two doctors in the town, all of whom have a college education. Most teachers commute daily and do not have familial ties to the town. Four teachers are either from or live in the town. Curiously, no interviewee identified them as professionals (*profesionistas*) during interviews. Neither doctor is from Tlacuitapa or has any family locally; they are both seen as outsiders to the town.

While adolescents in Tlacuitapa do not have much contact with professionals, they have substantial contact with economic migrants. Nearly every teenager has a father, uncle, cousin, or older brother in the United States. During the town fiestas, English is spoken as extensively as Spanish. More cars than not have U.S.-issued license plates, and their drivers make a show of blasting music from the United States from their speakers while cruising down Tlacuitapa's dusty streets. The influence of Mexico's northern neighbor is inescapable in Tlacuitapa, particularly in January when many are visiting relative in the town.

As discussed in Chapter 2, Tlacuitapa has a very strong culture of migration (Cornelius 1975; Alarcón 1991). In towns like Tlacuitapa immigration eventually becomes self-perpetuating once sufficient cultural capital has been amassed in the destination communities (Massey 2003). For a young male finishing middle school, immigration is a viable alternative to education that can be facilitated by family with experience in the United States. Such immigrant role models are an omnipresent feature of Tlacuitapa life.

Roberto is a 16 year old in Tlacuitapa who is socially close to economic migrants rather than middle-class professionals. His brothers live in Oklahoma City where they are undocumented construction workers. Roberto finished elementary school but then chose not to continue onto middle schools. When I asked him why he stopped going to school, he told me, "it's what I preferred. I preferred to earn money than be in school." He currently works doing odd jobs in Tlacuitapa and is able to earn enough money to help his parents maintain the household.

Roberto plans to join his siblings in the United States. When I asked him when he planned to immigrate he replied, “When I’m 18 and from then on [I’ll be in the United States]. I want to be of age. That’s what I want, at 18 you’re an adult and you can be there and be person responsible for just yourself. Nobody will have to take care of me.” When I asked him where he would find work, Roberto said, “My brother works in construction. That’s what I’ll do. That’s where I’ll find myself.” Subsequent conversation with Alejandro revealed that he believed the border crossing would be somewhat difficult but manageable and that he would easily be able to find work.

Roberto’s experience and expectations to migrate at age 18 conforms the culture of migration identified by Cornelius (1975) and cumulative causation (Massey 2003). Roberto has older brothers in Oklahoma who can provide information and finance his initial trip to the United States. Because of his social proximity to immigrant, Roberto views immigration, and not education, as the most likely opportunity for economic mobility. As Roberto defers migration until an age deemed socially appropriate, he eschews school in favor of pursuing labor opportunities in the effort to build a skill set he believes will be useful in obtaining work in Oklahoma.

Social Proximity to Adults in the United States

Students in the United States grow up in a very different context than Roberto. They live in integrated neighborhoods in large urban centers. These students are exposed to college-educated professionals, some of who also have close ties to Tlacuitapa. This exposure acts as a “pull” factor; seeing adults who have high-skill,

high-wage jobs impresses upon the second generation the very realistic possibility of attaining a professional occupation.

A key contact for many of the college students I interviewed in Union City comes through their job at the municipal Department of Leisure Services. Several second generation Tlacuitapenses work part-time at the community centers and after-school programs for small children while attending local community and four-year colleges. Leisure Services can design their work schedules to compliment their course schedules.

Luís, the supervisor at Leisure Services is also a Tlacuitapense; he was born in the United States to parents who migrated from the town. Luís and his sister Gema are college graduates who have professional jobs working for local governments. Their success, and social proximity to younger members of the Tlacuitapense second generation, has been instrumental in supporting the education of many of their co-ethnics.

I interviewed Miguel, a 19 year-old college student, while he was working at a community center. Miguel is studying for his associates degree in early childhood development so he can work as a pre-school teacher while completing his bachelors degree and K-12 teaching credential.

The relationship between Miguel and Luís demonstrates the importance of being socially close to an institutional agent. When I asked Jesus why he employs a number Tlacuitapense youth, he indicated that he likes being able to assist friends and family who are looking for a job that dovetails with the needs of college students. Like Miguel now, Luís worked part-time in a Union City community center when he was in college

and understands the difficulties of balancing the demands of work and school. He also reported a preference for employing members of the community who can relate to recreation patrons on a personal level.

Miguel benefits from his relationship with Luís. He procured his job through an informal network of co-ethnics that now has the ability to distribute patronage. His hours are flexible. His specific function, working with elementary school children after-school, aligns to his career goal of becoming a teacher. Finally, Luís serves as a role model for Miguel. When asked if he knows any college graduates aside from his teachers, Miguel specifically mentions Luís as somebody “from my background” who has finished college. Jesus is not just a visible example of successful, middle-class Tlacuitapense; he also serves as an important source of information for Miguel as he works to transfer to a four-year college.

Miguel has also been socially close to teachers who inspired him to prepare for a career in the classroom. These teachers had both influenced him personally and served as sources of information for a young person interested in a career. When I asked him why he wanted to become a teacher, Miguel told me:

I'm trying to look for something that I like to do. I don't want to make hecka money and be bored...If I like it, I'll put my time and effort into it. And like I say, teaching, it's different. Every year you get different students, a variety of stuff, you can switch it up a lot. I like that, I like that variety.

He also indicates a desire to be instrumental in the lives of other students.

I think it [the desire to become a teacher] started my junior year. Up until freshman year, I did not like school at all. And then I started seeing the advantages of school, picking up knowledge, just learning other stuff you never would normally pick up on the street... My thing was that if I didn't like the teacher, I didn't like the class. So there were some teachers that I really like and that I really admired and that really pushed me forward, those were the classes that I liked. I had an Algebra teacher named Mr. Gonzalez. He really made me focus. I never liked algebra, or any math at all, and he just got me into it. Now Algebra comes easy.

Miguel identifies Mr. Gonzalez's class as a turning point that changed the trajectory of his education and made him think about the impact he could have on the lives of others.

Miguel later told me that he was glad to have been pushed by a Latino male, Mr.

Gonzales, in math. Miguel's social proximity to a co-ethnic role model impressed upon him the visible – not just abstract – possibility of a middle-class career in teaching.

Social proximity to successful Latinos is important to Tlacuitapense youth. In Mexico itself, there are few high-skill, high-wage workers to serve as role models or to provide the information and encouragement needed to pursue higher education. In the United States, however, these institutional actors are more common and serve as important resources for the U.S.-born second generation.

Gender

The regression model presented in Table 3.3 shows that male interviewees hold lower educational aspirations than females. This unexpected finding was discovered after fieldwork had concluded, so there was no opportunity to explore this topic in the semi-structures interviews. Nor had I detected this pattern while interviewing in Mexico or the United States. Looking back through the interviews I conducted, I am able to

form a preliminary, tentative hypothesis from the U.S.-side may begin to shed light on this finding.

In Union City, I had the opportunity to interview several members of the same family. Pedro Lopez was born in Tlaucitapa and now works in manufacturing. He was unemployed throughout 2009 and reported an annual income of approximately \$57,000 dollars in 2008. His son, Adrián is 26 and is halfway through the trade program to become a HVAC specialist. Lizbeth, Pedro's 24 year old daughter, is studying at a community college with the eventual goal of becoming a social worker. Adrián's educational goal, which would be reported as "14" in the MMFRP survey, is "less than" his sister's objective of attaining bachelors degree, which would be coded as "16."

Though Adrián and Lizbeth have quantitatively unequal aspirations, they share the same optimistic, upwards trajectory into the middle class. The two siblings seek to enter occupations with very similar annual salaries. The mean annual salary for certified HVAC technicians in the East Bay is \$66,150 while social workers in the same region earn a mean salary of \$63,620 per annum. These numbers are not substantially different from each other, but each represents a greater than 10 percent increase over their father's salary.

Lizbeth's occupational objective is firmly professional and middle-class. Social workers rate a 65.71 on the Duncan SEI scale, a number similar to statisticians, pilots, and computer programmers. She has a clear understanding of the link between obtaining a college education and becoming a social worker, and has adjusted her major to be a competitive applicant for social work positions. Lizbeth's occupational and educational aspirations follow a clear upwards trajectory.

At first glance it may not appear that Adrián is as upwardly mobile in his aspirations as his sister. Installation installers rank only a 28.01 on the Duncan SEI scale, not much higher than the type of industrial occupation his father holds. But occupational mobility is still part of Adrián's story. After high school, he started working alongside his father in construction. He was initially content making \$20 an hour, but that shifted as a result of the Great Recession. Adrián says, "these last couple of years work got really slow, construction got really bad, and I thought to myself I gotta do something. So I decided to go back to [trade] school." The Recession itself actually motivated Adrián's aspirations.

I asked Adrián why he chose to pursue a HVAC certificate. His reply demonstrates a belief in the stability the job will provide him:

As far as I hear it's a great field to get into. Like everything it's slow right now, but it's still a great field, it's still in demand. In wintertime people get cold and they want to heat up, so there's always a call for heat...I'm staying in for the whole program, which is commercial, because that's where they money's at. Which is buildings, supermarkets, big walk-in freezers, anything that has to do with climate control, air conditioning, any store, office building. Pretty much every building you go into has some type of temperature control, so the field is wide open.

A lot of guys I talk to in the construction business, older guys like my dad's age, they ask me what I'm up to and I tell them I'm going to school for that and they're like, 'shit, that's good money.' I haven't heard anything bad from them. Everybody says the AC guys, there's always money, there's always work.

Adrián believes that the HVAC market will remain open throughout his career. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (2009) supports this belief stating that "with much faster than average job growth and numerous expected retirements, heating, air-conditioning, and

refrigeration mechanics and installers should have excellent employment opportunities.” More importantly is how Adrián – and the immigrant generation above him – perceives his job choice. Becoming an HVAC technician is seen as a step above the jobs held by immigrant men. The job comes with higher pay and increased stability. Though it may initially appear that Adrián is “stagnating” by remaining in the same employment sector as his father, his choice does lead both in reality and perception to intergenerational economic progress.

In Lizbeth and Adrián’s stories, a potential suggestion emerges for the finding that male Tlacuitapense have quantitatively lower educational aspirations. There are high-skill/high-wage jobs in certain sectors, such as construction, that tend to be male dominated. To the extent that bachelors degrees are not entry requirements for these occupations, quantitative measurements may obfuscate men’s aspirations – both real and imagined – to do better than their parents.

Discussion

Tlacuitapense youth have high educational aspirations, but students in the United States do set their goals slightly higher for three principal reasons. First, the relative abundance of high schools and colleges in the United States makes education a visible pathway to social mobility. Second, Tlacuitapenses in the United States are less likely to be extremely economically disadvantaged even in a relative sense compared to their co-ethnics in the origin community. Finally, Tlacuitapense youth in the United

States are socially closer to white-collar professionals who serve two critical roles. They can be institutional actors, connecting youth with the networks and information they need to finish high school and enroll in college, and they also are visible examples of the idea that “education pays.”

Gender also plays a role in influencing aspirations. Boys are less likely to have high aspirations than girls. This does not mean, however, that male respondents were uninterested in postsecondary education. Those who were pursuing vocational as opposed to academic studies still had high career goals and are well-positioned to improve on their parents’ economic position. The impact of gender was not the principal focus of this study, and further community-based research needs to be conducted in this area.

Figure 3.1 compares the aspirations and expectations of Tlacuitapenses by country of residence and socioeconomic status. Students coming from more affluent backgrounds have more information about education, more access to professionals, and the means at least consider the possibility of financing education beyond compulsory levels. Students of lower socioeconomic backgrounds do not benefit from these same resources and adjust their aspirations downward at least somewhat to align with a realistic assessment of their expectations (see Bourdieu 1984).

	Mexico Residents	U.S. Residents
High SES	High Aspirations, Skeptical Expectations	High Aspirations, High Expectations
Low SES	Depressed Aspirations, Commensurate Expectations	Variable Aspirations, Realistic Expectations

Figure 3.1: Typology of Aspiration Formation among Tlacuitapense Youth

While aspirations are mostly a product of class, expectations are more closely tied to country of residence. In the United States, a well-developed educational infrastructure and the presence of highly educated professionals leads students to elevate their expectations. Conversely, students in Mexico lower their expectations to align with the lack of available educational opportunities.

Though this chapter focuses on variation within the Tlacuitapense community, it started with a simple point: aspirations are high among all Tlacuitapense students. Virtually every student interviewed said they wanted to finish high school, and most wanted to finish college. So while aspirations largely, though not completely, converge, it remains to be seen if attainment will follow the same pattern.

Tables 3.2 and 3.3 are reproduced from “Equal Hopes, Disparate Outcomes: Education in an Immigrant Community” by Travis Silva, Luz María García García, and Emily Puhl in *Recession Without Borders: Mexican Migrants Confront the Economic Downturn* edited by David FitzGerald, Rafael Alarcón Acosta, and Leah Muse-Orlinoff. The thesis author is the primary author of this chapter.

4. Diverging Realities

In the previous chapter, I argue that in absolute terms Tlacuitapense students have high educational aspirations – the average student in both countries wants to finish high school and enroll in college – but that the U.S. born second generation do set slightly higher educational goals for themselves. I present two reasons for this significant difference. I suggest that students in the origin community are more likely to believe that structural obstacles will impede their educational progress and adjust their goals downward to align with this reality. I also contend that U.S. born Tlacuitapenses are “socially closer” to professionals with high levels of education. Aspiring to professional salaries and lifestyles, U.S. based respondents seek educational credentials that will permit their entry into middle class, white-collar jobs. Thus the slight up-tick in educational goals is more of an adjustment to different social situations than a wholesale change in attitude; students in both countries want to pursue education.

We can glean much from analyzing how and why students articulate certain educational goals, but attainment, here defined as the number of years of formal K-16 education completed, can tell us much more. In Chapter 1, I hypothesize that students educated in the United States will have significantly higher levels of attainment than their co-ethnic peers in the origin community. This prediction is tested in this chapter.

I begin by presenting quantitative data that stress dissimilation among Tlacuitapenses in terms of educational attainment. I show that those educated in the United States complete far more years of school than their peers living in Tlacuitapa, even when controlling for gender, some socio-economic indicators, and age. I then draw

on qualitative observations to discuss several structural differences between the United States and Mexico that explain differing outcomes between the origin and destination communities before concluding with a brief discussion about the theoretical implications of these findings.

Educational Attainment: Divergent Outcomes

The origin/destination community comparison suggested by the reorientation framework informs this study's point of departure (Jimenez and Fitzgerald 2008). I compare the educational attainment of Tlacuitapenses living in Mexico with their co-ethnics living in the United States largely to demonstrate how immigration among the parent generation facilitates educational attainment for the subsequent generation. When immigrants move from a rural community in Mexico to an urban setting in the United States, they leave behind a severely underdeveloped educational infrastructure and into a community with relatively more academic opportunities, a shift that accounts for much of the statistics below.

Table 4.1 reports t-tests that compare the education attainment of a subset of the entire sample based on the country where respondents received their education.¹ I

¹ The "country of predominant education variable" is a dichotomous variable representing the country, the US or Mexico, where the respondent received the majority of his or her education. It was constructed using these rules:

- a. If the respondent never attended school (n=51), the respondent was assigned to their country of residence at age 5.
- b. If the respondent was educated in only one country (Mexico n=626; US n=34), the respondent was assigned to that country.
- c. If the respondent was educated in both countries (n=26), the respondent was assigned to the country in which s/he completed more years of school.

exclude every respondent who is currently a student as his or her ultimate educational attainment is unknown. By dividing the subsample into age cohorts, I begin to control for the effects of improvements in infrastructure and shifting cultural norms throughout time. Such effects are numerous, particularly for those educated in Tlacuitapa, as educational opportunities there greatly expanded 25 years ago when the *telesecundaria* was build and the road between Tlacuitapa and a major highway was paved, linking the town to Lagos de Moreno and its high schools. These two facts explain the steady increases in attainment overtime for those cohorts educated predominantly in Mexico.

Table 4.1: Comparison of Educational Attainment by Country of Education and Age Cohort (current students excluded; n=737)

	Mexico		US
15-30	7.7	***	11.8
<i>n</i>	216		32
31-40	6.6	***	12.7
<i>n</i>	158		19
41-50	5.2	***	12.3
<i>n</i>	123		6
51-65	3.9		8.0
<i>n</i>	179		2

*** $p > 0.001$

The data collected from US educated respondents is notable for having similar intergenerational outcomes but relatively few observations. The comparison of the oldest age cohort, though stark, is statistically insignificant simply because we did not speak with many Tlacuitapenses of that age group who had been educated in the United

States.² The 41-50 year old cohort does yield a statistically significant comparison despite having only six observations from the US. In this and the 51-65 cohorts, U.S. educated respondents finished more than twice the number of years of schooling as their co-ethnics educated in Tlacuitapa.

The two younger cohorts, reflecting an experience much closer to that of today, are probably of more interest. Mexican educated respondents in both cohorts on average finished primary school and started middle school. 31-40 year olds primarily educated in the United States are, on average, high school graduates with a small amount of college experience, while their peers educated in Tlacuitapa average about seven years of school. There is a similar difference among respondents in the youngest age cohort, 15-29 year olds. Those educated in destination communities average 11.8 years of school, compared to 7.7 years for their peers in the origin community.

While the 15-30 year olds educated north of the border appear at first glance not to have finished high school, this is merely a misleading data artifact. High school dropouts are over-represented in Table 4.1 due to the exclusion of current students. Over half (52.9 percent) of all 15-30 year-olds educated primarily in the United States are still students and 88.9 percent of this subgroup intending on going to college. Given these numbers, it is highly probable that if these same respondents were surveyed fifteen years from now, their average attainment would exceed a high school diploma and include significant college studies.

² An unfortunate by-product of our survey protocol is that we conducted few interviews with anyone who no longer has strong ties to Tlacuitapa. All interviews with U.S. residents took place in Tlacuitapa itself or during one of two brief fieldwork excursions. Because we relied on a snowball sample than began in Tlacuitapa, we oversample those who retain strong ties to the origin community.

To the extent that educational attainment is used as a metric for assimilation, we are most interested in the educational outcomes of relatively young people. Table 4.2 and Figure 4.1 compare the educational attainment of respondents between 19 and 29 by country of education. All respondents in the age range, including current students, are included. By excluding all interviewees under age 19, I omit current high school students as they confound the analysis by appearing as dropouts when many will go on to earn a high school diploma. The upper boundary remains at age 29 as all people under 30 who were educated in Mexico attended school after the 1993 implementation of compulsory middle school education.

Table 4.2: Cross-Tabulation of Educational Attainment by Country of Education

(n=191)

	K-6	7-9	10-12	13-15	16+	n
Mexico	65	62	4	9	8	148
United States	2	7	12	18	4	43

Notes: Pearson Chi2=76.904; p<0.001. The “16+” category includes only respondents who hold a bachelors degree or the equivalent in Mexico regardless of the length of study.

Table 4.2 is a cross-tabulation of attainment by country of education; Figure 4.1 graphically represents these same numbers as percentages for ease of analysis. Just under 80 percent of U.S. educated respondents finished high school, whereas fewer than 15 percent of the Mexico-educated interviewees finished 12th grade. Perhaps a fairer assessment is to compare (compulsory) middle school attainment in Mexico to (essentially compulsory) high school attainment in the U.S. In Mexico, 56.1 percent of

respondents had finished middle school, while 79.1 percent of the U.S.-educated interviewees had a high school diploma (percentages not shown in tables). College-going rates were drastically different; over half of those educated in the United States had at least some college experience with 10 percent holding a bachelors degree. In Mexico, 11.5 percent had any college experience and about 5.5% hold a *licenciatura*.

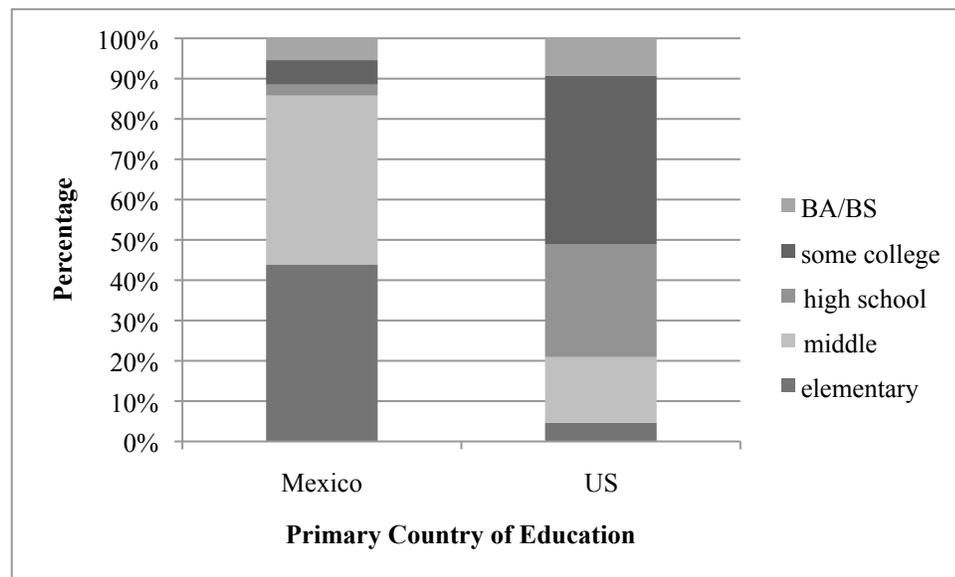


Figure 4.1: Educational Attainment by Country

The tables and figure above illustrate an important finding, namely that respondents educated in the United States have attained significantly higher levels of education than interviewees educated in Mexico, but they do not establish a causal link between where respondents were educated and their educational attainment. A regression will begin to establish the causal link between country of education and attainment. The descriptive statistics for the regression models are in Table 4.3, which

shows that more than half the overall sample was female, only five percent of the respondents were born in the United States and only slightly more were predominantly educated in the United States.³ Though some respondents reporting having very-well educated parents, this was atypical; most respondents' parents did not finish primary school. The mean age was 38 and the average respondent had finished primary school.

Table 4.3: Descriptive Statistics of Attainment Variables (n=737)

Dependent Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation	n
Highest Grade Completed	0	21	6.44	3.80	737
Independent Variable					
Age	15	65	38.08	14.20	737
Primary country of education (1=US)	0	1	0.08	-	737
Mother Highest Grade Completed	0	21	3.08	3.24	543
Father Highest Grade Completed	0	21	3.10	3.42	511
Gender (1=male)	0	1	0.44	-	737
Born in US (1=yes)	0	1	0.05	-	737

Table 4.4 reports an OLS linear model that regresses selected proxy variables on educational attainment. The migration variables, “primary country of education” and “country of birth,” test the relationship between immigration and education while two (very) rough socio-economic indicators, fathers’ and mothers’ educational levels, control for socioeconomic status. Gender and age are also included.

³ Unfortunately, the data set does not include information about respondents’ documentation status while they were studying (this information would only apply to people educated in one country but born in another). Country of birth is the most appropriate proxy available.

Table 4.4: Unstandardized Coefficients for OLS regression of Selected Variables on Educational Attainment (n=470)

Variable	I	II	III	IV
male	-.393 <i>.300</i>	-.363 <i>.291</i>	-.428 <i>.276</i>	-
age	-.068 *** <i>.011</i>	-.066 *** <i>.011</i>	-.063 *** <i>.011</i>	-.064 *** <i>.011</i>
mother's educational attainment	.262 *** <i>.055</i>	.164 ** <i>.057</i>	.141 ** <i>.054</i>	.139 ** <i>.053</i>
father's educational attainment	.303 *** <i>.052</i>	.330 *** <i>.050</i>	0.333 *** <i>0.048</i>	.333 *** <i>.048</i>
US Born	-	3.487 *** <i>0.649</i>	-0.016 <i>0.78</i>	-
primary country of education (1=US)	-	-	4.837 *** <i>0.661</i>	4.818 *** <i>0.522</i>
Constant	7.789 *** <i>.534</i>	7.708 *** <i>.519</i>	7.538 *** <i>.492</i>	7.383 *** <i>.482</i>
Adj. R2	.318	.357	.422	.421
F	55.829 ***	53.094 ***	58.158 ***	86.559 ***
n	470	470	470	470

Notes: * p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001 (two-tailed tests). Standard error is shown in italics

Model I includes the four control variables. Gender is not significant in any of the four models. Age is consistently significant showing generational changes that, while important, are largely beyond the scope of this research project. Parental education is also significant in each model presented; fathers' attainment is predictive stronger predictor of educational attainment in Model I and each subsequent model.

Model II retains the control variables and introduces country of birth, which in this second model is both significant and highly explanatory. Age and both parent education variables remain significant in this second model. Model III adds “primary country of education” to the mix. In this third model, we can see that “primary country of education” is much more explanatory than country of birth, which is rendered insignificant upon the addition of the final variable. Model IV removes male and country of birth to create a fully significant model. The fit statistics in both Models III and IV indicate that the regression successfully explains an important portion of the variation along the dependent variable.

Model IV’s constant, significant at the $p > 0.001$ level, of 7.383 represents the educational attainment of a hypothetical respondent – María – educated in Mexico and whose parents did not attend school. Parental education explains a substantial portion of the variation in Tlacuitapenses’ attainment; if both parents complete high school instead of middle school, nearly two years of attainment could be added to their child’s attainment. Equally importantly, if we move the hypothetical María to the United States (and as the country of birth variable has fallen out of Model IV, it wouldn’t matter if she was born in the U.S. or if she had immigrated at a young age), her attainment increases by nearly five years, from a 7.383 to over 12. Where respondents’ were educated is significant and also the most explanatory variable in the regression models.

The social meaning of the coefficients in Model IV merits discussion. Here, it is important to go beyond questions of statistical significance and to interpret the context of these findings. The difference between 7.383 and 12.201 is the difference between someone who did not finish the compulsory educational program in Mexico and a

respondent with a diploma from a high school in the United States. I will draw on this distinction in the discussion of these findings.

Explaining the Attainment Gap

While interviewing Tlacuitapenses, three themes emerged that shed light the forces behind the differing attainment rates: financial barriers to education, physical proximity to (or distance from) schools, and access to “safe harbors.” Financial cost and the availability of schools are closely linked, and so I discuss these together before moving onto a discussion of “safe harbors,” or programs that (explicitly or implicitly) encourage enrollment and retention in school, thus boosting overall attainment levels. I address each topic by drawing on interviews, observations from the field, and some quantitative findings.

Cost and Proximity to High Schools

Families in both countries were concerned about the cost of education, but Mexico differed from the United States in terms of when families began to express their concern about paying for school. Interviewees in Tlacuitapa began to express concerns about financing education at the high school level, while their peers in the United States remained largely unconcerned about paying for K-12 education. I start this discussion by juxtaposing Pedro, a father unable to send his daughters to high school, to Javier, a high school student living in Tlacuitapa, to illustrate how many Tlacuitapenses struggle to pay for a high school education.

Pedro is a farmer, poor by the standards of the town, and a father of three who lives on the outskirts of Tlacuitapa. His oldest daughter finished middle school in 2009 and now works in the town's shoe factory. The middle child is a daughter, now in the eighth grade at the middle school. Both girls expressed a desire to go to high school. Their younger brother is a third grader. When I asked Pedro why his oldest daughter went to work in the factory, he answered with a sardonic laugh and one word: "resources." When I asked him to elaborate, he replied that high school was overall expensive and specifically cited transportation as a major impediment to his daughter's education. He did not believe that his second daughter would be able to go to high school, either. Pedro expressed that he would prefer for his daughters to study instead of working, and specifically said that girls should go onto high school because they generally aren't economically active in their teenage years.

There is much to unpack in what Pedro says. Most obvious is how he constructs different educational aspirations for his children on the basis of gender; discussion of this portion of his interview can be found in the preceding chapter. More relevant here is that Pedro identifies the cost of transportation as the main roadblock in his daughter's currently deferred path to high school. Like many Tlacuitapenses, Pedro does not own a car, nor does he fully participate in a monetized economy (he farms a significant portion of his family's food). Like Pedro, many in Tlacuitapa do not have the economic resources needed to send a child, every week day, to Lagos, 40 miles away.

Even those families that are relatively well-off in Tlacuitapa can struggle with the cost of transportation. Javier is in the second year of *preparatoria*, the equivalent of 11th grade in the United States. Javier's initial arrangement had been to live in a

boarding house in Lagos, but that proved financially unsustainable after just one year. He has rejoined his family in their large, well-built house in Tlacuitapa. The structure itself could be found in California or Oklahoma (compare this to Pedro above, whose house was a mixture of concrete and wooden sticks with a tin roof), and Javier's father has steady, well-paid employment. Javier and his family can rightly be called among the Tlacuitapense middle class.

When our conversation turned to finances, Javier, like Pedro, indicated that the largest educational cost his family incurred was transportation. "The expensive thing is that you have to come and go. You spend money going there and you spend money coming home to your house. You're always spending money. Daily. And that's the cost. For the school itself, just over 300 pesos per month, nothing more". Javier makes a telling distinction between tuition and the more expensive transportation costs.

Though Javier first preference, to live in Lagos while studying, was not economically feasible, he and his family have the resources needed to pay the monthly tuition fee (approximately \$25) and the transportation costs incurred by the daily commute. Javier is the counterexample – one of the few students who is able to afford a high school education despite the high cost. Javier, whose family owns an extra vehicle that can be used for a daily commute to Lagos, estimates that he spends just over \$100 on gasoline per month, bringing the monthly cost of tuition and transportation to more than \$125 before factoring in other costs such as uniforms, books, supplies, and the opportunity cost of Javier's lost wages while he studies full time. The high price of a high school educational is prohibitively out of the reach of most Tlacuitapenses.

The median monthly income for full time workers in Tlacuitapa is only \$60. Even if we assume that students live in a two-income household with equal salaries (and very few wives in Tlacuitapa earn as much as their husbands), we begin to understand the extreme financial burden of pursuing a high school education in Lagos – any why only a few students like Javier are able to continue beyond middle school.

Financial concerns about high school are uncommon in the United States. When I spoke to parents and students in the United States about the obstacles confronting high school students, money was rarely mentioned; when finances were discussed the conversation generally revolved around the high price of extracurricular activities and largely optional purchases, such as yearbooks. In terms of transportation, Tlacuitapenses in both Oklahoma City and Union City are concentrated in housing tracts that contain neighborhood high schools. Many second-generation Tlacuitapenses are easily able to walk or bike to school, and in general the second-generation confront few financial obstacles as they seek to complete high school.

Proximity to Postsecondary Education: Mitigating Cost

Anabel, 18, had just finished high school when I met her celebrating her cousin's birthday. I ran into her about a week later and we spoke about her experience completing high school in Lagos. She told me she wanted to go to college to become an architect, and when I asked her why she hadn't enrolled at a university we had the following exchange:

A: A lack of money.

TS: How much would it cost to continue?

A: I think about 3,000 pesos (approximately \$300) a month. In fact, I would receive a scholarship for my grades. But right now it's very...there's no money. My sister supports me but as she's here [in Tlacuitapa as opposed to Chicago] she can't.

TS: Why did the sister who is here return?

A: I don't know, she's been here about a year. My sister says "I'll help you" but since she's here she doesn't have a job.

TS: Would you continue in Lagos or in Guadalajara?

A: I'd prefer Guadalajara. But my dad says "it's really far" and I don't know. Also, in theory that the university doesn't charge you because it's public but just the same you have to pay for transportation, living. I think it would be about the same.

Several concerns emerge from my interaction with Anabel. Most salient is the fact that her family is not in a position to take on the financial burden of paying the "hidden costs" of her college education regardless of whether Anabel chose to go the University of Guadalajara or its extension in Lagos. Although Anabel had earned a scholarship at the Lagos campus for her high grades, it would only partially cover the cost of attending college in Lagos or Guadalajara. The family would still need to make some tuition payments and either arrange for Anabel to live in Lagos or pay for daily transportation to the city. And while there would be no tuition payment at the Guadalajara campus of the University of Guadalajara, the price of transportation, rent, and general living expenses in Mexico's second city would be extensive. Anabel's disadvantage is linked not necessarily to the fact that she's in Mexico, but rather to her family's rural location. The hidden costs that she and her family would incur as she

attended college arise from the fact that they do not live in an urban center with postsecondary opportunities.

Anabel's sister, Lucy, had returned from Chicago to live with the family. Though the reason does not emerge in the quote above, her undocumented sister had returned for two distinct reasons. An older brother had been seriously injured in a car accident in 2008, about a year before I met Anabel and her sister, and the family had determined that either Anabel would have to stop going to school or Lucy would have to return to Tlacuitapa to help care for their brother during his recovery. At about the same time, Lucy lost her manufacturing job in Chicago and became an economic casualty of the Great Recession. She volunteered to go back to Mexico so Nora could finish school.

With Lucy home, however, the family lost an important income stream that had defrayed the cost of Anabel's high school education in Lagos. The loss of Lucy's remittance, which had gone directly to Anabel, was a major factor in the family's decision to defer Anabel's college enrollment. Anabel's experience not only helps illustrate how the high cost of higher education in Mexico can impede an individual's desire to earn a bachelors degree, but also how the 2007-2010 economic crisis has impacted the fragile economic situation of many households in this community of mass emigration.

Anabel grew up two doors down from Oscar, also 19 years old. Unlike Anabel, however, Oscar immigrated to the United States when he was in middle school. He holds a green card and speaks fluent English in a soft, shy voice. Despite speaking only

Spanish when he arrived in New Jersey, he finished high school in June, 2009 at age 18 and wants to attend college to become an engineer.

When I asked Oscar what he did during the fall 2009 semester, he told me that he was taking the 2009-2010 school year off to work. I asked when he planned to enroll in college:

TS: When do you think you might go back to community collage?

O: In September

TS: So why take the year off?

O: When I'm in school I can't work as much.

TS: How much does it [collage] cost?

O: I think it's \$2,000 a year.

Oscar's mother: The thing is that you pay in installments. But the truth is I'm not sure of the total.

We can contrast Oscar's situation with that of his neighbor Anabel. Whereas Anabel doesn't know if or when she'll be able to go back to school, Oscar and his mother have identified September, 2010 as his entry date into community college in the United States. Like Anabel, Oscar had to defer his education for a year, but during his year off he worked to save money for tuition. I point this out to not criticize Anabel for being unemployed, but to compare the two friends' economic opportunities. There are very few jobs available for women, particularly for young women like Anabel, in Tlacuitapa. Her economic inactivity was not a choice but rather a consequence of a stagnant local

economy. Oscar, on the other hand, was gainfully employed on a farm close to his parents' home in New Jersey.

Another key point that emerges in the interview with Oscar and his mother is their awareness of an installment plan at the local community college that eases the burden of tuition payment. Oscar's older sister had attended the same college, and so the family was aware of a program that allows them to make payments, which reduces the up-front cost of enrolling at a postsecondary institution. Programs that facilitate enrollment, and immigrant families' knowledge of them, are critical to second-generation attainment. We will return to the theme of "enrollment-facilitating programs" later, but first we turn our attention to the importance of living close to community colleges and universities for the U.S. born second-generation.

Proximity to Postsecondary Education: Easing the Transition to Adulthood

As discussed in Chapter 3, educational infrastructure plays a role in aspiration formation among Tlacuitapenses. Inexorably linked to the notion that the visible presence of schools increases aspirations is the idea that having educational opportunities nearby actually facilitates enrollment and thus aspirations. Table 3.5 is reproduced here as Table 4.5 to illustrate a critical point – students being educated in Mexico are far more likely to believe that a lack of schools is a significant obstacle to their own educational career.

Table 4.5 Is school quality or a lack of schools an obstacle for you in your education?

(n=76)

	yes	no	n
Mexico	18	19	37
US	6	33	39

Pearson's Chi2=9.732; p=0.002

Having previously described the educational opportunities in both the origin and destination communities, it seems repetitive to rehash that discussion here. In terms of Tlacuitapa itself, it is sufficient to say that the nearest high school and university is in another city (Lagos) and the costs associated with attending school there are cost prohibitive for most town residents. However, I will briefly offer a few observations that illustrate how educational infrastructure can facilitate enrollment in the United States.

I interviewed Mona, a second generation Tlacuitapense community college student, at her parents' home during a school day. She had a break between her morning and evening classes, and during this time was able to return home to eat lunch, study, and rest. This last issue, rest, is critical as Mona was beginning the spring semester three months pregnant. Mona's proximity to a community college (coupled with her family's ability to afford an extra car) allows her to remain in school during her pregnancy. If we hypothetically located Mona at a relative's house in Tlacuitapa (instead of Union City), she would be living far away from school and would not have the same rent-free base to use during the days while on break for class.

Miguel, a neighbor of Mona's in Union City who was also profiled in Chapter 3, provides another example of a student who benefits from the close proximity of postsecondary institutions to his parents' house. After graduating from Logan High School, Miguel enrolled at Humboldt State University in the far reaches of Northern California. He completed his first semester at Humboldt, but he and his family soon realized that they could not continue to finance Miguel's education and living expenses. He returned home and enrolled at Chabot, the local community college. He hopes to transfer to CSU East Bay, a 10 minute drive distant, or San Francisco State, located a 45 minute commuter train ride away from Union City.

Miguel tried to move away to go to college, the equivalent of Anabel wanting to move to Guadalajara for school. He found he could not pay for it and returned home. But unlike Anabel, there is a community college and a four-year degree granting institution in his hometown. Miguel is able to continue working on his degree coursework while living rent-free at home, an option that simply does not exist for Nora in Tlacuitapa. Miguel and Mona's stories show us why so few of the second generation in the United States identified a lack of schools as an obstacle in achieving an education.

Safe Harbors

Consistent with the reorientation framework (Jimenez and Fitzgerald 2008) the anecdotes above illustrate that the mere existence of schools in and around Union City facilitates attainment among the Tlacuitapense second generation. But a comparison of the numbers of school, teachers, and desks can only explain so much. Several specific

features of the American educational system help retain immigrant students in school (Portes and Fernandez-Kelly 2008). In this section, I identify and discuss two programs in particular – athletic programs and “untracking programs” (Mehan et al. 1994).

David, 20, graduated from Logan High School in 2007 and now attends Ohlone College in neighboring Fremont, California. David played soccer in high school, is on his community college team, and hopes to earn a soccer scholarship to play at a four-year school. We had the following discussion about soccer:

TS: So you played at Logan?

D: Yeah, I was on varsity two years. I didn't play my sophomore year because of grades, pretty much. I was lagging. It was really stupid. We actually did pretty good. We won MVAL [our athletic league]. I won all-league senior year.

TS: In high school, which would you say was more important to you? Would you say it was soccer or your grades?

D: I think in high school it was soccer. I think the reason being just because I never had nobody really telling me or pushing me. I always had my mom telling me “do good in school” or whatever. But if I would have had somebody really showing me, like, look, this is what's going to happen, you'll go to community college, spend two years and rather than if you do good over here, you go straight to a four year.

TS: Was a 4 year something you wanted to go to when you finished?

D: Yeah. Some of my friends went to four years. When I saw some of my friends playing for San Francisco and East Bay, I was like, they had good grades to go do it and I didn't. They're playing at a higher level, and we were at the same level the whole time, it's kinda like frustrating.

Earlier in the conversation he discussed why he transferred from Chabot to Ohlone.

D: I was at Chabot, and I play soccer. I was playing over there [at Chabot], the team really sucked, and I just needed a different team. The

coach over here [at Ohlone] actually calls scouts. I'm not saying I'm great or anything, but I'm pretty good to play at especially East Bay.

Soccer has been an extremely important part of David's educational experience, and its impact on his academic studies is apparent in the portion of the conversation reproduced above. David hints at (and confirms later in the conversation) that he was ineligible to play soccer as a high school sophomore. He specifically sought to raise his grades as a junior so that he could compete as a varsity athlete during his final two years at Logan. David's aspiration to play soccer positively impacted his educational attainment not just in high school but in college as well.

Soccer continues to motivate David's academic career. He recognizes that former teammates at Logan are equally skilled, but because of their superior grades were able to move directly to four-year colleges. He wants to join them. He selected his community college based on the strength of its soccer program, and now articulates the link between grades and being the experience of playing NCAA soccer. In maintaining eligibility as a college athlete, he will remain on track to finish a bachelors degree.

Martina, a junior at Logan High School, has participated in the PUENTE program since her freshman year. Both of Martina's parents are from Tlacuitapa, and neither graduated from college. PUENTE is a University of California-led outreach program that assists educationally disadvantaged students who seek to enroll in four-year colleges and universities. The program has academic, counseling, and leadership components and seeks to encourage youth to become leaders in their communities post-graduation (PUENTE 2010).

When I asked Martina how the PUENTE program impacted her, she replied with two distinct yet equally important observations. First she told me that her PUENTE teacher kept her informed and on-track to apply to college. She said, “the counselors are great, but they’re really busy. But [my teacher] knows all that stuff, and makes sure we’re doing what we need to be to get ready for college.” The PUENTE teacher, specially trained to teach in this program, serves as an institutional actor, linking Martina to the information and networks she needs to successfully transition to college (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990).

Martina also told me that the majority of her friends were also in the PUENTE program. She couldn’t articulate a reason for this – she didn’t dislike people who weren’t in the PUENTE program – but she simply found it easy to socialize with “other PUENTE people.” The PUENTE program facilitates the formation of informal networks that allow students to safely articulate non-oppositional attitudes and high educational aspirations. These networks, combined with the power of adult mentors involved in the administration of the program, allow for the construction of positive group dynamics that support educational attainment (Stanton-Salazar and Dornbusch 1995).

I discuss Bobby and Martina not because their situations are exceptional, but because they seem almost typical. Nearly every second-generation Tlacuitapense I interviewed, both boys and girls, was currently playing or had played high school soccer and pointed to this experience as the defining feature of their high school experience. Several specifically credited academic success to the influence of soccer. Most soccer players were friends with teammates, and several said that they didn’t hang

out with the wrong crowd because they were socially integrated into the soccer team. Some other students had similar experiences with cheerleading and band.

Likewise, Martina was not the only student who benefitted from an academic program that explicitly sought to ease the transition to college. Many current high school students I interviewed participated in PUENTE. Others had similar experiences taking AP classes while a few attended a small, local charter high school that focused on four-year college enrollment. Even more so than informal safe harbors, specific programs such as PUENTE and AP classes play an important role in providing educational opportunities to the Tlacuitapense second-generation.

Discussion

Even when controlling for age (and thus the impact of increasing infrastructure over time), Tlacuitapenses who attended school primarily in the United States achieve significantly higher levels of education than their co-ethnics living in Tlacuitapa. More than socioeconomic predictors or country of birth, a person's country of education is the main factor in predicting the number of years of school a Tlacuitapense, born either in the United States or in Mexico, will attain. As mentioned, the specific educational gap between interviewees in Mexico and the United States is socially important: those in Mexico do not average finishing ninth grade, the last compulsory year of school in Mexico, while respondents educated in the United States hold, on average, a high school diploma.

This study focuses on educational outcomes, and so it is most productive to focus attention on younger people, whose experiences in school most closely approximate the current condition of the Mexican and United States educational systems. The comparison among people aged 19-29 is stark. The majority of U.S.-educated respondents have a high school diploma whereas the majority of Mexico-educated respondents did not begin high school. If we call finishing high school “compulsory” in the United States (at least in terms of social pressure, if not law), Tlacuitapenses educated in Mexico have a lower rate of finishing the highest required grade than their peers in the United States.

Several factors help explain why attainment is higher in the United States. First, schools are readily available in destination communities. The direct comparison between the case study of Union City, California and Tlacuitapa reveals stark differences in educational infrastructure. The highest level of education available in the origin community is middle school. The nearest high school and college campus are located in Lagos de Moreno, approximately 30-45 minutes distant by car. The cost of living in Lagos is higher than in Tlacuitapa, and many Tlacuitapenses lack the ability (i.e. a car) to commute to Lagos daily for school. The nearest major university is a two-hour drive away.

Union City is situated differently. Logan High School, which in 2009 was just ranked in the top half of the state’s high schools by the California Department of Education, is located in the same neighborhood that most Tlacuitapenses call home. Chabot College in Hayward and Ohlone College in Fremont lie 15-20 minutes away from Logan High School, and California State University-East Bay is an even closer 10

minute drive. Other CSU campuses (San Jose State and San Francisco State) along with a major public research university (UC Berkeley) are close by, and each is accessible by public transportation.

The simple availability of schools begins to explain higher attainment rates among U.S. educated Tlacuitapenses, but it does not tell the whole story. While paying for school is a significant impediment to enrollment and retention in both countries, finances factor into the decision making of Mexican residents at an earlier age. The hidden costs of high school attendance, including books, uniforms, and transportation to and sometimes rent in an urban center inhibit many children from Tlacuitapa from attending high school. Students in the United States are less likely than those in the origin community to identify financial concerns as a major obstacle to obtaining an education.

Students in both Mexico and the United States believe it is difficult to finance college, though here too there are differences. Students in Tlacuitapa have to first get to a city to attend college. Many go to Lagos de Moreno, though others go to Guadalajara or León. In moving from their hometown to an urban center, students incur many of the same expenses incurred by high school students – rent, daily transportation, and living expenses. These barriers restrict university enrollment to all but the wealthiest Tlacuitapense families.

Cost also matters in the United States. Each of the college students in the U.S. works part-time. Several interviewees in their 20s have established a “work-school-work” pattern, whereby they work full-time for a semester or a year to save tuition money, then enroll in college classes for as long as they can afford before repeating the

cycle. Though work schedules may slow the pace of a college education – and many students I spoke with expect to take more than four years to finish a bachelor’s degree – the key distinction between Tlacuitapa and the United States is that in the latter there are employment opportunities for young Tlacuitapenses who need to be employed during their college years.

“Safe harbors” are a critical component of the United States educational system. Two profiled here – sports teams and untracking programs – work in different ways to keep Tlacuitapenses, and by extension other educationally disadvantaged communities, in school. In addition to soccer players, I interviewed other second-generation youth who participated in extra-curricular activities such as alternative spring break, cheerleading, band, leadership programs (at both the high school and college levels), and general-interest clubs. Some extra-curricular activities specifically aim to keep students in school; others do not. Regardless of their reason for being, participation in extra-curricular activities has been positively associated with college entrance and retention (Kaufman and Gabler 2004), and to the extent U.S. resident youth participate in these programs, which are notably absent from the high school in Lagos de Moreno, they remain actively engaged in and more likely to attend school.

PUENTE is not an extra-curricular program. It targets Latinos who are potential first-generation college students and explicitly aims to increase college enrollment rates among minority students. Tlacuitapenses participated in PUENTE, Advanced Placement, and International Baccalaureate programs that put students on a fast-track to a bachelors degree. Community college students used Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS), and four-year students had participated in summer bridge

programs for first-generation college students. Untracking programs such as these serve as institutional agents linking with the resources and cultural capital that facilitate college and financial aid applications and have been instrumental in the educational careers of many Tlacuitapense second-generation youth.

Theoretical Implications

Jimenez and Fitzgerald argue that assimilation theorists “miss the point” when they argue over a few months of school in discussing third-generation decline. They instead compare outcomes in origin and destination communities to engage in an interesting game of “what if.” Their comparison essentially allows us to ask “what would the life chances have been for this group, the second-generation born abroad, had their parents not migrated?” The answer presented in the chapter is clear: controlling for all else, students educated in the United States receive far more years of education than their peers.

But what does this tell us about assimilation in the United States? After all, the comparison made by assimilation scholars is between the immigrant groups and other sectors of the host society, not the home country. The work of John Ogbu bridges the gap between assimilation theory and the reorientation framework proposed by Jimenez and Fitzgerald. Ogbu (1986) classifies minorities into two groups – immigrant minorities and involuntary minorities. Involuntary minorities, generally families that have been in the United States for several generations, have experienced American-style discrimination and lost touch with the mythical American Dream. As in the dissonant acculturation model, involuntary minorities adopt oppositional attitudes that counter-

productively impede economic progress in the host society. The result, at least in terms of education, is low attainment levels and high drop-out rates.

Matute-Bianchi (1986) adapts Ogbu's framework for Mexican-origin peoples. Studying a California high school, she finds that U.S. born Mexican-Americans are less likely to enjoy mainstream success – here, high school completion and college enrollment – than their more “Mexican-oriented peers.” As will be shown in the next chapter, the Tlacuitapense community is well rooted in the United States and, although born to immigrant parents, the second-generation is substantially more “American” than “Mexican” in their outlooks. Ogbu, Matute-Bianchi, and Portes would probably accept that outcomes for the Tlacuitapense second-generation might be better in the United States than they would have been in rural Mexico. But the models proposed by these scholars would suggest that, compared to whites, the Tlacuitapense second-generation will be significantly disadvantaged by the structural constraints of discrimination, an hourglass labor market, and urban stagnation. I will turn my attention to these claims in Chapter 5.

Tables 4.2 and 4.3 are reproduced from “Equal Hopes, Disparate Outcomes: Education in an Immigrant Community” by Travis Silva, Luz María García García, and Emily Puhl in *Recession Without Borders: Mexican Migrants Confront the Economic Downturn* edited by David FitzGerald, Rafael Alarcón Acosta, and Leah Muse-Orlinoff. The thesis author is the primary author of this chapter.

5. Theoretical Implications

At their most basic level, Chapters 3 and 4 make two simple points. First, Tlacuitapense youth across the board have high educational aspirations. Nearly all interviewees wanted to finish at least high school and most wanted to attain a bachelors degree. Goals were set slightly higher north of the border; this increase is the product of relatively well-developed educational infrastructure and the push to earn the educational credentials needed to enter professional employment.

While aspirations are largely similar throughout the Tlacuitapense community, educational attainment is not. Interviewees who had been educated in the United States finished far more years of school than their peers in the origin community. Again, infrastructure is the key factor in explaining the difference. Compared to Tlacuitapa, the second generation (and child immigrants) grew up in neighborhoods with more high schools and colleges. Tlacuitapenses passing through these schools were adept at dropping anchor in “safe harbors” – features of the educational system that directly or indirectly encourage academic engagement among at-risk youth. Safe harbors, largely absent from my observations in Tlacuitapa’s schools, drove up attainment rates in the United States.

What do these comparative findings tell us? Why are they important? And aren’t these findings fairly commonsensical to any reasonable person who might compare rural Mexico to urban America? This chapter explores these questions while engaging the literature surrounding the economic assimilation of Mexican-Americans in the United States.

Attitudes and Aspirations

Ogbu develops a binary typology by juxtaposing the terms “immigrant minorities” and “involuntary minorities” (1991). Immigrant minorities favorably compare the American opportunity structure – and their position in American society – to their home countries. By contrast, involuntary minorities been socially and economically excluded from the U.S. opportunity structure for decades and express pessimism about their ability to get ahead in America. Involuntary minorities oppose the hegemonic dominant society by adopting oppositional attitudes while immigrant minorities conform to the behavioral norms required by the mainstream.

Ogbu’s collaborator Maria Eugenia Matute-Bianchi (1991) adopts Ogbu’s framework to Mexican-origin youth in the United States. Matute-Bianchi identifies five categories of Latino youth in a California high school: recent Mexican immigrant, Mexican-oriented, Mexican-American, Chicano, and Cholo. Focusing on issues of identity and group belonging, Matute-Bianchi suggests a link between retaining some level of identification as a *mexicano* and academic performance.

Nearly all of the academically successful students at Field High fell into the Mexican-oriented or Mexican-American categories, though not all students in these groups had strong grades. High achieving Mexican-descent students were well integrated into the school and active in schools clubs, student government, and sports. High levels of engagement led to higher grades.

By contrast, the Chicanos/Cholos, who as involuntary minorities exhibited oppositional attitudes at school, were not engaged in school. They were more likely to

be enrolled in remedial classes and to have disciplinary problems. The Chicanos and Cholos rejected the notion that school could “pay off” for them and remained distant from the institutional actors who could help boost their educational careers.

The second generation Tlacuitapenses I interviewed fall mostly into the “Mexican-oriented” category, though some may “spill over” into Matute-Bianchi’s broad Mexican-American category. The interviewees maintain strong ties to Mexico, including annual vacations to and regular contact with extended family in Tlacuitapa. As students, they participate in activities with a strong and clear ethnic identification. Both safe harbors discussed in the preceding chapter – the PUENTE program and Logan High’s organized soccer team – are predominantly Hispanic. Far from being ambivalent about their cultural roots, the Tlacuitapense second generation weave their Mexican heritage into the fabric of their daily lives.

At the same time, the Tlacuitapense second generation is economically integrated into American society. Enrique Jr., who was profiled in Chapter 4, worked for several years before going back to receive his HVAC certificate. He recognizes the instrumental value of that credential and so is willing to finance the expensive coursework needed to complete the HVAC program. Araceli, the future diplomat who helps introduce Chapter 1, is a leader in the University of California student movement to publicize the adverse impacts of the state’s continued divestment in public higher education.¹ Her involvement has required her to navigate through the highest levels of the UC power structure. Araceli and Enrique Jr. have – in very different ways –

¹ See Lewin & Cathcart (2009) and Wollan (2009) for New York Times coverage of the student protests at UC Berkeley where Araceli is a student leader.

incorporated themselves into dominant modes of economic and political participation in the United States.

Tlacuitapense second generation interviewees are socially competent in both Mexico and the United States. They spoke fluently about 21st birthdays in Las Vegas and *quinceñeras*, road trips to soccer games in Oregon and flights to visit grandma in Mexico, eating dinner at Applebees and learning to make tamales from their aunts. One interviewee, a University of California student, contacted me after finding our research group on the Internet. I conducted an interview with her over Skype and she added me as a friend on Facebook – and we only met in person by chance while attending the same party in Tlacuitapa. The Tlacuitapenses I came to know are not detached from Mexico and thus do not fit into Matute-Bianchi’s “Mexican-American” category. To imply that they are only “Mexican-oriented” would only tell half the story.

The relative biculturalism of the Tlacuitapense second generation may be a function of their birthplace: they were mostly born in the United States. At Field High, the Mexican-oriented students were predominantly born in Mexico and entered the United States as young children. By contrast, the Tlacuitapa second generation was born in the United States. This critical deviation from Matute-Bianchi’s framework has important implications for the trajectory of Tlacuitapense economic integration.

Segmented Assimilation and Tlacuitapenses

The segmented assimilation model proposes three acculturation pathways for the “new” second generation: consonant acculturation, selective acculturation, and

dissonant acculturation (Portes and Zhou 1993, 82). Sixteen years after initially developing the segmented assimilation model, Portes and colleagues find that being a member of the Mexican-American second generation is a statistically significant “exogenous determinant” of outcomes associated with downward assimilation (Portes, Fernandez-Kelly, and Haller 2009: 1091).

Yet based on the data presented in the two preceding chapters the Tlacuitapense second generation shows little evidence of undergoing dissonant acculturation. Instead, nearly half of the U.S. educated respondents over the age of 25 hold a bachelors degree compared to just over 30 percent among third generation whites (Farley and Alba 2002). In this section, I argue that Tlacuitapense youth are undergoing selective acculturation in large part due to the long tenure of the Tlacuitapense community in the United States.

Applicability of Dissonant Acculturation to Tlacuitapenses in the United States

The prediction that Mexican-American youth are particularly prone to dissonant acculturation is based on three features of post-1965 immigration: pronounced phenotypical differences between immigrants and the white mainstream, the urban concentration of new immigrants, and an increasingly segmented U.S. labor market. I systematically discuss each of these in relation to the Tlacuitapense community in the United States.

First, Portes and colleagues argue that more than the children of white immigrants from a century ago, “new immigrants” and their children will feel the sting of discrimination because they are phenotypically distinct from the white mainstream.

MMFRP does not collect data on phenotypes and I did not add any observations of physical characteristics in my supplemental fieldwork, thus this study cannot comment on the first point advanced by Portes and Zhou.

The second empirical pillar supporting the dissonant acculturation model is the segregation of immigrants into urban ghettos. Living in decaying post-industrial cities “exposes second-generation children to the adversarial subculture developed by marginalized native youths” (Portes and Zhou 1993: 83). Indeed, Tlacuitapenses are concentrated in two urban areas: Oklahoma City and the San Francisco Bay Area. The Oklahoma City MSA contains over 1,000,000 inhabitants and is the 44th largest Metropolitan Statistical Area in the United States.² The city is one of the densest in the Midwest and its economy relies heavily on energy production and construction. In short, it is an urban center.

Tlacuitapenses in the Bay Area live predominantly in two cities, Hayward and Union City, that form part of the country’s 13th largest MSA. These two medium-sized independent cities share many features of post-industrial urban communities. Both rapidly moved from agricultural to industrialized economies in the latter half of the 20th century. The manufacturing sector in both communities has subsequently suffered as outsourcing as shipped jobs overseas.³ Like many urban centers, much of the Bay Area outside of Silicon Valley, including Hayward and Union City, is still searching for its economic identity in the 21st century economy.

² The Oklahoma City MSA is larger than the MSAs of such large cities as New Orleans, LA; Tucson, Arizona; and El Paso, Texas.

³ In fact, two factories that employed Tlacuitapense immigrants closed during the course of my fieldwork in the Bay Area.

Tlacuitapenses do live in urban areas, but this does not guarantee that second generation youth come into contact with the adversarial attitudes of the involuntary minority class. Table 5.1 shows enrollment and dropout statistics for Grant and Logan High Schools. These schools serve the vast majority of the Tlacuitapense second generation in Oklahoma City and the Bay Area, respectively. Both schools are “majority minority” in that students of color comprise more than half the student body.

Table 5.1: Student Enrollment at High Schools by Ethnicity 2008-2009.

	Logan High	Grant High
American Indian	0.3%	7%
Asian	22.5%	1%
Pacific Islander	5.0%	-
Filipino	19.7%	-
Hispanic or Latino	27.8%	56%
African American	9.5%	11%
White (not Hispanic)	11.8%	24%
Multiple/Other/No Response	3.4%	1%
School 4-year Dropout Rate ⁴	8.7%	40.1%
State 4-year Dropout Rate	18.9%	12.4%
Total Enrollment	4102	1566

Source: California Dept. of Education Educational Demographics Unit; NCES.

Both schools have significant “involuntary minority” populations. Native Americans and African-Americans combine to make up nearly 20 percent of the population at Grant High, and Latinos make up over half the overall student body. Logan’s student body is about 10 percent African-American and another 25 percent are Filipinos and other Pacific Islanders. As with Mexicans, the classification of Pacific

⁴ For Logan High, dropout rate is for 2007-2008 school year. For Grant High, dropout rate is for the 2008-2009 school year.

Islanders into the Ogbu involuntary/immigrant minority structure is challenging because of the long history of U.S. intervention in the region and resulting immigration into the United States. As at Grant, the overwhelming majority of Logan's Latinos are Mexican, and they make up slightly more than a quarter of the student population. In both Oklahoma and the Bay Area Tlacuitapenses are around other students of color, including significant populations of involuntary minorities.

An initial statistical proxy for "oppositional attitudes" is the dropout rate at these two high schools. Two out of every five members of the Grant Class of 2009 did not finish high school. This rate indicates the presence of a strong oppositional counterculture at the school site with which the Tlacuitapense second generation has substantial contact.

The dropout rate at Logan High is significantly lower than the statistics for Grant High and California statewide. It should be noted that the dropout rates for Latinos and African-Americans are higher – 13.6% and 10.3% respectively – but in comparing the two high schools an unmistakable difference comes into view. Oppositional attitudes and behaviors are likely more prevalent in the Oklahoma City high school.

An analysis of crime statistics may illustrate the extent to which the gang activity discussed by Ogbu pervades everyday life in the two destination communities. Table 5.2 compares violent and property crime statistics for Oklahoma City and Hayward/Union City to several reference cities.⁵ Los Angeles, Phoenix, and Las Vegas

⁵ The crime statistics for Hayward and Union City are combined. The two cities share a common border that divides the specific neighborhood where the Tlacuitapense community is concentrated.

Table 5.2: Comparative Crime Statistics of Selected Cities. Crimes per 1,000 Inhabitants

	Oklahoma City	Hayward/ Union City	Los Angeles	San Diego	El Paso	Richmond	Phoenix	Las Vegas
Violent Crimes	9.77	6.10	6.90	4.76	4.61	7.95	6.60	9.85
Property Crimes	58.94	32.00	26.18	31.74	32.17	40.81	52.14	39.29
Population	552,452	211,393	3,850,920	1,271,655	612,374	199,674	1,585,838	1,353,174

Source: FBI Annual Uniform Crime Report. Statistics for January - December 2008

are included as large urban centers with significant and historical immigrant populations. El Paso is included as a majority Mexican-American city and Richmond, Virginia is included as a majority African-American city. San Diego is included for several reasons. Not only is it a large border city with a substantial immigrant population, it is also home to the CILS survey that serves as much of the empirical basis for segmented assimilation theory.⁶

Of the cities listed Oklahoma City has the highest property crime rate and just trails Las Vegas for the second highest violent crime rate. The crimes rates in Hayward/Union City are somewhat lower. The violent and property crime rates in the Bay Area communities are both third lowest of the cities listed, though this obfuscates several important observations. The combined Hayward/Union City area has a higher property crime rate than Los Angeles and a significantly higher violent crime rate than either El Paso or San Diego, home of the CILS survey. Additionally, the Union City/Hayward area has a substantially higher violent crime rate than two neighboring cities – Fremont and Newark – and a higher property crime rate than Fremont.

The dropout rates and crime levels in both Oklahoma City and the Bay Area communities of Hayward and Union City suggest, consistent with Portes and Zhou's formula for dissonant acculturation, that the Tlacuitapense second generation lives in close proximity to oppositional attitudes. The metrics are more negative in Oklahoma City than in the Bay Area cities, indicating that the second generation growing up in the former may be more exposed to and inclined to adopt opposition attitudes.

⁶ The Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Survey (CILS) gathered quantitative data on 1.5 and 2.0 generation immigration youth in the greater Miami and San Diego regions on three separate occasions. The CILS forms much of the empirical basis for the segmented assimilation model.

In addition to phenotypical differences and residential segregation, Portes and Zhou identify a third cause for downward assimilation: increasing segmentation in the U.S. labor market constricts employment opportunities for second generation youth. Because fewer and fewer medium-skill, medium-wage (e.g. manufacturing) jobs exist, the children of immigrants must

Cross the narrow bottleneck to occupations requiring advanced training if their careers are to keep pace with *their U.S. acquired aspirations*. This race against the narrowing middle demands that immigrant parents accumulate sufficient resources to allow their children to effect the passage and *to simultaneously prove to them the viability of aspirations for upward mobility* (Portes and Zhou 1993: 85. Emphasis added).

Portes and Zhou emphasize the responsibility of parents to transmit high occupational and educational aspirations to their children. These aspirations are to be acquired in the United States, presumably by children who act rationally, listen to their parents, and infer the existence of a bifurcated labor market. In other words, immigrants and their children adjust their educational goals in response to the American opportunity structure. The directionality of the adjustment depends upon parents' ability to marshal sufficient resources to present educational and occupational advancement a realistic possibility to their children.

Following Jimenez and Fitzgerald's (2008) call for a reorientation of assimilation studies, I compared educational aspirations in the United States and Mexico in Chapter 3 and found that Tlacuitapenses share high aspirations in both countries. Tlacuitapenses north of the border do not have "U.S. acquired aspirations;" rather they have educational goals similar to those of their co-ethnics residing in the

rural countryside.⁷ Youth in both Mexico and the United States seek to join the ranks of white-collar professionals working in the primary labor market. That this aspiration exists in the destination as well as in the origin communities casts doubt on what Portes and Zhou suggest is a particular obligation among parents in the United States: to convince their children of the viability of using education as a vehicle for upwards economic mobility.

Portes and Zhou contend that many second generation Mexican-Americans will assimilate into a rainbow underclass because they will lower their educational aspirations in the face of structural barriers to employment in the primary labor market. Ogbu would agree that involuntary minority youth, aware of generations of economic disadvantage and exclusion, are likely to adopt adversarial attitudes and behaviors that oppose dominant norms. But recalling Matute-Bianchi's schema of Mexican-origin youth in Field High, Portes and Zhou's hypothesis seems to apply mainly to the Cholo and Chicano youth whose lengthy family histories in the United States offer multiple examples of economic and social disadvantage. The Tlacuitapense second generation, however, do not fit into the Cholo and Chicano categories. In fact, these youth do not fit neatly into Matute-Bianchi's framework at all. They can rightly be called Mexican-oriented students but only while recognizing their bicultural competencies and ease with the American educational system. In short, much of the Tlacuitapense second generation appears to be integrating, if not acculturating, into the middle class as they

⁷ The slight increase in aspirations among U.S. based interviewees should not obfuscate two key findings from Chapter 3: that most Tlacuitapense youth, regardless of where they live, have high educational goals and that higher aspirations in the United States are the product of structural factors.

maintain the high educational aspirations found throughout their binational community instead of adopting the oppositional lifestyles that are present in their neighborhoods.

Portes and Zhou identify three features of the United States – phenotypical differences, urban segregation, a segmented labor market – that will exogenously push much of the “new” second generation to assimilate in a downwards trajectory. I provide no comment on the first and find that the Tlacuitapense second generation is in close contact with oppositional countercultures. However, on the third point, the Tlacuitapense second generation defies the prediction that native-born youth will acquiesce in joining a rainbow underclass in the face of a difficult labor market. Instead, they and remain upbeat about futures in the United States.

The incongruence between the actual experience of the Tlacuitapense second generation and the acculturation outcomes predicted by the segmented assimilation model raise two questions – the “why?” and the “so what?” In the next section, I employ the term “Tlacuitapense exceptionalism” to explain unpredicted, positive educational outcomes among the Tlacuitapense second generation before discussing the theoretical implications of this argument.

Tlacuitapense Exceptionalism

Tlacuitapenses in the United States are not representative of Mexican immigrant families. Though such an admission sometimes relegates research to some sort of academic netherworld, this fact actually strengthens the study. Becker (1998) encourages us “to deliberately seek out extreme cases that are most likely to upset our

ideas and predictions.” While I wish I could say that I deliberately selected Tlacuitapa exactly for this reason (it was more a question of institutional resources), the end result is agreeably aligned with Becker’s plea.

Foreign-born adult Tlacuitapense migrants are privileged when compared to Mexican immigrants as a whole. Table 5.3 compares several key metrics including homeownership, education, salary, documentation, and citizenship. Age is included to demonstrate that though Tlacuitapenses are somewhat older than Mexican immigrants as a whole, the difference is not so great as to account for the stark contrast on the other metrics.

Table 5.3. Comparison of Tlacuitapense Immigrants to Mexican Immigrants

	Tlacuitapense Immigrants	Mexican Immigrants ⁸
Percent Homeowners ⁹	74.0	44.0
Median Year of Education	6.0	9.0
Median Annual Salary	\$28,704	\$23,000
Percent Legally Documented	82.0	45.0
Percent Citizen	34.0	15.0
Age	35.4	41.5

Some caution must be exercised with comparing the statistics in Table 5.1. In one case the numbers are not directly comparable, and no difference of means test was performed for any comparison. Nevertheless, the point is clear: first generation Tlacuitapenses immigrants are privileged compared to Mexican immigrants as a group.

⁸ All statistics about Mexican immigrants are from March 2008 CPS calculated by Pew Hispanic Center (2009)

⁹ The homeowner statistics are not directly comparable and are only presented for perspective. The Census statistic actually indicates homeownership, the statistic for Tlacuitapenses only indicates the percentage of respondents who live in a dwelling that is owned, not rented, by the head of household.

Despite being only slightly older, Tlacuitapenses earn more money than their peers and are more likely to be a citizen or legal resident. Tlacuitapenses are much more likely to own their home (or to live in a home that is owned by the head of household as opposed to a landlord). The only unfavorable comparison here is education, though this is likely explained by the fact that all Tlacuitapense immigrants come from rural Mexico while at least some Mexican immigrants were raised in urban areas with more access to schools. This one exception notwithstanding, Tlacuitapense immigrants on the whole have done comparatively well in the United States.

Tlacuitapense Exceptionalism: Origins and Impact on Second Generation

What accounts for the differences between Tlacuitapense and the average Mexican migrant? Tlacuitapenses have an extraordinarily long history of migration to the United States (Cornelius, et al. 2009). Substantial numbers of Tlacuitapenses were regularized under the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) passed during the Reagan Administration (Vásquez, et al. 2009). Through family reunification provisions in U.S. immigration law, IRCA sent Tlacuitapa *as a community* on a path toward eventual legal residency and, for many, citizenship.

Tlacuitapa's experience with IRCA is atypical. The median year of entry for a Mexican immigrant in the United States is 1991.¹⁰ This date is well after the deadline to apply for amnesty under either regularization program in IRCA, thus fewer than half of the Mexican immigrants currently in the United States could have received papers through the IRCA regularization program.

¹⁰ Author's calculation from the ACS 2008 1% PUMS.

By contrast, many Tlacuitapenses were already in the United States when IRCA came into effect. Tlacuitapenses' presence north of the border rendered them eligible for regularization under the reform. During the 1980s, Tlacuitapenses were concentrated in small California enclaves. Advocacy groups were well established in California at this time and actively educated immigrants about the new law. Information flowed through the tight-knit Tlacuitapense community and nearly all those from the town who were eligible eventually became permanent residents.

The high documentation rate among Tlacuitapenses in the United States has facilitated a number of positive economic outcomes. Table 5.1 notes that a substantial majority of Tlacuitapenses in the United States owns their own homes. Homeownership is not a new trend in this community, at least in the Bay Area. Though the MMFRP survey did not ask how long respondents had lived at the same address, the question usually came up in the course of conversation. The majority of immigrants we met had purchased their homes in the 1980s and early 1990s; in other words, immediately after the IRCA regularization program. Consequently, much of the Tlacuitapense second generation has lived in the same house (or at least moved infrequently throughout) their entire lives. This fact bodes well for second generation youth as high rates of school mobility have been positively associated with high school drop out rates (Kerbow 1996) and inversely associated with the amount of time teens spend on homework (Ainsworth 2002).

Tlacuitapenses also have higher salaries than the average immigrant from Mexico. While this is also potentially positive for their children, income alone is not the most important economic benefit of being documented. Male Tlacuitapense immigrants

are highly concentrated in unionized jobs in the construction sector. With work unsteady – particularly during the 2007-2010 economic downturn – documented immigrants have had recourse to union services and unemployment benefits. Tlacuitapenses in particular have had high rates of unemployment in the 2007-2010 economic cycle, but have been able to use unemployment insurance to stabilize their households (Cabrera Hernández et al., forthcoming).

Relative to co-ethnic migrants, Tlacuitapense immigrants have found a higher level of economic success in America – a point that has potentially significant ramifications for their children. The second generation’s educational outcomes can also be compared favorably to the Mexican-American second generation.

Having already established that Tlacuitapenses in the United States finish far more school than their counterparts in Tlacuitapa, Table 5.4 compares high school and college completion rates of the Tlacuitapense second generation to native-born Mexican Americans as a whole. In terms of high school completion, Tlacuitapenses show only a trivial advantage over their native born co-ethnics, but the college completion numbers are where the Tlacuitapense second generation really shines.

Though we spoke to very few U.S.-born respondents over the age of 24, nearly half of those we did survey hold a bachelors degree. A similar proportion, 45.0 percent, of the second generation aged 19-24 are currently college students (n=20). The second generation in the MMFRP sample greatly outstrips native-born Mexican-Americans in terms of college attainment and looks poised to continue to do so.

Table 5.4: Educational Outcomes of Tlacuitapa Second Generation Compared to Native Born Mexican-Americans¹¹

	Tlacuitapa	Mexican-Americans
High School Completion (%)	78.9	76.9
Bachelors Degree Completion (%)	47.4	13.0

The term “Tlacuitapense exceptionalism” seems to apply to two phenomena: the legal and economic stability of the immigrant generation and the educational outcomes of the second generation. MMFRP collected no data that would lend itself to establishing a causal claim between these two observations. But after conducting many interviews with students and parents in their Bay Area homes I did see a pattern emerge that is relevant to this question.

The majority of second generation college students I met live at home with their parents, who continue to support their children economically.¹² One father, who has two children in college, told me

We give them everything they need. They have a room, they have food, they can use the car. Anything extra, the cell phone, anything like that, that’s for them. But the basics, we have that here and as long as they’re in school and not in trouble they’ll always have that here.

¹¹ Sources for Table 5.4. Tlacuitapa second generation high school completion: all U.S. born respondents primarily educated in the United States ages 19 and higher, n=38. Tlacuitapa second generation BA/BS completion: all U.S. born respondents primarily educated in the United States ages 25 and higher, n=19. Native-born Mexican-Americans (both statistics) from 2000 Census 5% PUMS reported in Rumbaut (2005). Note that the second column reports attainment for all native-born Mexican-Americans, not just the second generation. Rumbaut’s numbers, however, are not significantly different from a reliable, earlier estimate of attainment specific to the Mexican-American second generation (Farley and Alba 2002).

¹² This finding may be partially attributable to sampling bias. See Appendix A for further reflections on how the sampling protocol may impact this project’s findings.

This mindset seemed common among parents. When I asked students about moving out of the house, they told me that they felt no pressure to leave while they were still establishing themselves economically. Tlacuitapense parents and children seem to come to a common understanding: parents will provide economic support while their children study. The first “prong” of Tlacuitapense exceptionalism seems to enable the second: economic security begets conditions that facilitate college enrollment and completion.

Tlacuitapense parents are more secure than the average Mexican immigrant in the United States, a product of their long presence in the United States and the impact of IRCA. While their children are finishing high school at rates similar to native-born Mexican-Americans, the college completion rate among the Tlacuitapense second generation is over three times greater than it is for native born Mexican-Americans. These findings challenge several assumptions underlying the deterministic “dissonant acculturation through oppositional attitudes” paradigm; specifically the notion that Mexicans in the United States have so little intra-group variation as to permit the use of “one size fits all” theoretical models.

Theoretical Implications

The immigrant/involuntary minority framework adapted by Matute-Bianchi to describe Mexican-origin youth informs the downward assimilation component of the segmented assimilation model (Portes and Zhou 1993: 87). A central point of debate is the attitudes and behaviors of the U.S. born second generation, and both studies imply

significant dissonant acculturation among Mexican-Americans born to immigrant parents.

The Tlacuitapense second generation remains optimistic about their life chances in the United States. This finding encourages an expansion of the “immigrant minority” concept to include U.S. born youth in immigrant families.¹³ (see Taylor 2008 for a similarly expansive conceptualization of “immigrant minority”). By approaching life in the United States as “immigrant minorities,” native born Tlacuitapense youth remain connected to Mexico and retain their parents’ hopeful outlook when it comes to upwards mobility in the United States.

Jimenez and Fitzgerald’s (2008) reorientation framework sets the table for this reconceptualization by encouraging researchers to employ a binational comparison that reflects the perspectives of immigrants themselves. Multi-sited fieldwork is key to this endeavor. Only by incorporating a rich understanding of both the origin and destination communities can the researcher begin to understand what Suarez-Orozco (1991) terms “the dual frame of reference” employed by immigrant families (Fitzgerald 2006).

Tlacuitapense Exceptionalism and Segmented Assimilation

On balance, the Tlacuitapense second generation shows signs of selective acculturation and initial hints of full economic incorporation into the mainstream. This contradicts the finding that being Mexican is an exogenous determinant of dissonant

¹³ See Taylor (2008) for an equally expansive conceptualization of “immigrant minority.” The case studies included by Gibson and Ogbu (1991) are exemplars of a more narrow reading of the “immigrant minority” label, which is restricted in the initial formulation to immigrant children – the 1.5 generation.

acculturation even when controlling for socioeconomic status (Portes et al 2009). Tlacuitapense exceptionalism explains the discrepancy.

According to the segmented assimilation model, three background characteristics – parental human capital, family composition, and modes of incorporation – should determine whether the second generation undergoes selective or dissonant acculturation. Mexican immigrant families are thought to come with low levels of human capital, tend to have “unstable families,” and have a negative context of reception in the United States. Following the theory’s logical progression, these negative background characteristics lead to dissonant acculturation throughout the Mexican-American second generation (Portes et al 2009: 1085).

At the same time, Portes and colleagues know that there are many *individual* outcomes that run contrary to their model. After collecting the data for CILS-III, they interviewed several “exceptions” to the norm; that is, economically successful, selectively acculturated children of immigrants. Though their qualitative work, Portes and Fernandez-Kelly (2008) identify several factors that lead to selective acculturation for individuals.

But the Tlacuitapense second generation appears to be – at least in terms of education – to be selective acculturating *as a group*. The long tenure of Tlacuitapenses in the United States combined with the positive effects of IRCA on the immigrant generation have together enabled the second generation *en masse* to make educational strides that contradict the low expectations of the segmented assimilation model as it applies to Mexican American youth. In other words, these factors have “protected” the

second generation against the most pernicious negative “background factors” that impact the Mexican-American community as a whole.

Figure 5.1 demonstrates how the background factors identified by Portes and colleagues as determinants of acculturation are manifested in the Tlacuitapense community. The first factor, human capital, is where the Tlacuitapense community most conforms to the demographic characteristics of Mexican immigrants. Most immigrants from Tlacuitapa have little formal education. This must hinder occupational mobility among the immigrant generation. This constraint may be mitigated, however, by another feature of the Tlacuitapense community: their strong union ties. Fifty-eight percent of male Tlacuitapense immigrants work in construction, and the overwhelming majority of these workers are unionized. By linking Tlacuitapense immigrants to higher paying, more stable job opportunities, union participation boosts the cultural and human capital levels of the Tlacuitapense community.

	Human Capital	Family Composition	Mode of Incorporation
Positive	most men are unionized	high marriage stability most 18-25 year olds continue to live with parents	high levels of documentation
Negative	low levels of formal education		unauthorized initial entry into the U.S. stigma of association with undocumented immigrant flows

Figure 5.1: Background Determinants of Acculturation for Tlacuitapenses in the United States

Tlacuitapense families are very strong. In the CILS-III analysis, only 59.5 percent of Mexican families were considered “stable,” which is defined as children living with both biological parents (Portes et al 2009: 1085). MMFRP does not ask youth if they live with their biological parents, but several statistics do indicate that Tlacuitapense families in the United States are remarkably stable. Ninety-three percent of the 130 Tlacuitapense immigrant parents who live with their children also live with their spouse or partner. Eighty-six percent of the second generation under 25 years of age live with both parents. These data strongly suggest that Tlacuitapense families in the United States are substantially more intact than the Mexican families that compose the CILS-III survey.

Portes and colleagues say that Mexicans are negatively incorporated into the United States because their nationality is a proxy for low rates of documentation. However, I have already shown in Table 5.3 how Tlacuitapense immigrants are much more likely than their co-nationals to be U.S. citizens or legally resident in the United States. The Tlacuitapense community has largely overcome the negative impact of their initial, undocumented entry into the United States and settled into stable families and relatively secure jobs.

The immigrant generation from Tlacuitapa does not possess most of the background determinants that lead to dissonant acculturation; in fact, their exceptional position in the United States serves as the foundation for the selective acculturation of their children. Our inability to easily explain the educational success of the Tlacuitapense second generation using conventional theory casts some doubt on the use of Mexican nationality as a determinant of dissonant acculturation.

Resegmenting Assimilation

The segmented assimilation model fails to sufficiently account for intra-group variation among Mexican immigrant families in the United States. Portes et al. find that being Mexican is an exogenous determinant of life outcomes associated with dissonant acculturation, but they do not control for a key variable that this study brings to light: parental documentation status.

There are an estimated 12.7 million Mexican immigrants in the United States today. Nearly half – 45 percent – are authorized to be in the country (Pew Hispanic Center 2009), making parental documentation status an important contribution to the intra-group variation of the Mexican-American community. Any model that seeks to predict acculturation outcomes for the second generation should consider the documentation status of parents *as individuals* instead of assuming a negative reception in the United States based on presumed public perceptions of an ethnic group.

In addition to including information about parental documentation status, the socioeconomic indicators used to explain students' attainment should be refined. The most recent analysis of the CILS-III data does contain a socioeconomic status measure. However, how this variable is constructed is not specified and it may not take into account the extent to which family resources are apportioned with children's educational goals in mind.

Quantitative models should address socioeconomic status by factoring how a family directs the use of their resources to their children's education. Participation in the safe harbors discussed in the preceding chapter is not free. The reality of Bobby's

involvement in his varsity soccer team is that players and parents have to shell out money for uniforms, transportation, summer camps, and the like. In Martina's case, participation in PUENTE does not have a significant financial cost, but enrollment in the program presents a burden to the family in the form of required fundraising and parent meetings at night and on the weekends. Families with resources will find it easier to participate in PUENTE and its sister AVID and charter school specific programs. Simply analyzing a family's socioeconomic status is an incomplete measure of how parents' resources impact their children's education; more fine-grained analysis must determine the extent to which those same resources are allocated in ways that directly shape educational success.

“Resegmenting assimilation” requires moving beyond sweeping, overly deterministic statements about entire ethnic or national groups. A more helpful analysis of the acculturation and assimilation of the second generation depends upon looking at the causal mechanisms that help shape the life chances of individuals. Several factors that should be included – namely parental documentation status and household allocation of resources to education – have been highlighted here. By recognizing intra-group variation, scholars considering these variables will be able to move away from hypothesizing about the theoretical life chances of groups, such as Mexican immigrant families, that are falsely perceived as monolithic and instead begin explaining the factors underlying the dissimilarity in individual outcomes in the second generation.

6. Conclusion

Tlacuitapa is a binational immigrant community. In this study Tlacuitapa is defined to include not just the town located in the Jalisco highlands but also well-established destination communities of Tlacuitapenses in the United States. This deterritorialized conceptualization of Tlacuitapa permits a comparison across borders of educational metrics that are key to understanding the acculturation of Tlacuitapenses in the United States.

The educational aspirations of current students on both sides of the border are compared in Chapter 3. Tlacuitapense youth in both the origin and destination communities set high educational goals for themselves. When we asked students to state the highest level of school they wanted to complete, the median response in Mexico and the United States was the same: a complete college education.

Though aspirations are high throughout the community in an absolute sense, Tlacuitapense youth in the United States did set relatively higher goals when compared to their peers living in Tlacuitapa. Two factors – both relating to “proximity” – account for this difference. First, students in the United States grow up physically close to schools that generally provide a free education. By contrast, there is no high school in rural Tlacuitapa and transportation to the nearest high school and college is prohibitively expensive. Second, the rapidly growing Tlacuitapense second generation in the United States grows up “socially close” to white collar workers. As mentors, role models, and institutional agents these middle class professionals inspire immigrant youth to seek jobs in the primary labor market and provide information and opportunities that facilitate their entry into postsecondary education.

Educational attainment is initially compared by age cohort. In each age group, respondents educated north of the border attained far more years of schooling. Regression analysis confirms that having been educated in the United States is a significant, positive indicator of educational attainment among Tlacuitapenses. The causal mechanisms undergirding increased attainment in the United States are similar to those that push aspirations higher north of the border. Physical proximity to school and the availability of public transportation facilitate enrollment and retention in school. Tlacuitapense youth also have high participation rates in “safe harbors,” which are defined as features of the educational system that directly or indirectly encourage academic engagement among at-risk youth. Varsity sports and academic programs specially tailored to the needs of Mexican-American youth are two examples of safe harbors cited in Chapter 4.

Heeding the call for a spatial reorientation in immigration studies (Jiménez and Fitzgerald 2008), this multi-site study finds convergent educational aspirations but disparate outcomes among the Tlacuitapense community. This conclusion reveals the limitations of two oft-cited theories that seek to explain the aspirations and educational attainment of immigrant youth: the immigrant/involuntary minority dichotomy developed by John Ogbu and the segmented assimilation model elaborated by Alejandro Portes and colleagues.

Throughout Ogbu’s work the optimistic “immigrant minority” perspective on the American opportunity structure is usually attributed to immigrant parents and the so-called 1.5 generation of immigrant children. In those cases where the binary comparison is applied to second generation youth, the children of immigrants are

generally portrayed as ambivalent toward their chances for economic mobility or as adopting the oppositional attitudes of involuntary minorities (Matute-Bianchi 1991). But the U.S. born Tlacuitapense second generation is very upbeat when describing their educational and occupational goals. These Mexican-American youth “stretch” the boundaries of the immigrant minority tag in ways not fully discussed by Ogbu’s collaborators.

The Tlacuitapense second generation aspires to professional jobs in the primary labor market. The high school and college completion rates of U.S. born Tlacuitapenses also compare favorably native-born Mexican-Americans as a whole. These two empirical findings call into question the blanket applicability of Portes’s expectation, and subsequent finding, that Mexican-origin youth are particularly susceptible to undergoing dissonant acculturation and assimilating into a rainbow underclass (Portes and Zhou 1993, Portes et al. 2009).

Segmented assimilation theory posits that Mexican immigrants are negatively received by American society because they are likely to enter the United States without authorization. But Tlacuitapense immigrants are exceptional in this regard; the immigrant generation is overwhelmingly documented. Their mode of incorporation into the United States is more neutral or positive than the overall body of Mexican immigrants. This distinction impacts the second generation, which have seen their fathers work in union jobs and their mothers leave the house to engage in steady, on-the-books employment. Tlacuitapense youth retains their parents’ optimism as they form their own goals and progress through school.

Legal Tlacuitapense immigrants have attained comparatively great economic stability in the United States. They are long-term homeowners well integrated into their neighborhoods. They out-earn the median Mexican immigrant in the United States by about 20 percent. Their socioeconomic status is by no means exceptionally high; these are, by most measures, modest people living in working class conditions. But their long tenure in the United States and relative legal and economic security set them apart individually and as a community from the general population of Mexican migrants in the United States.

Future Research Directions

I argue that assimilation theory should be “resegmented” to account for the lessons learned from the Tlacuitapense community in the United States. Having documented parents has favorable direct and indirect effects on student aspirations and attainment, and should be considered in any analysis of acculturation and assimilation. Measures of socioeconomic status should be refined to include allocation of resources to the education of the second generation. Knowing how much money parents make and how many major appliances they have at home may be important, but a more direct measure of the impact of wealth should consider the interface between household socioeconomic status and access to safe harbors.

Jiménez and Fitzgerald’s (2009) call for spatial reorientation of immigration studies informed this study’s critique of segmented assimilation theory and refinement of Ogbu’s immigrant/involuntary minority framework. Multi-sited fieldwork that includes survey and ethnographic work in both the origin and destination communities

can fully inform binational research projects that shed considerable more light on the attitudes and experiences of immigrants.

Policy Implications

This study analyzes the educational success of second generation Mexican-Americans as a product of two independent observations: the legal and economic security of immigrant parents and the participation of second generation youth in “safe harbors.” I will develop separate policy recommendations from both observations.

The proposed DREAM Act seeks to regularize the status of students who were brought into the United States as minors, attended school in the United States, and have no other pathway to gainful employment. The approximately 360,000 immigrant children who would benefit from the DREAM Act will undoubtedly welcome such a change to the American immigration regime (MPI 2006). But this number is miniscule compared to the 3.3 million Hispanic youth in the United States with at least one undocumented parent (Fry and Passel 2009). The lessons of IRCA are instructive in how a regularization program could impact these youth.

Tlacuitapense parents were largely regularized under IRCA. The economic success of Tlacuitapense parents is the foundation of their children’s ultimate educational achievements; this same economic stability is a function of the fact that Tlacuitapense parents are U.S. citizens and permanent residents. Regularizing parents who are currently in the United States illegally is a critical first step in support their U.S. citizen children’s academic development.

Economic stability does not automatically follow regularization. A particular feature of the Tlacuitapense immigrant generation is a high level of union participation. Government, and unions themselves, can do much to lower the barriers to union membership for immigrants. Membership can be conferred regardless of immigration status. Government contracts, particularly those paid for by stimulus money, can require union labor, thus increasing the number of union jobs available for an entire decade. Proposals such as the legislation popularly known as “card-check” can facilitate unionization. Many individual Tlacuitapenses have astutely used union membership – with its accompanying wages and employment opportunities – to ensure economic stability for their families.

Tlacuitapense youth have participated in “safe harbor” programs that facilitate educational achievement. Unfortunately, these programs are frequently fall victim to budgetary stress and can be challenging to access. Federal and state governments must resist the urge to be penny-wise but pound-foolish. Strong extra-curricular activities and co-curricular supports are critical for the academic success of immigrant youth. The federal government, in particular, could strengthen the current Race to the Top program (and its eventual successors) by recognizing the importance of safe harbors and using federal funding as a vehicle for the expansion of such programs.

Funding educational programs will always be politically popular, but the immigrant proposals discussed above will be contentious. This study argues that regularizing currently undocumented immigrants will lead to positive educational outcomes for their children. As debates about immigration reform will continue to be a part of American public discourse, the link between parents’ legal and economic

security and the life chances of their children should be remembered. The long-term health of the American economy depends on training each successive generation to be competitive in a technology driven global economy. Policies that fail to promote the full incorporation of immigrant families are counterproductive in the context of global competitiveness.

Appendix A: Reflections on Fieldwork

Many people find comfort in empirical data. I sometimes join them, but I also would borrow from (and gently modify) Mark Twain: “In life there are lies, damned lies, and academic findings supported by statistics.” I remain skeptical that any observation, either qualitative or quantitative, can accurately represent the complex interactions that form human society. Instead of viewing it as an incomplete version of the truth, however, I choose to continue gathering data. Social scientists must walk a fine line; empirical evidence must not be eschewed as insufficient nor may it be treated as incontrovertible truth. We must be transparent in discussing the limitations of our data so that our work can be viewed in its proper context. In short, we must never overreach.

This appendix is my attempt to be transparent regarding the collection and analysis of the data used in this thesis. I have placed these concerns in an appendix not to hide them, but rather to allow myself ample opportunity to describe the hesitations and concerns that came to mind as I carried out this project without distracting from arguments I present in the body of the study.

Sampling Error

My principle concern regards systematic sampling error. If we multiply interviewers by days in the field to create a unit called “interview days,” MMFRP spent approximately 200 interview days in Tlacuitapa but only 50 interview days in the United States. This imbalance has several ramifications, each of which introduces the

possibility of systematic over- or undercounting of certain social groups in our “research universe.” Instead of tediously listing every possible source of error, I will shortly discuss two potential sampling problems that could greatly impact the quality of this study.

We went to Tlacuitapa during the town’s annual fiestas in the hopes of interviewing vacationing U.S.-based immigrants. And indeed, we conducted 128 interviews with people living in the United States while we were in the town, accounting for 18.6 percent of the respondents interviewed in Mexico. We must, however, be aware of a possible selection bias inherent in this method. At a time when Mexican immigrant communities are suffering from especially high levels of un- and underemployment, not all Tlacuitapenses had the financial resources to travel to Jalisco for the 2010 town fiestas. As we interviewed “vacationing” immigrants in Tlacuitapa, we *may* have been interviewing the most economically successful of those Tlacuitapenses living in the United States.

U.S. based fieldwork is supposed to be a remedy for this type of bias, and in fact we were able to capture data that would probably have been lost if we only interviewed people in Mexico. The U.S.-based research, however, suffered from the limitations inherent in our snowball sampling method. In Tlacuitapa, we asked for the contact information of U.S. based relatives from each person we interviewed; these are the people we called when we arrived in Union City and Oklahoma City. After we interviewed those people, they referred us to other Tlacuitapenses.

Snowball sampling is an important research tool when considering difficult to reach “hidden populations” (Snijders 1992; Biernacki and Waldorf 1981). However it

has the tendency to tap into certain social networks and ignore others (Erickson 1979). Biernacki and Waldorf (1981) exhort us to monitor this potential bias and consider our findings in light of it. Because our U.S. based fieldwork started with contacts we received in Mexico (from a likely non-random group of returned migrants), it is possible that our U.S.-based fieldwork may have reinforced the socio-economic bias of our Mexico-based interviewing.

Undetected, systemic sampling error is problematic because it privileges the responses of certain groups of respondents over others. But I make no claim to have interviewed a representative sample of all Tlacuitapenses, nor do I argue that Tlacuitapenses are representative of Mexican immigrant families in the United States. The strength of this study is the fact that it focuses on a group of people who do not represent the modal or median case. In order to argue that parental documentation status should receive greater attention in the study of immigrant assimilation, I needed to focus on talking to children of documented immigrants instead of trying to chase down a more “representative” sample of second generation Mexican-Americans. As Becker (1998) points out, we can best challenge well-established thought by looking for the rare case.

Ethnography To Go

One of the strengths of this study is the integration of qualitative and quantitative data. Case studies, quotes from interviewees, and personal observations find themselves next to descriptive tables and regression models, and thus it may appear as though I rely equally on qualitative and quantitative methods throughout throughout

the study. While I wish this were true, I must be candid in saying that at its core this is a quantitative study.

I rely on statistical data to lay the foundation for the conclusions presented in this study. The 830 interviews conducted by the MMFRP team paint a far more representative picture than the few education related, semi-structured interviews I was able to conduct. This is why Chapters 3 and 4 begin by presenting quantitative models before employing qualitative data to help interpret the statistical findings. The semi-structured interviews are important: they help the reader (and the researcher) breathe life into the numbers. But the usefulness of the qualitative data should not obfuscate the fact that the findings themselves are primarily arrived at through statistical inference.

Appendix B: List of Semi-Structured Interviews Referenced

Interview Number	Interviewee (pseudonym)	Interviewee's Place of Residence	Interviewee's Documentation and Immigration Status
1	Eréndira	Berkeley, California	US born citizen
2	Linda	Tlacuitapa, Jalisco	non-migrant
3	Manuel	Tlacuitapa, Jalisco	non-migrant
4	Roberto	Tlacuitapa, Jalisco	aspiring migrant
5	Miguel	Union City, California	US born citizen
6	Luis	Union City, California	US born citizen
7	Adrián	Union City, California	US born citizen
8	Lizbeth	Union City, California	US born citizen
9	Pedro	Tlacuitapa, Jalisco	non-migrant
10	Javier	Tlacuitapa, Jalisco	non-migrant
11	Anabel	Tlacuitapa, Jalisco	non-migrant
12	Oscar	Marlton, New Jersey	legal permanent resident
13	Mona	Union City, California	US born citizen
14	David	Union City, California	US born citizen
15	Martina	Hayward, California	US born citizen

Appendix C: The Quantitative Questionnaire

i. Hace tres años, un grupo de estudiantes vino a Tlacuitapa para hablar con la gente de aquí. ¿Alguien de ese grupo de hace tres años le entrevistó a usted?

ii. Primer nombre

1 ¿En qué año y mes nació usted?

2 ¿Y dónde nació?

3 ¿Dónde vive usted actualmente?

4 ¿Asiste usted actualmente a la escuela?

5-8 ¿Hasta qué año aprobó usted en la escuela?

9 ¿Hasta qué año o grado aprobó su padre en la escuela? ¿Y dónde estudió?

10 ¿Y su madre?

11 ¿Puede usted leer y hablar inglés? ¿Y en español?

12 ¿Hasta qué grado cree que va a poder llegar usted?

13 ¿Hasta qué grado le gustaría estudiar?

14 ¿Qué tan fácil o difícil es que un joven termine la preparatoria [high school] en la comunidad donde usted reside?

15 ¿Qué tan fácil o difícil es que un joven termine la universidad [college] en la comunidad donde usted reside?

16 Hay muchos motivos para estudiar. En su opinión, ¿por qué estudian los jóvenes de Tlacuitapa?

17 ¿Cuáles son los tres problemas más importantes para un joven que quiere terminar la preparatoria [high school] en la ciudad dónde usted reside?

18 ¿Alguien en su casa participa en el programa Oportunidades?

20 ¿Alguna vez usted ha estado casado o ha vivido en unión libre? ¿En qué año inició? ¿Causa por la que terminó?

21 En los últimos 6 meses, ¿con qué frecuencia pudo ver a su pareja?

Información sobre hijos: edad, sexo, lugar de nacimiento, estatus migratorio, año en que fue a EEUU por primera vez, lugar donde reside, año en que murió, años de escuela terminados, estatus académico, ¿hasta qué grado quiere que llegue en la escuela?

Información sobre parentesco: número, lugar donde residen, documentación en EEUU, cuántos viven en su casa y si contribuyen económicamente; apuntado para parejas, hermanos, hijos, padres y abuelos.

31 ¿Cuántas veces al mes hace usted llamadas a sus familiares que viven al otro lado?

32 ¿Y cuántas veces al mes recibe usted llamadas de sus familiares que viven al otro lado?

33 ¿En dónde hace o recibe sus llamadas, la mayor parte del tiempo?

34 En el mes pasado, ¿cuántas veces asistió a misa?

35 ¿En qué trabaja usted principalmente?

36 ¿Cómo se desempeña usted en su trabajo actual? (*Posición en el trabajo*)

37 ¿Cuánto tiempo lleva de desempleado?

Información sobre la vivienda en 2007, 2008 y 2009: lugar donde vivió, número de personas con que vivió, pago mensual (renta o hipoteca), ocupación, posición en el trabajo, horas trabajadas por semana, ingresos totales, semanas con desempleo.

38 ¿Por cuánto tiempo en total ha vivido en otras partes de Jalisco o de México?

39 Para este nuevo año 2010, ¿usted piensa ir a vivir a alguna otra parte de Jalisco o de México?

40 ¿A dónde?

41 ¿Alguna vez ha ido, o ha intentado ir a los EEUU para vivir o trabajar?

Información migratoria: número de viajes, lugar de destino, año y mes en que llegó, documentación cuando pasó, número de veces detenido en el cruce, usó coyote, dinero pagado al coyote, tiempo del viaje, primera ocupación en EEUU, posición en el trabajo, cuanto ganó, horas trabajadas por semana.

SOBRE EL PRIMER VIAJE

42 Antes de que usted se fuera a los EEUU por primera vez, ¿cuántas personas de entre sus padres, hermanos y cónyuge tenía ya viviendo en los EEUU?

43 Antes de salir de Tlacuitapa por primera vez, ¿en qué trabajaba usted principalmente?

44 Antes de salir de Tlacuitapa por primera vez, ¿cómo se desempeñaba usted?

45 ¿Cuánto ganaba en ese trabajo?

SOBRE EL ULTIMO VIAJE

46 ¿Cómo logró juntar o conseguir el dinero para pagar el viaje?

47 ¿Por cuál parte de la frontera pasó o intentó pasar?

48 Cuando pasó la frontera, ¿lo hizo con papeles, o tuvo que entrar sin papeles?

49 Al entrar a los EEUU en su último viaje, ¿los agentes de la migración o de la aduana de los EEUU le hizo alguno de las siguientes cosas [segunda revisión, detención, inspección del carro, revisar el cuerpo o ropa]?

50 ¿Cuántas veces intentó cruzar la frontera durante su último viaje o intento a cruzar a los EEUU?

- 51 ¿Cuántas veces fue detenido?
- 52 Entonces, ¿pudo pasar o no?
- 53 ¿Pasó usted por una garita?
- 54 ¿Cómo logró pasar por la garita?
- 55 ¿De qué manera cruzó la línea?
- 56 ¿Cuántas personas estaban con usted cuando cruzó la línea / la garita?
- 57 ¿En su último cruce [o intento de cruzar], en dónde se reunió con el coyote que le ayudó a cruzar?
- 58 ¿Quién se lo recomendó?
- 59 ¿Pudo seleccionar entre varios coyotes al coyote que contrató?
- 60 ¿Negoció el precio del cruce con el coyote que usó?
- 61 ¿Cuánto tiempo necesitó para pagar la deuda al coyote (O a la persona que le prestó el dinero)?
- 62 En los últimos 5 años, ¿dónde ha pasado más tiempo, en Tlacuitapa o en los EEUU?
- 63 En los últimos 5 años, ¿cuántas veces pudo usted regresar a Tlacuitapa, incluyendo visitas breves y vacaciones?
- 64 En su último viaje a los EEUU, ¿se quedó más tiempo de lo que tenía planeado?
- 65 ¿Usted piensa regresar a México este año 2010 para vivir o trabajar?
- 65a ¿A dónde?
- 66 Para este año 2010, ¿piensa ir a vivir en otra ciudad en los EEUU?
- 67 ¿A dónde?
- 68 ¿Usted ha tenido que quedarse en los EEUU aunque su visa se venció?
- 69 Actualmente, ¿qué tan difícil es evadir la migra: muy fácil, algo fácil, algo difícil, o muy difícil?
- 70 Actualmente, si uno no tiene papeles, ¿qué tan peligroso es cruzar la frontera: muy peligroso, algo peligroso, poco peligroso, o nada peligroso?
- 71 ¿Conocía personalmente a alguien que se fue a los EEUU y que murió al intentar a cruzar la frontera?
- 72 ¿Sabe usted si en los últimos 3 años el gobierno de los EEUU ha hecho algo para eliminar la entrada de gente indocumentada a los EEUU?
- 73 ¿Cree usted que el cambio de Presidente en los Estados Unidos ha hecho que el cruce SIN papeles a los Estados Unidos sea más difícil o más fácil?
- 74 ¿Cree usted que el cambio de Presidente en los Estados Unidos ha hecho que obtener documentos para ir o trabajar en los EEUU sea más difícil o más fácil?

75 Ahora le voy a enseñar algunos dibujos. De las cosas que se muestran en estos dibujos, ¿cuáles son las tres que más le preocupan a una persona que va a cruzar la frontera sin papeles?

76 De las cosas que se muestran en estos dibujos, ¿cuáles son las tres que *más* le preocupan a un migrante que vive en la ciudad donde usted vive [o en la ciudad donde viven sus familiares] en los EEUU?

77 Si la migra llega a la casa de alguien, ¿es obligatorio abrir la puerta?

78 Si la migra le pregunta algo a una persona, ¿es obligatorio responder?

79 Si una persona que no tiene papeles es detenida, ¿esa persona tiene el derecho de consultar a un abogado?

80 Si una persona que no tiene papeles es detenida, ¿esa persona tiene el derecho de explicarle su situación a un juez?

81 Algunas personas dicen que los políticos en la ciudad donde usted vive NO cuidan los intereses de los migrantes. Otros dicen que los políticos SÍ cuidan los intereses de los migrantes. En su experiencia, ¿los políticos de su ciudad cuidan los intereses de los migrantes?

82 Y en su experiencia, ¿cómo trata la policía a los migrantes en su ciudad?

83 Si le robaran en la ciudad donde vive, ¿lo reportaría a la policía o no lo reportaría?

84 En los últimos 12 meses, ¿cuántas veces ha sido parado por la policía en los EEUU?

85 ¿En dónde fue parado la ultima vez?

86 ¿Qué tipo de documentos le pidió la policía? [le detuvieron por unas horas, le detuvieron más de un día, le pusieron una multa, le quitaron el carro, le dio una mordida al official].

87 ¿Qué le pasó después del encuentro con la policía?

88 En los últimos 12 meses, ¿cuántas veces ha sido parado por la policía en México?

89 ¿En dónde fue parado la ultima vez?

90 ¿Qué le pasó después del encuentro con la policía? [le detuvieron por unas horas, le detuvieron más de un día, le pusieron una multa, le quitaron el carro, le dio una mordida al official].

91 ¿Para este nuevo año 2010, piensa ir a los EEUU?

92 ¿Piensa cruzar con un coyote?

93 En el año pasado, ¿tuvo que cancelar un viaje a los EEUU que tenía planeado hacer?

94 ¿Por qué no realizó su viaje?

95 ¿Usted ha tenido una green card / una mica de residente permanente legal?

96 ¿En qué año la recibió?

97 ¿Cómo obtuvo su mica/green card?

- 98 ¿Usted tiene la ciudadanía estadounidense?
- 99 ¿En qué año recibió la ciudadanía?
- 100 Si hubiera un nuevo programa de legalización o una amnistía para migrantes en los EEUU, ¿estaría usted más dispuesto/a a ir a los Estados Unidos, o le daría igual?
- 101 Si hubiera un nuevo programa de trabajadores temporales, parecido al programa de los Braceros de los años 50's, ¿estaría interesado/a en participar?
- 102 ¿Cómo consiguió su último trabajo en los EEUU?
- 103 ¿Cuánto tiempo necesitó para encontrar ese trabajo?
- 104 ¿El patrón es [era] de Tlacuitapa?
- 105 Cuando empezó a trabajar en su trabajo más reciente en los EEUU, ¿el patrón le pidió algún documento de identificación?
- 106 ¿Qué tipo de documento?
- 107 En su estancia actual o más reciente en los EEUU, ¿en alguna ocasión presentó papeles falsos/prestados con la intención de conseguir un trabajo?
- 108 ¿Alguna vez en Estados Unidos un patrón le ha dicho que no podía trabajar o conseguir trabajo porque presentó papeles falsos/chuecos?
- 109 ¿Cuándo fue? (año)
- 110 ¿Dónde fue? (ciudad y estado)
- 111 ¿Los patrones en la ciudad donde usted reside en los Estados Unidos están obligados por ley a verificar los papeles que les presentan los empleados?
- 112 ¿La policía de la ciudad donde usted reside en los Estados Unidos trabaja con la migra para encontrar y deportar inmigrantes indocumentados?
- 113 En los últimos tres años, ¿hubo redadas en el lugar de su trabajo en los EEUU?
- 114 ¿En qué año ocurrió?
- 115 ¿En dónde (ciudad/estado)?
- 116 ¿Estuvo usted presente cuando la migra llegó?
- 117 ¿Fue detenido?
- 118 En los últimos tres años, ¿la migra lo deportó alguna vez?
- 119 ¿En qué año ocurrió?
- 120 ¿En dónde fue detenido?

- 121 ¿A dónde lo llevaron?
- 122 ¿Tiene usted algún familiar o amigo cercano que haya sido detenido por la migra en una redada en el trabajo?
- 123 ¿Qué tan fácil o difícil es encontrar trabajo en los EEUU actualmente?
- 124 ¿Es más difícil conseguir trabajo en Union City o en Oklahoma City?
- 125 ¿Los trabajos son mejor pagados en Union City o en Oklahoma City?
- 126 ¿Es más caro vivir en Union City o en Oklahoma City?
- 127 En su opinión, ¿diría que la situación económica actual en los Estados Unidos es muy buena, algo buena, algo mala, o muy mala?
- 128 En su opinión, ¿diría que la situación económica actual en México es muy buena, algo buena, algo mala, o muy mala?
- 129 Desde 2007, ¿alguien en su casa ha regresado de los EEUU a Tlacuitapa por falta de trabajo?
- 130 Desde 2007, ¿alguien en su casa fue deportado?
- 131 Algunas personas dicen que los jóvenes nacidos en Tlacuitapa pueden progresar en la vida sin salir del pueblo. Otras personas dicen que para superarse, los jóvenes nacidos en Tlacuitapa tienen que salir. ¿Qué diría usted?
- 132 ¿Cómo se paga el consumo diario en su casa?
- 133 En su hogar, ¿es una mujer o un hombre quien sostiene la familia económicamente?
- 134 En su hogar, ¿es una mujer o un hombre quien toma las decisiones sobre el uso del dinero?
- 135 ¿Me puede decir cuánto gana su pareja actualmente?
- 136 ¿Usted es propietario de la casa/el departamento donde vive?
- 137 ¿La está pagando o ya la terminó de pagar?
- 138 ¿Ha tenido dificultad en el pago de su vivienda en los últimos tres años?
- 139 ¿En los últimos tres años, cómo pudo juntar el dinero para los pagos de su vivienda?
- 140 ¿Ha cambiado de casa/departamento en los últimos tres años?
- 141 ¿En la casa/departamento donde vive, ha incrementado el número de personas en los últimos tres años?
- 142 En los últimos tres años, ¿tenía una casa que perdió por no poder hacer los pagos?
- 143 ¿En qué año la perdió?
- 144 ¿Me podría decir cuánto dinero trajo consigo cuando regresó a Tlacuitapa la última vez?

- 145 En su último viaje a los EEUU, ¿mandaba dinero a sus parientes en Tlacuitapa?
- 146 ¿Cuánto dinero mandaba?
- 147 En comparación con el año pasado, ¿ha cambiado el monto promedio que usted envía?
- 148 En total, ¿cuánto le costó su viaje más reciente a Tlacuitapa (incluyendo el costo de gasolina, comida, boletos de vuelo o camión, etc)?
- 149 En alguna ocasión en los últimos 2 años, ¿ha recibido dinero de alguien en México?
- 150 ¿Cómo cuánto dinero le mandaron la última vez de México?
- 151 ¿Actualmente, alguien en su hogar recibe dinero de alguien en los EEUU?
- 152 ¿Con qué frecuencia se recibe el dinero de los EEUU?
- 153 ¿Cuánto dinero recibió la última vez?
- 154 ¿Diría usted que recibe la misma cantidad que hace un año?
- 155 Durante el último año, ¿ha enviado alguna vez dinero a un familiar/amigo que viva en los Estados Unidos?
- 156 ¿Cómo cuánto dinero mandó a los EEUU la última vez?
- 157 En los últimos dos años, ¿pidió prestado dinero de alguien para financiar un viaje a los Estados Unidos?
- 158 ¿Se lo dio/dieron?
- 159 ¿Cuánto pidió en total?
- 160 Al fin, ¿pudo hacer el viaje?
- 161 ¿Cuáles de las siguientes cosas tiene la casa dónde vive actualmente?
[a Televisión; b Estéreo; c Refrigerador; d Computadora; e Lavadora; f Carro/Vehículo; g Agua Potable; h Luz / electricidad; i Estufa de gas/electricidad; j Baño; k Servicio de limpieza o empleada doméstica; l Cable o satellite TV; m Conexión de Internet]
- 162 ¿En los últimos 12 meses, alguien en su hogar ha tenido que sacar un préstamo o pedir un crédito para cubrir los gastos de la vida diaria?
- 163-165 Favor de decirme si alguna vez en los últimos tres años recibió ayuda de los siguientes programas, si sigue recibiendo la ayuda, y cuántos meses lleva participando con cada uno. ¿Recibió ayuda en los últimos 3 años? ¿Sigue recibiendo ayuda? ¿Número de meses que recibió ayuda?
[Cupones de alimentos / Foodstamps; Las prestaciones de desempleo / Unemployment; Bienestar / Welfare; Ayuda financiera / Financial Aid para gastos de la escuela; Food Bank / Food Pantry; Ayuda de la iglesia (ropa, comida, etc); Otro]
- 166 Le voy a leer una lista de tipos de servicios de salud ¿Me puede decir si en su último embarazo, o el de la madre de sus hijos, utilizó los siguientes servicios de salud y en dónde?
[a Vitaminas; b Citas regulares con el medico; c Ultrasonido; d Consejos alimenticios; e Parto; f Otro]

167 ¿En dónde vivió durante la mayor parte de su último embarazo (o el de la madre de sus hijos)?

168 Cuándo usted [o la madre de sus hijos] se embarazó de su último hijo:
[¿quería embarazarse [quería que se embarazara]?; ¿quería esperar más tiempo?; o ¿no quería embarazarse [quería que se embarazara]?]

169-170 Ahora le voy a leer una lista de tipos de enfermedades. ¿Podría decirme si alguna vez ha tenido síntomas de las siguientes enfermedades? ¿Me puede indicar si alguna vez un médico las diagnosticó y en qué año?
[a Diabetes; b Depresión; c Anemia; d Enfermedad de transmisión sexual/STD; e VIH/SIDA]

171 ¿Está en sus planes tener un hijo este año?

172 En los últimos 12 meses, ¿ha tenido una pareja?

173 ¿Qué hacen usted y su pareja para evitar el embarazo o una enfermedad?

174 ¿Es gratis o tiene que pagar para conseguirlo?

175 ¿Usted tiene algún tipo de *seguro médico*?

176 ¿Tiene su pareja algún tipo de *seguro médico*?

177 ¿Diría que la atención médica que puede conseguir en su localidad es buena o es mala?

178 ¿Qué se debe de hacer en la comunidad donde usted vive para mejorarla?

180 Lugar de la entrevista

181 Número en el plano:

182 Sexo de la persona entrevistada

183 Duración de la entrevista

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