

Assimilation beyond Earnings: An Analysis of Career
Aspirations and Job Satisfaction for two cohorts of
Mexican Immigrants in the United States

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines intergenerational changes in occupational satisfaction levels and career priorities for Mexican migrants living in San Antonio and Los Angeles in 1965 and 1998, using data from the Mexican American Study Project (MASP). This idea originates from contemporary literature that aims to shift to migrant's subjective understandings of "success" as a metric for assimilation. It uses an ordinary least squares regression to find that a migrant's education level, English fluency, age and being from San Antonio had a positive impact on the respondent's occupational satisfaction levels. Then, using multinomial logit models, I evaluate different factors that influence career priority choices for respondents in the MASP. The first multinomial logit model uses "Interest in Work" as its base case and the second multinomial logit model is relative to "financial aspects". In this analysis, generally, we find that an increase in human capital (education and language fluency) made respondents prioritize career aspects higher on more "self-actualized" priorities on the Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (i.e interest in work, social prestige) over more fundamental needs (i.e financial aspects and job security). The multinomial logit models also reveal that a respondent's location and gender also played a significant role in how respondents prioritized career aspects. Intergenerationally, career priorities and occupational satisfaction levels do not change substantively, with the exception that 2nd generation respondents value an "interest in work" more than their parents and "financial aspects" less than their parents. This study raises important questions about the ways we measure intergenerational mobility for migrants in the United States and offers an analysis of relatively understudied economic variables of career success.

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Preface

“Assimilation” is a term that is rooted in political, social and economic groundings, and for many, this term has shaped the ways we have engaged with our communities and ourselves. This word holds a special personal meaning for me. My parents’ nomadic jobs meant that I spent my school years in Shanghai, Baltimore, New Delhi and Mumbai. With every move, I grappled with the meaning of “assimilation” for myself. Did “being assimilated” mean having a new favourite food? Did it mean learning new languages? To me, “assimilation” was the way I had measured my own “success”, albeit how elusive the word may be. This thesis, thus, builds on my own introspective journey in understanding what it means to “assimilate”.

While Merriam Webster defines “assimilation” as the act or process of “absorbing into the cultural tradition of a population or group”, at Tufts, I learned that this term has been scrutinized in numerous ways across disciplines. In my sophomore year, I took a class, “The Economics of Migration”. I learned that many immigration economists define assimilation through a gradual “wage convergence” between native-born and foreign-born individuals with the same attributes and skills. Through multiple conversations with professors of many disciplines, I have learned that “assimilation” can also refer to the decline of the impact of these racial and cultural differences over time. This thesis thus uses economic variables, but also shifts the gaze to immigrants’ own definitions of assimilation. How do they define their success? What are their career goals and how satisfied are they with their jobs? Tracking occupational aspirations and satisfaction levels will allow me to incorporate immigrant dreams in our equation for “assimilation”

Chapter 1: Introduction

Context

In 2017, the number of international migrants worldwide stood at almost 258 million (or 3.4 percent of the world's population), according to UN Population Division estimates. Moreover, international migration has more than tripled in size since 1960, rising from 77 million to almost 259 million in 2015, according to the Migration Policy Institute. These unprecedented levels of global human movement have economic, political and social implications. Most recently, we have witnessed the extreme health consequences of human movement, with the COVID-19 Pandemic. These global implications trickle down to the individual level, as migrants deal with the physical, mental and emotional consequences of movement. Over time, we can measure these trends in human behavior through the study of migrant assimilation; the extent to which the differences between “foreign-born” and “native-born” individuals decline over time.

Migrant assimilation situates well within the domain of International Relations, due to its interdisciplinary aspect and its global relevance. Essentially, both sending and host countries carry stakes in the migration process. Many sending countries work hard to retain ties with their emigrants to preserve their economic health, evident in debates about “brain drain” and remittances. Meanwhile, host countries must adapt to the changing needs of the evolving demographic composition of their nations. Some international relations scholars even explore migration as a “weapon” for foreign policy (Greenhill, 2010). In Chapter 2, I conduct a literature review, wherein I examine many dimensions of migrant assimilation, including educational, linguistic, spatial, social relations and health. My analysis specifically focuses on the Mexican migrant population in the US,

however my findings can be relevant to other migratory contexts in different nations. Ultimately, exploring contemporary migrant assimilation requires an understanding of the consequences of colonial baggage and relationships between nations. In this context, I focus on the Mexican migration story to the US.

In my analysis, I challenge the conventional economists' definition of migrant assimilation to society which focuses on "the improvement in the relative wage of a specific immigrant cohort over time" and comparing the earnings to their "native born-counterparts" (George Borjas & Katz, 2007). While there are merits in examining earnings differentials between native and foreign-born individuals, my thesis expands the conventional economic definition to include occupational satisfaction levels and career priorities.

Background

Mexican immigrants in the United States make up "roughly 25 percent of the 44.5 million immigrants as of 2017"(Zong & Batalova, 2018). Mexican immigrants merit special attention, not only because many "arrive with very low levels of education, but also because many enter the United States without authorization"(Lee, 1998).

Additionally, this specific migrant group has endured a rise in political scrutiny under Trump's administration, with calls for a border wall and stricter immigration protocols. This political scrutiny stem from "fears-real or imagined-that today's newcomers and their children may form a new underclass and become a burden on America's society and economy" (Lee, 1998).

Mexicans represent the largest unauthorized immigrant group in the United States, with approximately 53 percent of the estimated 11.3 unauthorized immigrants in

the US being from Mexico, in 2016 (Zong & Batalova, 2018). Interestingly, the Mexican migration story represents “a deeply institutionalized, multigenerational social process” (Cornelius, 1981) . Mexican migratory patterns to the US, unlike that of other national-origin groups, have remained fairly continuous since the mid-1880s, punctuated by a few key large waves of migration, in response to US migration policy. Sociologists Richard Alba, Tomás Jiménez and Helen Marrow (2014) argue that “there is irony in this new attention to Mexicans because they have been an immigrant group for more than a century, and before then, they were a large part of the original population resident on territory that was incorporated into the USA by conquest”(R. Alba et al., 2014). In Chapter 2, I provide a deeper overview of the Mexican migration story to the US.

Scholars have largely centered the debate on Mexican migrant assimilation in terms of a “convergence to the mean”, or the “extent to which newcomers converge to the mean for native-born Americans” (Zhou et al., 2008). Thus, intergenerational migrant progress rests on a normative assumption that immigrants should become more like their native-born counterparts to officially “assimilate”. This approach seems to value an entire migrant group’s success in comparison to a sometimes-unachievable norm, due to structural and institutional barriers. Inspired by the work of Zhou et. al (2008), my thesis takes a “subject-centered approach” (Zhou et al., 2008). I aim to place the way members of the migrant communities perceive, define and measure occupational success at the center of my analysis. I will analyze the evolution of migrant’s career priorities and occupational satisfaction, as a means of exploring how migrants define assimilation.

Because Mexican Americans’ complex history of conquest with the United states resulted in present-day migrants that belong to generations past the first and second, I

sought a dataset that would capture this intergenerational aspect. My research uses the Mexican American Study Project Dataset 1965-66 and its follow-up from 1998-2002. The Mexican American Study Project offers a unique longitudinal and intergenerational data set that represents Mexican Americans living in San Antonio City and Los Angeles County in 1965 and 1998. This holistic survey consists of a mixture of pre-coded questions and open-ended questions, covering the respondents' "educational, work history and immigration history" as well as "household composition and attitudes income, health, participation in religious and social organizations, and political views" (Grebler et al., 2017). My analysis focuses on more qualitative economic variables, which are career priorities and occupational priorities and satisfaction levels. I also measure general demographic variables like age, sex, education, and English and Spanish language fluency levels.

Research Questions

My first research question asks how if, if at all, did Mexican immigrants' career priorities evolve from one generation to the next, and from 1965 to 1998? Were the changes (if any) similar or different in San Antonio and Los Angeles? Are the observable changes related to identifiable attributes including sex, age, birthplace, education level, English and Spanish language fluency, self-reported ethnic identification, survey year, and city? Then I ask, how have occupation satisfaction levels for Mexican migrants evolve over time. To what extent can we attribute these changes to observable characteristics of the immigrants and to generational changes?

Roadmap

In Chapter 2, I present the foundational debates and historical contexts for my research. I begin with a brief overview of Mexican migration to the United States, that spans from the early 1800s to present-day 2020, identifying key legislation and historical events that have shaped their migration story. Then, I pivot to a literature review that explores ways of measuring assimilation across various disciplines, which then focuses on economic debates in immigration assimilation. Section 2 ends by presenting work that explores assimilation beyond earnings: the scholarship that has inspired my own research. Chapter 3 outlines the theoretical framework that underlies my own approach and segues to Chapter 4 where I explicate my data and its limitations. Chapter 5 finally presents my results and Chapter 6 evaluates the findings with some discussion. Chapter 7 concludes my thesis and offers some greater implications of my work and how it fits into scholarly conversations. Please find my references and appendix at the very end of the thesis.

Chapter 2: Dimensions of Assimilation, A Review of the Scholarly Literature

While the Merriam-Webster definition of “assimilation” refers to the act or process of “absorbing into the cultural tradition of a population or group”, this term has been scrutinized and analyzed across multiple disciplines (*Assimilation*, n.d.). This term centers my research, as I aim to understand, in the most basic sense, how are foreign-born Mexican migrants doing in the United States? In other words, to what extent are they assimilating or have they assimilated? While I take a broadly economic approach to this research question (by looking at variables related to careers and occupations), my analysis complements and critiques the economic approach with other dimensions of migrant assimilation. Before the literature review, I provide a brief overview of the Mexican migration story to the United States, because Mexico and United States have shared complex and extensive relations over time. In the first part of my literature review, I outline five thematic concentrations that explain different perspectives on assimilation, studied across disciplines (primarily sociology and economics) and dimensions (educational, linguistic, spatial, social, and health). While these perspectives are valuable in painting a holistic picture of a migrant’s assimilation, I ultimately focus my analysis using economic variables. Therefore, the second part of my literature review covers foundational arguments and debates in economic assimilation. Finally, I conclude this section by explicating some scholarly work that tracks immigrant aspirations and satisfaction levels.

Overview of Mexican-American Migration to the United States 1880s-Present Day

Historically, Mexico and the United States have shared complex and extensive relations. Recent attention to this topic is deeply ironic. Indeed, this group has been here for more than a century, whose complicated story of conquest and now immigration greatly shapes the way we analyze current generations of immigrants and descendants. I will highlight what makes Mexican migration unique to US history, and then will focus on important legislative actions that have shaped Mexican migration patterns. Lastly, I will draw attention to San Antonio's and Los Angeles's history with Mexican migration, which are the two cities of focus for my data analysis.

People of Mexican descent have lived in current US territories for generations, spanning from the early 1800s. After Mexico gained independence from Spain, the Mexican government "continued colonization patterns, sending soldiers, missionaries and settlers to the Northern Mexican frontier"(Romo & Mogollon-Lopez, 2016). Eventually, the American government's quest in Manifest Destiny led to an armed conflict with Mexico in 1845, which resulted in the US annexation of nearly half of Mexico's territory, including present-day US states of Arizona, California, New Mexico, Nevada, Utah and parts of Colorado. In fact, Alba and Nee (2003) argue that the overall perception of Mexican Americans during this part of the nineteenth century was that of race and that "army US leaders argued that Mexicans were unable to govern and develop their precious land, and thus Manifest Destiny called for it to be ruled and developed by enterprising and intellectually superior White Americans" (R. D. Alba & Nee, 2003). The end of the war, marked by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, made some "fifty thousand Mexicans became US citizens and went from being a majority in their own country to a

minority in an alien land.” (Romo & Mogollon-Lopez, 2016). These changes in Mexican society shifted the relationship between people of Mexican origin in the United States and those living in Mexico, especially in the way that these “migrants” began to define themselves. According to Browning and Garza (1986), for several decades following the US-Mexican war, the people in the southwestern United States were as “Mexican” as those who lived south of the border, and over time the Mexican American community in the US became more heterogeneous, while “some enjoyed greater success and mobility than others”(Browning & de la Garza, 1986). Around this turn of the century, Mexicans in the Southwest were subject to segregation and horrible acts of racial violence, including “lynching, school segregation and segmented labor markets”(R. D. Alba & Nee, 2003).

The 1900s witnessed a new tone in immigration policy both derived from and resulting in political movements. Approximately 10 percent of Mexico’s population immigrated to the United States in the twenty-year period beginning about 1910 to 1920 (R. Alba & Nee, 1997) . This influx of immigration, combined with a growing demand for “cheap Mexican labour” led to the creation of the United States Border Patrol in 1924, that was sought to “control Mexican immigration”, contributing to growing racial tensions and an immigration debate. The wave of Mexican immigration temporarily paused during the Great Depression of 1929, and then resumed in around the 1940s with the Bracero program. The Bracero Program was a US policy to meet the labour demands produced by maritime shortages from World War 2, from 1942-1964. This meant that during this time period, the border between the US and Mexico became more permeable, and temporarily allowed for relatively more flexible migration between the US and

Mexico. However, after the Bracero program ended, many of the people who had worked legally under the program continued to cross the border and worked without official work authorization documents (Romo & Mogollon-Lopez, 2016). In 1965, the US government amended the Immigration and Nationality Act, and repealed the national origin quotas, and increased the number of available visas, and made “family ties to US residents the key factor that determined whether an applicant was admitted into the country”. Notably, 1965 was the year of the first wave of the Mexican American Study Project 1965, which means that many of the survey respondents may have migrated to the US as part of this program. In 1986, the US passed the Immigration Reform and Control Act, which was a response to pressures to control unauthorized immigration and to strengthen border controls. This act granted legalization status to many formerly undocumented immigrants. This was during this time period that the US began to witness higher levels of racialized tensions and growing diffusions of migrants (R. Alba & Nee, 1997). In the 1990s, a resurgence of large undocumented population led to California’s administration voting in favor of “Proposition 187”, which denied educational and health benefits for the undocumented. In 1996, the Federal government passed the Personal Responsibility Act that “limited noncitizen access to public welfare benefits and the Illegal Immigration Reform” (Telles & Ortiz, 2008). By the early 2000s, post 9/11, new security concerns about foreign terrorists garnered support for more anti-immigrant legislature (Telles & Ortiz, 2008). These new policies, in turn, led to political movements to protest these immigration reforms. In more modern immigration politics we find more anti-Mexican rhetoric from the Trump administration, leading to new levels of racialized tensions (“Here Are All the Times Donald Trump Insulted Mexico,” 2016).

My dataset looks specifically at San Antonio and Los Angeles, because of the large populations of Mexican Americans living both those cities. However, both cities differed in many ways. Both were home to approximately one fourth of Mexican Americans in the South West in the 1960s and about half of them living in metropolitan areas, and shared a similar cost of living at that time (Telles & Ortiz, 2008). However, Los Angeles had a larger Mexican American share as a proportion of the total number of immigrants in 1970, than San Antonio. While 25% of Mexican Americans were immigrants in Los Angeles in 1970, only 9% of Mexican Americans were immigrants in San Antonio at the time. By the 2000, this statistic increased to 47% in Los Angeles and 13% in San Antonio. Both also differed in terms of economies. The average respondent's monthly income in LA was almost twice (\$439) than that of the average San Antonio respondent (\$251). Homes were worth three times more in Los Angeles in the 1970s compared to San Antonio (Telles & Ortiz, 2008). Lastly, Telles and Ortiz, authors of the 1998 follow-up survey, describe Los Angeles to have experienced an "economic dynamism" with booming job opportunities in the late 1990s while San Antonio had little industry and barely any unionization (Telles & Ortiz, 2008). In the 1960s, due to segregationist politics and differing industrial and occupational structures, San Antonio had far fewer opportunities for Mexican Americans than Los Angeles. By the late 1990s, San Antonio's economy transformed from one largely based on military business to ones dominated by information technology, telecommunications, tourism and health care.

Dimensions of Migrant Assimilation

Five prominent dimensions of migrant assimilation dominate the scholarly literature. However, all of them seem to concur on the fact that assimilation occurs

“incrementally, as an intergenerational process, stemming both from individuals’ purposive action and from the unintended consequences of their workaday decisions... and at different rates.” (R. Alba & Nee, 1997)

Recent contentious political debate from the current administration focuses on highlighting the distinction between positively and negatively selected migrants. Because positively selected migrants are those who come from countries with presumably lower education dispersion, there exists a reason that those who choose to move will tend to have above average skill levels, and vice versa for negatively-selected migrants. Therefore, the most prominent way that scholars from different disciplines tend to address the topic of assimilation is through analysis of educational attainment.

Educational Attainment

Michael Rendall (Professor of Sociology) and Susan Parker (Professor of Economics) compare “educational attainment distributions of Mexican migrants to local residents to see how much educational attainment occurred from one quarter to the next.” Their research finds that educational attainment improves from immigrant parents to their children but stalls between the second and third generations (Rendall & Parker, 2014). Edward Telles and Vilma Ortiz, Professors of Sociology at UCLA, re-examine this finding and further analyze the reasons for the educational attainment gap for Mexican migrants in the United States, using the Mexican American Study Project (Telles & Ortiz, 2008). Their findings suggest that “parents’ education and income are the best predictors of their child’s education”, and further nuance the conversation on educational assimilation by looking at the effect of racialization in schooling (Telles & Ortiz, 2008). Alba et.al(2014), sociologists, like Telles and Ortiz, also include race variables in their

analysis, but further account for the “cohort effect” in that the average educational attainment has been higher among Mexican immigrants in each successive cohort indicating that there exists shared temporal experiences that distinguish one cohort to the next (R. Alba et al., 2014).

We also see economists use education as a variable of understanding migrant assimilation. George Borjas, a widely cited immigration economist, uses education as a variable to explain the “secular decline of quality of immigrants admitted to the United States over time”, has long argued that immigrants from are negatively selected, specifically from “poorer countries after 1965” (that is increasingly come from lower-educational backgrounds or have fewer skills usually measured in terms of years of formal education and of experience) have increasingly declining earnings per cohort (George Borjas, 1999)

Whereas, sociologists like Rendall and Parker (2014) and Alba and Nee (2014) view education assimilation as a dependent variable, economists, like Borjas seem to analyze education as an explanatory variable to regress on earnings profiles of immigrants over time in the USA.

Linguistic Assimilation

While educational attainment is one way to observe assimilation, many scholars like Chiswick and Miller (2012), Alba and Nee (2014) and Waters and Jiménez (2005) further extend this analysis by measuring language acquisition as a sign of migrant assimilation.

Chiswick and Miller, economists, primarily focus on immigrant vs native earnings as a measure of migrant assimilation over time. They find a correlation between

knowledge of the host country language and wages and earnings. Their findings suggest that “earnings among immigrants are shown to be greater among those more proficient in the destination language, other variables being the same”(Chiswick & Miller, 2012). That is, those who know the language of the host country are more likely to assimilate in terms of wages. Here, language acquisition acts as an independent variable.

Sociologists like Alba and Nee use language in their analysis by assessing intergenerational language shifts for different migrant populations in the United States using Census data. They find that more than 60% of Mexican children of the third and later generations speak only English at home, despite a strong incentive to maintain the mother tongue given the availability Spanish-language media and living in enclave communities(R. D. Alba & Nee, 2003). However, they also argue that “language does not offer the right paradigm for understanding other forms of acculturation” because it can be multi-directional some aspects of culture can survive over time because they are in fact absorbed into the “mainstream”(R. D. Alba & Nee, 2003). Here, Alba and Nee use language as a way of understanding whether an immigrant adapts to the “mainstream” through their ability to communicate, but they also temper this thought with the idea that assimilation is not necessarily the “end goal”, and that an influx of a foreign language in a host country can lead to multiculturalism. Finally, Waters and Jiménez (2005), sociologists, synthesize Chiswick and Miller (2012) and Alba & Nee’s (2012) research, and offer a succinct “three-generation” model of linguistic assimilation, wherein the “the immigrant generation makes some progress but remains dominant in their native tongue, the second generation becomes bilingual, and the third generation speaks English only”(Waters & Jiménez, 2005).

Thus, discussion on language assimilation have primarily centered on its relation to income earnings, its interaction with “mainstream” languages in the host country, and an intergenerational trend.

Spatial Patterns

Because an individual’s mother tongue language retention very much depends on their access to communities to practice with, many sociologists have also chosen to focus on spatial patterns in order to measure migrant assimilation. Using the Latino National Political Survey and the Panel Study of Income dynamics, South et. al’s (2005) research looks at Latino residential mobility into neighborhoods inhabited by greater percentages of non-Hispanic whites to measure assimilation. Their findings suggest that residential mobility increases with English-language use and educational levels (South et al., 2005) thereby unlocking a relationship between educational, linguistic assimilation and spatial assimilation. Jimenez and Fitzgerald (2007) propose a model of “dissimilation” defined as “the process of becoming different(Jiménez & FitzGerald, 2007). Their empirical work looks at educational attainment levels through comparative analysis of educational stratification in Mexico and the United States”, by explaining that emigrants from Mexico experience a “spectacular upward mobility” relative to those who stay in Mexico (Jiménez & FitzGerald, 2007). Their research is unique in that it looks beyond national boundaries by comparing emigrants with those who remain in the sending society (Jiménez & FitzGerald, 2007). Alba and Nee (2003), sociologists, further add to the conversation on spatial assimilation by exploring the determinants of immigrant settlement patterns. Their findings suggest that social networks guide immigrant settlement patterns (R. D. Alba & Nee, 2003). Alba and Nee’s research reminds us that

spatial assimilation is “determined partly by the need of immigrants, unfamiliar with American society and frequently lacking proficiency in English” (R. D. Alba & Nee, 2003). The spatial dimension of assimilation theory, thus, provides a new visual perspective on the way we treat the topic of assimilation.

Intermarriage and Social Relations

We turn now to a discussion of a slightly less-documented perspective: using intermarriage and social relations as a tool to understand migrant assimilation. This methodology primarily comes from sociology and offers a very intimate perspective on what it means to “assimilate” to a host country. Waters and Jimenez (2005), Alba and Nee (2012), and Alba et. al (203) address intermarriage in their analysis. Waters and Jimenez claim that “intermarriage is often seen as the litmus test of assimilation”, and cite other scholars that, in their view, have defined it as the “ultimate proof of assimilation” (Waters & Jiménez, 2005). In their study, which was an extensive literature review, they find that most studies on intermarriage tend to look at broad racial groups (such as Asians, Latinos, African Americans, American Indians and Whites), but not necessarily on national origin groups (Waters & Jiménez, 2005). However, they do find that some studies have found that significant intermarriage among the groups that make up broad racial groups, producing “pan-ethnic unions (Waters & Jiménez, 2005). Rosenfeld (2002) moreover finds that social barriers between Mexican Americans and Whites are low citing consistently increasing rates of intermarriage between Mexican American–non-Hispanic whites, using 1970-1980 Census data (Rosenfeld, 2002). Alba & Nee also discuss social relations in their analysis of migrant assimilation, and further offer us reasons for which migrants tend to behave in group-like settings (R. Alba & Nee,

1997). Their social assimilation theory rests on the idea that “when discriminatory barriers block an individualistic pattern of social mobility, assimilation, when it occurs, depends on collectivist strategies” (R. Alba & Nee, 1997).

Kaivan Munshi’s (an economist) work also emphasizes the importance of social networks for migrant assimilation, and draws a connection between social networks and Mexican migrant’s performance in the U.S labour market, finding that those who have a larger network will be more likely to be employed (Munshi, 2003). Here, we see that some scholars tend to look at intermarriage as the product of assimilation, while others see intimate relationships and social networks as an influencing factor for other kinds of assimilation. More recently, Abramitzky et. al’s (2020) work measured assimilation in terms names; examining whether immigrant mothers who had lived in America for longer chose more “American-sounding names” according to a “foreignness index” the authors developed (Abramitzky et al., 2020). Exploring this thematic concentration, has thus demonstrated that sociologists tend to use social networks and intermarriage as variables in their analysis of assimilation, however fewer economists have addressed the importance of social networks and their relation to economic variables of assimilation.

Health Assimilation

While sociologists and economists look at variables like education, language, social relations and spatial analysis to understand migrant assimilation, scholars in the life sciences have also approached this subject through a health lens. Public health researchers have looked at a variety of variables such as health-related behaviors, mortality statistics and access to health insurance to understand migrant assimilation. The key term used in this field is “acculturation” rather than assimilation, seeing the

“acquisition of the cultural elements of the dominant society- language, food choice,” as a continuous process by which ethnic groups “unlearn their culturally based behaviors” (LaVeist & Isaac, 2013). Lara et. al’s overview of acculturation literature of migrant health finds that acculturation is associated with several negative health-related behaviors in Latino populations, such as “illicit drug use, drinking smoking, nutrition, and dietary patterns” , but also find that acculturation is associated with “improved access to care and use of preventive health services among Latinos” (Lara et al., 2013) While some, like Lara et. al, use a synthetic literature review to analyze the health effects of assimilation, other scholars address health acculturation in terms of the “healthy migrant hypothesis”, which states that healthier people self-select to migrate, and therefore, migrants in general, tend to be healthier (Lu & Qin, 2014).

While some health-related disciplines scholars address this healthy migrant hypothesis in some regard, there have been many further branching on nuances on health assimilation. Eschbach et al.’s(2007) work focuses on the relationship between place of birth and active life expectancy over a 7-year period for Mexican migration, introducing the aspect of physical disability through aging as an indicator for assimilation (Eschbach et al., 2007). Contemporary research by Hayward et al (2007), Goldman et al (2014) and Angel and Angel (2007) has also introduced variables of mental health, early child health and access to health care as ways of measuring assimilation

In summary, scholars in life sciences have largely centered on key thematic debates like the healthy migrant hypothesis and have examined whether positive-selection in terms of health affects a migrant’s ability to assimilate, using health variables

intergenerationally. Therefore, examining assimilation through a health lens offers us an almost-evolutionary perspective on migrational patterns.

Competing Arguments in Economic Assimilation

So far, I have addressed different dimensions of assimilation across a variety of disciplines, but we now will pivot to understanding how economists have historically examined assimilation. This section will ultimately inform the niche that I fill for my research. This section begins with some of the foundational debates of immigration economics, between economists George Borjas, Barry Chiswick and David Card, who have primarily looked at earnings of foreign-born versus native born individuals over time as a way of measuring migrant assimilation. These foundational arguments have since been complicated by scholars who focus their research on factors that influence these earning gaps for, with two of the key streams of rationales being human capital differences and challenges in the US labor market. Lastly, I introduce some of the scholars who have inspired my niche, in understanding immigrant occupational satisfaction levels and career goals. My thesis research question will thus extend this economic analysis on assimilation by introducing relatively understudied economic variables.

The Foundational Debates in Immigration Economics

Barry Chiswick conducted one of the first studies that looked at earnings of immigrants in the United States in 1978. He compared immigrant earnings to those of native-born workers with the same ethnic background. His findings suggested that immigrants, at first, experience a period of income decline due to “costs of immigration”, however, over time these immigrants achieve a wage convergence and even overtake the

earnings of native-born workers of the same ethnic background(Chiswick, 1986).

Chiswick suggests that as “Americanization” takes place, “immigrants acquire skills at a faster rate than natives, including English language fluency and learning the workings of the US labour market, closing the wage gap between the two groups” (George Borjas, 1999).

George Borjas, in 1985 challenged Chiswick’s research, stating that Chiswick relied on a model that seemed to conflate immigration-cohort effects and aging. Borjas argues that the “overtaking phenomenon” (wherein immigrant wages surpassed that of their native counterparts) relied on an assumption that immigrants are more able and more highly motivated than natives (G. J. Borjas, 1985). This immigrant motivation, Borjas argues, is not a valid assumption, as immigrants are “not necessarily implied by the income maximizing behavior on the part of immigrants” (G. J. Borjas, 1985). Borjas then conducts his own analysis using 1970 and 1980 census data and finds that earnings growth of more recent cohorts did not exceed the earning levels of the native born counterparts, and were in fact lower than the growth experienced by earlier cohorts of immigrants. Borjas’ points out a specific flaw, in that taking repeated cross-sections of Census data may not account for return migrants (those who migrate to their source countries or elsewhere) (G. J. Borjas, 1985). He argues that if migrants were to return with relatively high wages, then that would conflate the “economic assimilation” upwards. Borjas, finally, concludes his argument stating that the decline in “immigrant quality” or human capital, is the reason for the recently lowered earnings growth for immigrants over time (G. J. Borjas, 1985).

Because Borjas credits the decline in “immigrant quality” to those of third-world origin, his research calls upon a question of impact on local labour markets. In other words, how does an influx of migration influence the earnings of native-born individuals? Here, David Card introduces findings from one of the first natural experiments- the Mariel Boatlift from Cuba, a mass influx of Cubans who travelled to Miami in 1980. His research suggests that the influx of immigrants did not really affect the wages of natives in Miami (Card & Lewis, 2005). However, Borjas, then, challenges Card’s analysis and states that Card did not separate the natives into skill groups, and if he were to separate the analysis in different skill groups, then some people in the Miami community would have been negatively impacted by the influx of Cuban immigrants (George Borjas, 2014).

The foundational debates between Borjas and Chiswick, and then Card and Borjas, demonstrate that economists heavily rely on earnings differentials as a way to understand assimilation, and further tend to nuance their analysis looking at cohort effects, skill groups, and language capacity.

Less-Studied Economic Variables of Assimilation

Other scholars like Fairlie and Woodruff (2007) and Alba and Nee (2003) pivot the lens of these foundational debates and question the very use of wage or income variables as an economic variable of assimilation. Fairlie and Woodruff focus their attention on a less-studied group, immigrant entrepreneurs. They use occupational status as a way of measuring assimilation, and specifically looked at self-employment rates in Mexico and among Mexican immigrants in the United States and examined the separate components of this difference(Fairlie & Woodruff, 2007). Their cross-country analysis stems from the statistic that roughly one fourth of Mexico's workforce is a self-employed

business owner, and so the likelihood of Mexican migrants to be self-employed might be a signal of assimilation (Fairlie & Woodruff, 2007). Though, they conclude that structural differences, specifically with industry compositions, in the Mexico and the US economies create barriers for migrant self-employment s to be self-employed (Fairlie & Woodruff, 2007).

Alba and Nee (2003), sociologists, also point to occupational status as evidence of immigrant assimilation in the host country, by explaining the concept of an “ethnic economy” (R. D. Alba & Nee, 2003). An ethnic economy is an economic subsystem associated with one particular ethnic group (R. D. Alba & Nee, 2003). Ethnic economies are typically enclave groups of immigrant entrepreneurs, and therefore may skew the use of the variable of self-employment as a signal of assimilation, and so, Alba & Nee’s research highlights the role of the ethnic economy as a place immigrant workers may establish a foothold in the immigrant labor market by, but over time, the direction of job changes is generally towards those job with the “better remuneration and conditions that are mostly available in the mainstream labour market” (R. D. Alba & Nee, 2003). Therefore, though occupational status may be a useful variable to explore, it needs to be analyzed with the caveat that self-employment can be a signal of assimilation and/or an option when finding a job for someone else is hard.

Factors that affect Wage Assimilation

Contemporary scholarship in immigration economics has thus advanced these foundational debates into an extended conversation on factors that influence migrant wage assimilation. Existing work by economists tend to fall in two large categories,

pointing to either 1) differences in human capital or 2) challenges in the US labor market as the primary agents that affect a migrant's wage assimilation over time.

Differences in Human Capital

Sjaastad (1962), Lubotsky (2007), Borjas (2014) and Funkhouser and Trejo (1995) address assimilation through a lens of human capital. Sjaastad argues that we must treat migration as an investment opportunity, one that both incurs costs and renders returns (Sjaastad, 1962). In his analysis of wage differentials, he looks at both money costs and non-money costs that play an impact on an immigrant's ability to assimilate to the host environment and is the first to introduce the idea of a "psychic" cost as "people are often genuinely reluctant to leave familiar surroundings" (Sjaastad, 1962). Sjaastad, thus, offers a way to bring human costs as a component to the migration human capital investment model. Lubotsky also studies immigrant-native earnings gaps, however using Social Security records, and accounts for back-and-forth migration (Lubotsky, 2007). In his analysis, he credits that immigrants who invested in U.S specific human capital in ways other than through working, like education, gives us a lens to understand immigrant earnings growth over time (Lubotsky, 2007). Similarly, Funkhouser and Trejo look at human capital in terms of education, by tracking education and hourly earnings of recent male immigrants in the United States (Funkhouser & Trejo, 1995). While Lubotsky, Funkhouser and Trejo tend to study human capital through the lens of education, Borjas offers a normative analysis on human capital differences.

Borjas argues that human capital takes its primary effect before the migrant even enters the nation by drawing a link between human capital and country of origin. Borjas emphasizes the economic importance of national origin, and argues that "to some extent,

the differences in incoming human capital across immigrant groups in the United States mirror the skill differences that exist across the populations of the source countries”(George Borjas, 2014). Here, we see that economists have largely used human capital, in terms of education, to describe how an accumulation or lack of it can influence wage differentials. However, one niche not filled in this literature is the way that human capital, in other regards, such as language attainment and health interact with a migrant’s earnings over time.

Challenges in the US Labour Market

Lastly, some economists attribute some differences in economic assimilation between foreign and native born to challenges in the labour market themselves. Portes and Zhou (1993) explore challenges that the 2nd generation immigrants face in adapting to American society (Portes & Zhou, 1993). Notably, they cite that some types of immigrants are eligible for government support programs, including educational loans for their children (Portes & Zhou, 1993). They also add to the conversation on spatial assimilation theory, citing that some immigrant groups may have an additional advantage as they have resources available through networks in their ethnic communities (Portes & Zhou, 1993). Card’s research from the natural experiment of the Mariel Boatlift also supports this perspective as he argues that there are factors in facilitating “absorption rates” of migrants, such as language, industry suitability and frequency of migrant influxes (Card & Lewis, 2005).

Tracking Occupational Aspirations and Satisfaction Levels

In the existing literature on migrant assimilation, very little research focuses on immigrant communities’ own perception of their own progress. Zhou et al. (2008) offers

a relatively novel way to understand social mobility of migrants by offering “subject centered approach”, by conducting “detailed life histories” on second generation Chinese, Vietnamese and Mexican communities in Los Angeles to understand identify key mechanisms that affect their social mobility; including “parental human capital, family situation and modes of incorporation”(Zhou et al., 2008)

Taking a similar approach, various scholars have explored migrant career development and aspirations through a lens of cultural differences. Lopes et. Al looks at the relationship between cultures that embrace “individualism” versus “collectivism” and the ways that these values shape career motivation (Lopes, 2006). Shinnar (2007) also examines variables shaping career development, with a focus on Mexican Migrants, and finds that individual-level variables, group-level variables (i.e. cultural value orientation) and contextual variables (state of the labour market) all contribute to Mexican immigrant’s careers (Shinnar, 2007). Shinnar’s study uses qualitative interviews to understand these career motivators and barriers for Mexican immigrant career progression(Shinnar, 2007). Solehim et al also utilizes a qualitative approach and takes a cross-boundary lens, interviewing Mexican immigrants in Minnesota and their family members in Mexico to decipher mechanisms that influence their goals and expectations; finding that the “reality of supporting two households in two countries led to the reshaping of expectations for achieving their goals”(Solheim et al., n.d.). Villarreal and Blanchard(2013) also look at migrant career choices but specifically argue that career priorities are often a function of job characteristics/state of the economy, by looking at a panel survey of Mexican adults to examine how job characteristics affect the risks they take to try to be employed in the “formal sector”(Villarreal & Blanchard, 2013).

Lee (1998), Katz, Aguilera and Massey (2003), and Massey and Akresh (2006) measure migrant career development and job satisfaction as a function of social capital. Lee explores variation in occupational choice amongst immigrant groups, with a focus on the likelihood of self-employment. Lee's study finds that immigrants with more developed communities that have stronger "social structures" facilitated greater success in "self-employment"(Lee, 1998). Katz further adds that social capital, or "socialization" is critical to the gradual transition and readjustment of occupational status for migrant groups; specifically emphasizing that major indicators of immigrant integration are subjective, reiterating Zhou et al's subject centered approach (Katz, n.d.). Aguilera and Massey (2003) find that undocumented migrants with greater English language abilities were more likely to find jobs through friends and relatives, and that interpersonal connections were incredibly important in finding jobs (Aguilera & Massey, 2003). Massey and Afresh extend the social capital theory, and place it in the context of naturalization and settlement; finding that Mexican migrants with greater interpersonal connections were more likely to have higher wages, and more likely to have intentions on settling in the United States (Massey & Akresh, 2006).

Chiapa et.al (2012), Kandel and Kao (2000), and the Gallup Healthways Wellbeing Survey look at job satisfaction levels and career aspirations and extend theories on social capital. They center their analysis on migrant's accumulation of human capital. Chiapa et. al's study finds that career aspirations among Mexican children in Mexico are greatly increased through social programming that increase their exposure to educated professionals in various fields; revealing the relationship between career aspirations and educational attainment (Chiapa et al., 2012). Similarly, Kandel and Kao's

studies find that households that discourage education have a strong influence on the child's career aspirations, looking specifically at Mexican migrant children studying in the US(Kandel & Kao, 2000). Lastly, Gallup Healthways Wellbeing Surveys find a relationship between age, human capital accumulation (English language abilities) and job satisfaction. In general, not specific to migrant groups, senior citizens have the highest level of job satisfaction among U.S workers as of 2011.

Finally, one of the more generally known theories of human motivation comes from Maslow's hierarchy of needs, that explains human behavior in terms of basic requirements for survival and growth. This theory can also apply to career development, with the most basic physical requirements constituting the lowest level of need, such as job security and financial aspects. These more fundamental needs need to be satisfied before an individual focuses on more "self-actualization needs", that deal with "developing his or her talents and abilities to their fullest extent"(Shmutte, 2013)

Conclusion

This chapter examines the ways that economists and sociologists have measured migrant assimilation. The five prominent dimensions of assimilation: educational, linguistic, special, social relations and health demonstrates that sociology and economics have much to learn from each other. Within economic literature itself, research largely utilizes earnings differentials to measure migrant assimilation, and only in the rather contemporary corpus of literature have we begun to see variables related to human capital. This thesis thus seeks to introduce a qualitative element to the important question of immigrants' economic assimilation. Instead of focusing on earnings differentials, I introduce a relatively new indicator of migrant's economic well-being, career priorities

and occupational satisfaction. Thus, I use *migrants'* metrics of success rather than an approach that compares them to native-born individuals to measure migrant assimilation.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

Conventional economic variables used to measure migrant assimilation include earnings and wages, educational attainment, and language acquisition, as seen in the literature. However, these models of assimilation lack important features of intergenerational mobility, career goals and occupational satisfaction levels. This thesis thus tries to enrich the literature on assimilation, by adding these relatively unexplored dimensions to the model of economic assimilation. In this section, I provide a synthesizing framework that will outline the way I will analyze my data. To begin, I propose a general economic model that serves to synthesize the many determinants of migrant assimilation seen in the literature.

$$A=f(E,L,M,I,G,C,S)$$

A= Migrant's assimilation to host country

E= Education

L= Language Acquisition of the Host country language

M=Earnings/ Wage convergence with Native-born counterparts with similar skill compositions

I= Migrant's ethnic self-identification

G=Migrant's generation

H=Host country characteristics (i.e industry composition, unemployment rate, GDP, etc)

C= Career Goals

S= Occupational Satisfaction Levels

Migrant assimilation is a function of both migrant and host country characteristics, including personal demographics and the economic climate of country of destination. In this general model, assimilation is a function of the migrant's education, language capacities, earnings, ethnic identity (e.g Mexican-American, Mexican, Chicano, etc), generation (1st or 2nd generation), and their career priorities and occupational satisfaction levels.

Intergenerational Changes

While these are all generally relevant attributes to a migrant's assimilation into their host country, my research specifically focuses on two dependent variables: career priorities and occupation satisfaction levels. "Career priorities" is a discreet categorical choice in the dataset I use (see: Chapter 4). Respondents choose their top career priority from a list of 9 options. These 9 options include financial aspects, social prestige, good future, security/stability, interest in work, native ability, job training, service to humanity, and physical aspects. Notably, the options do not seem mutually exclusive, rather they are simply 9 general goals from which respondents were asked to choose their top choice. Occupational satisfaction level" is a continuous dependent variable, wherein respondents ranked their satisfaction level on a scale from 0 (not at all satisfied) to 4 (very satisfied).

The literature suggests that assimilation is an intergenerational process, and my dataset (see: Chapter 4) captures this aspect for Mexican migrant stories (Zhou et al., 2008). This means that I did not need to produce "synthetic cohorts" like how some economists, such as George Borjas (1999) created using pooled Census data (George Borjas, 1999). The respondents from the second wave of the survey (1998) are actually the children of the respondents from the first wave of the survey conducted in 1965.

Henceforth, I refer to the 1998 respondents as the children of the 1965 respondents or 2nd generation interchangeably.

To test whether the second generation had statistically significant changes in occupational satisfaction levels and career priorities from their parents in 1965, I use Chi-Squared tests wherein the null hypothesis (H0) is that occupational satisfaction levels/top career priority choices are independent of the survey year. Furthermore, I report a p-value for the difference between the 1965 and 1998 career priorities. I did this by generating indicator variables for each of the nine options for career priorities and then regressed each of those on a dummy variable for the survey year (0=1965 and 1=1998). This tests whether the individual career priorities in the list of nine options given to respondents statistically changes its priority intergenerationally.

Intergenerational Change in Occupational Satisfaction Levels

My first research question focuses on whether, if at all, Mexican immigrants' occupational satisfaction levels evolve from one generation to the next between 1965 and 1998, and to what extent were these observable changes related to identifiable attributes including survey year, city, sex, age, birthplace, English and Spanish language fluency, and years of education. For this research question, I use an ordinary least squares regression model: my dependent variable is occupational satisfaction and my explanatory variables are demographic variables.

Career Priorities

My second research question looks for intergenerational changes in career priorities between 1965 and 1998 in the United States. The dataset codes "Career priorities" as a discreet multinomial choice in the dataset. While there were 9 options for this question, I

generated a new variable that grouped the 4 least selected career aspects (which were “Social Prestige”, “Native ability”, “Service to Humanity” and “Physical Aspects”) into a cohesive “Other” category, while keeping the remaining 5 categories as distinct choices: resulting in 6 rather than 9 options, in order to ease interpretation of results.

I estimate a multinomial logit model to investigate the effect of multiple variables (such as sex, age, birthplace, educational level, English fluency, survey year, and city), on the respondent’s career priority. The theoretical framework of the multinomial logit model has each respondent i , faced with J different career priority choices at time t .

Theoretically, the respondent receives a certain level of utility from each career priority option and chooses the career priority that maximizes their utility. I assume that each respondent chooses between the nine options at a given time, with $j=1..j=6$ (to represent each career priority choices). With this model, the choice probabilities for repeated probabilities made by a respondent produces a correlation among the residuals for the respondent within choices but leaves the residuals independent across the different respondents.

Therefore, the utility of respondent’s top career priority choice J , in time period t in a random-effects context can be specified as:

$$V_{it} = X_{it}B_j + \varepsilon_{it}$$

where V_{it} is the respondent’s utility derived from choosing their top career priority, X_{it} is a vector of explanatory variables such as sex, age, birthplace, educational level, English fluency, survey year, and city, and ε_{it} are random error terms that are independently and identically distributed. The vector B_j represents the coefficients for the vector of explanatory variables.

To interpret the logit model, I define a “base case” or “reference category”. This means I would observe how a “one-unit” increase in X_{it} would affect the likelihood of choosing career priority choice $J=4$ (security and stability) *relative* to the base category which could be $J=1$ (financial aspects). Because respondents’ most frequently chosen category was “Interest in work”, I conducted my first multinomial logit regression relative to the base case “Interest in Work”. I then conducted a second multinomial logit regression relative to the base case “Financial Aspects” because of the preceding academic literature on migrant economic adjustment in terms of earnings.

Notes on Omitted Explanatory Variables

In theory, immigrant assimilation is a function of different host countries, and this was something I could not control in my model. Instead, I set up both regressions with the same explanatory variables which include sex, age, birthplace, educational level, English fluency and Spanish fluency, survey year, and city. Some of these variables are nominal while others are categorical.

There were a few explanatory variables I considered including that did not function well with my model. These included: respondent’s self-identification (e.g Mexicano vs Tejano vs Chicano) and employment status (a dummy variable). I did not include the respondent’s ethnic self-identification because there is little literature regarding the relationship between self-identity (e.g identifying as Mexicano vs Tejano vs Chicano) and the survey asks respondents to answer this question in both English and Spanish. Therefore, including this explanatory variable in the multinomial logit and linear regressions made the results confusing to interpret. Employment status produced issues of collinearity therefore STATA automatically deleted this variable in the analysis.

Table 1 summarizes the methods used to address each research question.

Table 1: Research Questions and Methods

Research Question	Method
<p>How, if at all, did Mexican immigrants' career priorities and occupational satisfaction levels evolve from one generation to the next (1965 wave and 1998 wave)?</p>	<p>-2 Chi-Squared Tests testing differences between 1965 and 1998. One for evolving career priorities and the other for evolving occupational satisfaction levels. -Reporting P-Values for each of the career priority choices by regressing an indicator variable for each career priority option on a dummy variable for survey year (1965 vs 1998). -Reporting P-values for each occupation satisfaction level on the survey year dummy as well.</p>
<p>Are the observable changes in occupational satisfaction levels related to identifiable attributes including sex, age, birthplace, educational level, English fluency and Spanish fluency, survey year, and city?</p>	<p>Conducting an Ordinary Least Squares Regression regressing occupational satisfaction levels on explanatory variables: sex, age, birthplace, educational level, English fluency and Spanish fluency, survey year, and city</p>
<p>In what ways can we attribute differences in career priorities to a respondent's sex, age, birthplace, educational level, English fluency and Spanish fluency, survey year, and city?</p>	<p>Conducting 2 Multinomial Logit regressions. The first multinomial logit regression relative to the base case "Interest in Work" and the second relative to "Financial Aspects"</p>

Chapter 4: Data

This section explains the data source, its limitations, and the operational definitions for my variables of interest.

The Mexican American Study Project

This thesis uses the Mexican American Study Project Dataset. The Mexican American Study Project (MASP) is a longitudinal and intergenerational data set that represents Mexican Americans living in San Antonio City and Los Angeles County in 1965 and 1998.

The MASP datasets are uniquely valuable for my research because its sample follows the same families of Mexican American households in LA and San Antonio. Census data, in comparison, does not allow me to explore this intergenerational dimension nor to follow individuals (and their own descendants) over time. This study consists of three parts; the original survey 1965-66, and then a follow-up of the original respondents under age 50 done in 1998-2002, and a sample of their children. For my research, I use the original dataset in 1965 and the follow up of their children in 1998-2002. The goal of the project was to “conduct a comprehensive study of the experience and position of Mexican Americans using an interdisciplinary approach; the study was the most comprehensive study of this population of the time” (Grebler et al., 2017). Interestingly, two UCLA library employees accidentally discovered this survey in their archives in 1992, when the university “cleaned out its holdings from the old Powell Library” during a renovation. Edward Telles and Vilma Ortiz, sociologists in UCLA, decided to revisit the 1965 Mexican American Study Project and conduct a follow-up survey in 1998.

I use the two waves, the 1965-66 (MASP 1965-66) and the Mexican American Study Project Dataset 1998-2002 (MASP 1998-2002). The 1998-2002 dataset is publicly available on the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) website, and through an application, Harvard Dataverse provided me the data from the 1965 survey. Though I was granted general access to the data, there were some limitations. One key limitation was that the data do not have any case-identifiers, which means that I was unable to match each respondent in 1965 wave to their offspring in the 1998 survey. However, I was able to verify that the 1998 respondents were indeed the children of the 1965 respondents because a question on the 1998 survey asked respondents to state which parent was an original respondent in the 1965 survey.

The original 1965 survey interviewed 973 households in Los Angeles and 603 households in San Antonio. In total, there were 665 male and 995 female respondents in 1965. These two cities have had historically large populations of Mexican Americans. According to the survey description, “The two cities were selected since they included about a quarter of Mexican Americans in the Southwest and a third of those living in metropolitan areas. Care was taken to obtain a sample that was representative of the diversity of Mexican American life experiences”(Grebler et al., 2017). The survey includes of a mixture of pre-coded and open-ended questions , covering everything from the respondent’s educational, work, immigration and household histories, as well as attitudes towards family, careers and education (Grebler et al., 2017). The MASP used bilingual interviewers to survey a random sample of 1st generation Mexican migrants. At the end of the interview, the interviewer completed a “brief assessment of the housing

and dwelling area, and of the personal characteristics of the respondent” (Grebler et al., 2017).

The follow-up survey, carried out in 1998, designed by Telles and Ortiz, identified the original respondents from the 1965 wave and then interviewed a random sample of their children, regardless of where they moved. More specifically, 758, which was 68% of selected children who met the survey criteria were interviewed in the 1998 sample (Telles & Ortiz, 2008). In their book, *Generations of Exclusion*, they claim that their “intergenerational design overcomes many of the deficiencies of previous data that are unable to examine true change between parents and children (Telles & Ortiz, 2008). The data set is large enough for systematic statistical analysis, is based on random samples of two quite distinct metropolitan areas, and has questions appropriate to studying ethnic retention and change” (Telles & Ortiz, 2008).

Limitations

Some general weaknesses of this dataset are that they focus on two specific populations, and therefore its analysis may not be applicable to other parts of the United States. However, San Antonio and Los Angeles are important locations with critical histories of Mexican migration, and therefore my analysis will be relevant to the stories there.

I also recognize that these data are not very recent. However, my analysis of the data explores the evolution of economic assimilation for Mexican Americans in these two cities from the 1960s to early 2000s. The first part of the study coincided almost exactly with the beginning of when the civil rights movement’s first legislative successes (R. Alba et al., 2014) , but when racial inequalities were still widespread (R. Alba et al.,

2014). Due to this, educational attainment could have been skewed for Mexican Americans who experienced institutional school changes (desegregation of schools) The new generation of children could have had a socioeconomic starting point not immediately much better or worse than their parents had experienced (R. Alba et al., 2014).

Data Issues

Legacy data are data stored in old or obsolete formats, and the MASP 1965 survey came in such a format. When I received the data package from Harvard's Dataverse, I only got the original survey questionnaire, the survey description and a ".dta file" for the data. As such, there was no actual codebook. I sifted manually through the hundreds of questions to identify questions on the questionnaire that corresponded to their respective variables in the dataset. This process required a lot of decision-making and assumptions, as I was working with limited information. Along these lines, I discovered that many people in one household were interviewed for the demographic questions (age, sex, education level, etc), and each response was coded as P1 (for person 1) to P20 (person 20), but it was hard to decipher which respondent was the one to respond to all the other questions in the questionnaire. Therefore, I ran some descriptive statistics on some of these variables and decided to use the P1 response as the respondent for my data analysis. This meant that the age spread for the 1998 respondents was considerably younger than the age spread of the 1965 respondents. Another key assumption I had to make was that the 1998 survey respondents were the children of the 1965 survey respondents.

Additionally, the wording of the questions was sometimes problematic, probably due to the fact that it was collected by scholars from different disciplines from the mid 1900s. There were questions that I would have preferred to phrase differently, but since I did not run the survey myself, I had to deal with this limitation. For example, the questions incorporated very dated assumptions about gender. For example, the question about career priorities in the 1965 survey asked, “What would you say is the most important single thing for a young man to consider when he is choosing his life’s work?” or “Suppose you knew a really outstanding young man here in the neighborhood. What one occupation do you think you would advise him to aim toward?”

Another issue with this data was that I had to work with self-reported information, which can be especially problematic with questions related to sensitive financial and occupational topics, like income and occupational satisfaction levels. Also, due to the bilingual nature of interviews, it is possible that some ideas got lost in translation between Spanish and English.

Another issue with the data was the attrition rate between the 1965 and 1998 respondents. The children were selected from a random sample of the original respondents’ children born between 1947-1960 (Telles & Ortiz, 2008). When more than two children met the selection criteria, the child with the most recent birthdate was selected. Based on a logistic regression that showed results for selecting the child respondents, education, gender and being from San Antonio had a statistically significant impact (Telles & Ortiz, 2008). San Antonio residents were less likely to be selected because they came from larger families. Women were often found at home, and were “easier to arrange interviews with” (Telles & Ortiz, 2008). There were more educated

children selected likely because of their “greater stability and willingness of parents to give their contact information” (Telles & Ortiz, 2008). However, this sample does not largely interviewed children that still resided in San Antonio or LA, and therefore might not capture the effects of return migrants to Mexico or those who have moved out of state.

I also needed to define new variables for some that were not given in the dataset. For example, I needed to produce a variable, “Birthplace”. The 1965 survey asked respondents to list their birth city, and for the purposes of my analysis I wanted to know if respondents were simply foreign or native-born. Therefore, I sifted through all the “birth cities” to identify which of those were located in the US and which were located in Mexico, but there were some cities with misleading names (e.g: SEA99), that I had to group into an “Other” category. A full list of the variables I used, and their definitions are provided in Table A1 in the Appendix.

Fortunately, in places where the data I received was difficult to interpret, I often referred to Edward Telles and Vilma Ortiz’s book *Generations of Exclusion* to further understand the survey analysis.

Descriptive Statistics

The Mexican American Study Project survey has been used to test intra- and inter-generational change in ethnic identity, behavior, and socio-economic mobility for Mexican Americans living in Los Angeles, California and San Antonio, Texas, by scholars such as Alba et. al (2014), Alba and Nee (2003), Waters et. al (2009) and Waters and Jimenez (2005). The survey aimed to produce a comprehensive study of the experience and position of Mexican Americans using an interdisciplinary approach” conducted by

sociologists from UCLA (Grebler et al., 2017),. The study was limited to Los Angeles and San Antonio because those cities were home to about a quarter of Mexican Americans in the Southwest and a third of those living in metropolitan areas in the 1960s.

The 1965 sample contained 1,418 distinct observations, and the 1965 sample only contained 758 distinct observations. The respondents from the 1998 sample are the children of the 1965 sample. Understandably, there was a considerable attrition rate between the 1965 and 1998 surveys, since the researchers were not able to track down every family descendant and/or not all progeny agreed to participate in the follow-up survey. Due to redacted case-identifiers, my analysis still uses “synthetically-produced” cohorts, with an understanding that the 1998 wave is the 2nd generation whose parents are the respondents from the 1965 survey.

Table 2 below provides sample characteristics between 1965 and 1998 respondents (refer to Appendix B for visualizations of these demographic compositions). There are more respondents in the 1998 sample were born in the US than in the 1965 sample, and more respondents born in Mexico in the 1965 sample compared to the 1998 sample. A very small percentage of the sample reported being from a different locality. Each sample has slightly more female respondents than male respondents. The mean age of the respondents from the 1998 sample is about half that of the average mean respondent from the 1965 sample. On average, respondents in 1998 self-report higher English fluency levels than respondents from the 1965 sample; on average, the 1965 and 1998 respondents report similar levels of Spanish fluency.

Respondents in both surveys were asked about their preferred ethnic identification. The 1965 survey used only pre-determined response categories while the 1998 survey had open-ended questions. The questions were asked in Spanish or English, according to the interviewer’s judgement of the respondents’ preferred language of communication. On average, the preferred ethnic terms in English among the 1965 respondents and their children, the 1998 respondents, are on average quite similar. 1998 respondents were more likely to identify as “Mexican-American” than the 1965 respondents, and they were less likely to identify as “Latin-American” than their 1965 counterparts. In Spanish, 1998 and 1965 respondents also exhibited similarities in the way they identified themselves, ethnically. 1998 respondents were more likely to identify as “Americano ” than their 1965 counterparts, and “Mexican-Americano” than their 1965 counterparts. Education was coded as number of years of education, from 1-16, with 17-19 being Masters, Doctorates and Trade-School attendees. The mean education level in 1998 is higher than that of the 1965 sample (Table B7 in Appendix).

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of the sample

	Total # of Observations	# of Missing Observations		Survey Year	
				1965	1998
Birthplace (%)	2304	8	US	57.99	94.74
			Mexico	26.94	5.26
			Other	15.06	0
Sex (%)	2307	5	Male	44	41.86
			Female	56	58.14
Mean Age (years)	2149	163		43	22

English Fluency (%)	2199	113	No English	8.03%	4.75
			Broken English	23.07	14.84
			Normally Fluent	38.1	36.8
			Very Fluent	30.8	43.62
Spanish Fluency (%)	2253	59	No Spanish	1.07	0.58
			Broken Spanish	11.55	10.47
			Normally Fluent	47.9	56.69
			Very Fluent	39.49	32.27
Identity in English (%)	2223	89	Spanish-Speaking	5.14	4.36
			Latin-Americans	24.52	15.41
			Mexicans	38.47	37.21
			Mexican-Americans	19.53	27.62
			American Only	7.64	11.92
			Hispano-American	0.22	0
			Spanish-American	1.54	0.58
			Spanish descent	0.66	0.29
			Other/Texan	2.28	2.62
			Identity in Spanish	1512	800
Mexican-American	18.92	21.58			
Latino	17.53	12.95			
Hispano	2.26	0.36			

			Tejano	2.04	0.72
			Chicano	1.08	0.72
			Americano	6.13	10.43
			Latino- Americano	0.86	0.36
			Otro	3.12	3.96
Mean Education Level (Years of Education)	2120	192		8	10

Operational Definitions

Table 3, below, defines frequently discussed key terms and phrases frequently. These definitions come from either what is most used in the literature or the data’s prerequisites.

Table 3: Operational Definitions

Term	Definition
1st generation immigrant	An individual who was born outside of the United States
2nd generation immigrant	An individual with one or both parents born outside of the United States, as based on self-reported responses on survey data
1965 MASP Participants	Respondents who participated in the 1965 portion of the MASP. They are also sometimes referred to as the “parents” or 1 st generation
1998 MASP Participants	Children of the 1965 participants, frequently referred to as the 2 nd generation

Native-born individual	Someone born in the United States
Occupational Satisfaction	Measured on an index, where respondents can answer “Very”, “pretty much”, “not very”, “not at all”. An answer of “very” will indicate the highest level of occupational satisfaction and “not at all” will indicate the lowest level of occupational satisfaction.
Career Priorities	Measured as a discrete multinomial variable, wherein respondents chose their top career priority out of nine options (financial aspects, social prestige, good future, security/stability, interest in work, native ability, job training, service to humanity, physical aspects). Sometimes referred to as “career aspects”
Wage parity	When earnings between native- and foreign-born individuals with comparable qualities converge

Chapter 5: Hypotheses

Based on existing literature and methodology, there seems to be an intergenerational trend in economic adjustment (Massey & Akresh, 2006). There is also existing literature that note relationships between language gender and education level on occupational satisfaction levels (Aguilera and Massey; Blau and Kahn; Shinnar). Lastly, there is very little existing literature regarding migrant career priorities, therefore, I base my hypothesis largely on intuition and theories regarding accumulation of social capital (Aguilera and Massey).

- ***Intergenerational Change in Occupational Satisfaction:*** I expect respondents in the 1998 wave to be more likely to report higher occupational satisfaction levels than their parents (the respondents from the 1965 wave). Higher occupational satisfaction levels would be defined as more respondents reporting “very satisfied” with their jobs.
- ***Intergenerational Changes in Career Priorities:*** I expect respondents in the 1998 wave to have similar career priorities to their parents (the respondents from the 1965 wave), with no statistically significant changes in individual career priorities between the two survey years.
- ***Determinants of Occupational Satisfaction:*** A respondent’s English and Spanish language fluency, sex and years of education will have an effect on their occupational satisfaction level. Women are more likely to report lower occupational satisfaction levels. Respondents who are more fluent in English and more fluent in Spanish will report higher occupational satisfaction levels. Lastly

those with a larger number of years of education will report higher occupational satisfaction levels.

- ***Determinants of Career Priorities, relative to “Interest in Work”:*** A respondent’s generation, years of education and sex will influence the way they prioritize career aspects relative to “Interest in Work”. Relative to the base category, “Interest in Work”, respondents from the first generation are more likely to prioritize financial aspects and job security/stability over “Interest in Work”. Respondents with more years of education are more likely to prioritize “interest in work” over other categories. Respondents who identify as female are more likely to prioritize other categories over “interest in work”.
- ***Determinants of Career Priorities, relative to “Financial Aspects”:*** A respondent’s generation and years of education will influence the way they prioritize career aspects relative to “Financial Aspects”. Relative to the base category, “Financial Aspects”, respondents from the first generation are more likely to prioritize financial aspects over other categories, compared to their children (1998 wave). Similarly, respondents with more years of education are more likely to prioritize categories such as “interest in work” and “social prestige” over financial aspects.

Chapter 6: Results

I organize the results around my guiding research questions. The primary question focused on intergenerational change in occupational satisfaction levels and career priorities. Then, I present the results of the Ordinary Least Squares Regression which explores determinants of occupational satisfaction levels. Lastly, I showcase results from the multinomial logit regressions that analyze respondents' career priorities relative to "Interest in Work" and "Financial Aspects".

Empirical Results

Table 4 compares top career priority choices between the 1965 wave and the 1998 wave of respondents. I hypothesized that respondents in the 1998 wave are likely to have similar career priorities to their parents with no statistically significant changes in individual career priorities between the two survey years. However, though overall changes in respondent's career priorities over time were not statistically significant, some individual career priorities did change over generations. When regressing each individual career priority over survey year, we find that the 2nd generation prioritize "financial aspects" less than their parents and an "interest in work" more than their parents, with statistical significance.

Table 4: Respondents' Top Career Priority Choice between 1965 and 1998

Respondent's Top Career Priority Choice	Survey Year		Total Percentage	p-value
	1965	1998		
Financial aspects	15.83	12.03	14.58	0.032**
Social prestige	2	1.36	1.79	0.334
Good future	13.83	13.56	13.74	0.874
Security/Stability	14.67	15.93	15.08	0.450
Interest in work	29	33.05	30.34	0.08*
Native ability	7.08	8.64	7.6	0.228
Job training	10.92	9.83	10.56	0.482
Service to humanity	4.08	3.22	3.8	0.370
Physical aspects	2.58	2.37	2.51	0.789
Total N	1,200	590		

$\chi^2(8, N=1790)=9.9700, p=0.267$

* $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$

Source: Mexican American Study Project.

Table 5 compares occupational satisfaction levels over the two generations. I had hypothesized that the 2nd generation would have higher occupational satisfaction levels than their parents (1965 wave). However, there is no statistically significant change in the way respondents perceive occupational satisfaction levels over the two generations. In general, about a third of respondents report being “very satisfied” with their current jobs in both waves.

Table 5: Differences in Respondents' Occupational Satisfaction levels between 1965 and 1998

Respondents' Occupational Satisfaction level	Survey Year		Total Percentage
	1965 ^a	1998 ^b	
Not at all satisfied	4.95	4.83	4.91
Not very satisfied	15.13	17.61	15.96
Pretty much satisfied	41.02	41.48	41.17
Very satisfied	38.9	36.08	37.96
Total N	707	352	

$X^2 (3, N= 1,059)=1.4155 , p= 0.702$

Source: Mexican American Study Project

^a Numbers in this column are given in percentages

^b Numbers in this column are given in percentages

Table 6 presents the results of regressing occupational satisfaction levels on the explanatory variables: sex, age, birthplace, educational level, English fluency and Spanish fluency, survey year, and city. I had hypothesized that a respondent's English and Spanish language fluency, sex and education to have a statistically significant effect on their occupational satisfaction level.

While English fluency and education did produce a statistically significant effect on a respondent's occupational satisfaction level, a respondent's city (San Antonio vs Los Angeles) and age also had a statistically significant effect. Specifically, respondents from San Antonio were more likely to report higher occupational satisfaction levels. Additionally, older respondents, respondents with higher English fluency and those with education were also more likely to report higher occupational satisfaction levels. It is also important to note that this model has an R^2 value of 0.07, so the model only represents

7% of the total variation, which means that there are many other influencing factors that the model does not capture.

Table 6: Ordinary Least Squares Regression Measuring Occupational Satisfaction Levels

	Occupational Satisfaction Level
Year (dummy ^a)	-0.039 (0.075)
Location: San Antonio (base category: LA)	0.240 (0.065)**
Sex: Female	0.082 (0.068)
Age	0.004 (0.002)*
Birthplace (Base Category: USA)	
Mexico	-0.018 (0.086)
Other	-0.054 (0.102)
English Fluency Level	0.191 (0.043)**
Spanish Fluency Level	-0.045 (0.045)
Years of Education	0.017 (0.008)*
Intercept	2.341 (0.232)**
R^2	0.07
N	865

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$

Source: Mexican American Study Project

^aDummy Variable: 1965=0, 1998=1

Table 7 presents the results of the first multinomial logit model, relative to the base category “Interest in Work”. I expected that a respondent’s generation, education and sex would influence the way they prioritize career aspects relative to “Interest in Work”. I also hypothesized that respondents from the first generation (1965) would be more likely to prioritize financial aspects and job security/stability over “Interest in

Work”. Then, I expected that respondents with more education would be more likely to prioritize “interest in work” over other categories and those who identify as female are more likely to prioritize other categories over “interest in work”. It is important to note that when interpreting the coefficients for the multinomial logit regression, it makes most logical sense to interpret the “signs” (positive or negative effect) rather than the magnitudes themselves.

The results reveal that having additional years of education made respondents less likely to choose “financial aspects”, “good future” and “security & stability” over “interest in work”. Notably, location also played a statistically significant impact: specifically, respondents from San Antonio were more likely to choose “financial aspects” and “security and stability” relative to “interest in work”. The respondent’s sex also had a statistically significant impact. Respondents who identified as female were less likely to choose “Good future” and more likely to choose “Security and stability” and “Job training” over “Interest in Work”. Lastly, respondents with a higher English fluency were less likely to choose “financial aspects” over “interest in work”.

The “other” category which grouped 4 of the least selected career priorities: “Social Prestige”, “Native ability”, “Service to Humanity” and “Physical Aspects” also presented some interesting findings. Those who identified as female and with higher English fluency levels were less likely to choose one of these “other” categories over “interest in work”. However, those with a higher Spanish fluency were more likely to choose an “other” category over “interest in work”.

Table 7: Random-Effects Multinomial Logit Estimates of Career Priority Choice relative to base category "Interest in Work"

Career Aspects			
Financial Aspects	Year (dummy ^a)	-0.103 (0.235)	
	Location: San Antonio (base category: LA)	0.411 (0.191)*	
	Sex: Female (Base category:Male)	-0.107 (0.173)	
	Age	-0.002 (0.006)	
	Birthplace		
	USA	0.040 (0.304)	
	Mexico	0.170 (0.350)	
	English Fluency Level	-0.411 (0.120)**	
	Spanish Fluency Level	0.021 (0.130)	
	Years of Education	-0.108 (0.026)**	
	Good Future	Year (dummy ^a)	0.182 (0.226)
		Location: San Antonio (base category: LA)	0.337 (0.194)
		Sex: Female (Base category:Male)	-0.358 (0.173)*
		Age	0.006 (0.006)
Birthplace			
USA		0.303 (0.325)	
Mexico		0.291 (0.382)	
English Fluency Level		-0.056 (0.125)	
Spanish Fluency Level		0.021 (0.130)	
Years of Education		-0.094 (0.026)**	
Security & Stability		Year (dummy ^a)	0.066 (0.230)
		Location: San Antonio (base category: LA)	0.812 (0.188)**
		Sex: Female (Base category:Male)	-0.445 (0.174)*
		Age	-0.002 (0.006)

	Birthplace	
	USA	0.578 (0.332)
	Mexico	0.479 (0.386)
	English Fluency Level	-0.181 (0.124)
	Spanish Fluency Level	0.203 (0.135)
	Years of Education	-0.097 (0.026)**
Job Training	Year (dummy ^a)	0.117 (0.248)
	Location: San Antonio (base category: LA)	1.295 (0.204)**
	Sex: Female (Base category:Male)	-0.402 (0.191)*
	Age	0.006 (0.006)
	Birthplace	
	USA	0.413 (0.334)
	Mexico	0.212 (0.399)
	English Fluency Level	-0.263 (0.136)
	Spanish Fluency Level	0.076 (0.148)
	Years of Education	-0.069 (0.028)*
Other	Year (dummy ^a)	0.160 (0.220)
	Location: San Antonio (base category: LA)	0.097 (0.192)
	Sex: Female (Base category:Male)	-0.354 (0.168)*
	Age	0.003 (0.006)
	Birthplace	
	USA	-0.113 (0.298)
	Mexico	-0.184 (0.351)
	English Fluency Level	-0.400 (0.119)**
	Spanish Fluency Level	0.281 (0.128)*
	Years of Education	-0.027 (0.025)
	<i>N</i>	1,460
	<i>Pseudo R²</i>	0.0377
	<i>Log Likelihood</i>	-2434.5458

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$

Source: Mexican American Study Project

Year Dummy: 0=1965, 1=1998

Notes: Multinomial logit regression run. Compared to base category: "Interest in Work"

The second multinomial logit regression, Table 8, compares different control variable's effects on respondents' career priorities, relative to the base case "Financial Aspects".

I had expected that a respondent's generation and education to influence the way they prioritize career aspects relative to "Financial Aspects". I also had hypothesized that respondents from the first generation are more likely to prioritize financial aspects over other categories, compared to their children (1998 wave). Similarly, I predicted that respondents with moer education would be more likely to prioritize categories such as "interest in work" and "social prestige" over financial aspects.

Interestingly, the variables that played a statistically significant impact were the respondent's English fluency, education and location. A higher English fluency level made respondents more likely to choose both "Good future" and "Interest in Work" over "Financial Aspects". Additionally, respondents with a more education were more likely to choose "interest in work" over "financial aspects". Respondents from San Antonio were less likely to choose "interest in work" and more likely to choose "job training" over "financial aspects". Lastly, respondents with a higher education level were more likely to choose a priority in the "Other" category (Social Prestige", "Native ability", "Service to Humanity" and "Physical Aspects" over "Financial Aspects").

Table 8: Random-Effects Multinomial Log Estimates of Career Priority Choice relative to base category "Financial Aspects"

Good Future	Year (dummy ^a)	0.285 (0.267)	
	Location: San Antonio (base category: LA)	-0.073 (0.214)	
	Sex: Female (Base Category: Male)	-0.250 (0.198)	
	Age	0.008 (0.007)	
	Birthplace		
	USA	0.263 (0.358)	
	Mexico	0.121 (0.403)	
	English Fluency Level	0.356 (0.137)**	
	Spanish Fluency Level	0.001 (0.152)	
	Years of Education	0.013 (0.030)	
	Security and Stability	Year (dummy ^a)	0.168 (0.268)
		Location: San Antonio (base category: LA)	0.401 (0.208)
		Sex: Female (Base Category: Male)	-0.338 (0.197)
		Age	0.000 (0.007)
Birthplace			
USA		0.538 (0.362)	
Mexico		0.309 (0.405)	
English Fluency Level		0.230 (0.135)	
Spanish Fluency Level		0.182 (0.155)	
Years of Education		0.010 (0.029)	
Interest in Work		Year (dummy ^a)	0.103 (0.235)
		Location: San Antonio (base category: LA)	-0.411 (0.191)*
		Sex: Female (Base Category: Male)	0.107 (0.173)
		Age	0.002 (0.006)
	Birthplace		
	USA	-0.040	

		(0.304)
	Mexico	-0.170
		(0.350)
	English Fluency Level	0.411
		(0.120)**
	Spanish Fluency Level	-0.021
		(0.130)
	Years of Education	0.108
		(0.026)**
Job Training	Year (dummy ^a)	0.219
		(0.283)
	Location: San Antonio (base category: LA)	0.885
		(0.223)**
	Sex: Female (Base Category: Male)	-0.295
		(0.211)
	Age	0.008
		(0.007)
	Birthplace	
	USA	0.373
		(0.363)
	Mexico	0.042
		(0.415)
	English Fluency Level	0.148
		(0.145)
	Spanish Fluency Level	0.056
		(0.167)
	Years of Education	0.038
		(0.031)
Other	Year (dummy ^a)	0.263
		(0.261)
	Location: San Antonio (base category: LA)	-0.314
		(0.212)
	Sex: Female (Base Category: Male)	-0.247
		(0.193)
	Age	0.005
		(0.006)
	Birthplace	
	USA	-0.153
		(0.336)
	Mexico	-0.354
		(0.376)
	English Fluency Level	0.011
		(0.131)
	Spanish Fluency Level	0.260
		(0.150)
	Years of Education	0.081
		(0.029)**
<i>N</i>		1,460
<i>Pseudo R²</i>		0.0377
<i>Log Likelihood</i>		-2434.5458

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$

Source: Mexican American Study Project

^aYear Dummy: 0=1965, 1=1998

Notes: Multinomial logit regression run. Compared to base category: "Financial Aspects"

Chapter 7: Discussion

This study yielded results that both confirmed and extended established theories on career aspirations, occupational satisfaction levels and immigrant assimilation. It was surprising to see that even though career priorities generally remained constant between the two generations, respondents from the 2nd generation valued “financial aspects” less than their parents and “interest in work” more than their parents”, exhibiting a sort of evolution towards more “self-actualized goals” over time (Shmutte, 2013). This intergenerational change could be attributed to the idea that the second generation had higher earnings than their parents and had accumulated more “social capital”(Massey & Akresh, 2006). These accumulated social networks may have granted them more job opportunities, and therefore a chance to prioritize higher needs like “interest in work” over “financial aspects” .

To further understand the degree of “economic adjustment by the second generation, I referred to *Generations of Exclusion*, written by Edward Telles and Vilma Ortiz, who conducted the follow-up 1998 survey of the Mexican American Study Project. In their book, they compared earnings and occupational distributions between the 1965 and 1998 wave of respondents (see Table 9 and Table 10, below).

Table 9: Earnings, Income and Poverty Rates over 1965 and 1998 Respondents dfkj

	Original Respondents, 1965 ^a		Children (1998)	
	Los Angeles	San Antonio	Los Angeles	San Antonio
Personal Earnings ^b	\$31,355	\$20,411	\$37,463	\$32,595
Family Income ^c	\$38,566	\$24,873	\$54,730	\$45,145
Poverty ^d	12%	41%	15%	19%

Source: Mexican American Study Project, table taken from Generations of Exclusion (Telles & Ortiz)

^a1965 figures adjusted to 2000 dollars

^bPersonal Earnings includes wages and business income; among workers.

^cFamily income based on husband's and wife's income and includes personal income interest, dividends, pensions and government assistance

^dBelow poverty based on family income using government thresholds (based on family size and composition)

Table 10: Occupational Distributions over 1965 and 1998 Respondents

	Original Respondents, 1965	Children, 1998
Occupational distribution		
Professional or manager	8%	28%
Tehcnical or administrative	10	38
Total White collar	18	66
Service	5	12
Production or repair	20	12
Operatives or laborer	57	12
Total blue collar	77	22

Source: Mexican American Study Project, table taken from Generations of Exclusion (Telles & Ortiz)

I focus my attention on the Earnings and Income between 1965 respondents and their Children in Table 6.4, since these are the comparable groups for my analysis. The authors corrected for inflation and price changes. Accounting for inflation and price changes, these numbers suggest that personal earnings among workers have remained in the \$30,000 range in both 1965 and 1998 (adjusted to 2000 dollars). Family income does, however, significantly increase in both San Antonio and Los Angeles.

Table 6.5 reports the occupational distribution of original respondents and their children in 1965 and 1998, demonstrating substantial intergenerational mobility out of blue-collar jobs and into white-collar occupations over time. Telles and Ortiz ascribe this change to “overall changes in the occupational structure of the United States since the 1960s” and the “decreasing education and earnings of lower white-collar jobs in the past”. New Mexican immigrant influxes post 1965 could have also contributed to this notable occupational structural change, in which these immigrants took “low wages and the blue-collar jobs previously held by older immigrants US-born Mexican-Americans”(Telles & Ortiz, 2008).

The significant intergenerational occupational gains from original respondents to the next generation and relatively stable income levels between respondents likely had an impact on the patterns we see in career aspirations and occupational levels. The fact that there were upward shifts out of blue-collar jobs into lower-level white-collar jobs, may have related to a lower priority placed on “financial aspects” and a greater priority on “interest in work”. However, given that most of the respondents in both generations worked in “service or manufacturing occupations” like “maids, cleaners” and “police

officers”, these jobs may not be the most stable jobs either, leading to a relatively similar level of priority placed on “security and stability” and “good future” in both generations (Telles & Ortiz, 2008).

Additionally, there were no significant changes occupational satisfaction levels over the two generations. This does corroborate Katz’s wherein occupational satisfaction is a function of “socialization and acculturation- a gradual transition and readjustment”(Katz, n.d.).The lack of change may be attributed to the fact that income and earnings remained relatively the same across both survey years, and if occupational satisfaction largely depends on financial stability, then there may have been no change in satisfaction levels too.

Here, notably, the considerable attrition rate between the 1st and 2nd generation respondents may affect the results. This attrition rate might not have captured inter-city movement between generations- in that children who may have moved out of state, or return migration. In this sense, there could have been positive or negative pre-fabricated results. Therefore, this ambiguous correlation of the attrition rate may skew how we interpret this intergenerational change in occupational satisfaction levels and career priorities.

The results from the Ordinary Least Squares regression suggested that respondent’s age, being from San Antonio, English fluency and years of education has an effect on a respondent’s occupational satisfaction level. These are consistent the 2011 survey done as part of the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index, which found that senior citizens have the highest level of jobs satisfaction among U.S workers. Higher levels of human capital, years of education and language acquisition, may have allowed

respondents to better engage with their coworkers, given that approximately 40% of respondents across both years worked in roles with high levels of personal interactions (e.g: administrative, service roles). Lastly, San Antonio respondents reported higher occupational satisfaction levels. San Antonio experienced a sharper decline in poverty rates from the 1965 to 1998 compared to that of Los Angeles (Telles & Ortiz, 2008). Telles and Ortiz argue that the decline in poverty rates in San Antonio was due to a massive industrial restructuring of military jobs in San Antonio, with a growing private sector, offering more opportunities for those working there, perhaps resulting in higher occupational satisfaction levels for respondents of San Antonio.

Career Priorities, Relative to “Interest in Work”

For my first multinomial regression, I looked at the effect of different explanatory variables on career priority choices relative to “interest in work”. Before continuing, it is worth noting that both the structure of the multinomial logit model and indeed the structure of the questionnaire are set up in a way that presumes a mutual exclusivity; that a respondent can only pick one of these career aspects as their most valued career priority. In reality, people are likely to value many of these things, and that is something not captured in the survey data. Granted, there may be instances where, if someone is a migrant with limited job opportunities, they may not be able to choose a job that involves many of these career aspects at once. There is, nevertheless, some value in knowing which of these attributes the respondent places the most weight.

I chose “Interest in Work” as the first base category because it was the most frequently chosen option across both years. Results from this multinomial regression suggested that years of education, location, sex, English fluency, and Spanish Fluency all

had a significantly determining role in a respondent's career priorities, relative to Interest in Work. While some of these results corroborate theories in the literature, others offer some new insights.

The fact that a higher education made respondents less likely to choose “financial aspects”, “good future” and “security and stability” over “interest in work” is consistent with theories of status attainment models. Findings from *Generations of Exclusion* suggest that education had the most powerful effect on “every indicator of socioeconomic status”, in fact “for every additional year of education increases earnings by about \$4,000” (Telles & Ortiz, 2008). Therefore, respondents with more education may have simply been able to afford to prioritize a genuine “interest in work” over financial aspects and job security. However, inconsistent with this theory is that the respondents with higher English fluency levels (an indicator of human capital), were less likely to choose “financial aspects” over “interest in work”. In fact, those with higher English fluency levels were also notably less likely to choose one of the “other categories” over “interest in work”. The “other categories” were “Social prestige”, “Native ability”, “Service to Humanity” and “Physical Aspects”: or less financially-related categories. Perhaps in this scenario, English language acquisition was not clearly an indicator of accumulation of human capital.

Sex also played an important role: females were less likely to choose “good future” and more likely to choose “security and stability” and “job training” over an “interest in work”. Females were also less likely to choose one of the “other categories” over “interest in work”. Intuitively, this means that females were prioritizing career aspects that were more “practical” over “self-actualizing”. This result relates to Blau and

Kahn's work on gender and assimilation, wherein they find that Mexican migrant women were more likely to support their husbands financially; which may lead to them prioritizing financial and job security related career aspects over an "interest in work" (Blau & Kahn, 2007).

Lastly, respondents from San Antonio were more likely to value security and stability over interest in work, as well as job training over an interest in work. This might be related to the fact that between 1965 and 1998, San Antonio underwent major industrial restructuring, with the privatization of many military jobs. This may have led respondents, undergoing this industry change, to value career aspects that offer them a sense of stability and the skillsets needed to adapt to the change.

Career Priorities, relative to "Financial Aspects"

The second multinomial logit model uses the base case "Financial aspects". The model measures the effect of generation, location, sex, age, birthplace, English and Spanish fluency and years of education on the way a respondent values different career aspect relative to "Financial aspects". The results of this model suggest that a respondent's English fluency level, years of education and location were statistically significant determinants of their top career priority, relative to financial aspects.

The fact that respondents with a higher English fluency chose both "Good future" and "Interest in Work" over "Financial Aspects", suggests that English language acquisition made respondents value career aspects that relate to genuine interest and ambition over more basic needs like financial stability. Similarly, a higher education level made respondents more likely to choose "interest in work" over "financial aspects". Those with higher education levels also demonstrated a higher likelihood of choosing a

career priority in the “other” category (Social Prestige”, “Native ability”, “Service to Humanity” and “Physical Aspects”) over “financial aspects”. These results align with the theory that an accumulation of “human capital” for migrants may allow them to prioritize career aspects that deal less with financial stability and more with self-actualized goals.

Similar to the results of the 1st multinomial logit regression, respondents from San Antonio were less likely to prioritize “interest in work” and more likely to choose “job training” , relative to “financial aspects”. The need for “job training” and the emphasis of “financial aspects” over “interest in work” may be related to the industrial restructuring of San Antonio, with the mass privatization of a lot of previously military related jobs.

Notes on Robustness of the Models

The R^2 value of the occupational satisfaction OLS regression is 0.07, which means that my model does not capture a lot of other variables that may be affecting the dependent variable. Some of these could include a migrant’s social networks, the cultural nuances of job, or the respondent’s relationships with coworkers. Similarly, the Pseudo R^2 value for the both multinomial logit regressions are 0.03, implying that there could have been a range of other factors influencing the way that migrants prioritize different career aspects; for example, parental expectations, familial responsibilities, and available job opportunities.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

This thesis aimed to redefine what “assimilation” means by using the migrant’s perspective. Previous literature in economic assimilation largely focuses on a “convergence to the mean” approach, wherein an erosion of economic differences between foreign-born and their native-born counterparts was the gold standard for assimilation. Inspired by research by Zhou et al, Soldheim et. Al, Massey and Afresh, Katz and Kao, Chiapa et. Al and Aguilera and Massey, this thesis introduces previously neglected economic variables such as occupational satisfaction levels and career priorities to quantify some qualitative elements of the working experience for migrants.

These data distinguish themselves through their intergenerational aspect. The data from the Mexican American Study Project provide information on two generations of Mexican migrants living in San Antonio and Los Angeles, with the first wave interviewed in 1965 and their children interviewed in 1998. This dataset uniquely provides a lens to understanding long-term integration, giving us information on what happened to the descendants of past waves of Mexican immigrants

There were two elements to my research: 1) looking for intergenerational change in occupational satisfaction levels and career priorities and 2) exploring determinants of occupational satisfaction levels and career priority choices for Mexican migrants. These determinants included a host of respondent demographic characteristics (e.g: age, sex, years of education, birthplace, language fluency).

The findings both corroborate and contradict previous research in this domain. While I expected there to be sweeping intergenerational change in these career priorities and occupational satisfaction levels, based on Katz’s(1993) theories of assimilation and

acculturation as a “gradual transition and readjustment”, I found that regardless of generation (in my analysis, measured by survey year 1965 vs 1998), respondents generally have similar occupational satisfaction levels and career priorities (Katz, n.d.). The only exception was that 2nd generation respondents valued “interest in work” more than their parents and valued financial aspects less than their parents; suggesting a somewhat “self-actualizing” change in career priorities over the two generations.

Moreover, a host of characteristics seemed to contribute to the respondent’s likelihood of choosing specific career priorities relative to the base case “interest in work”; including years of education, location (San Antonio vs Los Angeles), sex, English fluency, Spanish fluency. As I began to interpret the results of the multinomial logit models on career priorities, I realized that the career priority options could be grouped in 2 different categories: 1) aspects related to job security (e.g financial aspects, security/stability, job training) and 2) aspects related to the more self-actualized goals (e.g: interest in work, social prestige, service to humanity, physical aspects). “Good Future” was a category that I felt respondents could interpret as something related to job security or as an opportunity to “rise up the ladder”.

In general, respondents with a higher education level and a higher English fluency level, or more human capital, were more likely to choose “self-actualized” goals over job security aspects. This is consistent with theories of human capital accumulation: in that migrants who develop skills that allow them to prosper in their careers may simply be able to afford to prioritize career aspects like an “interest in work”. I also found that location mattered. Those from San Antonio were more likely to prioritize “job training” and “security and stability” over an “interest in work” more than their Los Angeles

counterparts, likely due to differences in industry composition, poverty rates, unionization and family income between the two cities. Lastly, surprisingly, birthplace did not play a statistically significant determining role in how a respondent prioritizes career aspects.

Similarly, only the respondent's English fluency, education, and location had a statistically significant impact on a respondent's occupational satisfaction level, suggesting that those with higher levels of "human capital" were generally more satisfied with their current jobs.

While these models produced some statistically significant results, there were certainly limitations and phenomena that were not captured in the survey data, either due to the structure of the questionnaires or the assumptions of the models themselves. Some of these limitations include the mutual exclusivity of the career priority choices, the way the questions were asked (very gendered), and the attrition rate between the 1965 and 1998 respondents. Arguably, the differences in career priorities and occupational satisfaction levels could have resulted from a shift in standards. Perhaps the children reported a marginally higher satisfaction level because their standards were lower than their parents, and the same logic could apply to intergenerational changes career priority choices. Essentially, future research needs to incorporate the "why" as well as the "what". A question that simply asks respondents to report their top career priority choice and occupational satisfaction level does little in helping understand the multitude of factors that influence those choices.

Therefore, future research must incorporate more demographic variables as determinants of occupational satisfaction levels and career priority choices. These

demographic variables can include a respondent's ethnic self-identification, employment status, earnings, income, household size, number of social network connections in the host city, years spent in the US, and citizenship status (if possible). This analysis can also extend to include characteristics of the host country, such as industry sector composition, unemployment rates, access to education, etc. I would also be interested in quantifying how a migrant's cultural values align with their career priorities; as this is a topic that has frequented my discussions with my own Indian-immigrant parents as I anticipate to join the workforce next year. In many ways, I view in-depth qualitative research that utilizes interviews as a holistic method of understanding migrant aspirations and satisfaction levels.

With a rise of undocumented immigrants in recent years, Mexican migrants, once again take the center stage in public policy debate. The issue of legal residency can undeniably impact social mobility and opportunities for migrants, and therefore, future research can also incorporate the spectrum of mixed-migration, not only voluntary economic migrants. Future research can work to include an analysis of incorporating refugees, asylum-seekers, displaced persons, etc. This analysis can also be replicated for different immigrant groups from different countries, to compare and contrast career aspirations and achievements cross-nationally.

I was also unable to pursue two highly relevant questions due to the legacy nature of the dataset. The first research question was about how migrant wages, relative to native-born individuals, changed over generations. However, income variables were coded as discrete and not continuous variables: moreover, I could not match individuals in the two generations. The second research question involved examining intergenerational changes

in occupational distributions. Each occupation/industry was coded as a 4 digit number, and the dataset did not come with a codebook. I tried to see if the values aligned with Standard Industry codes or Occupational Codes, and some did not correlate with the values given in the codes. Therefore, I would encourage researchers to preserve their survey data in way that remains accessible and understandable for future generations to use and analyze. In fact, I would argue that the Mexican American Study Project is due for another follow-up in 2020, to assess the 3rd generation.

Edward Telles and Vilma Ortiz, the researchers who conducted the 1998 wave of the Mexican American Study Project, argue that “American dependence on Mexican labour needs to be acknowledged without the common scapegoating of Mexican Americans as their unassimilable progeny” (Telles & Ortiz, 2008). I would argue that measuring migrants’ occupational satisfaction levels and career priorities is one key way to humanize this often-callous discourse on migrant assimilation, especially we talk about Mexican migrants in the United States. Policymakers can use this thesis’s analysis, beyond the typical data of migrant earnings and occupational distributions, to gauge integration prospects for future migrant populations. Non-profits can also use data on migrant aspirations to engage in more intentional programming that can help all Americans feel more satisfied in their jobs, achieve their career goals, and work towards making the “American dream” more inclusive. Shifting the gaze towards migrants themselves and simply asking them, “what do you prioritize in your career?” and “are you happy with your job?” can provide a more nuanced outlook on migrant assimilation.

APPENDIX A: Explanation of Data Analysis

Table A1: Variables and their Coding in Dataset

Variable Name	Coding information
var012	Respondent's sex 1= male 2= female
v86_o2	Participation in Bracero Program (only for respondents in 1998 sample) 1=yes 2=no
var015	Self-Preferred Identification (in English) 1=spanish-speaking 2=latin-americans 3=mexicans 4=mexican-americans 5=american only 6=hispano-americano 7=Spanish American 8=Spanish descent 9=other (texan)
var016	Self-Preferred Identification (in Spanish) 1=mexicano 2=mexico-americano 3=latino 4=hispano 5=tejano 6=chicano 7=Americano 8=latin-americano 9=other
var285	In 1965: 1= parents' decision 2=economic reasons 3= to attend school 4= political refugee 5=greater opportunity 6=to join relatives 7=unspecified personal 8=marriage or divorce In 1998: 1=economic or occupational reasons 2=family reasons 3=community reasons 4=health 5=climate 6=education opportunity 7=other-revolution

engflu	Respondent's English Fluency level 1=no english 2=broken english 3=normally fluent 4=very fluent
spanflu	Respondent's Spanish Fluency level 1=no spanish 2=broken spanish 3=normally fluent 4=very fluent
birthplace	Respondent's Birthplace 1=US 2=Mexico 3=Other
var184	Choose the most important aspect of your career that you prioritize (Top career priority variable) 1=financial aspects 2=social prestige 3=good future 4=security/stability 5=interest in work 6=native ability 7=job training 8=service to humanity 9=physical aspects
highinc	Rank how important for high income 1=don't care 2=important 3=very important
fired	Rank how important for low chances of being fired 1=don't care 2=important 3=very important
advancement	Rank how important work is chances for advancement 1=don't care 2=important 3=very important
workimp	Rank how important for work is important/feeling of satisfaction 1=don't care 2=important 3=very important
shorthrs	Rank how important for short hours 1=don't care 2=important

	3=very important
belong	Rank how important feeling of belonging (this was a question only asked in 1998 survey) 1=don't care 2=important 3=very important
asyouare	Rank how important people take you as you are 1=don't care 2=important 3=very important
var383	Respondent's education level 0=Preschool 1=1 2=2 3=3 4=4 5=5 6=6 7=7 8=8 9=9 10=10 11=11 12= High school grad 13=freshman college 14 =sophomore college 15=junior college 16 =graduated college 17=Masters degree 18=Doctors/all kinds 19=Trade school
tradeschool	0=did not attend tradeschool 1=attended tradeschool
year	Survey year (time dummy) 0=1965 1=1998
sample	1=LA 2=San Antonio
generation	Respondent's Generation 1=1st generation 2nd=2nd generation
satis	Occupational Satisfaction Level 1=Not at all satisfied 2=Not very satisfied 3=Pretty much satisfied 4=Very satisfied

empstat	0=unemployed 1=employed
var379	Respondent's age

Table A2: Correlation Matrix for Variables of Interest

	Occupation Satisfaction	Career Priority	Year	Sample	Sex	Age	Birthplace	English Fluency	Spanish Fluency	Education
Occupation Satisfaction	1									
Career Priority	-0.0193	1								
Year	-0.048	0.0217	1							
Sample	0.0901	0.0003	0.0232	1						
Sex	-0.0077	0.0139	0.4268	0.003	1					
Age	0.041	0.0468	-0.409	0.1143	0.1465	1				
Birthplace	0.0121	0.0052	0.3208	0.1715	0.0974	0.2411	1			
English Fluency	0.202	0.0662	0.0581	0.0967	0.0313	0.1831	-0.2195	1		
Spanish Fluency	-0.0583	0.0717	0.0464	0.1215	0.0277	0.0702	0.1646	-0.0449	1	
Education	0.1271	0.0843	0.1347	0.1953	0.0129	0.3352	-0.2809	0.5156	-0.2191	1

APPENDIX B: Descriptive Statistics Graphic Visualizations & Additional Variables

Table B1: Birthplace of 1965 to 1998 Respondents

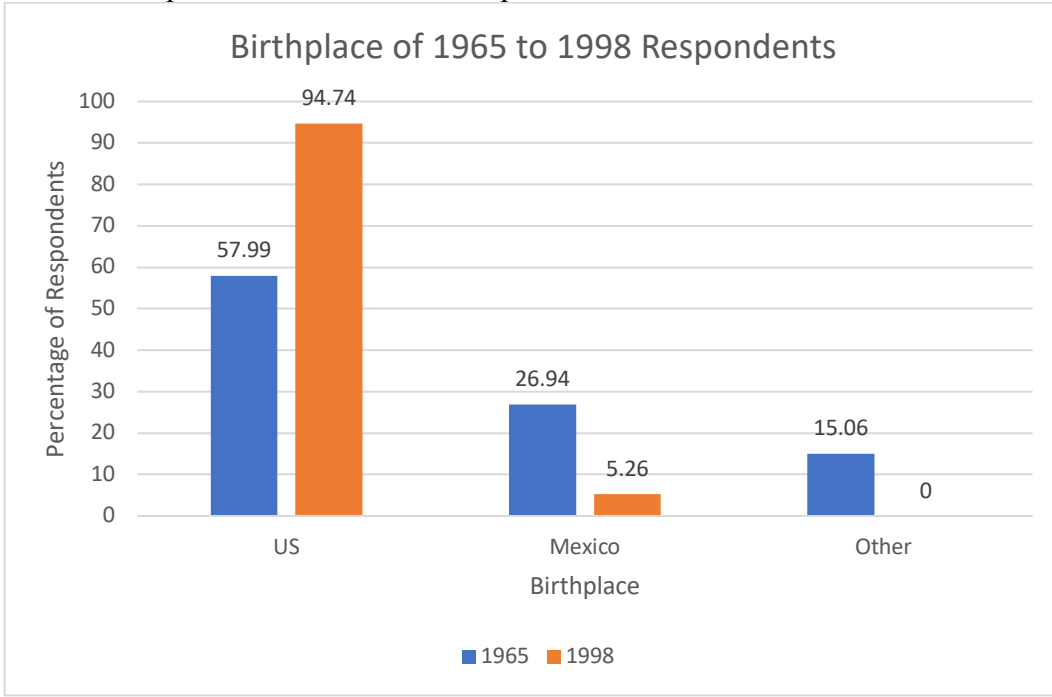


Table B2: Sex of 1965 to 1998 Respondents

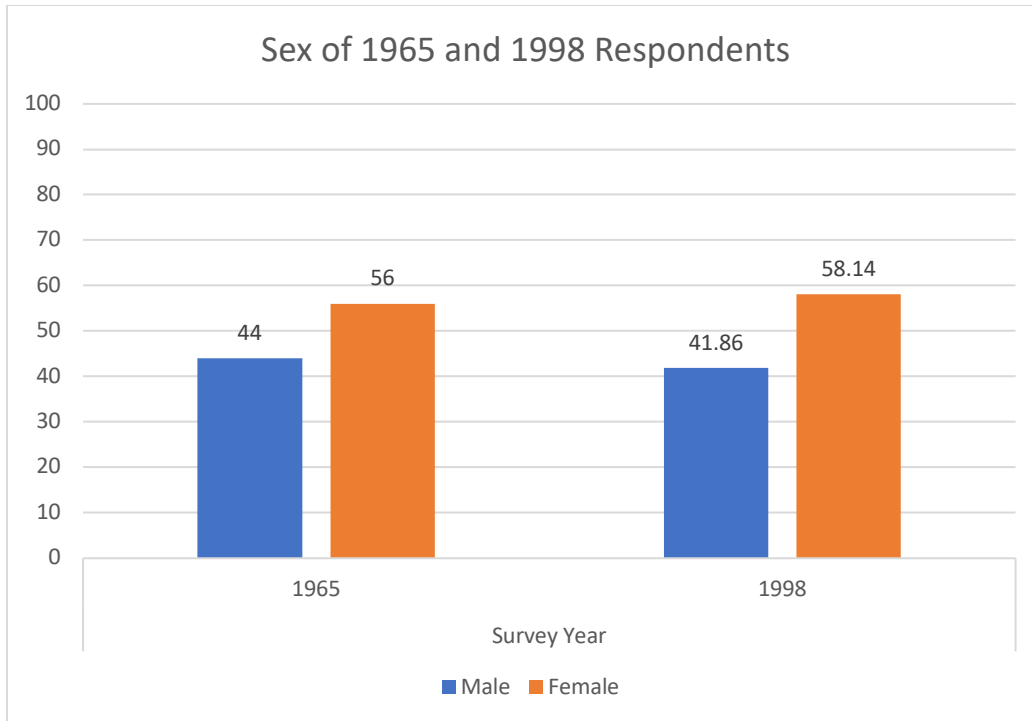


Table B3: Spanish Fluency for 1965 and 1998 Respondents

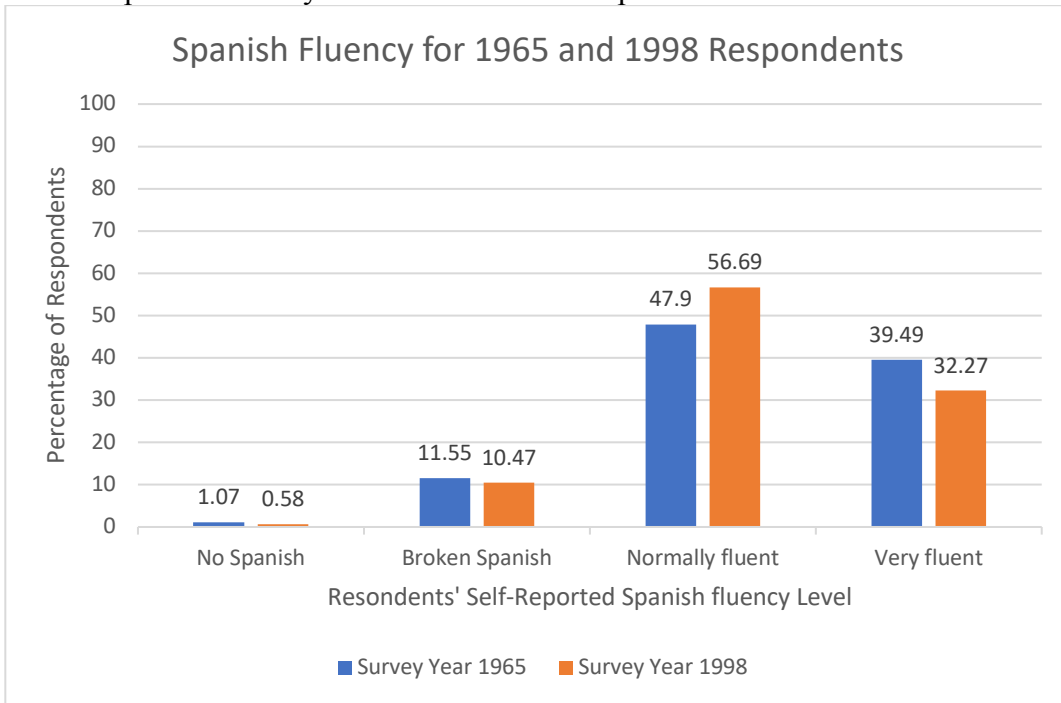


Table B4: English Fluency for 1965 and 1998 Respondents

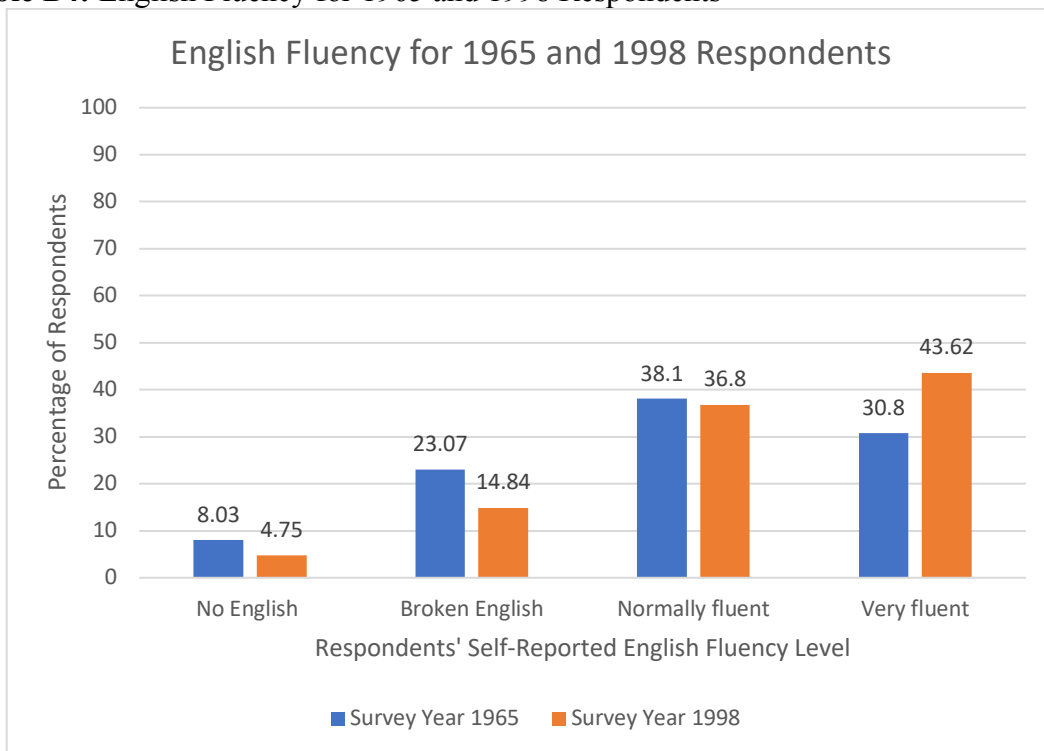


Table B5: Respondents' Ethnic Self-Identification(English) in 1965 and 1998

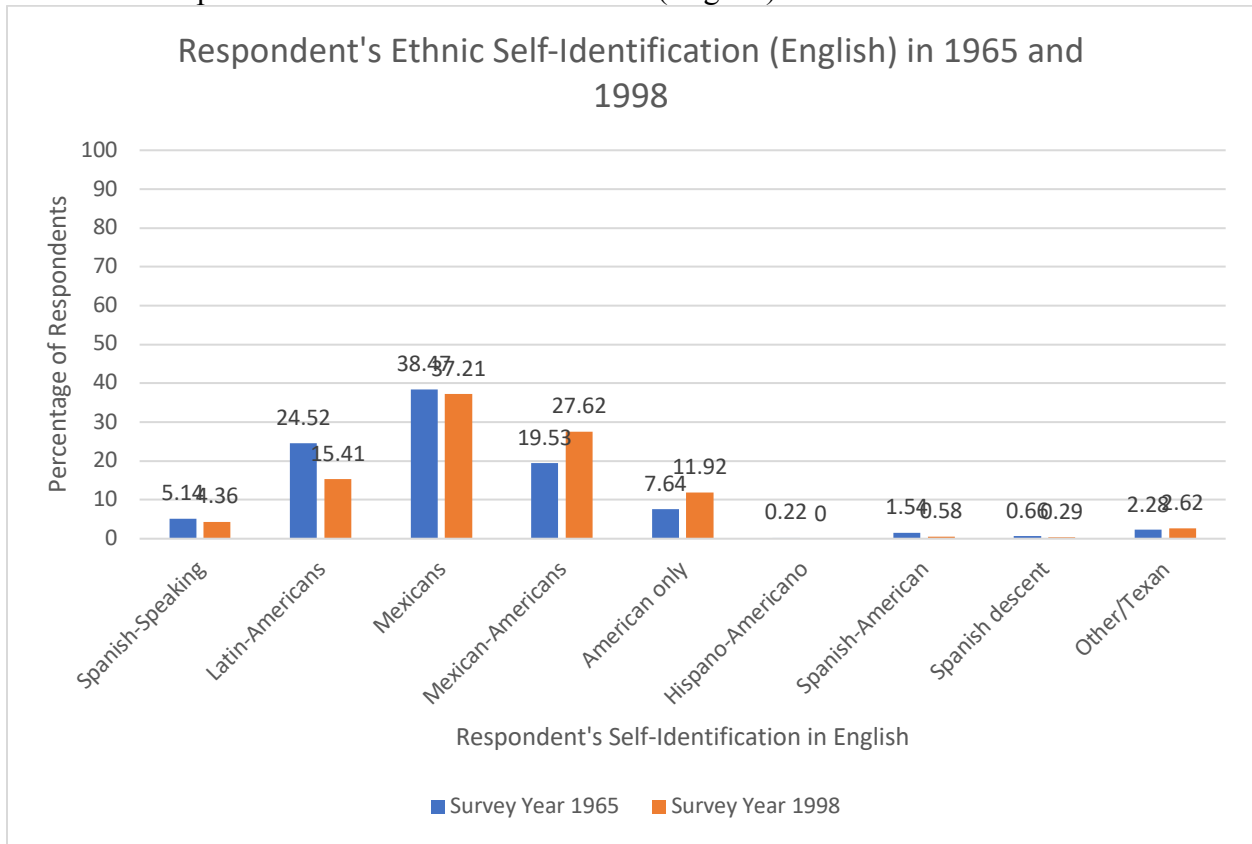


Table B6: Respondents' Ethnic Self-Identification (Spanish) in 1965 and 1998

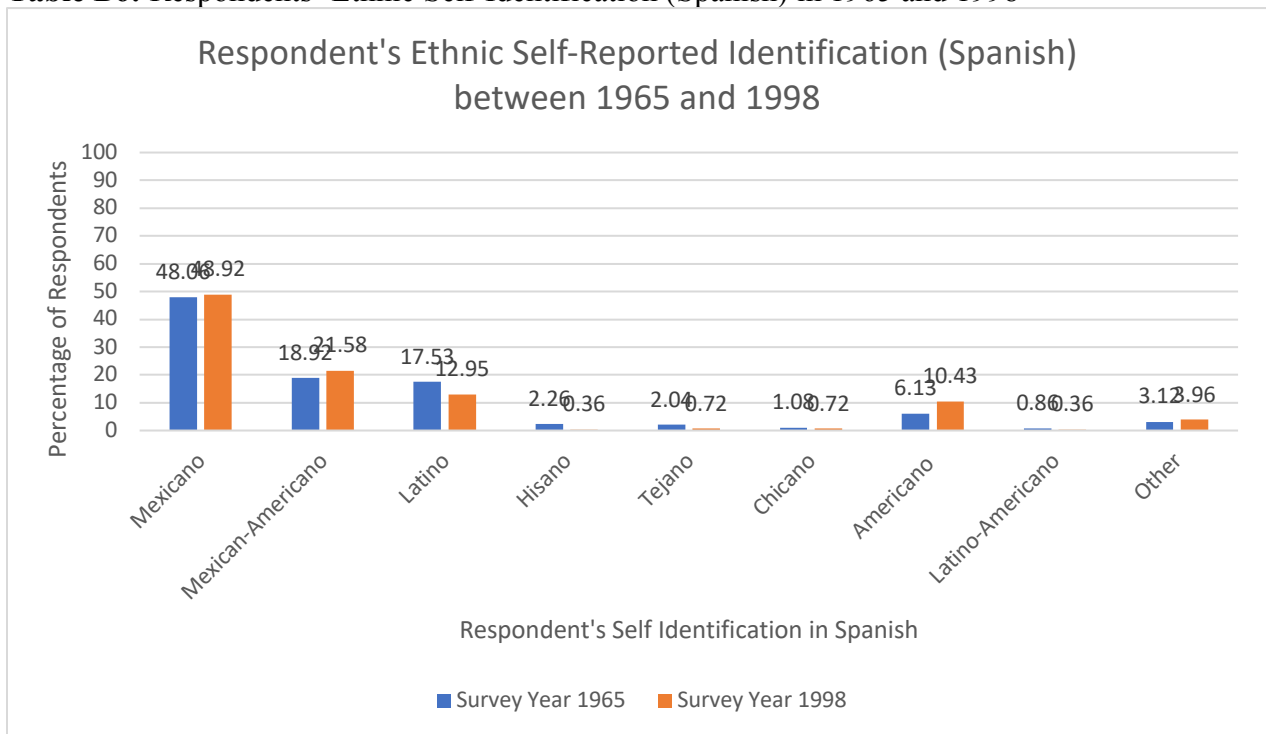


Table B7: Mean Education Level for 1965 and 1998 Respondents

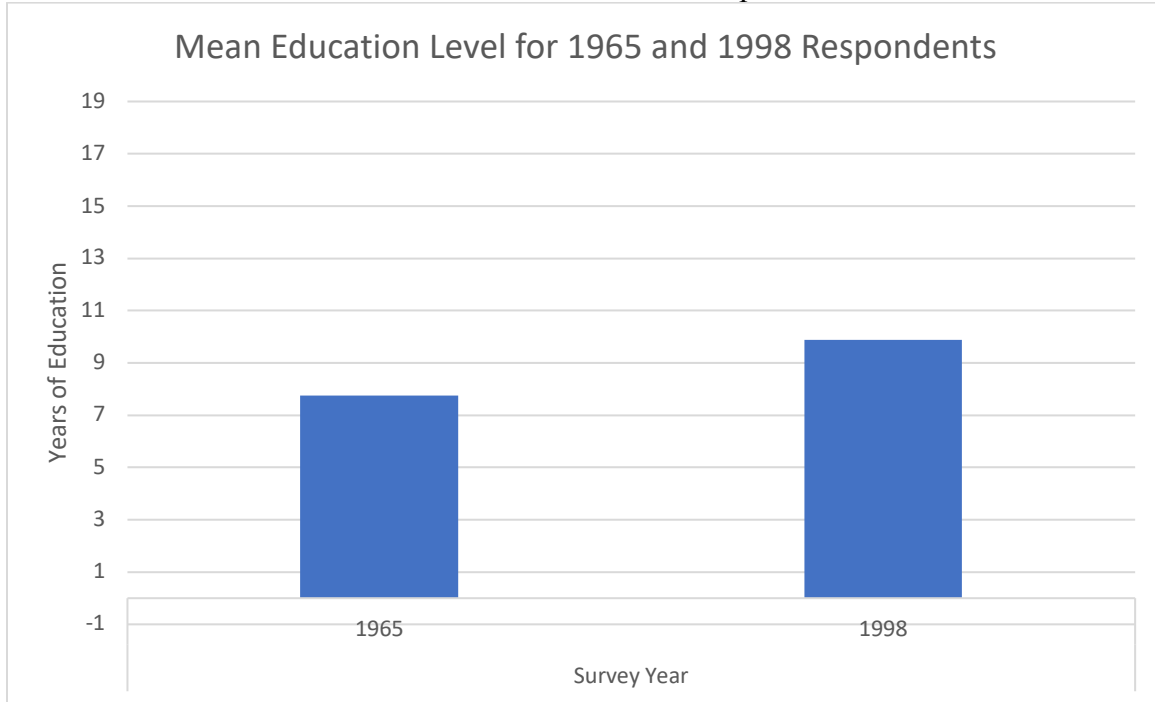
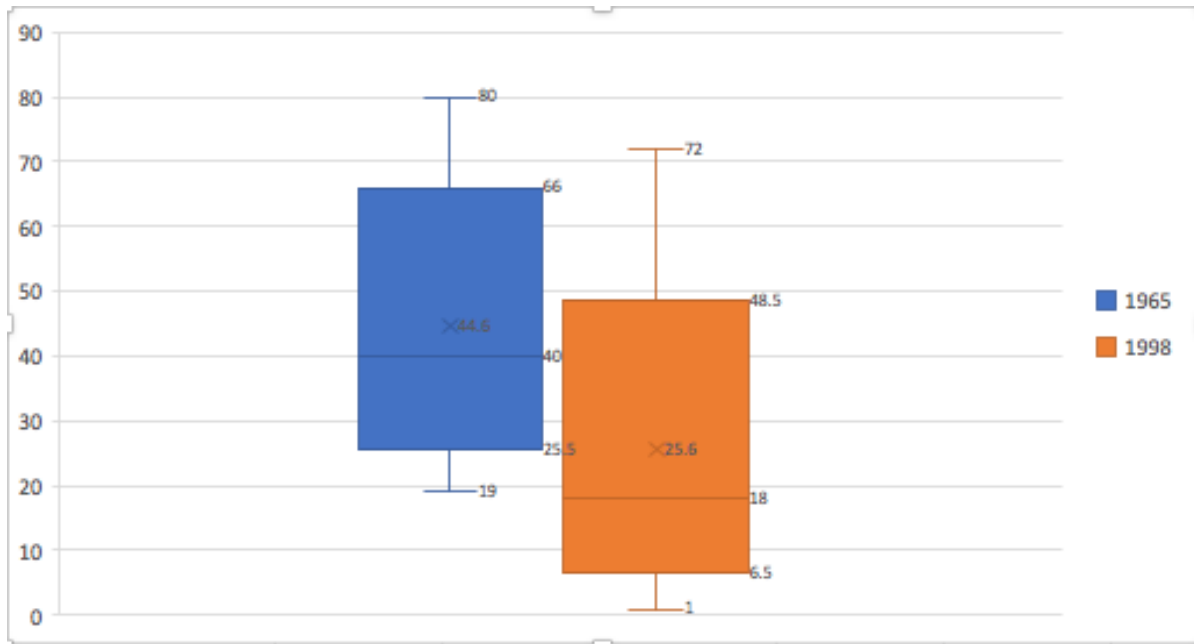


Table B8: Box and Whiskers Plot of Respondent's Age



***The following tables are additional variables related to Career Priorities included in my dataset that I did not use for my analysis**

Table B9: Respondents value for "High Income" between 1965 and 1998

Respondent's Importance Given to "High Income"	Survey Year		Total Percentage
	1965	1998	
Don't Care	5.7	4.56	5.33
Important	40.34	42.15	40.93
Very Important	53.96	53.29	53.74
Total N	1527	745	

$\chi^2 (2, N=2272)=9.9700, p= 0.438$

Source: Mexican American Study Project

Table B10: Respondents value for "Chances for Advancement" between 1965 and 1998

Respondent's Importance Given to "Chance for Advancement"	Survey Year		Total Percentage
	1965	1998	
Don't Care	3.68	3.47	3.61
Important	32.63	32.31	32.53
Very Important	63.69	64.69	63.86
Total N	1523	749	

$\chi^2 (2, N=2272)= 9.9700, p= 0.953$

Source: Mexican American Study Project

Table B11: Respondent's value for "Work is Important" between 1965 and 1998

Respondent's Importance Given to "Work is Important"	Survey Year		Total Percentage
	1965	1998	
Don't Care	2.23	1.74	2.07
Important	43.05	38.5	41.56
Very Important	54.72	59.76	56.38
Total N	1526	748	

$\chi^2 (2, N=2274)=5.3478, p= 0.069$

Source: Mexican American Study Project

Table B12: Respondents value for "Low Chances of Being Fired" between 1965 and 1998

Respondent's Importance Given to "Low Chances of Being Fired"	Survey Year		Total Percentage
	1965	1998	
Don't Care	7.55	7.25	7.45
Important	33.81	32.62	33.42
Very Important	58.63	60.13	59.13
Total N	1526	748	

$\chi^2(2, N=2268)=0.4664, p=0.792$

Source: Mexican American Study Project

Table B13: Respondents value for "Short Working Hours" between 1965 and 1998

Respondent's Importance Given to "Short Working Hours"	Survey Year		Total Percentage
	1965	1998	
Don't Care	53.22	53.57	53.34
Important	32.16	31.09	31.81
Very Important	14.62	15.34	14.86
Total N	1505	743	

$\chi^2(2, N=2268)=0.3660, p=0.833$

Source: Mexican American Study Project

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