UC Berkeley

CLPR Working Papers

Title
Labor Force Position of Latino Immigrants in California

Permalink
https://escholarship.org/uc/item/3j837022

Author
Ortiz, Vilma

Publication Date
1995-10-01

CLPP *working paper*

LABOR FORCE POSITION OF LATINO IMMIGRANTS IN CALIFORNIA

By

Vilma Ortiz Ph. D.

Department of Sociology

University of California, Los Angeles

October 1995

A Publication of the Chicano/Latino Policy Project

❖

LABOR FORCE POSITION OF LATINO IMMIGRANTS
IN CALIFORNIA

By

Vilma Ortiz Ph. D.
Department of Sociology
University of California, Los Angeles
October 1995

ii

About the Authors: Dr. Vilma Ortiz is an Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of California at Los Angeles. She received her Ph.D. in Social Psychology from New York University.

Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report examines the labor force position of Latina and Latino immigrants in California. There has been considerable immigration from Latin America throughout the 20th century, with much of this migration coming from Mexico. In the last 20 years, immigration from Central and South America has increased significantly. How immigrants from Mexico and other Latin American countries fare in the U.S. economic system is a critical research and policy issue. Prior research points to the particularly low status position of Latino immigrants in the labor force (Morales and Ong, 1993). Immigrants are typically concentrated in low wage manufacturing jobs, particularly in the garment, plastics, and furniture industries, as well as in low level service jobs, such as restaurant workers, janitors, and private household workers.

This research addresses three major questions:

1. To what extent does labor force position among Latinos vary by whether they were born in the U.S., are Mexican immigrants and citizens, Mexican immigrants and noncitizens, or Central American immigrants?

2. What factors affect the labor force status of Latinos immigrants? Which types of factors have a greater impact: human capital factors (e.g., education and language ability), family/household factors (e.g., being married or household composition), or proxies for structural indicators such as the presence of networks (i.e., contact with Latinos and other racial/ethnic groups) and residential segregation (i.e., extent of Latino neighbors)?

3. What differences are there in the labor force position of Latino men and women? Are some factors more important for men than women and vice versa?

The data to be used in this analysis came from the 1990 *California Identity Project* (CIP), a representative sample of 1200 Latinos residing in the state of California. In this report, the major groups compared with respect to labor force integration are Mexican origin persons born in the U.S., Mexican immigrants who are citizens, noncitizen Mexican immigrants, and Central American immigrants. Overall, Latinos are disadvantaged workers with respect to their hourly wage, working conditions, and family income. U.S.-born Mexicans are the most advantaged workers followed by Mexican immigrants who are citizens, then noncitizen Mexican immigrants, and least advantaged are Central American immigrants, although there are some exceptions to this

pattern. The largest differences are found between the citizen groups-- U.S.-born Mexicans and Mexican immigrants--on the one hand, and noncitizen groups--Mexican and Central American immigrants, on the other hand.

We observe that educational levels and English language skills are fairly low among Latinos. Moreover, citizens are more likely to speak English and have higher levels of education than immigrants who are not citizens. In the multivariate analysis among Latino men, we find that these individual characteristics--education and English language ability--explain much of the disadvantaged position of noncitizen immigrants. In other words, non-citizen immigrants tend to earn less than citizens because of their lower educational and English language skills. Similarly, Latinos who are noncitizens have lower family income than citizen immigrants because of their lower education and English proficiency. On the other hand, the disadvantaged working conditions, such as not being unionized and not having health insurance, among noncitizen immigrants persist even after controlling for individual characteristics.

Consistent with the previous findings, education and English proficiency are found to have a direct effect on the economic position of Latinos. Thus, those with higher educational and English ability skills have significantly higher wages, hold jobs with significantly better working conditions, and have significantly higher family income than those with weaker educational and language skills.

Most Latinos are married and reside in family units with children and other adults. However, these family characteristics do not explain the disadvantaged status of noncitizen Latino men nor do they have a direct effect on the economic position of Latino male workers.

As an indication of social networks, we find that most Latinos have high levels of contact with other Latinos and relatively little contact with non-Latinos, and are likely to live in Latino communities. Moreover, contact with non-Latino groups and living in non-Latino neighborhoods is more prevalent among those born in the U.S. and among immigrants who have become citizens. Contact with Latinos and other racial/ethnic groups has a strong positive effect on the wages and the family income of Latino men. Moreover, contact with Latinos and other racial/ethnic groups has a significant positive effect on holding a unionized job but not on other indicators of work conditions.

Overall, we found the economic position of Latinas to be significantly more disadvantaged than that of Latino men. Latinas hold jobs with significantly worse working conditions--not being unionized and not having health insurance. Moreover, Latinas have lower family income than

Latino men. Similar to the results among men, the most disadvantaged Latinas are noncitizen immigrants.

Labor force participation among Latinas who are born in the U.S. was significantly lower than for Latina immigrants, after controlling for individual, family, and structural characteristics. This finding suggests that Latinas participate less in the labor force when they have greater options due to their skills, family configuration, or structural position, while they participate more when they have fewer options and greater needs.

Moreover, we find that educational level and English ability have a direct effect on labor force participation. And we find that education and English fluency to some extent explain the lower family income of noncitizen Latinas and have a direct effect on family income among Latinas. In contrast, working conditions were found not to be strongly affected by these individual characteristics among Latinas nor do individual characteristics explain the more disadvantaged working conditions of Latinas.

Family characteristics are much more important for understanding the economic position of Latinas than of Latino men. Being married and having children in the home negatively affects labor force participation while the presence of other adults in the household positively affects labor force participation. In addition, being married and having other adults in the household affects the family income of Latinas in a positive manner. In contrast, working conditions were found not to be strongly affected by family characteristics among Latinas.

Similar to the results among Latino men, contact with Latinos and other racial/ethnic groups has a strong positive effect on the wages and the family income of Latinas. On the other hand, contact with Latinos and other racial/ethnic groups does not influence working conditions, such as having health insurance or retirement benefits.

Overall, it was found that individual factors--especially education and English language ability--were important in explaining the especially disadvantaged position of noncitizen immigrants. Moreover, individual and structural factors had a strong direct effect on the labor position for both men and women while family characteristics were more important for Latinas than Latinos. We found that gender differences in labor force position were pervasive, with Latinas consistently in a lower status position than their male counterparts.

These findings suggest a number of policies that could be implemented to assist in improving the labor force position of Latinos and Latinas:

3

1. **Education:** Improving the educational retention of U.S.- born Latinos and immigrants who come to the U.S. at a young age would enhance their labor market position. Education had a consistent effect on labor force position for men and women. Yet we know from this and other studies that Latinos have especially low rates of high school completion and college attendance. Educational programs at adult schools and community colleges (including bilingual education), especially for those who seek vocational rather than academic training, would be useful.

2. **English literacy:** Increasing adult classes in English literacy would be especially beneficial to immigrants since this study found immigrants to be consistently disadvantaged by lack of English language skills. While such services currently exist, the demand for these classes generally outnumbers the availability of classes.

3. **Child care:** Having high quality and affordable child care is critical in assisting Latinas to participate in the labor force. Conventional wisdom suggests that Latinas prefer forms of child care provided by family members. While this view is supported by the finding that the presence of other adults in the home facilitated participation in the work force, many families do not have this resource available to them. One alternative might be to facilitate the establishment of cooperative low-cost child care centers. The availability of affordable child care would enable greater labor force participation by Latinas and other working parents.

4. **Job placement/seeking strategies:** Overcoming the structural barriers to better paying and more stable jobs in the labor force is difficult. Yet, since we know that networks are important, strategies that expand job contacts and networks for immigrants might prove helpful. In particular, job seeking and placement programs will assist Latinos in overcoming barriers and might serve to improve their labor force position.

5. **Unionization:** The working conditions of Latino and Latina workers were shown by this study to be quite inadequate. For example, few have health insurance or a retirement plan. Historically, one mechanism workers used to improved their working conditions was to unionize. While there are currently many forces against unionization (government

legislation, corporate strategies, and economic restructuring), unionization still plays an important role in securing adequate working conditions. For instance, several union efforts have proved successful in organizing Latino workers in Los Angeles--two that come readily to mind are Justice for Janitors and the drywallers union. These efforts have been successful despite the conventional wisdom that Latino immigrants are difficult to organize. Since this study shows that unions reach a small portion of the Latino labor force, conditions facilitating unionization should be created.

Government Intervention: Another mechanism for improving working conditions of workers has historically been direct government intervention. One example of an existing effort is the minimum wage law. An example which has not succeeded is President Clinton's efforts to establish a national health care program, which would have reached many of the respondents in this study who work at low-wage jobs without health insurance. Unfortunately, public sentiment and government leadership are currently against strong government intervention. In fact, much of this sentiment is particularly targeted at immigrants as being partly responsible for job displacement, crime, and high social welfare costs. (as is evident in the overwhelming support for California's Proposition 187 in November 1994). Therefore, the feasibility of increasing the role of government in addressing the needs of immigrants seems dismal. Nevertheless, this is likely to be the most successful mechanism in the long run for improving the position of immigrants, considering that government interventions have historically been the only mechanisms for significantly altering the working and living conditions for society as a whole or for significant portions of the population.

Overall, this study pointed to a number of key issues that impact the labor force participation and position of Latinos and Latinas. While the processes that create these social inequalities are not easily remedied, a number of strategies like those suggested here could assist Latinos in their struggles in the labor market.

5

I. LABOR FORCE POSITION OF LATINO IMMIGRANTS IN CALIFORNIA

This report examines the labor force position of Latina and Latino immigrants in California. There has been considerable immigration from Latin America throughout the 20th century, with much of this migration coming from Mexico. In the last 20 years, immigration from Central and South America has increased significantly (Portes and Rumbaut, 1990). How immigrants from Mexico and other Latin American countries fare in the U.S. economic system is a critical research and policy issue. Prior research points to the particularly low status position of Latino immigrants in the labor force (Morales and Ong, 1993). Immigrants are typically concentrated in low wage manufacturing jobs, particularly in the garment, plastics, and furniture industries, as well as in low level service jobs, such as restaurant workers, janitors, and private household workers.

One key question examined in the present study is how immigrants fare in the labor market as a result of greater contact with U.S. culture (e.g., by residing in the U.S. longer and/or acquiring U.S. citizenship) According to assimilation theory, as persons from other countries settle and come in contact with the new culture in the host country, they integrate economically (Gordon, 1964; Lieberson, 1981)[1] Research has shown that the extent to which assimilation occurs and the pace at which it progresses vary significantly for different immigrant groups at different historical periods. While European immigrants who came to the U.S. at the turn of the century appear to fit a traditional assimilation model in which immigrants acquired the new culture and language and secured a position in the economic structure, the experiences of more recent immigrants from third world countries indicate that this model does not readily apply (e.g. Chapa, 1989-90). The experiences of Mexican immigrants and Chicanos in the Southwest suggests that alternatives to traditional assimilation models are needed.

The second major research question examined by this study is what factors explain the labor force position of Latino immigrants. Three major sets of factors are examined. First, the human capital perspective suggests that individual attributes are key to understanding the socio-economic position of immigrants (Borjas, 1990; Chiswick, 1979; 1986; Portes and Bach, 1985). Consequently, factors such as educational level and English language ability should be strong

---

[1] Assimilation has other dimensions, including the extent to which immigrants acquire behaviors, norms, and values (cultural assimilation); and are accepted into the institutions and social circles of the host country (structural assimilation).

predictors of labor force status. Second, the call for a gendered understanding of the interrelationships among family, work, and migration suggests that other factors are key to understanding the labor force position of immigrants (Grasmuck and Pessar, 1991; Simon, 1992). Particularly important according to this perspective, especially for women immigrants, is the role of household and family factors. Third, a structural perspective poses that employment and migration do not simply result from individual-level decisions but rather reflect processes by which individuals exercise options within constraints posed by structural forces (Arguello, 1989; Fernandez-Kelly, 1983; and Sassen, 1987). For instance, corporate and government policy result in conditions favorable and unfavorable to migration or to expanding economic opportunities. While structural forces are difficult to measure directly with individual-level data, examining factors such as metropolitan area of residence, contact with other racial/ethnic groups, and the presence of Latinos in one's neighborhood can serve as proxies for these more abstract concepts. More specifically, greater contact with Latinos and with other racial/ethnic groups can indicate a wide network of persons (conceivable with weaker ties) that in turn provide greater links to jobs (Granovetter, 1973; Greenwell, DaVanzo, Valdez, 1993; Wegener, 1991). Presence of Latinos in one's neighborhood can indicate the extent of residential segregation and serve as a proxy for access to employment and areas of job growth (Massey, 1984; Wilson, 1986).

The third major question addressed in this study is whether there are differences between men and women with respect to both their labor force integration as well as the factors that affect on these outcomes. For instance, women have typically been viewed as passive participants in the immigration process (Houstoun, Kramer, and Barrett, 1984). They are thought not to engage in the immigration decision themselves but to be part of a family process whether that be the family of origin or of procreation. However, scholars have suggested that women themselves are active in making decisions about migration and in implementing economic survival strategies (Pedraza-Bailey, 1990). Consequently, these analyses are carried out separately for men and women and particular attention is paid to the role of household and family factors in understanding the socio-economic position of women (Grasmuck and Pessar, 1991).

Research Questions

This research addresses three major questions:

1. To what extent does labor force position among Latinos vary by whether they were born in the U.S., are Mexican immigrants and citizens, Mexican immigrants and noncitizens, or Central American immigrants?

7

2. What factors influence the labor force status of Latinos immigrants? Which types of factors have a greater impact: human capital factors (e.g., education and language ability), family/household factors (e.g., being married or household composition), or proxies for structural indicators such as the presence of networks (i.e., contact with Latinos and other racial/ethnic groups) and residential segregation (i.e., extent of Latino neighbors)?

3. What differences are there in the labor force position of Latino men and women? Are some types of factors more important for men than women and vice versa?

II. DATA AND METHODS

Methods

The data to be used in this analysis come from the *California Identity Project* (CIP), and were collected by the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center in 1990. This data set is based on a representative sample of 1200 Latinos residing in the state of California. The survey obtained detailed information about employment, immigration, and family composition, as well as issues of ethnic and social identity and attitudes toward other racial/ethnic groups.

The CIP data included Latinos with a range of immigration experiences: the children of immigrants or U.S.-born Latinos; legal and undocumented immigrants; citizens and noncitizens; immigrants who vary with respect to their length of time in the U.S.; and immigrants from various Latin American countries. In this report, I compare the labor force integration of Mexican origin persons born in the U.S., Mexican immigrants who are citizens, noncitizen Mexican immigrants, and Central American immigrants. I focus on citizenship, as opposed to other indicators such as length of time in the U.S., because it provides a meaningful distinction among respondents. In other words, there were significant differences between the citizens and noncitizens and citizenship is significantly related to other measures, like length of residence in the U.S. and age at immigration. Almost all of the Central Americans are noncitizens because of their recent migration history to the U.S. Among Latino men, the largest group in the sample is Mexican immigrants who are not citizens--almost 60 percent--while 10 percent are Central American immigrants, 10 percent are Mexican citizen immigrants, and 20 percent are U.S.-born Mexicans. Among Latinas,

8

52 percent are Mexican immigrants who are noncitizens, while 10 percent are Central American immigrants, 8 percent are Mexican citizen immigrants, and 30 percent are U.S.-born Mexicans.-

Data Limitations

The CIP data provide useful recent information on the Latino population in California, particularly given with the delays in utilizing 1990 Census data. On the other hand, the CIP data has some limitations that stem from problems during the data collection phase. Data was collected through a subcontract with Yankelovich (an east coast firm known primarily for political polling). In drawing the sample, Yankelovich used interviewers or field houses that were primarily Spanish-dominant. This improved the mechanisms for identifying Spanish language, i.e., Latino immigrant, respondents but appears to have resulted in the under-identification of U.S.-born Latinos. This problem was addressed by sampling additional English language respondents, who were primarily U.S.-born Latinos. However, the sampling flaws mean that the CIP can not be used reliably to estimate . the percentage of immigrants or of Spanish-speaking persons within the Latino population, or to estimate immigration flows. In the analysis for this report, I do not focus on these issues, but rather on the labor force characteristics of these groups.

A second limitation relates to the collection of occupation and industry information in the survey. It is customary in population surveys (like Census and Current Population Surveys) for occupation and industry information to be collected through open-ended questions, including probes for detailed information. This information is then coded into 300–400 classifications with many categories(developed by the Census Bureau). From reviewing original questionnaires, it appears that interviewers did not probe sufficiently for detailed occupation/industry information during the interviews. This left considerable room for errors in judgment when doing the coding of occupation and industry, creating considerable ambiguity in the coded responses. Therefore, occupation and industry are not used in the analysis of this report. Other labor force information, that is easily quantified and collected with close-ended questions (such as number of hours worked), does not appear to have these problems. Therefore, the analysis of this report relies on this type of information.

A third limitation is that the CIP is a sample of only Latinos, therefore other racial/ethnic groups are not available for comparison purposes. While it is not possible to obtain exactly the same measures as are available in the CIP from other sources, it is possible to make some approximate comparisons with published 1990 census data. Therefore, in the process of

9

presenting descriptive statistics on Latino men and women, I will attempt to compare the results to published information on other groups as much as possible.

Despite these limitations, these data provide much useful information, since there are few other systematic data sources available for describing Latinos. Moreover, the CIP included many more attitudinal and in-depth measures than are included in demographic data sources. Thus, the CIP data are used for this project.

III. DESCRIPTIVE RESULTS

Labor Force Status Among Latino Men

Table 1 presents labor force characteristics for Latino men by place of birth and citizenship status. Overall, we see that U.S.-born Mexicans are the most advantaged workers followed by Mexican immigrants who are citizens, then noncitizen Mexican immigrants, and least advantaged are Central American immigrants, although there are some exceptions to this pattern. The largest differences are found between the citizen groups-- U.S.-born Mexicans and Mexican immigrants--on the one hand, and noncitizen groups--Mexican and Central American immigrants, on the other hand.

Labor force participation for men is fairly high in all groups with the highest level found among Central American immigrants at 95 percent. Among Mexicans, noncitizen immigrants (75 percent) and those born in the U.S. (72 percent) have lower labor force participation than immigrants who are citizens (89 percent). The percent employed also indicates a similar pattern in that employment levels are fairly high and citizen groups are less likely to be unemployed than noncitizen ones. In comparison to other racial/ethnic groups (from published Census data), Latinos tend to participate in the labor force to a similar extent as do non-Latino Whites and more so than African-Americans.

Family income among Latinos is fairly low with Central American and Mexican noncitizen immigrants having a lower level of annual income (approximately $19,000) than that of Mexican citizen immigrants and U.S.-born Mexicans (approximately $24,000). Comparisons to published Census data show that family income among Latinos is lower than among non-Latino Whites and African-Americans. The unemployment rate varies in that Mexican immigrants who are noncitizens have the highest rate of over 6 percent and Central American immigrants have the lowest rate (less than 2 percent). U.S.-born Mexicans and citizen immigrants have unemployment rates of 4 to 5 percent.

10

	US-Born Mexicans	Mexican Citizen Immigrant	Mexican Noncitizen Immigrant	Central American Immigrant
Everyone				
Labor Force Part. Rate	72.2	75.0	88.7	95.1
% Employed	68.4	71.9	83.2	93.4
Mean Family Income (1000s)	$24.93	$23.98	$19.13	$18.88
(N)	(133)	(64)	(363)	(61)
In the Labor Force				
Unemployment Rate	5.2	4.2	6.2	1.7
(N)	(96)	(48)	(322)	(58)
Employed				
Mean Hourly Wage	$9.75	$10.00	$7.07	$6.68
Mean Hours Worked	38.9	41.5	40.7	38.7
% Work Full-time	96.9	91.3	94.7	89.5
% With More Than One Job	11.3	4.4	5.6	8.8
% Self Employed	8.2	15.2	6.0	5.3
% Unionized	40.2	30.4	13.2	12.3
% With Retirement Benefit	56.7	45.6	19.5	19.3
% Health Insurance	77.3	65.2	45.0	47.4
(N)	(97)	(46)	(302)	(57)

Table 1
Labor Force Characteristics Among Latino
Men by Place of Birth/Citizenship

Hourly wage, a frequently used measure of inequality, is found to differ between Mexican noncitizen immigrants and Central Americans, on one hand, and U.S.-born Mexicans and Mexican citizen immigrants, on the other. Mexican noncitizen immigrants and Central Americans earn about $7 an hour while U.S.-born Mexicans and Mexican citizen immigrants earn about $10 an hour. In fact, U.S.-born Mexicans earn slightly less ($.25) than do Mexican citizen immigrants. Published Census data shows that the hourly wage among non-Latino Whites and African-Americans is higher than among Latinos.

Among men, the overwhelming majority of all groups (90 percent or more) do indeed work full-time or over 40 hours a week. Some groups have a significant, although small, percent who hold more than one job simultaneously. U.S.-born Mexicans and Central American immigrants have higher rates of holding more than one job (11 and 9 percent, respectively) than Mexican immigrants, whether citizens or noncitizen (4.4 and 5.6 percent respectively).

11

Self-employment (or entrepreneurship) is frequently studied in immigrant populations. Among Latino men, we see that noncitizens--Mexicans and Central Americans--have lower rates of self-employment than do citizen groups--U.S.-born Mexican and Mexican citizen immigrants. The highest rate of self-employment is found among Mexican citizen immigrants at over 15 percent.

Unionization, retirement benefits, and health insurance serve as indicators of working conditions among Latino. Along all three indicators, we see considerably better working conditions , for men, among the citizen groups than the noncitizen ones. Forty percent of U.S.-born Mexicans work in unionized jobs while fewer than 15 percent of Mexican noncitizen and Central American immigrants do so. Over half of U.S.-born Mexican workers hold jobs with a retirement plan, 45 percent of Mexican citizen immigrants have this benefit, and fewer than 20 percent of Mexican noncitizen and Central American immigrants do so. Similarly with health insurance, over three-quarters of U.S.-born Mexican employees have health insurance through their jobs, 65 percent of Mexican citizen immigrants have this benefit, and less than half of Mexican noncitizen and Central American immigrants do so.

In sum, U.S.-born Mexicans are the most advantaged workers followed by Mexican immigrants who are citizens, then noncitizen Mexican immigrants, and least advantaged are Central American immigrants, especially with respect to hourly wage, self-employment, unionization, retirement, and health insurance. The largest differences are found between U.S.-born Mexicans and citizen Mexican immigrants, on one hand, and noncitizen Mexican and Central American immigrants, on the other.

Labor Force Status Among Latinas

Table 2 presents labor force characteristics for Latinas by place of birth and citizenship status. Overall, we see that U.S.-born Mexican women are the most advantaged workers followed by Mexican immigrants who are citizens, then noncitizen Mexican immigrants. The least advantaged are Central American immigrants, although there are some exceptions to this pattern. As with their male counterparts, the largest differences are found between the citizen groups--U.S.-born Mexicans and Mexican immigrants--on one hand, and noncitizen groups--Mexican and Central American immigrants--on the other hand. There are fairly small differences within the two citizenship groups along a number of indicators. Also, there is a consistent gender difference with men being in better labor force positions than women.

Female labor force participation is between 60 and 70 percent for all groups, with the highest level found among Central American immigrants at 69 percent, and the lowest (60 percent)

12

among Mexican citizen immigrants. Labor force participation among Latinas is similar to that found among non-Latina White and African-American women (from published Census data). The percent employed also indicates a similar pattern of differences by place of birth and citizenship status. Central American immigrants have the highest rate of employment. Mexican

Table 2 Labor Force Characteristics Among Latinas by Place of Birth/Citizenship				
	US-Born Mexicans	Mexican Citizen Immigrant	Mexican Noncitizen Immigrant	Central American Immigrant
Everyone				
Labor Force Part. Rate	62.2	60.4	635	69.1
% Employed	57.8	54.7	56.0	66.2
Mean Family Income (1000s)	$21.52	$21.58	$17.35	$19.89
(N)	(204)	(53)	(364)	(68)
In the Labor Force				
Unemployment Rate	7.1	9.4	11.7	43
(N)	(127)	(32)	(231)	(47)
Employed				
Mean Hourly Wage	$8.13	$8.14	$5.50	$5.91
Mean Hours Worked	36.4	38.1	35.6	37.3
% Work Full-time	85.2	82.8	89.2	75.6
% With More Than One Job	7.0	3.4	5.9	11.1
% Self Employed	7.8	6.9	6.9	13.3
% Unionized	21.1	27.6	6.8	13.3
% With Retirement Benefit	43.8	37.9	17.6	13.3
% Health Insurance	60.9	51.7	38.2	35.6
(N)	(128)	(29)	(204)	(45)

citizen immigrants have the lowest rate, and U.S.-born Mexicans and Mexican noncitizen immigrants fall in-between.

Family income among Latinas is fairly low, ranging from $17,000 to $21,500. Contrary to other indicators, Central American immigrant women reside in families with incomes that are more than $2,000 greater than that of Mexican noncitizen immigrants (approximately $17,000). Published Census data shows that family income among non-Latino White and African-American women is higher than among Latinas. Among citizen women, Mexican immigrants and U.S.-born

Mexicans have similar incomes (approximately $21,500). The unemployment rate among Latinas fluctuates with noncitizen Mexican immigrants having the highest rate of about 12 percent and Central American immigrants having the lowest rate (about 4 percent). U.S.-born Mexicans and citizen immigrants have unemployment rates of 7 and 9 percent, respectively.

Hourly wage, a frequently used measure of inequality, is found to differ between Mexican noncitizen immigrants and Central Americans, on the one hand, and U.S.-born Mexicans and Mexican citizen immigrants, on the other. Mexican noncitizen immigrants and Central Americans earn less than $6 an hour while U.S.-born Mexicans and Mexican citizen immigrants earn about $8 an hour.

Most Latinas work full-time or over 40 hours a week. The proportion of U.S.-born Mexicans and citizen immigrant women who work full-time are similar (about 84 percent). On the other hand, among women who are not citizens, Mexican women (89 percent) are more likely to work full-time than are Central American women (76 percent). A significant, although small, percentage holds more than one job simultaneously. For example, 11 percent of Central American immigrants and 7 percent of U.S.-born Mexican women hold more than one job.

Among Latinas, we see that Central American immigrant women have the highest rate (13 percent) of self-employment. In contrast, about 7 percent of the other three groups are self-employed. Among Latino men, in contrast, Central American immigrants have the lowest rate of self-employment and U.S.-born Mexican men have the highest rate.

Unionization, retirement benefits, and health insurance serve as indicators of working conditions of Latinas. Along all three indicators, we see considerably better working conditions among the citizen groups than the noncitizen ones. The highest percentage of unionized workers is found among Mexican citizen immigrant women, (28 percent) while about 20 percent of the U.S.-born Mexican women work in unionized jobs. Among noncitizens, 7 percent of Mexican immigrants and 13 percent of Central American immigrants do so. U.S.-born Mexicans and Mexican citizen immigrants are similar in the extent to which they have jobs with retirement plans (about 40 percent). Noncitizen women are less likely than citizens to have this benefit with 18 percent of Mexican noncitizen and 13 percent of Central American immigrant women having this benefit. Sixty percent of U.S.-born Mexican women have health insurance through their jobs, 52 percent of Mexican citizen immigrants have this benefit, and fewer than 40 percent of Mexican noncitizen and Central American immigrants do so. Overall, Latinas are less likely to be in jobs with these types of benefits than are Latino men.

14

In sum, women who are U.S.-born Mexicans and citizen immigrants are the most advantaged workers followed by noncitizen Mexican immigrants and Central American immigrants. These differences are most evident with respect to hourly wage, self-employment, unionization, retirement, and health insurance. Overall, Latinas are more disadvantaged than are Latino men with respect to their labor market position.

Background Characteristics of Latino Men

Table 3 presents descriptive statistics for Latino men. Overall, we see low levels of English ability skills and educational levels, with large differences in these individual characteristics by place of birth and citizenship. The average age among those who are citizens (both the U.S.-born and citizen immigrants) is about 42 years while the average age of Mexican noncitizen immigrants and Central American immigrants is 34 years. Also, English proficiency differs between those who are citizens and noncitizens--the U.S.-born and Mexican citizen immigrants have an average proficiency score of 4.6 and 4.0 respectively on a scale ranging from one to five while Mexican immigrants who are noncitizens and Central American immigrants have average scores of 2.5 and 3.0 respectively.

Educational level also differs between citizen and noncitizen men--U.S.- born Mexicans and citizen immigrants have an average of 11 years of education while Mexican noncitizens and Central American immigrants have fewer years of education. While the U.S.-born Mexicans have more years of education than Mexican citizen immigrants, interestingly they are less likely to be college graduates (24 percent) than are Mexican citizen immigrants (33 percent). Additionally, there is a higher percentage of poorly educated persons among the citizen Mexican immigrants than among the U.S.-born Mexicans. Also, Mexican noncitizen immigrants have a lower level of education than do Central American immigrants--7.6 and 9.9 years of schooling respectively. This may be due to more selective migration from Central America (because it is more difficult to immigrate) than from Mexico (Portes and Rumbaut, 1990). Published Census data shows that non-Latino Whites and African-Americans have more years of education and better English proficiency than do Latinos.

Most Latinos are married and reside in family units with children and other adults. There are small differences in family characteristics by place of birth and citizenship. Over three-fourths of Latino men are married, with the exception of Central American immigrants, of whom 69 percent are married. U.S.-born Mexicans are less likely to have young children (6 years old or younger) in the home than all other groups (perhaps due to being older). Central American

15

immigrants are more likely to have children between the ages of 7 and 13 than are the other groups. The number of other adults in the household differs between the citizen groups (1.4 on average for U.S.-born Mexicans and Mexican citizen immigrants) and the noncitizens (1.9 among Mexican

	US-Born Mexican	Mexican Citizen Immigrant	Mexican Noncitizen Immigrant	Central American Immigrant
Table 3 Background Characteristics Among Latino Men by Place of Birth/Citizenship				
Age[a]	42.4	42.7	34.8	34.2
English Proficiency[b]	4.63	4.06	2.55	2.96
Education[a]	11.4	10.8	7.6	9.9
Education 0-7 years[c] (Reference)	.097	.187	.488	.229
Education 8-11 years[c]	.226	.297	.328	.312
Education 12 years[c]	.436	.188	.118	.246
Education 13 or more years[c]	.241	.328	.066	.213
Married[c]	.797	.750	.774	.688
# Children in HH 0-6 years old[d]	.451	.734	.692	.721
# Children in HH 7-13 years old[d]	.579	.516	.587	.639
# Adults in HH[e]	1.43	1.36	1.91	1.88
Contact with Latinos[f]	3.50	3.41	3.46	3.30
Contact with Other Racial/ethnic Groups[f]	2.62	2.42	1.87	1.93
Extent of Latino Neighbors[b]	3.28	3.45	3.68	3.36
(N)	(133)	(64)	(363)	(61)

[a]*Mean years*
[b]*Mean with range of 1-5*
[c]*Proportion*
[d]*Mean number with a range of 0-5*
[e]*Mean number with a range of 0-9*
[f]*Mean with range of 1-4*

noncitizens and Central American immigrants). Latinos are more likely to be married and to have children than other racial/ethnic groups--non-Latino Whites and African-Americans (from published data).

Most Latinos have high levels of contact with other Latinos and relatively little contact with non-Latinos. Contact with other Latinos averages about 3.2 or greater on a scale ranging

16

from one to four, with small differences by place of birth and citizenship. On the other hand, all groups have considerably less contact with other racial/ethnic groups[2]. Average contact with other racial/ethnic group, however, is higher among U.S.-born Mexicans and Mexican citizen immigrants, on the one hand, than among noncitizen Mexican immigrants and Central American immigrants, on the other. There are fairly small differences by group in the extent to which respondents live in communities with Latino neighbors (averages between 3.3 and 3.7 on a scale ranging from one to five). This may be due to the high level of racial/ethnic segregation in urban areas today as well as the extensive white-flight from inner cities over the last 25 years (Massey, 1984).

Background Characteristics of Latinas

Table 4 presents descriptive statistics for Latinas. Overall, we see low levels of English language skills and educational levels among Latinas, with large differences in individual characteristics by place of birth and citizenship. The average age among those who are citizens-- the U.S.-born and citizen immigrants--is about 41 and 44 years, respectively, while the average age of Mexican noncitizen immigrants and Central American immigrants is about 35 years. Also, English proficiency differs between those who are citizens and noncitizens. The U.S.-born and Mexican citizen immigrants have an average proficiency score of 4.5 and 3.8 respectively on a scale ranging from one to five, while noncitizen Mexican immigrants and Central American immigrants have average scores around 2.6.

Among the Mexican origin women, the average educational level is highest among the U.S.-born Mexicans (11 years), lower among citizen immigrants (9.5 years), followed by Mexican noncitizen immigrants (7.2 years). Central American immigrants have an educational level that is closer to that of Mexican citizen immigrants than that of noncitizen immigrants. This may be due to more selective migration from Central America (because it is more difficult to immigrate) than from Mexico (Portes and Rumbaut, 1990). Also, Mexican noncitizen immigrants have an especially low rate of attending college (8 percent) in comparison to other groups.

Most Latinas are married and reside in family units with children and other adults. There are small differences in family characteristics by place of birth and citizenship. Over 70 percent of Mexican immigrants (both citizens and noncitizens) are married, while about 57 percent of U.S.-born Mexican women and 62 percent of Central American immigrant women are married. Mexican

---

[2] This measure averages 3 items that measure contact with Anglos, Asians, and Blacks.

noncitizen immigrants are more likely to have young children (6 years old or younger) in the home than all other groups. Central American immigrant women are less likely to have children between

	US-Born Mexican	Mexican Citizen Immigrant	Mexican Noncitizen Immigrant	Central American Immigrant
Table 4 Background Characteristics Among Latinas by Place of Birth/Citizenship				
Age[a]	40.6	43.9	36.2	34.2
English Proficiency[b]	4.58	3.80	2.51	2.71
Education[a]	11.1	9.5	7.2	9.9
Education 0-7 years[c] (Reference)	.108	.302	.541	.324
Education 8-11 years[c]	.265	.283	.269	.279
Education 12 years[c]	.387	.170	.110	.162
Education 13 or more years[c]	.240	.245	.080	.235
Married[c]	.569	.717	.712	.618
# Children in HH 0-6 years old[d]	.657	.604	.802	.765
# Children in HH 7-13 years old[d]	.628	.736	.736	.412
# Adults in HH[e]	1.25	1.40	1.59	1.85
Contact with Latinos[f]	3.36	3.53	3.46	3.32
Contact with Other Racial/ethnic Groups[f]	2.56	2.21	1.79	1.85
Extent of Latino Neighbors[b]	3.24	3.36	3.65	3.74
(N)	(204)	(53)	(364)	(68)

[a]*Mean years*
[b]*Mean with range of 1-5*
[c]*Proportion*
[d]*Mean number with a range of 0-5*
[e]*Mean number with a range of 0-9*
[f]*Mean with range of 1-4*

the ages of 7 and 13 in the home while Mexican immigrant women (both citizens and noncitizens) are more likely to do so. The number of other adults in the household is higher for groups that have been in the U.S. a shorter period--lowest among U.S.-born Mexicans and highest among Central American immigrants.

Most Latinas have high levels of contact with other Latinos and relatively little contact with non-Latinos. Contact with other Latinos averages about 3.3 or greater on a scale ranging

18

from one to four, with small differences by group. On the other hand, all groups have considerably much less contact with other racial/ethnic groups. As expected, average contact with other racial/ethnic groups for women is highest among U.S.-born Mexicans, declines among Mexican citizen immigrants, and is lowest among noncitizen Mexican and Central American immigrants. There are fairly small differences by place of birth and citizenship in the extent to which respondents live in communities with Latino neighbors (averages between 3.2 and 3.7 on a scale ranging from one to five).

IV. MULTIVARIATE MODELS AMONG LATINO MEN

Factors Influencing Hourly Wage Among Latino Men

Table 5 presents a multivariate model in which the effect of place of birth and citizenship status, human capital factors, family/household factors, and structural position on hourly wage among Latino men is examined[3]. The first model presents differences among the groups differing by place of birth and citizenship unadjusted for any other factors, with U.S.-born Mexicans, Mexican citizen immigrants, and Central American immigrants being compared to Mexican noncitizen immigrants (reference group). The first model in this table indicates that Central American immigrant men earn significantly less than Mexican noncitizen immigrants, and that Mexican citizen immigrants and U.S.-born Mexicans earn significantly more. In the second model, human capital factors are added and we find that the differences by place of birth and citizenship disappear. Therefore, differences among Central American immigrants, Mexican immigrants, and U.S.-born Mexicans are shown to be due to differences in age, English proficiency, and education. The differences among the groups continue to be non-significant in the models in which family/household and structural factors are added (models 3 and 4).

---

[3] The multivariate models for hourly wage and family income are from ordinary least squared regression, while the models for the other dependent variables are from logistic regressions since the dependent variables are dichotomous.

19

	Table 5			
	Unstandardized OLS Regression Coefficients			
	of Hourly Wage Among Latino Men			
	(Standard Errors in Parenthesis)			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Central American Immigrant	-0.382***	-0.973	-1.016	-0.981
	(0.625)	(0.608)	(0.606)	(0.601)
Mexican Citizen Immigrant	2.934***	0.977	0.888	0.850
	(0.685)	(0.707)	(0.713)	(0.702)
US-Born Mexican	2.785***	0.389	0.437	0.145
	(0.517)	(0.619)	(0.616)	(0.611)
Age		0.030	0.032	0.025
		(0.018)	(0.020)	(0.020)
English Proficiency		1.005***	0.994***	0.725***
		(0.195)	(0.195)	(0.209)
Education 8-11 years		-0.825	-0.754	-0.781
		(0.509)	(0.507)	(0.501)
Education 12 years		-0.561	-0.427	-0.582
		(0.620)	(0.620)	(0.614)
Education 13 or more years		1.378*	1.543*	1.218#
		(0.674)	(0.674)	(0.672)
Married			0.320	0.346
			(0.495)	(0.489)
# Children in HH 0-6 years old			0.473*	0.447*
			(0.227)	(0.224)
# Children in HH 7-13 years old			0.315	0.324
			(0.222)	(0.218)
# Adults in HH			0.009	-0.021
			(0.152)	(0.150)
Contact with Latinos				0.251
				(0.302)
Contact with Other Racial/ethnic Groups				0.727*
				(0.298)
Extent of Latino Neighbors				-0.551**
				(0.176)
Constant	7.066	3.624	2.768	3.574
R^2	.083***	.178***	.194***	.233***

#p<.10; *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001;

In model 4, contact with Latinos, contact with other racial/ethnic groups, and extent of Latino neighbors are added to the model. Contact with Latinos has no effect on wages. On the other hand, greater contact with other racial/ethnic groups means significantly higher wages suggesting that this is an indicator of social networks that provide links to jobs. Also , living in a community with more Latino neighbors means lower wages, suggesting that residential segregation negatively affects the labor market position of Latinos.

Overall, we see that group differences in wages among Latino men are explained to a large extent by individual characteristics, such as education and English language ability. Moreover, education and English proficiency have a strong effect on wages. While family characteristics have a weak effect, contact with Latinos and other racial/ethnic groups (serving as indicators of residential segregation and social networks) have a strong effect on wages among Latino men.

Factors Influencing Work Conditions Among Latino Men

Table 6 presents multivariate models for indicators of working conditions--(1) being self-employed, (2) having a unionized job, (3) having a job with retirement benefits, and (4) being provided with health insurance--among Latino men. Comparing the place of birth and citizenship groups, we see that U.S.-born Mexicans are significantly more likely than Mexican citizen immigrants, noncitizen Mexican immigrants, and Central American immigrants to have unionized jobs and jobs with health insurance. The three immigrant groups do not differ on any of the four indicators of working conditions.

Age has a significant effect on working conditions, in that older Latino men are more likely to be self-employed, have a unionized job, and have a job with retirement benefits than their youth counterparts. English proficiency has a positive effect on self-employment and a negative effect on unionization. In other words. Latinos with better English language skills are more likely than those with limited English proficiency, to own their business and less likely to be in unionized jobs. This latter effect is probably due to persons with fewer English language skills being concentrated in blue-collar jobs which are more likely to be unionized. Education has little effect on self-employment or being in a unionized job; on the other hand, education is significantly related to being in jobs with retirement or health insurance benefits. The proportion of Latino men with retirement benefits increase steadily with increasing educational level; those with some college have the highest proportion of retirement plan beneficiaries. Those with 8 to 11 years of education are significantly more likely, and those with some college are slightly more likely, to have health insurance than those with seven or fewer years of schooling.

21

For the most part, family/household factors do not have a significant effect on working conditions. The only significant effect found was that married Latino men are more likely to have jobs with retirement and health insurance benefits.

For Latino men structural factors had a significant effect on the likelihood of being in a unionized job. Greater contact with other Latinos and with other racial/ethnic groups meant that respondents were significantly more likely to be unionized, while living in an area with more Latino neighbors led to marginally higher levels of unionization. On the other hand, living in an area with more Latino neighbors meant that Latino men were significantly less likely to have health insurance through their employment. It appears that unionization is more likely to occur in jobs in which there is considerable contact with Latinos and other racial/ethnic groups.

Table 6 Predicted Change in Probability* of Working Conditions from Logistic Regression Among Latino Men				
	Self Employ	Union	Retire	Health Ins
Central American Immigrant	-0.022	-0.011	-0.072	-0.024
Mexican Citizen Immigrant	-0.002	0.149#	0.101	0.127
US-Born Mexican	-0.048	0.231**	0.116	0.202**
Age	0.004**	0.004*	0.006*	0.001
English Proficiency	0.053**	-0.048*	0.044	0.043
Education 8-11 years	-0.045	-0.018	0.158*	0.146*
Education 12 years	-0.024	0.148#	0.190*	0.073
Education 13 or more years	0.040	0.132	0.406***	0.157#
Married	-0.038	-0.008	0.171*	0.183**
# Children in HH 0-6 years old	0.032#	0.012	-0.020	0.001
# Children in HH 7-13 years old	0.026	0.034	-0.024	-0.027
# Adults in HH	0.015	-0.015	0.020	0.011
Contact with Latinos	-0.004	0.124*	0.049	-0.028
Contact with Other Racial/ethnic Groups	-0.014	0.148***	0.062	-0.009
Extent of Latino Neighbors	0.003	0.040#	-0.033	-0.055*

#p<.10; *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001;

*Logistic regression is used for this analysis in which an iterative maximum-likelihood solution predicts the logarithm of the odds of the probability of working conditions. Change in probability of working conditions is computed as $(\exp(L1)/(1 + \exp(L1)))-(\exp(L0)/(1 + \exp(L0)))$ where $L0 = Ln(p'/(1-p'))$ and $L1 = L0 + b_i$ and b_i is the coefficient of the relevant independent variable and p' is the proportion that is self-employed, unionized, in a retirement plan, or has health insurance (Peterson, 1985). These can be interpreted as the change in the probability of working conditions associated with a one-unit increase in the independent variable.

22

In sum, differences in unionization and having health insurance by place of birth and citizenship persist even after controlling for individual, family, and structural characteristics. Overall, we see the strong effect of individual characteristics on work conditions among men. On the other hand, family characteristics have little effect on these indicators. Contact racial/ethnic groups has an effect on unionization but not on other indicators of work conditions.

Factors Influencing Family Income Among Latino Men

Table 7 presents a multivariate model in which the effect of place of birth and citizenship status, human capital factors, family/household factors, and structural position on family income among Latino men is examined. The first model, comparing groups differing along place of birth and citizenship status unadjusted for any other factors, indicates that Mexican citizen immigrants and U.S.-born Mexicans have higher family incomes than Mexican noncitizen immigrants and Central American immigrants. In the second model, human capital factors are added to the model and we see that the differences by place of birth and citizenship status disappear. Therefore, differences among Central American immigrants, Mexican immigrants, and U.S.-born Mexicans are shown to be due to differences in age, English proficiency, and education. The differences among the groups continue to be non-significant in the models in which family/household and structural factors are added (models 3 and 4).

Model 2 of Table 7 shows the strong effect of English proficiency and education on family income. Latino men who speak English better are more likely to have higher incomes than those with limited English proficiency. Educational differences are also significant in that Latinos with some college education have significantly higher incomes than less educated men.

The third model with family/household factors added indicates that a number of factors significantly predict family income among Latinos. Being married and having other adults in the home results in significantly higher family income. This is not surprising since more adults can mean either (1) more workers or (2) more persons who can provide child care or other assistance. The significant effect of number of children age 7 to 13 on family income may be due to greater effort on the part of family providers with larger families to secure better paying jobs or work at more than one job.

In model 4, contact with Latinos, contact with other racial/ethnic groups, and extent of Latino neighbors are added to the model. Contact with Latinos has no effect on family income but greater contact with other racial/ethnic groups does mean significantly higher income, indicating

23

the importance of networks. Also, living in a community with more Latino neighbors, an indicator of residential segregation, means lower income. We can view these factors as proxies for structural forces that are expected to influence the labor market position of Latinos.

	Table 7 Unstandardized OLS Regression Coefficients of Family Income Among Latino Men (Standard Errors in Parenthesis)			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Central American Immigrant	-0.248	-2.757#	-2.673	-2.418
	(1.678)	(1.638)	(1.572)	(1.553)
Mexican Citizen Immigrant	4.851**	-0.863	0.416	0.159
	(1.678)	(1.754)	(1.700)	(1.700)
US-Born Mexican	5.795***	-1.429	0.496	-0.972
	(1.243)	(1.552)	(1.491)	(1.466)
Age		-0.049	-0.081*	-0.065#
		(0.038)	(0.040)	(0.039)
English Proficiency		2.617***	2.871***	1.888***
		(0.483)	(0.463)	(0.496)
Education 8-11 years		-1.207	-0.496	-0.386
		(1.258)	(1.204)	(1.181)
Education 12 years		2.232	2.385	1.980
		(1.553)	(1.492)	(1.467)
Education 13 or more years		7.469***	8.073***	6.805***
		(1.741)	(1.674)	(1.661)
Married			3.650**	3.393**
			(1.174)	(1.154)
# Children in HH 0-6 years old			0.196	0.228
			(0.552)	(0.542)
# Children in HH 7-13 years old			1.107*	1.107*
			(0.531)	(0.521)
# Adults in HH			2.552***	2.448***
			(0.371)	(0.364)
Contact with Latinos				0.327
				(0.716)
Contact with Other Racial/ethnic Groups				3.110***
				(0.721)
Extent of Latino Neighbors				-0.907*
				(0.421)
Constant	19.134	13.815	5.517	4.314
R^2	.042***	.169***	.244***	.276***
#p<.10; *p<.05;**p<.01;***p<.001;				

Overall, differences in family income by place of birth and citizenship are explained by other factors, especially individual characteristics (such as education and English language ability). Individual, family, and structural factors had strong effects on family income among Latino men as predicted.

V. MULTIVARIATE MODELS AMONG LATINAS

Factors Influencing Labor Force Participation Among Latinas

Table 8 presents multivariate models in which the effect of place of birth and citizenship status, human capital factors, family/household factors, and structural position on labor force participation among Latinas is examined. The analysis among women focuses on labor force participation, rather than hourly wage as does the analysis among men, because labor force participation is a more meaningful indicator for women.

The first model, comparing the groups based on place of birth and citizenship status, unadjusted for any other factors, indicates no significant differences among the groups. In the second model, human capital factors are added to the model and we see that some of the differences by place of birth and citizenship status become significant. U.S.-born Mexicans have a significantly lower level of participation in the labor force than do all other groups after taking into consideration differences in age, English proficiency, and education. This difference continues to be significant in the models in which family/household and structural factors are added (models 3 and 4).

Model 2 of Table 8 shows the strong effect of age, English proficiency, and education on labor force participation. Older Latinas are less likely to be in the labor force than their younger counterparts, while Latinas who are more proficient in English are more likely to participate in the work force than those with limited English fluency. In model 2, educational differences are also significant in that Latinas with some college education are more likely to participate in the labor force than less educated women; when family/household and structural factors are added to the model, this effect diminishes and becomes non-significant by the last model.

In model 3 where family/household factors are added, a number of factors significantly predict labor force participation among Latinas. Being married and having young children in the home (0 to 6 years of age) means that a woman is less likely to be in the labor force. On the other hand, having other adults in the home means she is significantly more likely to work, suggesting that these adults provide child care or other assistance.

25

In model 4, factors serving as proxies for structural forces are added. Contact with Latinos and with other racial/ethnic groups increases the probability of participation in the labor force, suggesting that wide-reaching social networks help women find jobs. Living in a community with more Latino neighbors also increases Latinas' probability of participating in the labor force,

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Central American Immigrant	0.057	0.020	-0.007	0.000
Mexican Citizen Immigrant	-0.031	-0.114	-0.076	-0.093
US-Born Mexican	-0.012	-0.182**	-0.162*	-0.173
Age		-0.005***	-0.011***	-0.011***
English Proficiency		0.068***	0.066**	0.042#
Education 8-11 years		0.018	0.020	0.019
Education 12 years		0.21	-0.002	-0.024
Education 13 or more years		0.152*	0.123#	0.092
Married			-0.120*	-0.130**
# Children in HH 0-6 years old			-0.160**	-0.155***
# Children in HH 7-13 years old			0.009	0.003
# Adults in HH			0.040*	0.041*
Contact with Latinos				0.069*
Contact with Other Racial/ethnic Groups				0.127***
Extent of Latino Neighbors				0.047*

Table 8
Predicted Change in Probability[a] of Labor Force Participation
from Logistic Regression Among Latinas

#p<.10; *p<.05; **p<.01; *** p<.001;
[a]Logistic regression is used for this analysis in which an iterative maximum-likelihood solution predicts the logarithm of the odds of the probability of labor force participation. Change in probability of labor force participation is computed as $(exp(L1)/(1+exp(L1)))-(exp(L0)/(1+exp(L0)))$ where $L0=\ln(p'/(1-p'))$ and $L1=L0+b_i$ and b_i is the coefficient of the relevant independent variable and p' is the proportion that is in the labor force (Peterson, 1985). These can be interpreted as the change in the probability of labor force participation associated with a one-unit increase in the independent variable.

which is contrary to the prediction and other findings in this study that segregation has a negative effect. It is possible that for women, the presence of Latino neighbors is an indicator of support networks, which should facilitate employment, rather than residential segregation[4].

_____

[4] This is further supported by the fact that presence of Latino neighbors does not significantly impact, either positively or negatively, any other outcomes among women.

26

Labor force participation among Latinas varied significantly by place of birth and citizenship after controlling for individual, family, and structural characteristics--with those born in the U.S. being significantly less likely to be in the labor force than their immigrant counterparts. These findings suggest that Latinas participate less in the labor force when they have greater options due to their skills, family configuration, or structural position while participating more when they have fewer options and greater needs. In addition, these findings show strong effects of individual, family, and structural characteristics on labor force participation among Latinas.

Factors Influencing Work Conditions Among Latinas

Table 9 presents multivariate models for indicators of working conditions--(1) being self-employed, (2) having a unionized job, (3) having a job with retirement benefits, and (4) being provided with health insurance--among Latinas. The major differences by place of birth and citizenship are with respect to having a unionized job: Mexican citizen immigrants and U.S.-born Mexicans are significantly more likely to be unionized than Mexican noncitizen immigrants. The groups do not differ significantly on any of the other three indicators of working conditions.

Age and English proficiency have no significant effect on working conditions among Latinas. This is in contrast to the findings among Latino men indicating significant age and language effects. For women education is significantly related to being in jobs with retirement or health insurance benefits, while it has little effect on self-employment or being in a unionized job. Those with some college are significantly more likely to have jobs with retirement and health insurance benefits. Those with a high school diploma are marginally more likely to have these benefits, than are the less educated.

For the most part, family/household factors do not have a significant effect on working conditions. There was a marginally significant effect of being married on having a job with a retirement plan and having more adults in the home was significantly related to having a unionized job.

Greater contact with other Latinos meant that respondents were significantly more likely to be unionized but significantly less likely to be self-employed. No other relationships between structural factors and working conditions were significant among Latinas

In contrast to the models of labor force participation among Latinas, working conditions were found not to be strongly affected by individual, family, or structural characteristics except that education affects the likelihood of getting a job with retirement and health benefits. This also

27

differed from the models among Latino men, in which individual and structural factors influenced working conditions.

	Self Employ	Union	Retire	Health Ins
Table 9 **Predicted Change in Probability* of Working Conditions** **from Logistic Regression Among Latinas**				
Central American Immigrant	0.086	0.097	-0.110	-0.079
Mexican Citizen Immigrant	-0.019	0.287	0.059	0.039
US-Born Mexican	-0.026	0.180*	0.092	0.139#
Age	0.002	0.001	0.001	-0.000
English Proficiency	0.020	-0.009	0.047	0.002
Education 8-11 years	0.018	0.005	0.060	0.102*
Education 12 years	-0.066#	0.078	0.185#	0.164#
Education 13 or more years	-0.041	0.165	0.296**	0.251**
Married	-0.022	0.019	0.120#	-0.011
# Children in HH 0-6 years old	0.001	0.026	-0.043	-0.016
# Children in HH 7-13 years old	-0.003	0.023	0.040	0.003
# Adults in HH	-0.006	0.039*	0.030	-0.012
Contact with Latinos	-0.038*	0.102*	0.006	0.046
Contact with Other Racial/ethnic Groups	0.032	0.010	0.037	-0.011
Extent of Latino Neighbors	-0.003	-0.013	-0.018	-0.029

#p<.10; *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

*Logistic regression is used for this analysis in which an iterative maximum-likelihood solution predicts the logarithm of the odds of the probability of working conditions. Change in probability of working conditions is computed as $(\exp(L1)/(1 + \exp(L1)))-(\exp(L0)/(1 + \exp(L0)))$ where $L0 = \ln(p'/(1-p'))$ and $L1 = L0 + b_i$ and b_i is the coefficient of the relevant independent variable and p' is the proportion that is self-employed, unionized, in a retirement plan or has health insurance (Peterson, 1985). These can be interpreted as the change in the probability of working conditions associated with a one-unit increase in the independent variable.

Factors Influencing Family Income Among Latinas

Table 10 presents multivariate models in which the effect of place of birth and citizenship status, human capital factors, family/household factors, and structural position on family income among Latinas are examined. The first model, comparing the groups differing along place of birth and citizenship status unadjusted for any other factors, indicates that Mexican citizen immigrants and U.S.-born Mexicans have higher family incomes than Mexican noncitizen immigrants. Interestingly, Central American immigrants have marginally higher incomes than Mexican

28

noncitizen immigrants. In the second model, human capital factors are added to the model and we see that the differences by place of birth and citizenship status disappear. Therefore, differences among Central American immigrants, Mexican immigrants, and U.S.-born Mexicans are due to differences in age, English proficiency, and education. The differences among the groups continue to be non-significant in the models in which family/household and structural factors are added (models 3 and 4). These results are similar to those found among Latino men.

Model 2 of Table 10 shows the strong effect of English proficiency and education on family income. Latinas who speak English better are more likely to have higher family incomes than those with limited proficiency; after controlling for structural factors in Model 4, the effect of English language proficiency is marginal. Educational differences are also significant in that Latinas with a high school diploma or some college education are in families with significantly higher income levels than those with less than a high school education.

Most of the family/household factors added in model 3 are significantly related to family income among Latinas. Being married and having other adults in the home has a strong and significant effect on family income. The effect of these measures indicates that there are more adults who can either be workers or provide child care and other assistance for respondents who work. The marginally significant effect of number of children age 7 to 13 on family income may be due to greater effort on the part of family providers with larger families to secure better paying jobs or work at more than one job. On the other hand, the presence of young children (under the age of 7) is related to lower incomes, suggesting that the extra effort in caring for these children limits parents' ability to work.

In model 4, contact with Latinos, contact with other racial/ethnic groups, and extent of Latino neighbors are added. Contact with Latinos and living in a community with more Latino neighbors has no effect on family income, but greater contact with other racial/ethnic groups does mean significantly higher income.

Overall, differences among the place of birth/citizen groups in family income are explained by other factors, especially individual characteristics (such as education and English language ability). Individual, family, and structural factors have a strong effect on family income among Latinas as predicted. These results were similar to those found among Latino men.

Table 10
Unstandardized OLS Regression Coefficients
of Family Income Among Latinas
(Standard Errors in Parenthesis)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Central American Immigrant	2.542#	0.603	0.918	1.162
	(1.560)	(1.502)	(1.435)	(1.412)
Mexican Citizen Immigrant	4.237*	1.220	0.817	0.774
	(1.736)	(1.753)	(1.669)	(1.636)
US-Born Mexican	4.167***	-0.507	0.020	-0.410
	(1.033)	(1.287)	(1.229)	(1.216)
Age		-0.021	-0.019	-0.025
		(0.035)	(0.037)	(0.036)
English Proficiency		1.061*	1.580***	0.726#
		(0.444)	(0.426)	(0.446)
Education 8-11 years		0.967	1.035	0.895
		(1.196)	(1.136)	(1.114)
Education 12 years		3.824*	3.299*	2.831*
		(1.517)	(1.452)	(1.426)
Education 13 or more years		9.451***	8.719***	7.424***
		(1.617)	(1.553)	(1.543)
Married			5.559***	5.477***
			(0.902)	(0.885)
# Children in HH 0-6 years old			-0.913#	-0.804#
			(0.492)	(0.484)
# Children in HH 7-13 years old			0.755#	0.648
			(0.463)	(0.454)
# Adults in HH			1.759***	1.731***
			(0.370)	(0.363)
Contact with Latinos				0.307
				(0.624)
Contact with Other Racial/ethnic Groups				3.114***
				(0.644)
Extent of Latino Neighbors				-0.379
				(0.387)
Constant	17.348	14.018	6.141	3.488
R^2	.027***	.133***	.224***	.258***

#p<.10; *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001;

particular, job seeking and placement programs will assist Latinos in overcoming barriers and might serve to improve their labor force location.

Unionization. The working conditions of Latino and Latina workers were shown to be quite inadequate. For example, only half of Latinos and a third of Latinas were employed in jobs with health insurance and fewer have a retirement plan. Historically, one mechanism workers used to improved their working conditions was to unionize. While there are currently many forces against unionization (government legislation, corporate strategies, and economic restructuring), organizing still plays an important role. For instance, several union efforts have proved successful in organizing Latino workers in Los Angeles; two initiatives that come readily to mind are Justice for Janitors and the drywallers' union. These efforts have been successful despite the conventional wisdom that Latino immigrants are difficult to organize. Since this study shows that unions reach a small portion of the Latino labor force, conditions facilitating unionization should be created.

Government Intervention. Another mechanism for improving the working conditions of workers has been direct government intervention. One example of an existing effort is the minimum wage laws. An example which has not succeeded is President Clinton's effort to establish a national health care program which would have benefited many of the respondents who work in low-wage jobs without health insurance. Unfortunately, public sentiment and political leadership are currently against strong government intervention. In fact, much of this sentiment is particularly targeted at immigrants as being responsible for job displacement, crime, and burgeoning welfare rolls (as is evident in the overwhelming support for California's Proposition 187 in November 1994). Therefore the feasibility of increasing the role of government in addressing the needs of immigrants seems dismal. Nevertheless, this is likely to be the most successful mechanism in the long run for improving the position of immigrants, considering that government interventions have historically been the only mechanisms for significantly altering the working and living conditions for society as a whole or for significant portions of the population.

Overall, this study pointed to a number of key issues that affect the labor force position of Latinos and Latinas. While the processes that create these social inequalities are not easily remedied, there are a number of strategies that could assist Latinos in their struggles in the labor market.

32

particular, job seeking and placement programs will assist Latinos in overcoming barriers and might serve to improve their labor force location.

Unionization. The working conditions of Latino and Latina workers were shown to be quite inadequate. For example, only half of Latinos and a third of Latinas were employed in jobs with health insurance and fewer have a retirement plan. Historically, one mechanism workers used to improved their working conditions was to unionize. While there are currently many forces against unionization (government legislation, corporate strategies, and economic restructuring), organizing still plays an important role. For instance, several union efforts have proved successful in organizing Latino workers in Los Angeles; two initiatives that come readily to mind are Justice for Janitors and the drywallers' union. These efforts have been successful despite the conventional wisdom that Latino immigrants are difficult to organize. Since this study shows that unions reach a small portion of the Latino labor force, conditions facilitating unionization should be created.

Government Intervention. Another mechanism for improving the working conditions of workers has been direct government intervention. One example of an existing effort is the minimum wage laws. An example which has not succeeded is President Clinton's effort to establish a national health care program which would have benefited many of the respondents who work in low-wage jobs without health insurance. Unfortunately, public sentiment and political leadership are currently against strong government intervention. In fact, much of this sentiment is particularly targeted at immigrants as being responsible for job displacement, crime, and burgeoning welfare rolls (as is evident in the overwhelming support for California's Proposition 187 in November 1994). Therefore the feasibility of increasing the role of government in addressing the needs of immigrants seems dismal. Nevertheless, this is likely to be the most successful mechanism in the long run for improving the position of immigrants, considering that government interventions have historically been the only mechanisms for significantly altering the working and living conditions for society as a whole or for significant portions of the population.

Overall, this study pointed to a number of key issues that affect the labor force position of Latinos and Latinas. While the processes that create these social inequalities are not easily remedied, there are a number of strategies that could assist Latinos in their struggles in the labor market.

32

Granovetter, Mark. 1973. The Strength of Weak Ties. American Journal of Sociology 78(6): 1360-1381.

Houstoun, M.F., R.G. Kramer, and J.M. Barrett. 1984. Female Predominance of Immigration to the United States since 1930: A First Look. International Migration Review 18: 908-63.

Lieberson, Stanley. 1981. A Piece of the Pie: Blacks and White Immigrants Since 1880. University of California Press.

Massey, Douglas and Brendan Mullan. 1984. Processes of Hispanic and Black Spatial Assimilation. American Journal of Sociology 89(4): 836-873.

Morales, Rebecca and Paul Ong. 1993. The Illusion of Progress: Latinos in Los Angeles. In Rebecca Morales and Frank Bonilla (Editors), Latinos in a Changing U.S. Economy. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Pedraza-Bailey, Sylvia. 1990. Immigration Research: A Conceptual Map. Social Science History 14(1): 43-67.

Peterson, Trond. 1985. A Comment on Presenting Results from Logit and Probit Models. American Sociology Review 50(1): 130-131.

Portes, Alejandro and Robert Bach. 1985. Latin Journey: Cuban and Mexican Immigrants in the United States. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Portes, Alejandro and Ruben Rumbaut. 1990. Immigrant America. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Sassen, Saskia. 1987. The Mobility of Labor and Capital. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Granovetter, Mark. 1973. The Strength of Weak Ties. American Journal of Sociology 78(6): 1360-1381.

Houstoun, M.F., R.G. Kramer, and J.M. Barrett. 1984. Female Predominance of Immigration to the United States since 1930: A First Look. International Migration Review 18: 908-63.

Lieberson, Stanley. 1981. A Piece of the Pie: Blacks and White Immigrants Since 1880. University of California Press.

Massey, Douglas and Brendan Mullan. 1984. Processes of Hispanic and Black Spatial Assimilation. American Journal of Sociology 89(4): 836-873.

Morales, Rebecca and Paul Ong. 1993. The Illusion of Progress: Latinos in Los Angeles. In Rebecca Morales and Frank Bonilla (Editors), Latinos in a Changing U.S. Economy. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Pedraza-Bailey, Sylvia. 1990. Immigration Research: A Conceptual Map. Social Science History 14(1): 43-67.

Peterson, Trond. 1985. A Comment on Presenting Results from Logit and Probit Models. American Sociology Review 50(1): 130-131.

Portes, Alejandro and Robert Bach. 1985. Latin Journey: Cuban and Mexican Immigrants in the United States. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Portes, Alejandro and Ruben Rumbaut. 1990. Immigrant America. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Sassen, Saskia. 1987. The Mobility of Labor and Capital. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Simon, Rita. 1992. Sociology and Immigrant Women. In Donna Gabaccia (Ed.), Seeking Common Ground: Multidisciplinary Studies of Immigrant Women in the United States. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger.

Wegener, Bernd. 1991. Job Mobility and Social Ties: Social Resources, Prior Job, and Status Attainment. American Sociological Review 56(1): 60- 71.

Wilson, William. 1986. The Truly Disadvantaged. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.