

# **Household Living Arrangements and Economic Resources among Mexican Immigrant Families with Children**

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**HOUSEHOLD LIVING ARRANGEMENTS AND ECONOMIC RESOURCES  
AMONG MEXICAN IMMIGRANT FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN**

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## **HOUSEHOLD LIVING ARRANGEMENTS AND ECONOMIC RESOURCES AMONG MEXICAN IMMIGRANT FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN**

### **Abstract**

Using data from the 2000 Census, this study examines the relationship between household living arrangements and economic resources among Mexican immigrant families with children. I model separately the relationships between family income and household structure and proportion of total household income contributed and household structure. The results show that families that coreside with extended kin and non-kin have higher incomes, all else equal, relative to those that reside in single-family households. In addition, Mexican immigrant families that reside in extended-household living arrangements contribute about three quarters of total household income. While families may gain some economic efficiency through extended household living arrangements, the results are consistent with expectations that Mexican immigrant families expend scarce resources in support of the migration and settlement of extended kin. The Mexican delayed assimilation thesis suggests such support inadvertently diverts resources away from immigrant children and slows intergenerational progress.

## **HOUSEHOLD LIVING ARRANGEMENTS AND ECONOMIC RESOURCES AMONG MEXICAN IMMIGRANT FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN**

A sizeable body of research has accumulated over the past 20 years on the economic prospects for the children of immigrants that have arrived since the mid-1960s (for reviews see Alba & Nee, 2003; Portes, Fernández-Kelly, & Haller, 2009), including research that focuses specifically on Mexican origin children (Bean & Stevens, 2003; Telles & Ortiz, 2008). Scholars most often point to Mexican immigrants' low educational attainment, high rates of unauthorized status, minority status and the structure of the U.S. economy as primary factors in their children's stalled socioeconomic progress (Bean & Stevens, 2003; Duncan, Hotz, & Trejo, 2006). For example, more than half of the Mexican-born population in the United States, up to 85 percent of recent arrivals, is estimated to be in the country without authorization (Passel, 2004; Passel & Cohn, 2009). And Mexican immigrants' annual earnings are about one third those of non-Hispanic whites (Bean & Stevens, 2003; Duncan et al., 2006). As a result, about a third of the children of Mexican immigrants live in poverty (Lichter, Qian, & Crowley, 2005; Van Hook, Brown, & Kwenda, 2004). Poverty affects children's chances of completing school, growing up healthy, and avoiding poverty as adults (Iceland, 2006).

Very little of the immigrant assimilation literature, however, considers the nature and structure of Mexican immigration itself as a factor in the economic prospects of Mexican immigrants and their children. Mexican immigrants often begin their tenure in the United States as temporary sojourners with a goal of improving household economic status in Mexico (Chavez, 1998; Piore, 1979). As such, migrants are not so much concerned with socioeconomic mobility in the United States as they are with earning a wage, any wage, to support their family in Mexico (Piore, 1979; Stark, 1991). Mexican immigrants inevitably decide to permanently settle and shift their objectives to family migration and settlement (Massey, 1986; Piore, 1979; Roberts, 1995).

Building on the assimilation literature, Frank D. Bean and Gillian Stevens (2003) and Susan K. Brown (2007) hypothesize that extended periods of temporary migration and subsequent support of family migration inadvertently divert scarce economic resources away from investments that would likely improve the economic prospects of their children. This diversion of resources then delays intergenerational progress.

Here I investigate the premise of Mexican delayed assimilation that Mexican immigrants with children often support extended family migration. I do so by assessing the relationship between Mexican immigrant families' economic resources and their household living arrangements, which recent research suggests result in part from processes of family migration and settlement (Glick, Bean, & VanHook, 1997; Van Hook & Glick, 2007). Specifically, do Mexican immigrant families that reside with extended kin possess relatively greater financial resources with which to support migration? Do Mexican immigrant families hold more supportive roles within extended-household living arrangements by contributing the most financial resources to their households? In attempting to answer these questions, I hold three specific objectives for the present study. My first objective is simply to describe the relationship between income and household structure among Mexican immigrant families with children to understand the extent to which current theories regarding household formation explain the relationship for Mexican immigrant families. My second objective is to assess whether families with relatively greater income, all else equal, remain involved in and support extended family migration as indicated by their living arrangements. My third objective is to model the relationship between household structure and the proportion of total household income that families with children contribute to understand the extent to which they may support those with whom they reside.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Mexican Delayed Assimilation**

Theories of immigrant socioeconomic assimilation seek to describe the processes, and explain differences in outcomes, by which immigrant groups achieve economic parity with the mainstream population, both over time within the immigrant generation and across generations. The neo-classical perspective, most recently articulated by Richard Alba and Victor Nee (Alba & Nee, 2003), contends that economic parity with the U.S. mainstream is largely inevitable by the third or fourth generation (see also Gans, 1979; Gordon, 1964). The segmented assimilation perspective proposed by Alejandro Portes and his colleagues (see Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Portes & Zhou, 1993) is more pessimistic, however, and emphasizes immigrants' entry into the U.S. racial and ethnic hierarchy as preventing intergenerational progress for some groups. Bean and Stevens (2003) and Brown (2007) point out inadequacies of both theories to account for the experiences of the Mexican origin population. On one hand, Bean and Stevens (2003) show that third and fourth generation Mexican Americans exhibit progress in terms of educational attainment and wages, contradicting predictions of downward assimilation by segmented assimilation theory. On the other, they observe that economic parity does not occur in the Mexican origin population until the fourth or fifth generation, much slower than for other groups. They argue that a two-generation delay is likely due to the unique structure of Mexican immigration and cite extended periods of circular migration and support of extended family migration, unauthorized status and Mexican immigrants' position at the bottom of the U.S. labor market as slowing progress for their children. Brown's (2007) results bolster the Mexican delayed assimilation thesis by showing that Mexican origin residential assimilation into neighborhoods with better schools and amenities does not occur until the fourth generation.

### **Mexican Immigration, Extended Family Support, and Household Formation**

The Mexican delayed assimilation thesis rests on the premise that support of extended-family migration and settlement diverts resources away from investments that would likely

improve economic prospects for the children of Mexican immigrants. Few, if any, representative data sets include information on exchanges of financial and other kinds of support to assess this premise directly. Recent work on Mexican immigrant household formation, however, suggests that extended-household living arrangements result in part from network migration and support. Glick, Bean and Van Hook (1997) and Van Hook and Glick (2007) argue that Mexican immigrant households reflect the unique structure of Mexican immigration and mention specifically immigrants' legal and economic disadvantage and reliance on migration networks. Massey (1986) previously suggested that a provision of shared housing is a resource often available through migration networks. Indeed, recent arrivals, who are more reliant on migration networks, reside in extended-household living arrangements much more often than Mexican immigrants with more experience in the United States (Van Hook & Glick, 2007). Mexican immigrant household living arrangements thus may offer insight into processes of support that divert resources away immigrant children.

Extended-household living arrangements likely hold different implications for families with children than for recently-arrived immigrants. Mexican immigrants with children in the United States have more experience in the United States and are more permanently settled relative to their unattached compatriots (Massey, 1986; Massey, Goldring, & Durand, 1994; Piore, 1979). Being more settled, most families eventually move into single-family living arrangements (Van Hook & Glick, 2007). In 2000, sixty percent of Mexican immigrant families with children resided in single-family households<sup>1</sup> (Ruggles et al., 2008). A relatively high rate of extended household formation certainly reflects economic disadvantage (Angel & Tienda, 1982; Van Hook & Glick, 2007). Given their experience and the resources that come with experience, however, many Mexican immigrant families are uniquely positioned to support the migration of extended family members. As such, extended-household living arrangements likely reflect economic *dependency*

for recent arrivals, whereas residing with extended kin may more represent *support* of others' migration and settlement for Mexican immigrant families with children. Some evidence in this regard comes from previous work that finds that families more often provide financial support others within extended households rather than receive support (Glick, 1999). Even if they do not provide direct financial support, a family that takes in additional household members likely possesses the necessary financial resources to acquire and maintain a housing unit.

The preceding discussion leads me to two specific expectations regarding the household living arrangements of Mexican immigrant families with children and their economic resources. First, I expect that families that reside in extended-household living arrangement exhibit higher incomes relative to families that reside independently. Results consistent with this expectation would strengthen the notion that families with relatively more economic resources direct those resources into family migration and settlement. Second, I expect that families that reside in extended-household living arrangements exhibit more supportive roles in family migration and settlement by contributing a majority of total household resources.

### **Other Causes and Outcomes of Household Formation**

Mexican immigrant extended-household living arrangements, of course, do not result entirely from immigration processes. Scholars have long understood economic need as predominate in Mexican immigrant household formation (for comprehensive reviews see Landale & Oropesa, 2007; Van Hook & Glick, 2007). The economic need theory posits that extended-household living arrangements result from strategies to alleviate economic hardship (Angel & Tienda, 1982; Baca Zinn & Wells, 2000). Not unique to immigrants, native adult children often coreside with their parents when the economic needs of either become greater than available resources (Cooney & Uhlenberg, 1992; Speare & Avery, 1993). Given Mexican immigrant economic disadvantage, it is not surprising that they reside in extended-household living



arrangements relatively more often than other racial and ethnic groups (Angel & Tienda, 1982; Tienda & Glass, 1985). As such, factors that are related to economic deprivation such as family structure, demographic and human capital attributes, and the U.S. experience of immigrants are all known to affect Mexican immigrant household formation. I expect similar findings here. Some scholars attribute Mexican immigrant extended-household formation to cultural familism (Landale & Oropesa, 2007), but this line of thinking is somewhat discounted by Van Hook and Glick's (2007) findings that immigrants are more likely to reside in such households relative to similar Mexicans in Mexico.

The relationship may operate in the opposite direction such that household structure affects a family's economic resources. For example, additional household members may offer instrumental support such as childcare that enables a parent to work more and generate more income (Cohen, 2002; Hogan, Eggebeen, & Clogg, 1993). Previous research, however, is not clear as to the size of this effect, especially with regard to the complex households of Mexican immigrants. While Mexican Americans in general are more likely to offer instrumental support to extended kin relative to other ethnic groups (Sarkisian, Gerena, & Gerstel, 2006), differences between U.S.-born Mexican Americans and immigrants are not understood. Other work that shows that instrumental support diminishes with lower socioeconomic status implies that such support is less available to immigrant families (Hogan et al., 1993).

In addition, a family's economic resources may be boosted simply by adding more income earners to their household. Jensen (1991), for example, finds that secondary earners within Mexican immigrant households ameliorate family poverty. His analyses do not distinguish spousal income from other related household members so it is not clear how much families benefit from extended kin separately. Other work shows that recent arrivals, who may comprise the bulk of additional household members, are more likely to share financial resources with others outside

their households (in all likelihood in the form of remittances to Mexico) rather than those within their household (Glick, 1999). As such, their income may not benefit the families with whom they reside.

### **Approach of the Present Study**

In summary, the Mexican delayed assimilation thesis posits that Mexican immigrants' support of family migration and settlement inadvertently diverts scarce resources away from the children of immigrants. The present study is concerned particularly with the burden that such support places on Mexican immigrant families with children. I first provide a descriptive profile of Mexican immigrant families in terms of income, proportion of total household income that they contribute, and various other characteristics that are known to be related to labor market outcomes and income. I hold three objectives for the multivariate analyses. First, I describe the relationship between family income and household living arrangements in terms of factors related to labor market outcomes to show the importance of economic need in Mexican immigrant household formation. My second objective is to assess whether families with relatively greater economic resources, *ceteris paribus*, support others' migration and settlement by residing in extended-household living arrangements. My third objective is to investigate the degree to which additional household members may be more or less dependent on the families with children with whom they reside. I expect that families' more supportive roles are reflected in their contributing a majority of total household resources.

### **METHOD**

#### **Data**

I use 2000 Census data to investigate the relationship between household structure and income for Mexican immigrant families with children. My data come from the five-percent sample of the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) data distributed by the Minnesota

Population Center (Ruggles et al., 2008). The advantages of Census micro data for the study of immigrants are well known in that they provide ample sample sizes for many national origin groups.

I use the Minimal Household Unit (MHU) as my unit of analysis to examine household structure and the economic resources of Mexican immigrant families. A MHU is the smallest unit within a household that could reside independently (Glick et al., 1997; Glick & Van Hook, 2002; Van Hook & Glick, 2007; Van Hook, Glick, & Bean, 1999). A MHU may consist of an unmarried adult who is not cohabiting and 1) that resides alone within a household, or 2) is 18 years or older and does not reside with a parent or child, or 3) is 25 years or older and resides with a parent. A MHU may also be a couple or family that is comprised of either 1) a married or cohabiting couple or single parent with minor children younger than 16 years old or 2) a married or cohabiting couple with no minor children present in the household. I assign children younger than 16 years whose parent does not reside in a household to the MHU of the householder. For example, in a household comprised of five independent adults ranging in age between 18 and 30, each individual would be identified as a separate MHU. A household that includes two parents and their three children ages 8, 10 and 11, the children's maternal grandmother, and a sister of the householder and her 1 year old baby would be comprised of three MHUs, the family with three children, the grandmother, and the sister and her baby.

My sample consists of MHUs that include at least one Mexican-born parent and at least one minor child that is less than 16 years of age. If there are multiple families within the same housing unit, I randomly select one of them to avoid violating regression assumptions regarding statistical independence of observations. My sample is comprised of 107,127 Mexican immigrant families.

## Measures

*Income.* My first dependent variable is total MHU income (family income). I use family income to assess differences in family economic resources across types of households. Income is not an ideal measure of a family's resources because it can fluctuate greatly from year to year, especially for low-skill workers in the secondary labor market, and it does not include in-kind government benefits such as food stamps, the eligibility of which is determined in part by household structure. In spite of these shortcomings, income is widely used and enjoys broad understanding as a measure of economic resources. Furthermore, as a component of the official U.S. poverty measure, its use allows linkages between my findings and studies of immigrant child poverty, a growing body of research that has yet to recognize the potential impact of processes of Mexican immigration (for example, see Crowley, Lichter, & Qian, 2006; Lichter & Landale, 1995; Lichter et al., 2005; Van Hook et al., 2004).

*Proportion Household Income Contributed.* My second dependent variable is the proportion of total household income contributed by Mexican immigrant families with children. I calculate the proportion by dividing family income by total household income. Few, if any, secondary data sources include information on the extent to which economic resources are shared with a household. I thus use proportion contributed to approximate the degree to which a family supports other household members. The measure assumes that a greater proportion contributed implies greater support. This measure may either overestimate or underestimate actual degrees of support. If a family contributes a majority of household income when no financial resources are actually shared within a household, the proportion contributed overestimates the degree of support by implying that a family's income is more dispersed within a household. Likewise, the proportion may underestimate actual support if additional household members rely on a family's support to remit their own income back to Mexico as discussed above.

*Household Structure.* Household structure is the independent variable of primary interest here. Following previous studies, I define household structure according to how the MHUs within each household are related (Glick et al., 1997; Van Hook & Glick, 2007; Van Hook et al., 1999). Single-family households are those that include only one MHU. Extended households are comprised of two or more MHUs. Family-only extended households are made up of multiple MHUs that are all related by blood or marriage. Family-extended households may be vertically extended, in which adult children reside with their parents, or horizontally extended, which include adult siblings, cousins, aunts or uncles, or nieces or nephews. Finally, non-kin extended households contain an MHU that is not related to any other MHU within the household. A household can include a mix of extension types so I create seven categories of extension, listed here mostly in order of complexity: 1) single family, 2) vertical-only family extension, 3) mix of horizontal and vertical family extension, 4) horizontal-only family extension, 5) non-kin and vertical family extension (may also include horizontal extension), 6) non-kin and horizontal family extension, and 7) non-kin only. Given that household complexity is negatively related to the U.S. experience of its inhabitants (Van Hook & Glick, 2007), more complex household may indicate greater involvement in and support of immigration processes for families with children.

I control for known factors of immigrant economic outcomes and thus household formation. The variables fall into three general categories: family structure, parental demographic and human capital characteristics, and exposure to the United States.

*Family Structure.* Marital status includes three categories, married, cohabiting and single. I also include the number of children in a family who are present in a household and variables that indicate the children's ages.

*Human Capital and Demographics.* These include the parents' age and educational attainment.

*U.S. Exposure.* I measure exposure to the United States with indicators of a parent's nativity and time in the United States. Given that only one parent may be Mexican born, the categories of this variable include 1) a U.S.-born parent, 2) both parents are born in Mexico and either parent arrived in the United States while younger than 15 years of age (1.5 generation), 3) both parents have been in U.S. for more than 10 years, 4) only one parent has been in U.S. for more than 10 years, or 5) both parents have been in U.S. for less than 10 years. Single-parent families are evaluated with the same logic although they cannot be U.S. born in accordance with the sample criteria. Another variable indicates whether either parent speaks English well or better. Recent residential mobility is often associated with greater financial instability. I also control for the nativity of the children present in a family.

*Householder Present in Family.* While I expect that most Mexican immigrant families hold more supportive roles within their households, some families may reside in extended households simply due to economic hardship. To distinguish the two scenarios, I control for whether a family includes the householder, the person identified in the Census as owning or renting a dwelling unit. Because all families that reside in single-family households include the householder and confounds the two variables, I interact householder status with household extension type in the multivariate models.

*Number of Additional Household Members.* The proportion of total household income contributed likely depends on the number of additional household members, and thus household complexity, that reside with a family. I control for number of additional household members in the proportion models differences between families that reside in households of similar size yet different compositions.

*Region.* I also control for regional differences in income.

*Weights.* For the descriptive analysis, I use the person weight of the family head to estimate population distributions of Mexican immigrant families with children. For the multivariate analyses, I weight up or weight down each observation by dividing the family head's person weight by the sum total of all person weights in the census data. This ensures proper calculation of standard errors for the regression model coefficients.

## **RESULTS**

### **Descriptive Statistics.**

Table 1 shows descriptive statistics for my two dependent variables and distribution of Mexican immigrant families by household structure and the control variables that I include in the multivariate analyses. Most Mexican immigrant families with children, about 60 percent, reside independently in single-family households. Of families that reside in extended-household living arrangements, most reside in family-only extended households. Ten percent reside with a grandparent (vertically extended) and 12 percent reside with other extended family members (horizontally extended).

[Table 1 here]

The average income for all Mexican immigrant families with children is about \$33,100 per year. Family incomes are generally lower in more complex households. Family income varies between a high of \$35,455 for families that reside in single-family households and about \$28,000 for families that reside in households with a mix of extended family and non-kin. Families that reside in more complex households contribute relatively smaller proportions, 0.38 and 0.42 in households that include a mix of extended family and non-kin. By contrast, families that reside in vertically-extended or horizontally-extended households contribute a majority of household income, 0.611 and 0.624 respectively.

Between 70 and 90 percent of the families that reside in extended-household living arrangements include a householder, a first indication that families hold a more supportive role within their households. Families that reside in vertically-extended households include a householder less often, between 69 and 75 percent. Almost all families that reside in horizontally-extended household or with non-kin include a householder.

Distributions for the other independent variables generally show that families that reside in more complex households exhibit characteristics associated with relatively lower income. Eighty-two percent of families that reside in single-family households include married parents while between one half and two thirds of families that reside with non-kin include a married couple. Forty percent of the parents that reside in horizontally-extended households and 48 percent in horizontal-non-kin mixed are less than 30 years of age. The ratio is reversed in vertically-extended households in which 36 to 40 percent of parents are older than forty years. Regarding educational attainment, about half of the families in single-family households include a parent that has at least a high school diploma whereas only one-third do in more complex households.

U.S. exposure variables also indicate relationships to household structure. Twenty-five percent of families that reside independently include a U.S.-born parent. Only 6 percent of families that reside in households with a mix of horizontal and non-kin extension include a U.S.-born parent. Alternatively, between 20 and 35 percent of families that coreside in more complex households include parents who have been in the United States for less than 10 years. Only about 12 percent of families in single-family households have such little experience in the United States. Related to time in the United States, of course, parents in more complex households have fewer English language skills (around half versus 70 percent in single-family households) and are relatively more likely to have children born in Mexico (40 percent versus 22 percent in single-family households).



Finally, more complex households include a greater number of additional household members. Households with a mix of family and non-kin include, on average, between 3 and 4 additional household members. By comparison, vertical-only and horizontal-only extended households include only two additional people. The number of additional household members is likely a factor in relatively lower proportions contributed to total household income.

### **Models of Family Income**

I use Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression to model both income and proportion of household income contributed for Mexican immigrant families with children. I use the natural log of income to satisfy normal distribution regression assumptions. In doing so, model coefficients that are less than 0.25, when multiplied by 100, approximate the percentage difference in real income for each unit change in an independent variable. Coefficients larger than 0.25 can be interpreted as a difference in income larger than 25 percent, of course, but a transformation to a percentage is not as precise. To reiterate, my objectives in modeling income are first to simply describe the relationship between household structure and income and, second, to test my expectation that families that reside in extended-household living arrangement have relatively higher incomes, *ceteris paribus*. Table 2 includes six models of family income. Model 1 simply depicts the bivariate relationship between household type and income without controlling for any other factors. Model 2 adds interaction terms to differentiate incomes of householder families (the main effects) and those of non-householder families (the interaction effects) within similar types of households. Model 3 through 5 assess separately associations between income and family structure, human capital, and U.S. exposure and their effects on the relationship between household structure and income. Finally, Model 6 includes all the control variables together along with regional dummy variables.

[Table 2 here]

Similar to the descriptive results, Model 1 shows without exception that families that reside in extended-household living arrangements have much lower income relative to those that reside independently in single-family households, the reference category. Model 2 further indicates that non-householder families have incomes that are a fraction of those of householder families that reside in similar types of households. Because most families with children include a householder I focus on the results for such families heretofore. Income differences across the types of household extension become somewhat smaller after controlling for the presence of a householder in a family. Incomes in vertically-extended households are not statistically different from single-family incomes. Families that reside in horizontally-extended households have incomes that are about 23 percent lower, and incomes in non-kin-extended households range between 14 and 40 percent lower than those of single family households.

Model 3 affirms that family structure is closely related to a family's economic resources. Single-parent families have dramatically lower incomes than married couple families as indicated by a coefficient of -1.42. Similarly, incomes for families with a male head are 30 percent higher than those with a female head. The model also shows that a greater number of children and younger children are both associated with lower income. Controlling for family structure affects the relationship between household structure and income, especially among families that reside in horizontally-extended households. The coefficient for horizontal-only households declines from -0.23 in Model 2 to -0.13 in Model 3. Households that include a mix of horizontal extension and vertical or non-kin extension similarly decline, from -0.15 to 0.00 and from -0.32 to -0.07, respectively.

Results in Model 4, as expected, show strong relationships between age and education and income. Parents in their 30s and 40s have higher incomes (coefficients equal to 0.37 and 0.55, respectively) than parents in their 20s. Likewise, parents who have obtained a high school diploma

or higher education have dramatically higher incomes (coefficients of 0.45 for high school diploma, 0.77 for some college, and 0.90 for bachelor's degree or higher education) than those who have not finished high school. Once these variables are controlled, family income in horizontal-only extended households are only 8 percent lower than single-family households while the coefficients for family- and non-kin-extended households decline by more than half (-0.06 and -0.11, respectively) relative to Model 2.

Model 5 shows that, as is well documented, Mexican immigrants with less experience in the United States receive much lower labor market returns relative to those with more experience and U.S. natives. Log income for families with less than 10 years experience is 0.65 less than families that include a U.S.-born parent or one who arrived in the United States younger than 15 years old. English language skills, residential stability, and U.S.-born children are all related to higher incomes. The U.S. exposure variables affect the household coefficients similarly as age and education such that family incomes in vertically-extended households are 5 percent higher and those in horizontally-extended households are only 10 percent lower relative to single-family households.

In the full model, Model 6, all the coefficients for the types of household extension become positive and statistically significant. This result indicates that, net of all other factors included in the model, families that reside in extended-household living arrangements have *higher* income than families that reside in single-family households. The differences for vertically-extended and horizontally-extended households, where most families that reside in extended households are situated, are relatively smallest (0.05 and 0.03 respectively). By contrast, family incomes are relatively higher in more complex household structures, 21 percent higher in vertical-non-kin mixed households and 17 percent higher in horizontal-non-kin mixed households.

### **Models of Proportion of Household Income Contributed**

Table 3 provides results for models that predict the proportion of total household income contributed by Mexican immigrant families with children. Model 1 includes only the six extended household-type dummy variables. Model 2 adds interaction terms between the household dummies and a non-householder indicator. Model 3 also includes all the family structure, human capital, U.S. exposure and regional control variables included in the full income model, Model 5, in Table 2. For space considerations, I do not show the coefficients for these variables as they do not relate to the proportion any differently from how they relate to family income, which is already described above. Model 4 excludes the family characteristic control variables but includes the number of additional household members. Model 5 is the full model that includes all control variables from Models 3 and 4.

[Table 3 here]

The proportion contributed in single-family households, the reference category for household type, is 1.0, of course, as indicated by the model intercepts. As such, the model coefficients represent differences in proportion contributed or the mean proportion contributed when subtracted from 1 so more negative coefficients represent less contributed to household income. As with the descriptive results, Model 1 shows that more simplistic household types such as vertical-only (-0.39) and horizontal-only (-0.38) extended households are associated with greater proportions contributed. Likewise, families in more complex household types, which have a greater number of additional household members (Table 1), contribute relatively less (i.e., coefficients of -0.62 and -0.58).

When the presence of a householder is controlled, Model 2 shows that the proportions contributed by householder families generally increase relative to Model 1. Householder families that reside in vertical-only extended households contribute about 75 percent of total income, which is more than in any other type of household, whereas householder families in more complex

households contribute about half. The results in Model 3 largely do not change from those of Model 2 after controlling for family characteristics. This indicates that differences in family income are not a predominate factor in differences in proportion contributed.

Model 4, however, shows that the number of additional household members affects the relationship between household structure and proportion contributed significantly. On average, two additional household members reduces a family's proportion contributed by 0.12, four additional household members reduce the proportion by 0.26, and six or more members reduce it by a full third of total household income. Comparing Models 2 and 4, the coefficient for horizontally-extended households, for example, increases from -0.33 to -0.27. The change is even greater, of course, for more complex households that have more additional household members (Table 1). The coefficient for households with a mix of horizontal and non-kin extension changes from -0.53 in Model 1 to -0.32 in Model 4. In other words, families that reside in such households, all things considered, contribute an average of 70 percent of total household income.

As with Model 3, the addition of family characteristic variables in Model 5 does little to change the size or pattern of differences in proportion contributed across household types. Family characteristics and size of household considered, householder families with children contribute an average of 83 percent of household income in vertically-extended households and between 70 and 76 percent when residing in other types of extended households.

## **DISSCUSION AND CONCLUSION**

The children of Mexican immigrants to the United States face formidable challenges in achieving socioeconomic mobility. The Mexican delayed assimilation thesis posits that they lag behind other immigrant children due in part to the structure of Mexican immigration. Mexican immigrants expend scarce resources in support of extended-family migration and settlement which diverts such resources away from investments that may bolster the prospects of their children.

Here I investigate whether Mexican immigrant household living arrangements provides insight into the premise that Mexican immigrant families with children are burdened by support of others' migration and settlement. I use 2000 Census data to assess three specific objectives. The first is to simply to describe the relationship between income and household structure. Using the full income model with all control variables included, my second objective is to test whether families with relatively greater economic resources reside in extended-household living arrangements. My third objective entails modeling the proportion of total household income that Mexican immigrants families contribute to assess the degree to which other household members may be economically dependent on such families.

Results from both descriptive analysis and multivariate models of income bolster previous research that economic need is strongly associated extended-household living arrangements. Families that reside in extended-household living arrangements have much lower incomes in general relative to families that reside independently in single-family households. The descriptive results illustrate that families that reside with extended kin, especially those that reside in more complex households, are more likely to be comprised of a single parent, parents who are younger and less educated, and parents who have less experience in the United States, all factors that limit returns in the labor market. In addition, the multivariate analyses show that family structure, parental human capital, and a family's U.S. exposure together explain the negative relationship between extended-household structure and income.

In regard to my second objective for the present study, the full model of income shows that families that reside in extended-household living arrangements have higher incomes relative to families with similar characteristics that reside independently. The families that reside in the most complex households, those that are most associated with recently-arrived migrants, have incomes that are 20 percent higher. While only a small percentage of families reside in such households,

families that reside in family-only extended households exhibit incomes that are three to five percent higher. This finding is consistent with my expectation that families with relatively greater economic resources, *ceteris paribus*, support processes of immigration as indicated by their housing arrangements. The differences between types of extension may indicate that most families support only extended family without having much more resources to do so.

Having relatively more resources, however, does not inform us of whether those with whom such families reside are more or less dependent. In modeling the proportion of total household income that families contribute, I find that distinguishing householder and non-householder families and controlling for the number of additional household members account for almost half of the differences in proportion contributed across the household types. Differences in income make very little difference in whether other household members are more or less dependent, as measured by the proportion that a family contributes. The proportion that families contribute in extended-household living arrangements ranges between 70 and 83 percent once other factors are controlled. Mexican immigrant families with children thus are the primary economic contributors within their households. While some economic efficiency may be gained from not being the sole contributor to a household as in a single-family situation, contributing the vast majority of resources within a household may indicate more supportive roles, and economic burdens, in processes of Mexican immigration and settlement. In sum, the results presented here bolster the premise of the Mexican delayed assimilation thesis that immigrant families expend scarce resources in support of family migration and settlement.

The results and conclusions presented here are not without limitations. I argue above that prior research is not conclusive regarding family resources being due to household structure rather than determining it as I imply in my conclusions. I cannot disaggregate causal direction with Census data<sup>2</sup> so this cannot be tested here. Two results indicate instrumental support likely does

not predominate in the results here. For one, additional household members report income as indicated by the proportion contributed, which indicates that they work rather than provide childcare, for example, within their households. Another indication is that one might expect instrumental support to exhibit a greater effect in vertically-extended households in which grandparents may be more available to provide such support. The results do not support this.

Another limitation is that Mexican immigration and household formation are highly dynamic processes that I attempt to analyze using data from one point in time. On one hand, the amount of time that Mexican immigrant families reside with extended family members may be relatively short and not affect their economic situations in the long term as the Mexican delayed assimilation thesis implies. On the other hand, support of others' migration and settlement is not limited to those with whom a family resides nor to the time period that children are present in the household. As such, the results presented here may underestimate the nature and extent of support and the implications for available resources for immigrant children. These are just a few avenues that future research should investigate.

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<sup>1</sup> Sixty percent is much lower relative to families of other ethnicities and nativity. Ninety percent of native-born non-Hispanic white families reside independently and almost three quarters of Mexican American families and Asian immigrant families do so (Ruggles et al., 2008).

<sup>2</sup> Even if one were to enlist a method such as a Heckman two-step regression analysis to control for selection effects, we do not know whether a family's household formation occurred prior to their current level of income as with other relationships such as in modeling migration and wages.



## Tables and Figures

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics by Household Structure Type, Mexican Immigrant Families with Children, United States, 2000

	Single Family	Family-Only Extension			Family / Non-Kin Mixed		
		Vertical <sup>a</sup> Only	Vertical <sup>a</sup> / Horizontal <sup>b</sup> Mixed	Horizontal <sup>b</sup> Only	Non-Kin <sup>c</sup> / Horizontal <sup>b</sup> Non-Kin <sup>c</sup> Mixed <sup>d</sup>	Horizontal <sup>b</sup> Non-Kin <sup>c</sup> Mixed	Non-Kin <sup>c</sup> Only
Distribution of Families	63.2	10.5	3.4	12.5	2.0	3.1	5.3
Dependent Variables							
Mean Income	35,455	31,130	28,489	28,610	28,783	27,382	27,414
(Standard error)	(138)	(325)	(536)	(274)	(855)	(616)	(425)
Mean Proportion Contributed to Household	1.000	0.611	0.456	0.624	0.383	0.422	0.584
(Standard error)	(0.000)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Independent Variables							
Family Includes Householder	100.0	70.6	75.0	91.1	69.2	87.1	90.1
Family Structure							
Marital Status							
Married	82.4	69.3	68.8	78.1	55.6	64.1	56.0
Cohabit	8.4	3.6	3.7	6.2	5.6	8.6	12.3
Single	9.3	27.0	27.5	15.7	38.8	27.3	31.7
Family Head is Male	80.6	72.4	72.6	78.5	66.8	77.6	69.3
Number of Children in Family							
1	29.3	46.2	38.4	31.0	46.2	34.7	36.5
2	35.6	30.3	29.6	33.3	26.6	30.2	31.0
3	22.5	14.8	17.6	20.2	14.7	18.3	19.0
4+	12.7	8.7	14.4	15.5	12.5	16.8	13.4
Child(ren) Ages							
0 - 4	53.7	45.3	57.8	66.1	54.4	70.5	60.5
5 - 11	67.2	56.2	60.7	63.2	56.1	58.9	61.8
12 - 15	38.2	40.3	32.1	27.5	33.6	23.8	31.1
Parental Human Capital / Demographic							
Age of Parents (mean of couples)							
< 30	26.1	27.4	32.9	40.5	36.5	48.3	37.1
30 - 39	47.9	28.6	34.9	45.1	26.9	39.8	42.8
40+	26.0	44.0	32.2	14.3	36.6	11.9	20.2
(continued next page)							
Source: Author's calculations using Census 2000 IPUMS							
a Household includes parents of adult children and their grandchildren							
b Household includes adult siblings, cousins, uncles/aunts, and/or nieces/nephews							
c Household includes unrelated persons							
d May also include mix of vertical, horizontal and non-kin extension							

Table 1 (continued). Descriptive Statistics by Household Structure Type, Mexican Immigrant Families with Children, United States, 2000

	Single Family	Family-Only Extension			Family / Non-Kin Mixed			Non-Kin <sup>c</sup> Only
		Vertical <sup>a</sup> Only	Vertical <sup>a</sup> / Horizontal <sup>b</sup> Mixed	Horizontal <sup>b</sup> Only	Non-Kin <sup>c</sup> / Mixed <sup>d</sup>	Horizontal <sup>b</sup> / Non-Kin <sup>c</sup> Mixed		
<b>Educational Attainment of Family Head</b>								
Less Than High School Diploma	49.9	57.3	61.6	60.3	65.2	64.8	63.3	
High School Diploma	22.9	20.6	20.0	23.1	19.2	21.3	19.2	
Some College	19.0	16.4	14.2	12.2	11.5	10.3	12.7	
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	8.2	5.7	4.2	4.4	4.1	3.6	4.9	
<b>Family U.S. Exposure / Migration</b>								
<b>Parental U.S. Exposure</b>								
Either U.S. Born	25.0	18.6	11.4	10.3	9.2	6.3	9.5	
Either 1.5 Generation (arrived U.S. < Age	21.8	25.0	25.0	20.3	22.5	18.1	19.4	
Both in U.S. 10+ Years	30.5	35.9	34.9	29.8	36.6	27.2	32.9	
Either in U.S. 10+ Years	10.8	7.5	10.8	15.3	10.0	15.3	11.0	
Both in U.S. < 10 Years	11.8	13.0	17.8	24.3	21.7	33.0	27.1	
Either Parent Speaks English Well	70.9	67.2	60.0	55.7	56.4	47.0	53.4	
Family Head Migrated in Past 5 Years	17.3	14.7	16.8	22.7	19.3	27.4	25.0	
<b>Nativity of Children</b>								
U.S.-Born Only	77.5	75.2	66.4	64.9	60.7	58.4	66.6	
U.S.- and Mexican-Born	13.2	9.8	15.1	20.0	14.6	22.6	17.0	
Mexican-Born Only	9.3	15.0	18.5	15.2	24.7	19.0	16.4	
Number of Other Household Members	0.0	2.1	3.4	1.8	4.1	3.5	1.9	
<b>Region</b>								
West	44.2	49.8	56.6	47.2	58.6	52.4	53.5	
Mountain	11.5	9.9	9.1	9.9	8.0	9.4	9.9	
Central	10.9	9.4	9.3	12.0	9.8	10.8	9.7	
Northeast	2.0	1.5	2.2	4.4	4.0	7.1	4.4	
Southeast	5.4	4.0	4.6	7.8	5.6	9.6	8.5	
Southcentral	26.0	25.4	18.1	18.6	13.8	10.6	14.1	
Source: Author's calculations using Census 2000 IPUMS								
a Household includes parents of adult children and their grandchildren								
b Household includes adult siblings, cousins, uncles/aunts, and/or nieces/nephews								
c Household includes unrelated persons								
d May also include mix of vertical, horizontal and non-kin extension								

Table 2. Ordinary Least Squares Regression Models Predicting Log Family Income, Mexican Immigrant Families with Children, United States, 2000

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
F Value	373 ***	836 ***	958 ***	860 ***	783 ***	706 ***
R <sup>2</sup>	0.02	0.09	0.16	0.12	0.12	0.20
Intercept	9.96 ***	9.96 ***	9.85 ***	9.32 ***	9.81 ***	9.38 ***
Household Extension						
Single Family	--	--	--	--	--	--
Family Vertical <sup>a</sup> Extension Only	-0.65 ***	0.03	0.05 **	-0.01	0.05 *	0.05 **
Family Vertical <sup>a</sup> & Horizontal <sup>b</sup> Mixed	-0.72 ***	-0.15 ***	0.00	-0.08 **	-0.09 **	0.07 *
Family Horizontal <sup>b</sup> Extension Only	-0.44 ***	-0.23 ***	-0.13 ***	-0.08 ***	-0.09 ***	0.03 *
Non-Kin <sup>c</sup> & Family Vertical <sup>a</sup> Mixed <sup>c</sup>	-0.90 ***	-0.14 ***	0.11 **	-0.06	-0.04	0.21 ***
Non-Kin <sup>d</sup> & Family Horizontal <sup>b</sup> Mixed	-0.68 ***	-0.32 ***	-0.07 *	-0.11 ***	-0.09 **	0.17 ***
Non-Kin <sup>d</sup> Only	-0.66 ***	-0.41 ***	-0.09 ***	-0.27 ***	-0.24 ***	0.06 **
Interaction Terms						
(Household Extension) * (No Householder Present in MHU)						
Family Vertical <sup>a</sup> Extension Only		-2.31 ***	-1.55 ***	-2.09 ***	-2.28 ***	-1.48 ***
Family Vertical <sup>a</sup> & Horizontal <sup>b</sup> Mixed		-2.28 ***	-1.66 ***	-2.19 ***	-2.16 ***	-1.57 ***
Family Horizontal <sup>b</sup> Extension Only		-2.34 ***	-1.71 ***	-2.24 ***	-2.07 ***	-1.52 ***
Non-Kin <sup>c</sup> & Family Vertical <sup>a</sup> Mixed <sup>c</sup>		-2.45 ***	-1.74 ***	-2.30 ***	-2.32 ***	-1.63 ***
Non-Kin <sup>d</sup> & Family Horizontal <sup>b</sup> Mixed		-2.78 ***	-2.06 ***	-2.71 ***	-2.50 ***	-1.91 ***
Non-Kin <sup>d</sup> Only		-2.56 ***	-1.88 ***	-2.44 ***	-2.26 ***	-1.67 ***
Family and Household Structure						
Marital Status						
Married			--			--
Cohabit			-0.08 ***			-0.05 **
Single			-1.42 ***			-1.25 ***
Family Head is Male			0.31 ***			0.33 ***
Number of Children						
1			--			
2			-0.06 ***			
3			-0.17 ***			
4+			-0.31 ***			
Child Ages						
0 to 4 Years			-0.19 ***			-0.12 ***
5 to 11 Years			0.15 ***			0.10 ***
12 to 15 Years			0.26 ***			0.20 ***
				cont. next page	cont. next page	cont. next page
a Household includes parents of adult children and their grandchildren						
b Household includes adult siblings, cousins, uncles/aunts, and/or nieces/nephews						
c May also be mixture of non-kin, vertical and horizontal extension						
d Household includes unrelated persons						

Table 2 (continued). Ordinary Least Squares Regression Models Predicting Log Family Income, Mexican Immigrant Families with Children, United States, 2000

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4 (cont.)	Model 5 (cont.)	Model 6 (cont.)
Parental Human Capital / Demographic						
Age						
Less than 30				--		--
30 to 39				0.37 ***		0.25 ***
40 plus				0.55 ***		0.38 ***
Education						
No High School Diploma				--		--
High School Diploma				0.45 ***		0.28 ***
Some College				0.77 ***		0.54 ***
Bachelors Degree or Higher				0.90 ***		0.69 ***
Family U.S. Exposure / Migration						
Parental U.S. Exposure						
Native-born Partner or 1.5 Generation					--	--
Either in US 10 years or more					-0.09 ***	-0.05 ***
Both/Only in US Less than 10 years					-0.65 ***	-0.35 ***
Speaks English Well or Better					0.44 ***	0.23 ***
Family Head Migrated in Past 5 Years					-0.20 ***	-0.17 ***
Nativity of Children						
All U.S. Born					--	--
Mix of U.S. and Mexican Born					-0.03 *	-0.11 ***
All Mexican Born					-0.04 *	-0.25 ***
U.S. Region						
West						--
Mountain						-0.03 *
Central						0.11 ***
Northeast						-0.18 ***
Southeast						0.05 **
Southcentral						-0.18 ***

Table 3. Ordinary Least Squares Regression Models Predicting Proportion of Total Household Income Contributed, Mexican Immigrant Families with Children, United States, 2000

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
F Value	23,800 ***	18,883 ***	5,797 ***	14,124 ***	6,042 ***
R <sup>2</sup>	0.57	0.67	0.67	0.70	0.71
Intercept	1.00 ***	1.00 ***	0.97 ***	1.00 ***	0.97 ***
Household Extension					
Single Family	--	--	--	--	--
Family Vertical <sup>a</sup> Extension Only	-0.39 ***	-0.25 ***	-0.24 ***	-0.18 ***	-0.17 ***
Family Vertical <sup>a</sup> & Horizontal <sup>b</sup> Mixed	-0.54 ***	-0.45 ***	-0.43 ***	-0.24 ***	-0.24 ***
Family Horizontal <sup>b</sup> Extension Only	-0.38 ***	-0.33 ***	-0.32 ***	-0.27 ***	-0.26 ***
Non-Kin <sup>c</sup> & Family Vertical <sup>a</sup> Mixed <sup>c</sup>	-0.62 ***	-0.52 ***	-0.49 ***	-0.28 ***	-0.27 ***
Non-Kin <sup>d</sup> & Family Horizontal <sup>b</sup> Mixed	-0.58 ***	-0.53 ***	-0.50 ***	-0.32 ***	-0.30 ***
Non-Kin <sup>d</sup> Only	-0.42 ***	-0.37 ***	-0.34 ***	-0.30 ***	-0.28 ***
Interaction Terms					
(Household Extension) * (No Householder Present in MHU)					
Family Vertical <sup>a</sup> Extension Only		-0.43 ***	-0.38 ***	-0.30 ***	-0.27 ***
Family Vertical <sup>a</sup> & Horizontal <sup>b</sup> Mixed		-0.31 ***	-0.27 ***	-0.25 ***	-0.21 ***
Family Horizontal <sup>b</sup> Extension Only		-0.38 ***	-0.33 ***	-0.23 ***	-0.20 ***
Non-Kin <sup>c</sup> & Family Vertical <sup>a</sup> Mixed <sup>c</sup>		-0.28 ***	-0.23 ***	-0.22 ***	-0.18 ***
Non-Kin <sup>d</sup> & Family Horizontal <sup>b</sup> Mixed		-0.28 ***	-0.23 ***	-0.21 ***	-0.17 ***
Non-Kin <sup>d</sup> Only		-0.37 ***	-0.33 ***	-0.24 ***	-0.20 ***
Family Structure, Human Capital, U.S. Exposure & Region			C.N.S.		C.N.S.
Number of Additional Household Members					
0 or 1				--	--
2				-0.12 ***	-0.12 ***
3				-0.21 ***	-0.20 ***
4				-0.26 ***	-0.25 ***
5				-0.30 ***	-0.29 ***
6+				-0.33 ***	-0.32 ***
Model 1 includes only the household type dummy variables					
Model 2 also includes household type dummy variables interacted with non-householder indicator					
Model 3 also includes family structure, parental human capital, U.S. exposure, and regional control variables					
Model 4 includes only household type dummies, interaction terms, and number of other household members					
Model 5 includes all control variables included in Models 3 and 4					
a Household includes parents of adult children and their grandchildren					
b Household includes adult siblings, cousins, uncles/aunts, and/or nieces/nephews					
c May also be mixture of non-kin, vertical and horizontal extension					
d Household includes unrelated persons					
C.N.S. - coefficients not shown					

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