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AUTHOR	Choldin, Harvey M.; Trcut, Grafton D.
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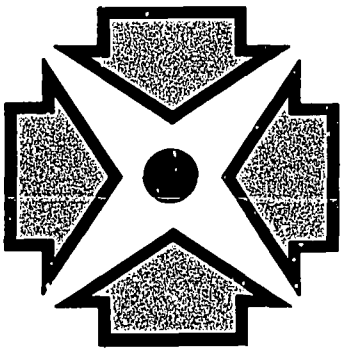
ABSTRACT

Part I of a sociological study concerned with the urbanization of Mexican Americans (former migrant farm workers) in Michigan cities is presented. Using a random sample of Mexican American households, the following areas are examined: household composition and education, migration and community stabilization, finding jobs, employment and income patterns, and occupational and income mobility. Policy and research recommendations are presented in terms of the foregoing areas. The report suggests that "the role of cultural variables in the migration, resettlement, employment, education, and mobility of Mexican Americans must be considered in the varying situational contexts into which migrants move and within which they and their children live." (ME)



RURAL MANPOWER CENTER

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MEXICAN AMERICANS IN TRANSITION

Migration and Employment in Michigan Cities

Part 1: Introduction and Summary

Harvey M. Choldin
Grafton D. Trout
Department of Sociology
College of Social Science

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
East Lansing

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Introduction and Summary

Harvey M. Choldin

Grafton D. Trout

Department of Sociology
Rural Manpower Center
Agricultural Experiment Station
Michigan State University
East Lansing, Michigan 48823

This is the final report of the project "The Mexican American Farm Worker in Transition," sponsored by the Office of Manpower Research, United States Department of Labor (Contract No. 81246632).

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INTRODUCTION

1. Migration and Urbanization.

The migration of Mexican-Americans into the cities of the midwest is a rather recent phenomenon. Most immigrants from Mexico and citizens of Mexican descent live in five southwestern states and their original settlement and subsequent immigration in that region are of long duration. In fact, settlement of some parts of that region by the ancestors of the present-day Mexican-Americans preceded the arrival of the now-dominant Anglos.

One part of the migration from Texas to the midwest has been underway for several decades, that is, the annual seasonal migration during the northern farming months for agricultural work in this region, followed by autumn return to home communities in Texas. This recurrent migration of farm laborers preceded the resettlement which we are studying and reporting. Although this agricultural migration is continuing, it has declined in recent years in this region with the development and use of mechanical agricultural equipment which decreases the need for manual field labor.

In Michigan, and in other midwestern states, over the past three decades, increasing numbers of migratory farm workers have been staying after the end of the agricultural work seasons, seeking employment on a year-round basis. Some of these settlers remain in agriculture-related work in rural small towns, but most settle in communities with industrial employment opportunities.

The overall social process through which these settlers are passing in Michigan can best be viewed as the process of urbanization. They are leaving one way of life, usually migratory agricultural work, and entering

and learning another, urban industrial work. This process of urbanization is complicated. It has a set of related components and it occurs over time, in fact, over generations.

The product of the urbanization process is an individual who has become integrated into an urban community. This has an instrumental aspect, an acculturative aspect, and an assimilation aspect concerned with the establishment of social relations in the city. The instrumental arrangements are perhaps the most urgent for the new settler. These involve arrangements for making an income and for housing himself and his dependents. The acculturative aspect involves learning the culture of the new community and internalizing it. This aspect of the process is slower and its effects may often be seen more clearly in the children of the migrants than in the settlers themselves. The establishment of social relations involves the settler's becoming involved in primary groups and social networks of various types in his neighborhood and larger community.

Each of these aspects is interesting in itself and requires a description of the migrant's career before settling in an industrial community as well as after settling. The instrumental arrangements, the primary concern of this report, involve a lifetime of job changes and, for many, a process of occupational mobility from low-paying and transitory jobs to higher-paying stable jobs. They also involve a process of searching for jobs. The acculturation process involves, most fundamentally, the learning of a new language for those who come as Spanish-speakers. It also often involves changing food habits, family values and norms, leisure time use, and other adjustments to a new culture. The establishment of social relations is often channeled by the process of chain migration whereby entire extended families move,

over a number of years, from one community to another, helping each other make the move and helping the newcomers to settle.

The entire urbanization process is also linked to the establishment and development of urban ethnic subcommunities. Some Michigan cities have "Mexican neighborhoods" and others do not. Some migrants settle in such neighborhoods and later move out of them. Others remain in Mexican neighborhoods. Which occurs may be related to the extent to which the settlers establish social relationships with Anglos in the cities.

This is a brief introduction to the urbanization process. The process itself will be explicated as the data are presented in the balance of this report.

2. The Mexican-American Research Project.

The research which we are reporting began as a study entitled "The Mexican-American Migratory Farm Worker in Transition." It was to be a study of migrant farm workers who were settling in Michigan communities, viewed in terms of their social and economic adjustment to a new environment. The study reported here contains that research, but includes more--the focus broadened as the research developed, principally because of two major decisions made in the course of the study, one at the time of the original discussions between Michigan State University researchers and Department of Labor staff members, another after the end of the feasibility phase of the research.

One decision which broadened the focus of the study was to build the study around a representative sample of settled Mexican-Americans in the state. The consequence of this was that although the survey includes many settlers who dropped out of the migratory agricultural stream, it also includes

significant numbers of Mexican-Americans who were born or raised as children in Michigan and also some who came here directly from the Southwest, but not as agricultural workers. Many of these persons who are not ex-farm workers are the sons and daughters of farm workers. Thus we will be able to see the effects of settlement on a second generation, reared in the new environment and we are able to compare them with the recent settlers coming out of the seasonal migrant stream.

The other important decision was to include a sub-study of the community leaders in the overall project in order to understand the context into which the newcomers were settling. This eventually became a set of community profiles of the eight communities or their major cities in which the survey took place. This enabled us to begin to understand not only the settlers undergoing an urbanization process, but also the kinds of communities into which they are settling and the effects of differing aspects of the communities on the process. We have studied not only the overall communities in which the Mexican-Americans are settling, but also the ethnic subcommunities in which many of them live.

The overall effect of the sample design and the community context studies was to enable us to make a more comprehensive study of the urbanization process for Mexican-Americans in Michigan. In this context, we see the agricultural workers entering the industrial labor force, finding jobs and housing, and additionally we also come to see them in the context of different cities, different employment opportunity structures, and different ethnic subcommunities.

3. Some Research Difficulties and a Possible Source of Bias.

We are not the first social researchers to learn that gathering information from people in the poverty sector of society is a very difficult task. Nonetheless, we must describe some of our difficulties and discuss some of the implications for the interpretation of the findings.

We succeeded in avoiding at least one of the principal failings in survey research among members of minority groups and among members of poverty populations. It is usually found that persons in such circumstances are afraid of outside interviewers and attempt to avoid being interviewed or refuse to supply information, or worse, give distorted or expected information. In our study we worked in collaboration with the Mexican-American leaders in the various communities studied and we employed Mexican-American leaders in the various communities studied and we employed Mexican-American interviewers and supervisors and other staff members. The interviewers were mostly housewives residing in the communities in which they interviewed and were bilingual in Spanish and English. Through these means we achieved a relatively low refusal rate and the interviewers found the respondents to be cooperative. The staff and interviewers, therefore, are not suspicious of the veracity of the responses.

The main difficulty arose out of the geographical mobility of the poorest families in the population studied. In order to have a random sample of Mexican-American households in the counties studied, the first step was to prepare a complete enumeration of all families of Mexican descent in each entire county. This proved to be a very detailed, time-consuming, arduous, and expensive task.

After the lists were completed we felt that proper procedures had been followed and that the lists were the best that could be prepared. Nonetheless, some of the entries in the lists were as old as 18-24 months. From these lists we drew random samples for each county. Consequently, in the cases in which the name represented an extremely poor family which moved frequently because of inability to pay rent regularly or for other reasons, the family was often lost to the study. In many cases the interviewers or their supervisors were able to track down the family and complete the interview, but some were lost. We have investigated, to the extent possible, the degree to which this distorts the survey sample. It appears to be somewhat less a problem than anticipated. If there is a bias in the sample, it is that it may over-represent stable families who do not move frequently and may under-represent families who move frequently without leaving forwarding addresses. Unfortunately, these characteristics are associated with other important variables: the stable families are likely to be the ones in which the household head has established a steady job, and the moving families are likely to be those with the smallest, most undependable incomes and to have other problems associated with this.

4. Some Unique Features.

We feel that the survey data analyzed in this report represent a unique and valuable resource which will prove useful in various ways. The cooperation of the respondents, in conjunction with diligent work on the part of interviewers and very close supervision and editing of interviews, has produced high-quality interview protocols. These include entire life-histories of each of the household heads interviewed, indicating a complete career of

jobs and of migration moves since age 16. There are probably no more than a few similar sets of occupational and migration life histories of a statistically sound sample of an American poverty and working-class population. Further analysis of these career histories promises to give additional insight into the processes of geographical and occupational mobility of persons beginning at low socio-economic positions. Mrs. Nancy Tuma, a doctoral candidate in the Department of Sociology, Michigan State University, is presently working on a mathematical model of the job change patterns. Dr. Thomas L. Conner, of the same department, has completed a paper on the probabilities of movement out of migratory farm work as a first job[1] using these data. Additional work is anticipated.

5. The Authors' Perspective.

Most studies of Mexican-Americans have been written by anthropologists whose concern has been cultural values, norms, and behavior patterns. This has lead to an image of the Mexican-American as a passive receptor of a traditional culture which has held him back in the process of assimilation into American society and prevented upward mobility toward middle class status, the assumption being that only through acculturation will he come fully to share the benefits of affluent American society. This view has come to be criticized by an increasing number of social scientists and Mexican-American leaders. The point of view of the authors of this study is largely sociological and thereby attempts to avoid explanation by reference either to imputed cultural traits or psychological states of mind or ethnic personality traits. Rather, we believe that the situation in which the Mexican-American

[1]"A Stochastic Model for Change of Occupation," unpublished paper, (February, 1969), Department of Sociology, Michigan State University.

finds himself is a product of the history of his ethnic group in American society, differing by region and even by community. Further, we view this history, not as a story of stagnation, inaction, and passive despair but as a series of attempts to survive and to move forward against formidable odds in local communities or by migration to apparently greater opportunities where often the odds may have proved little better. Indeed, we are particularly concerned with movement and change and therefore our perspective is likely to be quite different from that of the anthropologist studying a particular community where stability and continuity may be more striking. Nevertheless, we believe that the Mexican-American subculture has, in one sense, always been "emerging" out of the historical interplay of the forces that have shaped this minority's position in U.S. society. If our picture of the Mexican-American in Michigan fails to resemble that drawn by anthropologists in the Southwest, or even South Texas,[2] we can only respond that in a dynamic and mobile situation one should expect no less, unless one is committed to a notion of absolute cultural continuity and determinism. Michigan's Mexican-Americans are not homogeneous socially or economically. Their diversity is a product of the differential socio-economic mobility they have experienced here, some moving ahead rapidly in level of living over the decades, their children achieving higher levels of education; others still caught in a vicious circle of deprivation, scarcely improved over that experienced in San Antonio or the Rio Grande Valley or in the migrant stream. We believe that this diversity itself from family to family, from city to city, must be explained by sociological variables inherent in the situation, not by reference to some imputed stereotypic subcultural traits whether

[2]See, for example, William Madsen, The Mexican-Americans of South Texas, New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1964 and Arthur J. Rubel, Across the Tracks: Mexican-Americans in a Texas City, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1966.

thought to be attributable to Mexican-American culture or to a culture of poverty. But in viewing the members of our sample as, in different respects and in varying degrees, products of their experience and present situation, we do not consider them passive actors in their current settings. To the contrary, we have been impressed by the change arising from the initiative of Mexican-Americans themselves, both in respect to their personal life situations and that of the minority subcommunity. Nor is this a wholly recent phenomenon for, to some degree, it began several decades ago when Mexican-Americans from Texas first began to resettle in Michigan cities in significant numbers. They were neither passively acculturated and assimilated into the new communities nor did they simply unpack their cultural baggage and set up new "little San Antonio barrios" in these new communities. Rather, the interaction socially, culturally and economically between these new residents and members and institutions of the receiving communities, particularly the schools, the churches and the factories, produced and is producing something, in some degree, new and unique. Thus we have found little need in this report for reference to the cultural values, norms and traits said to be typically Mexican-American. That these may be found in varying degrees among individuals, families, and communities, we do not deny. That much of the Mexican-American cultural heritage may be of worth and great present value even in this northern Midwestern setting, we recognize. We simply believe that cultural variables are less useful than others in explaining much that we are concerned with in this study. We believe that many of the values and norms thought to be characteristically Mexican-American such as familial orientation, fatalism, envy of leaders ("envidia"), and lack of community unity, may be shared with other Americans of similar

positions in our society.[3] We are not convinced that they are peculiarly restrictive of Mexican-American assimilation and upward mobility. Furthermore, we believe that the findings of this study indicate that the maintenance of ethnic traditions and behavior patterns need not be detrimental to socio-economic advancement of Mexican-Americans. In our view, the role of cultural variables in the migration, resettlement, employment, education, and mobility of Mexican-Americans must be considered in the varying situational contexts into which migrants move and within which they and their children live.

[3]For an explication of this point of view, see Edward Casavantes, "Pride and Prejudice: A Mexican American Dilemma," Civil Rights Digest, (Winter, 1970), pp. 22-27 or Fernando Penalosa, "The Changing Mexican-American in Southern California," Sociology and Social Research, Vol. 51, (July, 1967), pp. 405-417.

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

Chapter 1

SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS: HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION AND EDUCATION

1. Some basic demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Size of place of current community of residence. Mexican-Americans in Michigan are a predominantly urban population.

Age. The median age of the male heads of household is about 40; female heads are slightly older with a median age of about 43.

Marital status. Almost all the male heads of household were married.

Characteristics of wives of household heads. The wives of household heads tend to be somewhat younger and have a higher level of education than their husbands.

2. Michigan Mexican-Americans as a whole. Because of the large number of young members in the Michigan Mexican-American population, there is a heavy burden of dependency on the working members of the population.

The evenness of the sex ratio for Michigan Mexican-Americans reflects the fact that most of the migrants come in family groups rather than as single males. It also reflects the fact that the migration has taken place over a sufficient number of years for families to reconstitute themselves in Michigan and to establish a normal sex ratio rather than one which is heavily male.

3. Household composition. The predominant type of household is a conjugal family of husband, wife and unmarried children living in a single dwelling unit with no other persons. The median number of persons in a household is 4.5.

The largest households are those headed by men in their forties. Households headed by males under 30 commonly have three or four persons in them. Those headed by men in their fifties and older tend to have fewer members.

The earlier residents (those who arrived before 1940) along with the most recent arrivals (those who came since 1960) are less likely to have large households. Most of the very large households are headed by men who arrived in the 1940's and 1950's.

The greater the education the smaller the size of the household.

The relationship between occupation and household size is not a clear one.

Low income families with incomes of less than $5,000 per year have a higher proportion of small households.

Families in cities are more likely to have small households than are those in rural areas or very small towns.

Most households have only two generations within them: parents and children.

Children in the household. The median number of children per household is four.

4. Education. The median level of educational attainment is six years. Persons with more education are found disproportionately in cities and persons with no education or only primary grades completed are more likely to be in rural areas and small towns.

Although the education level was very low for the Mexican-Americans studied, they nonetheless had more education than their parents.

The respondents' children: dropping out. During the age period 16 to 18 there is a rapid attrition of Mexican-American school enrollment.

Higher education. The proportion of Mexican-American youth attending college is far beneath the national or state averages, resulting in a failure of Mexican-American young people to be educated to rise above the manual occupations of their parents.

Educational trends. The overall trend for the Mexican-American population is toward increasing levels of education attainment.

The younger people have a much higher level of educational attainment than the older people in the Mexican-American population.

Over the years, the Mexican-Americans have consistently increased their level of education; each age group is more highly educated than the group just older than it.

The older people in the Mexican-American population have dismally low levels of education. About one-third of the males over age 65 have had no education and an additional one-third have had less than five years of education. Older women have had even less education.

5. Educational age-grade retardation. The concept "age-grade retardation". Age-grade retardation may be viewed as performance which is not in line with the expected age and grade level. Mexican-American children are older than the modal age for each grade level and they tend to quickly fall behind their age peers in school.

Age-grade retardation as a "risk" variable. Age is one of the most important factors in age-grade retardation; at younger ages we find smaller proportions retarded and as age increases (especially in the teens), retardation rates start to rise at a rapid rate. Retardation is clearly a "risk" conditioned variable since each additional year of school presents one more possibility of failure of promotion.

Comparison of Michigan total, non-white and sample Mexican-American retardation. Mexican-Americans are relatively disadvantaged in terms of their age-grade progress--clearly more retarded than the Michigan population as a whole.

Backwardness in age-grade school progress occurs to a considerably greater extent among males than females.

In general, better educated heads have children who are less retarded. This relationship is not perfectly linear; however, children of heads having no education appear to be doing quite well. This finding may imply that heads with no education may apply more pressure for their children to do well than do heads with low educational achievements who feel they are "getting along" and consequently put little pressure on their children to do well.

The higher the family income the less likely the child is to be retarded.

When education is controlled by income, those low on both variables have a higher percent age-grade retarded whereas those high on both have significantly lower percents.

Heads having higher SEI's have significantly less age-grade retardation among their children.

There exists neither a linear relationship between family size and retardation nor any easily interpretable relationship at all.

Retardation rates of children among college aspirant heads and non-college aspirants show little significant differences.

Speaking mostly Spanish by the head leads to higher retardation of his children while speaking mostly English or a combination of both Spanish and English leads to lower retardation rates among Mexican-American children.

Those heads low in preference for Mexican exclusivity have children with retardation rates which are the lowest for each age group while those who are high have the highest retardation rates for each age group. For low family income, above relationship seems to hold up, but in the high family income group it seems to reverse itself.

Retardation does not seem to be determined by how much a child's parents move.

Birthplace and place of early residence of head. If a child's head of household was born or raised in Texas, his possibility of being age-grade retarded is increased.

The number of years a head is exposed to the Michigan environment affects the age-grade performance of his offspring. Those with the lowest amount of exposure (1960-1967 group) have clearly the highest retardation rates.

Chapter 2

MIGRATION AND COMMUNITY STABILIZATION

1. Migratory Background

Most of the Mexican-Americans in Michigan have been highly migratory people, having spent several years of their lives as migratory farm workers before settling in Michigan.

1) Childhood homes. The typical migration pattern was to have a home base in Texas where the migrant stayed the five winter months and to spend the other seven months on the road.

2) Kinship organization. The work groups of the Mexican-American migratory workers are often integrated within their kinship organization; the oldest or most enterprising member of the extended family acting as the crew leader.

2. Geographical Origins

1) Nativity. One-fourth of the heads-of-households of the Mexican-American families in Michigan are immigrants. Forty-one percent are first generation Americans (parents born in Mexico), 19 percent are second generation (grandparents born in Mexico), and 15 percent are third generation or higher (grandparents born in the United States). Only 13 percent of their spouses were born in Mexico.

2) United States origin. Sixty percent of the respondents were born in Texas and 11 percent in Michigan. In contrast 45 percent of spouses were born in Texas and 20 percent in Michigan. The smaller proportion of spouses born in Texas and Mexico seems to indicate a tendency for single Texas-born men to migrate to Michigan and marry Michigan-born girls. Forty-seven percent of the in-migrants were unmarried when they settled in Michigan.

3) Texas origins. The Texas to Michigan migrants come from a very concentrated relatively small section of Texas; chiefly the San Antonio area and the southeastern counties. Eighty-one percent come from counties located in "The Valley". Seventeen percent come from the counties of Bexar, Comal, Hays, Travis and Atascosa. Six percent stem from the San Antonio-Austin region and the remaining four percent originated in Webb County.

a) Economic status. Massive poverty among Mexican-Americans in Texas constitutes a powerful economic push for out-migration.

b) Urban-rural origin. Most of the in-migrants grew up in relatively small towns resulting in the need for a re-socialization process to accompany the transition from rural to urban life. A significant number of migrants do come, however, with a good deal of previous contact with cities.

c) Characteristics of men at the time of leaving Texas. About two-thirds of the 626 males in the sample had lived in Texas. About one-half of them had migrated from small cities or towns to medium-sized Michigan cities. The other half had come from medium-sized Texas cities and migrated to medium-sized cities in Michigan.

d) Transitions in the migration to Michigan. In the second move from the first community in Michigan to the next, many stay in the same size range. The majority of those who move into different sized communities move into larger ones.

Migration usually reflects an agriculture to industry shift. There were almost no white-collar workers among those leaving Texas. The industries of agriculture (34%), manufacturing (13%), construction (10%), and repair services (6%), account for the last held jobs in Texas for a majority of Michigan migrants. The median socio-economic index for the men at the time of leaving Texas is about 10; extremely low as the possible range is between 0 to 100.

e) Age. The median age of men when they left Texas was approximately 27.

f) Place of birth. Three-fourths of the migrants were born in the United States; the remaining one-fourth was born in Mexico.

g) Educational attainment. The median educational attainment of the men who left Texas was fifth grade. Although this figure seems shockingly low, it is relatively high in comparison to the average years of education for the Mexican-American population in Texas counties of out-migration.

3. Year of Arrival in Michigan

Of the sample population, 12 percent was born in Michigan or migrated here before age 16. Nine percent of tne settlers came here before 1929. Only 4 percent came during the decade of the depression. Thirty-two percent arrived in the early 1940's correlated with an abundance of jobs in factories producing war materials. Migration increased in the early 1950's and declined in the late 1950's with the onset of the economic recession.

Persons relatively recent to the migrant population are somewhat younger, are more likely to have been born in Texas, and have somewhat more education than the resident Mexican-American population. The urban areas have higher proportions of persons who arrived earlier, and the rural areas have higher proportions of newcomers.

4. Maintenance of Ties with Texas Towns

Settlers maintain kinship ties in Texas by making visits and sending money back to relatives.

5. Some Social-Psychological Aspects of the Move to Michigan

a) Employment opportunities. Sixty percent of the migrants gave job elated reasons for migration and settlement.

b) Discrimination. Although repression and discrimination is a common source of migration, only 13 (2%) said they had left Texas for these reasons.

c) Kinship proximity. The desire to be near kinfolk was the second most important reason for migration given by respondents.

2) Precipitating event. Seventy percent decided to stay in Michigan after finding a job. Others resettled when they married a Michigan girl.

3) Information.

a) Employment opportunities. Sixty percent had some ideas about jobs in Michigan. It is surprising that the remaining 40 percent settled in Michigan without any information regarding jobs.

b) Housing. Only about 30 percent had heard anything regarding the housing situation. Thirteen percent of these had heard that it was difficult to find adequate housing. Others had heard that housing would be provided by their employer. The remaining 45 percent had heard something favorable regarding the housing situation.

c) Treatment of Mexican-Americans. Of the few who had information regarding treatment of Mexican-Americans in Michigan, 90 percent had heard that treatment was good.

d) Informational channels. Migrants received most of their information regarding employment, housing and treatment of Mexican-Americans in Michigan from friends and relatives. The mass media played no part in the collection of such information.

6. Chain Migration

Migrants tend to move according to chain migration, a process in which one member of a kinship group moves to a new place and later helps others join him. One-third of the migrants had relatives already and one-fourth had friends in the first city in which they settled in Michigan.

7. First Housing

During the first year in Michigan about 30 percent of the settlers lived on a farm; the remaining 70 percent lived in urban places. In that year approximately 50 percent stayed in their first residence while the rest made one or more moves. Almost half shared their first housing, usually with kinfolk or friends. In locating their first housing approximately one-fourth were aided by friends, and one-fourth by relatives. Some received housing as part of their job, living on the grower's or processor's property and 14 percent found housing by just looking around. Only 6 percent utilized want ads.

8. Stabilization

1) Moves within Michigan. The process of settlement appears to be one in which the farm worker works in one or more agricultural areas in the state, then moves to a city to work, and stays.

2) Inter-city migration. Older residents are more likely to move and to have moved more than once than younger ones. A much greater proportion of males than females have moved. Persons who were formerly migrant farm workers and uneducated persons were more likely to have made inter-city moves. No relationship between rates of residential mobility and occupational categories or between inter-city migration and socio-economic status were found. The size of the community of current residence was also not found to be a related variable.

3) Experience in the migrant stream. Those who had formerly been migrant workers have somewhat lower residential stability than those who were never migrants.

4) Size of present community. People living in rural communities with populations under 2,000 have the lowest proportion of long-term residents. Small towns (2,000-19,999) and larger towns (20,000-99,999) have the highest proportion of long term stable residents and the smallest proportion of newcomers. Medium-sized cities have a somewhat smaller proportion of long term residents and more people who have been there from two to nine years. These findings indicate that Mexican-Americans are not in the communities as temporary transients.

5) Years of continuous residence. A large proportion of Mexican-Americans have become stable residents of the communities in which they have settled. The median years of continuous residence is 5. More than one-third of the sample population had lived continuously in the same community for ten or more years. Thirty-eight percent, however, are considered newcomers, having lived in their present communities less than two years.

6) Variables associated with stability.

a) Year of arrival. Those who arrived in Michigan in the 1930's and 1940's have the highest stability; 60 percent having resided in their present cities for ten or more years.

b) Age. Older persons, particularly those over 60, have the highest residential stability.

c) Education. There is no systematic relationship between the level of educational attainment and community stability.

d) Occupation and SEI. Although the relationship is not simply linear, it appears that the higher the socio-economic index, the higher the probability of high community stability.

9. Moving Away From the First Job in Michigan

Many of the migrants have never moved away from the first town in which they settled in Michigan. Most of those who left their first community were seeking better jobs. Some moved to be closer to relatives.

10. Commitment to the Move

The commitment to stay in Michigan seems to be quite high. Almost all of the respondents said they felt that their current community in Michigan was their "hometown".

Chapter 3

FINDING JOBS

1. Economic Absorption

Employment is the essential foundation for the long process of cultural integration.

2. Finding the First Job in Michigan

An immigrant's ability to find work will depend greatly on the information he can acquire. Having friends and relatives in the new community often influences the types of job search patterns followed.

1) The reception base and information about jobs. Immigrants with a reception base of friends and/or relatives were more likely to have information regarding jobs. Almost none of the Mexican-Americans who arrive after those persons they know have already settled in the state are going to new areas; consequently new job markets are not being explored.

2) The reception base and methods of getting work. Mexican-American migrants in Michigan communities obtained their first job most often by going directly to the company and applying. Chain migration commonly leads to chain occupational placement whereby prior immigrants direct their later fellows to particular niches in the employment structure. Friends have a more pervasive influence on the manner in which new arrivals obtain their jobs than do relatives. When friends and relatives are not present to form a reception base, migrants seek assistance from formal agencies.

3) Information about jobs. Most of the new arrivals in Michigan have some information about jobs. Relatives are used more often to help secure a first job by those who do have such information. Persons with no information rely somewhat more often upon friends.

4) Search for a specific job in Michigan. In looking for a specific job, the immigrant is more likely to rely on his own personal initiative.

5) Help needed. One-third said that they needed nothing to obtain their first job in Michigan. The remaining two-thirds said they needed references, better English ability, a car, more education, more information on job opportunities and more skill and experience.

3. Comparison of the Methods of Finding the First and Present Jobs

1) Relative consistency in finding the first and present jobs. The order of importance of the different methods in securing employment was relatively consistent. Of the relatively few who abandoned their first means of getting work, the largest number went directly to the company for their present job.

2) Occupation and job finding. A relatively high degree of consistency seems to prevail in the manner in which occupations and job finding patterns are related by first and present jobs. Independent search by going directly to the company and looking around with less reliance on personal contacts is more frequent in finding present jobs.

3) Industry and job finding. In general, there is no correlation between particular methods of job finding and distinctive distributions of jobs by industry.

4. Finding the Present Job: Situational Variables

1) The type of job shift and finding the new job. There is no unique pattern of job finding characteristic of any type of job shift.

2) Ethnic composition of work unit. There is an association between the methods of finding present jobs and the presence of other Mexican-Americans in the same work unit. The less personalized the method of obtaining the job, the greater is the likelihood of finding a job at which no other Mexican-Americans are employed. Only one in every five workers is presently employed by an employer having no other Mexican-American workers on the job.

3) Job finding and the size of employing organizations. The larger the company and therefore the more visible in the community, the greater the proportion of its Mexican-American work force recruited by direct, independent means. The influence of friends is substantially reduced as the size of the organization increases. Influence of friends, however, remains relatively constant.

5. Finding the Present Job: Personal Background Variables

1) English language ability. It would seem that those who lack ability to use English would require the help of bi-lingual persons in obtaining a job.

a) When English was learned and finding the first job in Michigan. The hypothesis that the ability to speak English affects how Mexican-American migrants seek and find jobs was not verified in this study.

b) Adult language preference and finding the present job. The use of friends, relatives or other persons accounts for over one-third of the acquisition of present jobs by most Spanish speakers but only somewhat over one-fourth of those speaking Spanish about half the time at home and full-time English speakers.

c) Making out applications in English and job finding methods. The data provided in this study did not allow for a conclusive answer to the question of how important and in what ways English ability among Mexican-American immigrants influences how jobs are obtained. It did, however, point to a somewhat negative correlation that might be explained by any or all of the following reasons: 1) English is perhaps less important in the job search range of the lower skilled person, and 2) When a person is aware of deficiencies in relation to requirements for jobs, he may select himself out of that particular segment of the job market.

2) Education and job finding. The relationship between the education which a person has and the means he used to attain his present job is not high.

3) Age and job finding. Here again, the relationship between age and particular job finding methods is not significant.

4) Years in Michigan and finding the present job. About one-third of the jobs obtained up to 15 years of residence are found with the assistance of friends, relatives or other persons. After 15 years this drops to one-fourth. Looking around tends to increase with years of residence but going directly to the company remains relatively constant. Social agencies become more important with increased residence.

5) Job training and job finding. Those persons having adult education and specific job training continued to find employment in essentially the same manner as those who had not participated in such programs. Military training seems to have had a greater influence upon ways of getting a civilian job than either adult education or civilian job training; veterans tended to go directly to the company and state employment agencies. Those who have a particular skill appear to use formal channels through which they can sell that skill directly.

6) Discrimination and job finding. The feeling of discrimination in employment in Michigan is not a salient one among these respondents. It may be the case that relatively few of them have reached the threshold in job aspiration and search at which discrimination may be practiced.

Chapter 4

MAKING A LIVING: EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME PATTERNS

1. The historical occupational and industrial distributions of the Michigan Mexican-American labor force.

1) Occupational distributions, 1940-1947. The Mexican-American labor force doubled in size during W.W. II and again during the first five years following the war.

Since 1940 there has been a steady decline in the proportion of workers classifiable as either farm or non-farm laborers.

The proportion of the labor force segment comprised of Mexican-Americans working as operatives accounts for nearly one-half to two-thirds of all occupations.

The nearly six-fold increase in percent retired from 1960-1967 represents the advance to retirement age of earlier migrants.

Clerical, sales and service workers are under-represented among Mexican-Americans in Michigan. There appears to be a pattern of inheritance of factory employment regardless of educational advancement of second generation residents.

Using increasing numbers of Mexican-Americans employed as craftsmen and foremen as criteria, there has been no significant occupational up-grading.

The number of self-employed and managerial workers has increased slowly with the growth of the Mexican-American sub-community.

Unemployment among migrants seems to be a function of general economic conditions and resulting labor force demand.

2) Industrial distributions, 1940-1967. There has been a steady decline in the percentage of workers employed in agriculture since 1940.

Motor vehicle and kindred metal fabrication industries have always provided over half the jobs held by Mexican-Americans in Michigan.

For many migrant farm laborers, construction has been a complementary form of part-time employment.

2. The first job in Michigan.

1) Changing occupations with migration. Three-fourths of those migrating to Michigan changed occupations as they obtained their first jobs here.

2) The first job in Michigan by occupation.
In-migrants versus local. Distributions of first jobs differ less between in-migrants and local labor force entrants than between both of these and the ultimate distribution of present or last jobs held by these same workers after varying numbers of years of participation in the Michigan labor market.

Education seems to be less rewarded among Mexican-American males first employed in white collar, clerical and sales and service occupations than one would expect by national ranking of these occupations. Although Mexican-American service workers had as much education as craftsmen and foremen, they made only three-fourths as much money each week.

In respect to their first jobs in Michigan, Mexican-Americans are found in lower levels of clerical, sales and service occupations at pay incommensurate with their educational achievement.

The mean number of years in the migrant stream is negatively related to increase in occupational status and education.

With the exception of clerical and sales workers, the higher the occupational status, the greater the mean duration of the first job in Michigan.

Craft and operative jobs are target jobs for Mexican-American migrants.

3) The first job in Michigan by industry.
Industrial distribution of first jobs by migrant status. There is a tendency for sales and service jobs to be entry jobs for young beginning workers to a greater degree than for in-migrants and a slightly lesser tendency for these local workers to begin in construction or metals.

There is an inverse relation between the income derived from first jobs in Michigan and the educational attainment of the average worker.

Hours of work per week does not differ greatly by industry.

The mean number of years in the migrant farm labor stream for workers in each industry corresponds closely to the mean educational level. At least 50 percent in all industries except those in services, education and professional services, have had some migratory farm labor experience.

Mexican-Americans employed first in Michigan in sales and services have had a much greater propensity to change jobs.

Those workers who obtained employment in motor vehicles upon arrival in Michigan (or as their first job if born here) tended to keep it about nine years.

3. The present or last job in Michigan.

1) Occupational distribution by industry. A few industries account for the overwhelming majority of workers at each occupational level.

2) The present or last job in Michigan by occupation. There is a trend toward congruency over the working career in Michigan.

If there were not a reversal of the ranks of laborers and service workers relative to SEI (socio-economic index), there would be a perfect correlation between rankings on socio-economic status, education and pay of present or last held occupations.

The mean number of hours worked per week do not differ greatly by occupation except for those in professional, technical, managerial or proprietary work.

Occupational mobility is inversely related to years in the migratory stream.

With the exception of laborers, there does not appear to be much differenciation among present occupations and the tendency of workers to change jobs.

In respect to mean durations of all jobs held by workers presently employed in each occupation, there appears to be little variation.

3) Present or last job in Michigan by industry. The industries in which Mexican-Americans worked the longest hours, on the average, are those that have the lowest mean pay per week except for sales.

There is a correlation between years of migratory farm labor experience and shifts between first and present or last held jobs.

The mean tenure of present or last held jobs is remarkably high.

Regarding median year of arrival, those presently or last employed in agriculture were the most recent in-migrants.

In respect to hours worked, there does not appear to be any major discrepancy between Mexican-American workers and other employees.

In general, the working situation involves contact with other Mexican-Americans.

Three-fourths of the Mexican-Americans employed are union members.

Seasonal agricultural labor often provides a complementary employment for Mexican-American workers, especially during the first few years after resettlement.

The transition from field to factory; migrants in the field and the desire to settle. The difficulty of settling out of the migrant stream and finding urban industrial jobs is complicated by the fact that a majority of the migrants are at least forty years old.

Mexican-American migrants were more likely to have been born in larger communities than either Negro or white workers.

Three-fourths of the migrants had completed no more than a sixth grade education.

Work crews are often comprised of persons involved in a common familial network, and thus women and children are often found working in the fields alongside the men.

In general, migrants have extremely limited contacts outside the camps.

Those migrants who are younger and better educated and who have had more exposure to the non-farm jobs of the larger cities, more frequently report a desire to move out of agricultural jobs.

Age, education and size of hometown are factors which also affect the desire to settle in Michigan. There was no positive relationship, however, between having friends and relatives in Michigan and the desire to settle here.

Over two-thirds of those planning to stay in Michigan had completed more than six years of school.

Farm and migratory farm labor prior to settlement in Michigan. Those having migratory farm labor experience have always comprised at least half of the in-coming Mexican-Americans. Half of those settling in Michigan since 1961 had previously worked in the state as migratory farm workers.

Labor force experience of the ex-farm worker; the first job in agriculture. The period during which migrants began their working careers in farm work is important in determining how long they remained in their first jobs.

The impact of farm and migratory farm labor experience on distribution of first jobs by occupation after settling in Michigan is considerable for non-migratory local farm workers but much less significant for migratory ones.

With respect to the industry of the first job, local non-migratory farm background seems to make more difference than migratory farm labor experience.

Workers having local farm labor work and/or migratory work tend to be older than those with no farm work.

The mean years of school completed is considerably higher for those having no farm labor background of any kind than for those with it.

The propensity to change jobs does not vary greatly with the type of farm labor background.

There is little variation in the mean weekly pay for the first jobs in Michigan by previous farm labor status.

While those lacking farm experience found significantly higher status first jobs than those with such background, by the present or last job differentiation in mean SEI was greater and ranked very much as we would expect it to be given the educational and wage differences.

About one-fifth of the "direct" in-migrants have completed high school while only about one-tenth of the "migrant drop-outs" have done so.

There is a slight difference in the mean job shift record of the two groups of in-migrants. Those having no migratory farm labor experience in Michigan prior to settlement tend to have changed jobs somewhat less frequently and have held their first jobs longer than those who do. The difference in pay for first jobs is again slight. Similarly the differences between the socio-economic status index for first jobs are not impressive.

Job satisfaction and change. Among other favorably regarded features of the first non-farm job, nearly half mentioned pay first as a positive aspect.

Dissatisfaction with present employment does not seem widespread among Mexican-Americans but a desire and willingness to upgrade employment exists.

Work by other family members. The wives (approximately one-third), who were working were found to be over-represented in the operative category and under-represented in clerical categories when compared with other urban females. Although one in four of the wives is or has been employed in manufacturing, the next largest type of employment, excluding agriculture, is hospitals. About two-thirds of the working wives work the standard forty hours per week. Pay was generally very low; only one in five made more than $75 per week.

4. Income.

The 1967 income of Mexican-American heads of the household was in general lower than that of other white families in Michigan during 1959. Mexican-Americans often have only one wage earner per household and in general have occupations in the lower range of the socio-economic scale. Larger than normal household membership and frequency of minor children in the homes in conjunction with an inadequate income often force heads, especially female heads, to seek welfare.

1) Consumer behavior. The great majority of family heads are buying their houses.

Only about one in ten of the families is without its own car.

Most of the family heads said that they usually buy things that cost a lot of money on credit.

Only one-third of the Mexican-American family heads maintain checking accounts.

Nearly half of the family heads reported they have no savings at all.

Eight of every ten heads reported having a life insurance policy and a similar proportion have health insurance.

Chapter 5

GETTING AHEAD: OCCUPATIONAL AND INCOME MOBILITY

1. From Father to Son: Intergenerational Mobility

1) Educational mobility. Nearly three-fourths of the males have surpassed their father's highest grade in school. In general, the lower the educational attainment of the father, the more likely is the son to be found in the same category with regard to his own highest grade completed. The father's completion of at least elementary school seems critical to high educational attainment. In such cases, a remarkable 44 percent of the respondents had completed high school. The father's going beyond grade school to complete one to three years more of education, however, does not seem to have greatly enhanced the son's probability of completing high school. However, when the father had completed tenth grade or more, he had greatly increased his son's chances of finishing high school and going beyond to at least one year of higher education.

2) Occupational mobility. Only one-fifth of the respondents had the same occupation as his father while another fifth worked in an occupation of lower status than his father. Thus, about two-thirds had experienced intergenerational occupational mobility. Nearly three-fourths of this mobility can be accounted for by farmers' sons who now work in non-farm occupations, mostly as operatives in factories. Operative occupations show the highest degree of occupational inheritance from father to son.

While it is true that considerable educational mobility has been experienced by the respondents, it is somewhat less impressive when viewed relative to the generally rising years of school completed by the total population and to the increased educational qualification for better jobs. The mobility, while important, is achieved within a relatively narrow segment of the occupational spectrum.

2. Mobility in Michigan: Intergenerational Mobility

1) Occupational mobility. Half the workers are in the same occupations that they began in. Only about one-tenth has a job in an occupation that would be ranked lower than that in which he entered employment in Michigan. About two-fifths have moved upward in occupational status, a little over half of these achieving upward mobility have moved from farm laborer to non-farm laborer or service worker into operative jobs. One-fourth have moved into craftsman or foreman jobs.

2) Wage mobility. For one-third of the sample, there was a decline in real wages between the first job in Michigan and the present or last job held. Nearly two-thirds of the workers though had improved their real income. The median increase was $23 and the mean increase was $13.

3) Socio-economic index mobility by occupation. The great majority of jobs held by Mexican-Americans in Michigan are in the lowest quartile of the socio-economic index which ranges from zero to 100. Craftsmen and foremen and drivers and operatives have done less well in socio-economic mobility

than in wage mobility relative to white-collar workers. Laborers have experienced a slight negative socio-economic mobility between their first and present jobs, despite achieving wage mobility nearly as great as operatives.

4) Industrial mobility. Two-fifths of the workers were in the same industries as those in which they began work in Michigan. Those in motor vehicles and motors were least likely to have held first jobs in other industries. Workers in construction and non-durables showed the next highest stability of industry.

a) Wage mobility by industry. Workers in sales have experienced much greater wage increases on the average than those in any other industry. Next highest in those making some gain in real weekly wages between their first and present jobs are workers in construction and metals. Then come those in motor vehicles, durable manufacturing workers, workers in education and professional services and finally, workers in non-durable manufacturing and services. Nearly two-thirds of transportation and utilities workers experienced a slight gain.

b) Socio-economic index mobility by industry. Sales, motor vehicle and durable manufacturing workers have made much greater gains between their first and present or last jobs in Michigan than those in other industries. Educational and professional services workers rank next.

5) The ex-migratory worker's mobility experience.

a) Occupational mobility and years in the stream. Workers having fewer years of migratory farm work tended to experience greater upward mobility.

b) Wage and socio-economic index mobility and migrant status. Workers who have done migrant farm work only since age 16 have achieved the greatest median increase in real wages. Those workers who had not done work in the fields of Michigan before resettling there experienced a $20.60 median increase in real wages between their first and present or last jobs while those who had worked in the migrant stream achieved a $26.25 median increase.

3. The Way They See It: Subjective Status Placement and Aspirations for the Future

1) Socio-economic status perception. Most Mexican-American heads of household perceive their own socio-economic status as occupying a lower-middle position in their respective Michigan communities. Mexican-Americans are generally optimistic about their opportunities for socio-economic advancement, especially on the part of their children.

a) Subjective status mobility. At least half of the workers in all occupational categories have experienced upward mobility. Those in white-collar occupations appear most satisfied with their progress while those in laboring jobs have the least feeling of moving ahead. One-fifth say they have lost ground and one-fourth have felt no change. Those who settle in Michigan out of the migratory farm labor stream have about the same

mobility experience as those who have never worked in agriculture. The higher the wage mobility, the more likely the worker is to have a feeling of upward mobility.

2) The "good life". Of central concern to Mexican-Americans in achieving a "good life" was 1) adequate and comfortable housing, 2) education, particularly for their children, 3) a stable job, and 4) health and a long life.

3) Aspirations for children. Nine out of 10 heads expressed a desire for their children to have a college education. No more than 1 percent thought that anything less than a full high school education was adequate. Three-fourths hoped their sons would choose a professional career. Significantly, only one out of nearly 700 said he would like his son to work in agriculture, even as a farm owner and not as a laborer.

Chapter 6

POLICY AND RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Policy Recommendations Regarding Mexican-American Labor Mobility, Training and Job Placement Programs.

   (1) Recommendations Regarding Settlers.

   Guided migration.

   1) The most successful migrants are likely to be those who are relatively young, certainly under 40, with smaller than average families, higher than average education, relatives or friends in the areas of resettlement, and occupational skills and preferences conforming to the demands of the local labor market in the area of resettlement.

   2) Given adequate employment opportunities for adult family members, migration should be encouraged and facilitated to smaller or middle-sized communities as an alternative to resettlement in major metropolitan areas.

   3) Preparation for migration, especially when training is necessary, should be accomplished in the place of origin where feasible as well as, or in addition to, facilitation of settlement in the place of destination.

   4) Use should be made both in preparation for migration and in facilitating settlement of the ethnic interpersonal and institutional bonds of the families involved.

   Needs of settlers-in.

   5) Any programs for guided migration and resettlement of migratory farm workers in the Midwest make use of the valuable experience accumulated by previous smaller-scale efforts in assistance to migrants settling out of the stream.

   New opportunities in industrializing agriculture.

   6) Develop programs by which migrant field workers can learn the necessary mechanical skills to continue in agricultural work in new positions.

   Complementary part-time employment in seasonal farm labor.

   7) Some experiments should be undertaken in systematically linking ex-migratory farm workers and members of their families desiring part-time farm employment to opportunities for such employment.

Income maintenance during resettlement.

8) Low-interest "settlement" loans and/or relocation payments should be provided to supplement income during the first year or so of settlement to needy dropouts from the migrant stream.

(2) Recommendations Regarding the Settled.

Employment upgrading.

9) Job training programs involving Mexican-Americans, particularly those having a high proportion of new settlers, should, where feasible, work with them in separate ethnically homogeneous groups and employ as instructors persons of Mexican-American background who are bilingual.

10) Adult education be focused specifically upon enhancing the possibilities of promotion and job upgrading among younger workers and that a larger portion of the responsibility for the preparation of Mexican-American workers for promotion be vested with the employer as contrasted to general educational programs.

11) Greater "outreach" is required by employment agencies and other organizations having placement responsibilities in attempting to overcome rigidities in the labor market which result in the underemployment of Mexican-Americans in terms of their skill levels, motivation or experience.

Entrepreneurial opportunities.

12) Activities of the Small Business Administration continue to be strengthened to provide loans for business development among promising Mexican-Americans in Midwestern communities.

Housing.

13) Provisions should be made through the modifications of inhibiting code or inspection requirements for the encouragement of self-help housing renovation by low-income owners and that tax increases be lessened or eliminated for certain types of improvements in low-income housing. Increased availability of home improvement loans at low rate of interest is also needed.

14) Strengthen efforts against housing discrimination in local communities which may restrict the opportunities for Mexican-American families to upgrade their housing as their incomes increase.

15) Efforts should be made, particularly in small and middle-sized communities, to increase the capacities of local housing to absorb low-income in-migrants commensurate with the absorptive capacities of the local labor market.

Education.

16) Special "head start" and, even more importantly, "catch up" programs should be developed in schools having substantial numbers of recent Mexican-American migrant children to prevent them from falling behind other children of their age.

17) Programs which require active participation and commitment from Mexican-Americans should be, whenever feasible, composed exclusively by this group and involve them in positions of authority within it.

New careers--paraprofessionals.

18) In Midwestern cities of high Mexican-American in-migration, new paraprofessional positions should be created for longer-resident and experienced Mexican-Americans who can mediate between professional agency personnel and new clients.

2. Recommendations for Further Research.

Need for 1970 census data for midwest Mexican-Americans.

1) Present census sample data by ethnicity in publications of the 1970 U.S. Census of Population and Housing for Midwestern states (at least Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, Indiana and Ohio) as well as for the five Southwestern states for which it has been provided.

Metropolitan research.

2) A survey research study should be conducted of the Mexican-American population of Detroit or Chicago replicating some of the more important aspects of the present research.

Processual research.

3) Research support should be provided for focused processual studies to supplement findings of census and survey research.

Panel research.

4) Increased attention should be directed to those opportunities to build longitudinal studies on panels of families or workers being assisted in initial phases of resettlement or retraining making use of baseline data collected by these agencies of initial contact.

Need for contrast class data.

5) Future research should be directed at gaining information on unsuccessful and trapped potential settlers from the migratory farm labor stream and that such research should proceed at both ends of the migration channel.

Research coordination.

6) A working conference should be organized of researchers concerned with Mexican-American research, particularly with respect to Texas-Midwest migration to collate and assess the present information available and to confer regarding future research needs and priorities.