

UCLA

Program on International Migration

Title

Gender, Bilingualism, and the Early Occupational Careers of Second-Generation Mexicans in the South

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/46h0t9jc>

Authors

Hernandez-Leon, Ruben
Morando, Sarah J

Publication Date

2013-02-16

Gender, Bilingualism, and the Early Occupational Careers of Second-Generation Mexicans in the South

Rubén Hernández-León and Sarah J. Morando, Dept. of Sociology, UCLA

Abstract

Following two decades of Mexican migration to the southern United States, the second generation is entering the labor market. We analyze the early occupational careers of fifty-eight second-generation young adults in Dalton, Georgia, a global carpet manufacturing center. We find intergenerational occupational mobility, with children of Mexican immigrants deploying human capital skills to access better jobs than their parents. However, the Mexican second generation faces opportunity ladders structured along gender lines, with women working in services and men laboring as bilingual supervisors and crew leaders in the carpet industry. While bilingual skills play a critical role in the employment paths members of the second generation have started to chart, their use of bilingualism is also shaped by gender dynamics in the workplace.

Introduction

A wealth of research has analyzed the labor market integration of Mexican immigrants in new rural and urban destinations across the South (Zuñiga and Hernández-León 2005; Odem and Lacy 2009). Today, after two decades of settled migration in states such as Georgia, North Carolina, and Tennessee, the second generation is starting to enter the labor market. This cohort of young adults constitutes the *first* second generation coming of age in the region. In this study, we investigate the early occupational careers of fifty-eight male and female children of Mexican immigrants in Dalton, Georgia, a small city that has attracted thousands of Mexican immigrants to jobs in carpet manufacturing.

We identify the forces that shape the structures of opportunity and employment trajectories of Mexican second generation young adults by analyzing their first ten years of participation in the labor market. In this early stage of their careers, these young men and women detect employment opportunities, begin to deploy their human capital, and acquire skills that can be used later to further

mobility opportunities. These experiences interact with gender, race, ethnicity, and other socioeconomic characteristics to channel young men and women to distinct occupational ladders.

We contribute to the growing scholarship on the long-term assimilation and mobility prospects of children of post-1965 immigrants (Alba and Nee 2003; Bean and Stevens 2003). Some scholars argue that the members of the Mexican second generation are likely to face multiple roadblocks in their socioeconomic mobility (Portes and Rumbaut 2001). Others believe that the children of Mexican newcomers are likely to travel a path similar to the children of European immigrants who arrived on U.S. shores in the early twentieth century, working in blue-collar jobs in a trajectory of gradual mobility (Waldinger, Lim and Cort 2007). Despite their disagreements, these positions prognosticate that the Mexican second generation is unlikely to stray too far from the occupations of their parents. Moreover, these analyses are usually conducted at the group level, either assessing the assimilation process of one group over time or comparing the outcomes of different immigrant groups at one point in time. Our study departs from these approaches by examining how gender, bilingualism, educational attainment, and workplace practices can create internal differentiation among the Mexican second generation.

Furthermore, most studies of the second generation have been conducted in traditional gateways in the northeastern and southwestern United States. In contrast, our inquiry takes place in the southeastern region of the country, a new immigrant destination of Mexicans and other Latinos, who have often settled in non-metropolitan settings (Marrow 2011; Odem and Lacy 2009). In this context, we ponder whether localities like Dalton may provide unique mobility opportunities to second-generation, bilingual young adults who can mediate between the largely English-monolingual residents and the growing Spanish-dominant population in all economic sectors. Although some of these opportunities are also present in traditional gateways, new destinations do not have the abundance of bilingual speakers found in places like Los Angeles, Chicago, and San Antonio, where after a hundred years of immigration, multiple second generations coexist. As members of the very first second generation to come of age in Dalton, these young adults can use their bilingual and bicultural skills to take advantage of a unique “strategic hole” nobody else can fill (Marrow 2011: 19).

In this article, we intend to answer the following questions: Are members of the second generation holding the same types of jobs as their working-class parents in this new destination of Mexican immigration? How are the young adult men and women of this emerging second generation deploying key human capital characteristics that differentiate them from their parents—notably formal education and bilingualism—to chart their own occupational trajectories? How does gender shape these trajectories and with what consequences?

We concentrate on the effects of gender and bilingualism on the different employment trajectories of second-generation males and females. Despite similar socio-economic backgrounds, the labor market experiences of these women and men quickly bifurcate. In Dalton, young adults traverse clearly gendered paths that channel females into services, and men, largely but not exclusively, into the industrial world of carpet manufacturing. The distinct structure of opportunities that these young adults face is the result of multiple global and local societal transformations. While the growth of services offers an array of “pink-collar” job opportunities to women, the new immigration and the “Mexicanization” of the carpet mills positions second-generation males as the ideal supervisors and production floor leaders. We also show how in these gender-structured contexts, bilingual skills and other human capital assets acquire different meanings and possibilities.

The article is divided into five sections. We begin by laying out a framework that brings together the concepts and major findings of the second-generation literature with studies on schooling, gender, and labor market incorporation. In the second section, we contextualize Mexican migration to Dalton and important trends and changes in its carpet manufacturing industry, the primary source of employment for immigrants in northwest Georgia. We then turn to the discussion of our methods of data collection. Our findings analyze and contrast the occupational profiles of immigrant parents in Dalton vis-à-vis their children; we then compare the occupational experiences of the men and women of the second generation. The concluding section discusses the findings in light of the recent downturn of the carpet industry and the rise of alternative sources of employment for these young adults.

Assimilation Prospects for the Second Generation

Researchers have identified several barriers to the long-term socio-economic success of the children of Mexican immigrants in the United States, including the population's lower than average educational attainment levels, xenophobia, and deindustrialization (Farley and Alba 2002). Proponents of the theory of "segmented assimilation" predict that a large portion of the Mexican second generation will experience downward mobility, doing worse socio-economically than their immigrant parents (Portes and Rumbaut 2001). Other researchers find reason for "cautious optimism," underscoring the improved school completion levels of the offspring of Mexican immigrants with respect to parents (Alba and Nee 2003: 246). Such scholars anticipate that second-generation Mexicans are likely to undergo "lateral," or "horizontal" mobility and obtain working-class jobs similar to those of their parents (Waldinger, Lim and Cort 2007). Still others argue that the children of Mexican immigrants will experience "upward" mobility, but that it will be delayed relative to other immigrant-origin groups (Bean and Stevens 2003).

Certain circumstances may differentially influence the educational and occupational trajectories of male and female second-generation young adults. Scholars point to gender role socialization, both at school and within the family, as an important factor shaping the academic and work ambitions and outcomes of male and female children of immigrants as well as young adults more generally (Foner 2000; Grasmuck and Pessar 1991; Menjivar 2000; Waters 1999). As femininity is often associated with obedient behavior and masculinity with deviance, adherence to gender norms within educational settings can ultimately promote women's academic performance (Mickelson 1989).

Gender role socialization within immigrant families in particular can reinforce the gender role socialization occurring at school. Paradoxically, if not surprisingly, a pattern of adherence to traditional gender roles within immigrant families, such as expecting better behavior of girls and structuring and monitoring their actions closely, can result in girls' higher educational achievement with respect to boys (Zhou and Bankston 2001). Indeed, in recent decades, women in the United States of both native and immigrant parentage have outperformed men in educational attainment and achievement (Feliciano and Rumbaut 2005; Kao and Tienda 1995; Mickelson 1989; Snyder, Dillow and Hoffman 2009). Moreover,

many immigrant parents come from patriarchal societies that offer few school and work opportunities for women. As such, the female second generation's educational and employment experiences often depart significantly from those of their immigrant mothers (Lopez 2003).

The impact of gender role socialization in schools and within the family carries over to work ambitions, with scholars suggesting that consciously or not, boys and girls in the United States are socialized from childhood to be oriented towards jobs that are deemed appropriate for their gender (Kimmel 2000; Padavic and Reskin 2002). This finding holds for studies of boy and girl children of immigrants specifically (Espiritu 2003; Valenzuela 1999). In general, societies tend to label occupations as more fitting for either males or females, and in general, what is deemed "women's work" tends to be devalued with respect to "men's work." As a result, even if men and women end up in the same occupations, their paths into those careers are often quite different (Greene and DeBacker 2004).

Scholars have documented a positive correlation between high achievement and attainment in the educational arena and subsequent success in the work world among the children of immigrants (Lopez 2003). For both men and women of the immigrant second generation, educational ambitions and choices are intertwined with career ambitions and choices. However, gendered school and home experiences combine with structural changes in the American economy to produce divergent economic contexts and job possibilities for male and female second-generation young adults as they exit the educational system and enter the world of work. Specifically, working-class second-generation young adult males encounter a potentially disastrous set of circumstances that places them at risk of joblessness. While "the manual workplace...provided [an] outlet for the elaboration of a masculine identity" for many working-class men in the past, the availability of blue-collar jobs has diminished in the post-industrial economy (Waldinger and Feliciano 2004: 381).

In contrast, young women of a similar background encounter a more advantageous employment scenario, with the shift to a service economy that requires "a friendlier, more feminine presentation of self" (ibid.). While blue-collar jobs have dwindled, the number of "pink-collar" clerical roles has increased. The "apparent femininity" (ibid.) of schools, which favors the good behavior and obedience of

girls, also reinforces the skills necessary in a service economy. Moreover, the jobs that require college degrees in today's post-industrial service economy are occupations that have historically been considered women's work, while those that require minimal training have been regarded as men's work (Lopez 2003).

Although the maintenance of traditional gender roles in schools and within immigrant families does not always promote girls' educational and occupational success, the "gendered construction of social capital" has cumulative consequences that tend to be conducive to the upward mobility of second-generation females (Smith 2002: 121). In particular, there is likely to be more intergenerational mobility between second-generation daughters and their immigrant mothers than between second-generation sons and their immigrant fathers because "gender differences in economic activity are usually greater among the immigrants than among the native-born" (Waldinger and Feliciano 2004: 382). However, the import of the higher educational attainment of second-generation women vis-à-vis their mothers may be somewhat diminished since, within the general U.S. population, high educational attainment is often not converted into high occupational outcomes to the same extent for women as for men (Mickelson 1989).

Despite clear gender differences in the way male and female children of immigrants accumulate human and social capital, few studies on second-generation Mexicans in particular have included a gender component in their analyses of upward mobility prospects (but see Smith 2002, 2006; Blair and Cobas 2006). Similar to other ethnic groups, the female children of Mexican immigrants tend to complete more years of school and earn better grades than second-generation Mexican males (Camarrota 2004; Feliciano and Rumbaut 2005; Gandara 1995; Waldinger and Feliciano 2004). Smith (2002) suggested that Mexican American females in New York tend to do better in school and obtain better jobs than their male counterparts because of how their gender interacts with their ethnicity at home, at school, at work, and in the communities where they live.

Research on mobility among the Mexican-origin population has begun to examine how bilingualism may differentially affect the status attainment of women and men. In particular, researchers have evaluated the gendered acquisition of linguistic capital in immigrant families and its subsequent

deployment in socioeconomic pursuits. Early work by Portes and Schauffler (1994) positioned daughters in immigrant families as more likely to retain their parents' native language over time and become fully bilingual as they aged. Subsequent qualitative work by Vasquez et al. (1994) found that among Mexican-origin families, daughters tended to become parents' trusted translators, acting as "cultural brokers" who mediated between immigrant parents and the wider community. Similarly, Valenzuela (1999) found that female children of Mexican immigrants were more likely than boys to serve as translators and advocates for their parents in American institutional settings, helping them develop the "soft skills" (Moss and Tilly 1996) that have high economic return in a service economy (see also Orellana 2009). In turn, utilizing quantitative data, Blair and Cobas (2006) found that among bilingual Latinos across the country, females garnered more positive benefits from language use and ability developed within the family context than males as they applied linguistic capital to their educational and occupational mobility pursuits. However, recent studies of socially mobile Latinas employed in professional occupations have found that their Spanish-language ability was stigmatized in the white-collar work site (Agius Vallejo 2009; Flores 2011). This suggests that the extent to which bilingual capital boosts mobility may hinge on job type and social class as well as race and gender.

The Mexican second generation is now making the transition from the classroom to the workplace (Zhou 2001). This transition is resulting in a burgeoning body of literature on the post-secondary and occupational trajectories of children of immigrants. Important recent contributions (e.g., Kasinitz et al. 2008; Smith 2003) have evaluated second-generation occupational experiences primarily using large sets of quantitative data on mobility outcomes, but have not adequately interrogated how gender socialization and norms may have influenced the results they report on. Our study departs from theirs, and others, by employing nuanced, qualitative findings about second-generation Mexicans' employment choices in early adulthood, giving much-needed attention to the gendered processes that shape their work choices and their subsequent work experiences. In addition, our study distinguishes itself from other recent analyses of second-generation occupational outcomes by investigating these issues in a non-traditional immigrant destination in the southern United States. To date, few scholars have

had the opportunity to specifically examine the employment experiences of young adult children of post-1965 Mexican immigrants who are coming of age in this distinct context.

Context

Home to the largest carpet manufacturers in the United States, Dalton saw its Latino population grow exponentially in the 1990s. A combination of factors attracted Latinos to this small city. Chief among them was the draw of plentiful employment opportunities in Dalton's carpet mills and the surrounding region. Known as the "Carpet Capital of the World," Dalton and a five county area in northwest Georgia boast the largest cluster of carpet and rug manufacturing in the United States. In fact, ninety percent of all carpets produced in the United States are manufactured in the region (Carpet and Rug Institute 2007).

Employment in carpet manufacturing in the state of Georgia expanded by nearly twenty-four percent between 1990 and 2000 (see Table 1). During this period of expansion, a seemingly endless demand for low-skilled labor in this industry attracted thousands of Mexican and Central American immigrants as well as a small numbers of U.S.-born Latinos. By 2000, Latinos had established a niche in Georgia's carpet and rug manufacturing, becoming more than seventeen percent of the workforce (Ruggles et al. 2010). The dramatic increase in the number of Latino workers does not appear to have occurred through the outright displacement of other ethno-racial groups. Instead, Latinos seem to have captured the lion's share of additional jobs created over the decade through dynamics that combined ethnic opportunity hoarding and evolving employer preference for immigrant labor. Latinos held firm and even expanded their presence in carpet manufacturing in Georgia throughout the recession of the late 2000s, becoming more than one quarter of this industry's labor force by 2010 (see Table 1). National figures for employment in carpet manufacturing paralleled Georgia's numbers. In 1994, Latinos were only 6.3 percent of the carpet manufacturing labor force nationally. By 2000, Latinos were more than sixteen percent of the U.S. carpet workforce (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2012).

[Table 1 about here]

Strong demand for their labor and a low cost of living enabled immigrants to reunify their families in Dalton, leaving behind saturated historical destinations in the aftermath of the Immigration

Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986. IRCA granted legal status to 2.3 million previously unauthorized Mexican immigrants living in the United States. After a first wave of pioneer male migrants arrived in Dalton in the late 1980s and early 1990s, chiefly from California, Texas, Illinois, and Florida, women and children followed suit, moving directly from Mexico and other Latin American countries. Many of these women joined their spouses in the carpet mills of northwest Georgia, a fact attested to by the data collected for this project as well as previous studies conducted in Dalton. In their 1997-1998 survey of Mexican immigrant parents in Dalton, Hernández-León and Zúñiga (2000) found that fifty-five percent of female respondents were employed, chiefly as shop floor operatives in the making of carpets and rugs (see also Hernández-León and Zúñiga 2005; Zúñiga and Hernández-León 2009).

However, during the following decade, two recessions as well as long-term trends in the carpet industry began to change the conditions that drew immigrants to Dalton. The recession of 2008-2010, a full-blown crisis of the American economy, drastically reduced construction of new homes and commercial projects and consequently lowered demand for carpets. National employment figures for this industry illustrate the devastating effect of the crisis on carpet manufacturing. While in 2004 this industry employed 100 thousand workers, by 2009 this number had sharply declined to only forty-five thousand. By 2011, the number of workers employed in the industry rose to fifty-two thousand, indicating that a modest recovery was occurring in carpet manufacturing (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2012). (1)

But the fact that the decline in employment levels started well before the height of the crisis in 2009 suggests that additional circumstances were also at play. During the early part of the decade, a wave of consolidation and acquisitions swept the industry. Changes in consumer taste have also led to lower demand for wall-to-wall carpet as real-estate developers and homeowners increasingly prefer tile, hardwood, and laminate floor coverings (Patton 2010). Data from the Dalton-Murray Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) show that throughout the decade, carpet manufacturing was no longer the engine of growth and job creation that it once was. In fact, the industry was not only hiring fewer new workers but also shedding employees. Between 2000 and 2008, a net of 3,226 carpet industry jobs had been lost in the Dalton-Murray MSA (U.S. Census 2009). Moreover, in 2009, the sole poultry processing plant in

town closed its doors, laying off a largely immigrant workforce of about 300 people. That year, the official unemployment rate in Dalton surpassed the thirteen percent mark, making it the highest in the state of Georgia (Lazenby 2009).

Despite these worsening economic conditions and their potential deflection of fresh flows of immigrants, it is clear that twenty years after it began in earnest, Mexican immigration changed the face of this southern locale. For instance, many of the city schools became majority minority during the 2000 decade as the enrollment of children of immigrants outpaced any other group. As Dalton's industrial elite cohesively welcomed the arrival of newcomers, local schools reluctantly implemented programs to address the growing presence of immigrant-origin children (Hernández-León and Zúñiga 2005). By the second part of the decade, a growing number of 1.5- and second-generation immigrants were entering the labor market in Dalton and starting their occupational careers in the midst of a recession. Even though the carpet industry is unlikely to disappear anytime soon, many of our interviewees forecasted that local manufacturing will not regain its pre-recession capacity to generate jobs. While carpet manufacturing played a crucial role in the structuring of immigrants' labor market opportunities, this industry might be significantly less influential in configuring the occupational careers of Dalton's Mexican second generation.

Methods

The present paper is part and parcel of an extended case study of Dalton, Georgia, a new destination of Mexican and Latino migration in the U.S. South. The larger study started in early 1997, analyzing migratory trajectories and labor market incorporation of newcomers, and has progressively moved to other areas, including the second generation. This paper draws primarily from fifty-eight in-depth interviews with 1.5 and second-generation Mexican young adults conducted by one of the authors during 2008-2009 in Dalton. Our sample is composed of thirty-two female and twenty-six male 1.5- and second-generation Mexican young adults. The "second-generation" respondents were children of Mexican immigrants who were born and raised in the United States; the vast majority of second-generation informants were born in California but raised in Georgia, relocating to Dalton with their families in the

1980s and 1990s (see Table 2). The “1.5-generation” respondents were born in Mexico but underwent major socialization in the United States, having moved to the country by age fifteen. Despite respondents’ varying place of birth, we refer to both second- and 1.5-generation young adults in this study as “second-generation” because our fieldwork indicated that many of their educational, linguistic and occupational experiences were similar. All respondents were between the ages of eighteen and thirty-six at the time of interview, and most were employed full-time in Dalton’s local labor market. Focusing on Mexican American young adults during their early employment careers, we aimed to find interviewees with approximately ten years of work experience.

[Table 2 about here]

We located respondents in Dalton through a variety of channels, connecting with initial participants through contacts from prior research and three local non-profit organizations dedicated to educational and community initiatives. We utilized a strategic snowball sampling approach to identify subsequent respondents, meaning that although informants were not randomly selected, we recruited participants across multiple network chains to maximize the diversity of our sample. Respondents included in the sample varied along demographic and socioeconomic characteristics such as age, levels of education, types of jobs and employment sectors, and earnings, both at the initial and current points of their occupational careers. Interviews were conducted at public places such as cafes and restaurants in Dalton, or at respondents’ homes. Brief telephone follow-up interviews were conducted with all willing respondents in early 2010.

We collected demographic data and occupational profiles on all respondents and their parents using a semi-structured interview instrument. The interviews included in-depth information on educational and employment histories, ethnic identity, and intergroup relations at the workplace and school. Respondents were initially asked the same set of questions, but follow-up queries varied depending on informants’ answers. Interviews averaged approximately 1.5 hours in length, and were tape-recorded. Interviews were conducted primarily in English, although respondents occasionally injected Spanish words. After the interviews were completed and transcribed, both authors performed

data coding and analysis along thematic findings such as occupational change, intergenerational mobility, gendered mobility pathways, and discrimination. Our analysis of the data is also informed by ethnographic observations and additional interviews we conducted during six trips made to Dalton between 2008 and 2011. We attended family gatherings, visited the local college many attended, observed second-generation informants at their jobs, and toured a carpet mill where an interviewee worked. During these field trips, we also interviewed teachers, school counselors, job recruiters, college professors, and business leaders.

Findings

The occupational profile of the immigrant generation

The mothers and fathers of the fifty-eight interviewees are overwhelmingly employed as production floor operatives in the carpet industry, feeding and operating the machines used to manufacture rugs and carpets. In the mills that dot the region's landscape, these parents work as extruders, creelers, and tufters; they attach labels, wrap, and prepare samples of the product. Most of these jobs are labor intensive and occupy the lower echelons of the internal mobility ladder of the carpet industry. We do not find substantial gender segregation in these occupations. (2) Both men and women perform jobs such as creeling, which involves lifting heavy rolls of yarn to feed the tufting machines. There is one glaring exception to this observation: very few women in these mills work as lift truck operators, a job that entails driving a fork lift used to move large rolls of carpet and heavy objects in the warehouses and other sections of the plant. Many more fathers than mothers are in charge of operating lift trucks, a task that is better paid, and considered more skilled and less labor intensive than, for example, creeling.

Another important characteristic of our respondents' parents is the high level of labor market incorporation of mothers. The majority of informants' mothers were employed full-time and only a handful of them (eight in the entire sample) were homemakers exclusively. At the time of data collection, about sixty percent of our respondents' mothers were working in the carpet industry. These trends are consistent with early findings of an extended case study of Dalton, which also reported high levels of

labor force participation among Mexican immigrant women and identified carpet manufacturing as their most important labor activity (Hernández-León and Zúñiga 2000).

The employment patterns of the second generation

The children of immigrants interviewed for this study began their employment trajectories at an early age—sixteen for both women and men—while still attending high school (see Table 2). They often labored in entry level jobs as cashiers, waiters, and bussers, and earned wages that ranged between \$5.50/hour and \$7.50/hour. As members of working-class households, many of these young adults sought employment early in their lives, compelled not only by the economic circumstances of their families but also by an ideology that values work and obligation to family, sometimes to the detriment of educational success. Although some of our interviewees cited parental advice that weighed on the side of staying in and performing well in school, many others relayed unspoken familial pressure to contribute to the well-being of the family and lessen one’s economic burden on parents. As a twenty-four year-old woman explained, “a lot of our culture here is you go to work and you help your parents...you find a way to earn money... [Y]ou see your parents working hard at these mills, and you’d rather earn your own money.”

Once high school was completed, the children of Mexican immigrants entered full time jobs. Several employment avenues were available to these young adults. The most predictable would be to follow their parents into the carpet industry, where they could earn upwards of \$15.00/hour or twice what they were making in entry-level service jobs. But less than one fifth of our respondents selected that occupational track. Most opted to skip the lower rungs of the industrial ladder, and avoided carpet manufacturing altogether. They could do so in part because they possessed higher levels of human capital than their parents. The overwhelming majority had completed high school and most had attended post-secondary educational institutions with no significant differences between 1.5 and second generation members. All our interviewees were proficient English (and Spanish) speakers and were fully socialized in and familiar with U.S. institutions. Their careers already reflected a pattern of modest but consistent mobility. With less than ten years of labor market experience, on average, almost all of them had moved up to better jobs as employees at insurance firms and banks, and supervisors, trainers, and white-collar

staff at manufacturing plants. These posts paid significantly higher wages than their initial teenage jobs. In sum, the members of the Mexican second generation in Dalton were not only charting a different occupational path in comparison to their parents, but were also moving ahead, albeit in a gradual manner, during their first decade of labor market incorporation.

Gender and the occupational careers of the second generation

Nearly a decade into their employment careers, the occupational paths of the Mexican second generation diverge substantially, along gender lines, on one fundamental point: whether individuals resort to employment in the carpet industry. The contrast could not be starker. While second-generation men were consistently relying on carpet manufacturing for jobs in the various echelons of the industry's internal mobility ladder, many women appeared to purposefully avoid the mills—a fact worth noting because the mothers of both male and female interviewees were often employed in the plants. While half of the male respondents were working in the carpet industry at the time we conducted the interviews, only two of their female counterparts were employed in this sector. Similarly, whereas three-fourths of our male sub-sample has ever worked in the carpet mills, less than a third of the female respondents have ever been employed in an industry job (see Table 2). At the same time that they have sidestepped carpet manufacturing, women appear firmly ensconced in retail and services, female-dominant sectors in which they work as health aides, insurance agents, and sales associates. We argue that gender in interaction with generation, education, and workplace discrimination account for the observed outcomes.

The early stages of the women's occupational histories reflect the dual feminization of schools and distinct jobs and sectors of the economy. Our data indicates that females have been more successful in school than their male counterparts. While only three women dropped out of high school and got their General Education Development (GED) diplomas a few months or years later, eight of our male sub-sample dropped out or did not finish high school. Only one of these men managed to obtain a GED later on. More significant differences emerge when we consider the number of respondents who have completed at least one semester of college education. Here, women and men stand in sharp contrast. While twenty-eight of our thirty-two female respondents have finished one semester's worth of

coursework at a higher education institution, only twelve, or fewer than half of the men, meet this criterion.

Second-generation women were particularly adamant about avoiding the production floor of carpet mills, a setting they repeatedly associated with stress, intense competition, and even sexual harassment. Painful experiences of sexual harassment and gender discrimination from male supervisors motivated Estela to leave the carpet industry in search of a white-collar job. According to Estela, when she became pregnant, “all hell broke loose.” The supervisor, who had previously insisted on having lunch with her,

[P]ut me back at creeler, which was heavy for me since I was pregnant. So, I went to the doctor and he said, “You shouldn’t be doing that.” I took [to my supervisor the doctor’s] note and he said, “Well, if you don’t do your job, then I am going to have to fire you.” He wouldn’t put me back [on light duty] as a mender, so he fired me.

Recalling these experiences, Estela remembered telling her husband: “I refuse to work at a carpet mill!” After earning her GED and completing some college education, she became an insurance agent.

Another second generation female, Roberta, described the atmosphere at one of the largest carpet manufacturing companies in Dalton and commented on its potential effects on marital relations:

At Carpetland [fictitious name], I liked my job there, but I didn’t like the environment. I don’t know if you’ve heard this from other people, but the environment is just...it’s really negative. You go in there married and you come out divorced. There’s so much of that going on in there because it’s a plant and that’s just what it is, a bad reputation, so you keep to yourself, you work, and that’s all you do in those kinds of plants...I was there because I had to be. (3)

First-generation women who had experienced occupational mobility at the mills also faced adverse gender and ethnic interactions. Referencing the hostile reactions her immigrant mother had received from male colleagues in her job as a specialized technician at a carpet plant, a second-generation interviewee named Maria stated: “The men don’t like the women [that] are moving up in there and especially a woman that’s Hispanic and that tells them what to do, and they try to make problems.”

As our data indicates, second-generation women were present on the production floor of the carpet plants, albeit in small numbers. Their overall strategy was to seize opportunities to move out of this setting and into the office jobs offered by carpet companies. For example, Monica, a safety facilitator in one of the largest carpet manufacturing companies in town, assessed her current white-collar job positively because it allowed her to stay out of the production process, remarking that “[all] I know is that I’m off the floor right now, so that’s good.”

Similarly, Fernanda described her reasons for and the process of moving from the shop floor to the office after having recently obtained a position as an industrial safety specialist:

[I was] a tufting machine operator... making like \$14.37 an hour. It’s not too bad, but it’s a lot of stress, it’s a lot of machinery, it’s a lot of noise, the environment...it’s hot in there in the summertime. It’s not cold and it’s not raining on you in the wintertime, but it’s still not pleasant, and I knew that for someone being bilingual and having a high school education, I was capable of more than that. So I went back to college...and it kind of boosted my confidence, and they have job openings within the plant. You can move within the office, and an opening came up for this position... I like [that] I’m not on the floor anymore. I like that I’m in air conditioning. I’m in an office.

Finally, women also appeared more likely than their male counterparts to make employment decisions on the basis of job satisfaction and the quality of workplace relations, even if at times such strategizing meant sacrificing wages and other markers of mobility. Female interviewees often spoke of changing jobs and taking pay cuts in search of a better work environment. In explaining her switch to a lower paying job as a customer service representative from a post at a call center of a large telephone company that, in her words, forced employees to “sell hard,” Elsa cited her preference for “a more relaxed environment” in which the new employer was “family oriented” and “if you’re late they are not gonna write you up or something like that... If you need days off, they work with you on that.” Another respondent, Graciela, a 24 year-old receptionist at a medical office, cited the “hectic” pace of her job and the lack of support from co-workers as reasons to search for a position elsewhere.

In contrast with their female counterparts, second-generation men not only turned to carpet manufacturing as a steady source of employment, but they also evaluated their jobs in the industry in terms of wages and the mobility opportunities they offered rather than on the quality of the work environment. Two interrelated contextual factors help make sense of men's persistent reliance on industrial jobs: 1) the availability of a plentiful segment of low-level production jobs with minimal educational barriers to entry; and 2) the existence of internal mobility ladders, particularly in the largest carpet manufacturing companies. Second-generation men could rapidly move up the carpet industry's socio-economic ladder and into posts as supervisors, trainers, and quality control inspectors, which, while not removing them entirely from the shop floor, offered higher salaries than the jobs many took at the outset of their employment careers. Men's intermediary posts in the carpet industry also provided higher salaries than women's service sector jobs, on average. Access to these jobs afforded men a median wage of \$13.50/hour, which was substantially more than the median salary of \$11.00/hour women earned in service jobs.

As the case of Javier illustrates, the "rough" (ideologically masculine) world of the shop floor with its intense heat and noise offered men opportunities to prove to managers that they could take on other responsibilities. He started at a carpet mill as a forklift driver, a position often taken by immigrants and a job for which he was probably overqualified. According to Javier,

Any opportunity that was offered, any kind of job, I took it. I was a driver, I was running tables.

I could cut the carpet. I learned a little bit of wrapping... Any job they offered, I picked it up and

I went into it, and even to the hardest job as maintaining the machines that nobody wants.

Javier saw each job, however laborious or mundane, as a stepping-stone to his desired position as a trainer, a job that in effect straddled the production floor and office work:

They're [the supervisors] asking, "Why are you doing that job? Why? Why? Why?" There's a catch, because it's going to open the door for me and next thing you know...what I wanted in the beginning was to be a trainer...I'm a trainer. It was open and I had already all these credit

records on me that I did this much, I knew how to do this, I knew how to do that, and I got it, and I was there [on the production floor] less than a year.

The case of Esteban, a thirty-two year-old supervisor at a carpet plant, whose very first job ever was as a creeler, exemplifies how men viewed and sought to take advantage of the internal mobility within the industry:

I think there is a better chance of growing in a carpet mill than it is out there, and I have met a bunch of people that do that, and a lot of times the company even provides school for them or gives them the training for whatever job they're going to need, or they could even get like a scholarship to go to college and study a career that is going to help them at the company. So I've been thinking about it and if I was to go back to school, I'd probably do it through the company. That way I could go a little bit higher than where I am.

Gender and language at work

Second-generation men have assumed supervisory roles by seizing the opportunities opened by another transformation of the industry: the presence of a sizable Spanish-speaking workforce. In this context, the bilingual skills of our male interviewees were functional to the needs of managers who were now overseeing carpet plants that had become overwhelmingly Latino. These adult children of immigrants broke ground in their respective workplaces as part of a first cohort of Latino supervisors, crew leaders, and trainers who could translate manuals and instructions, interpret for white managers, and be in positions of authority in relation to fellow co-ethnics.

The experience of Carlos, a 19 year-old male born in California, provides a case in point. Employed at the warehouse of a carpet company, he recounted how one day his bosses told him, "Carlos, you're about the only bilingual we have here. You are now important to us. We're gonna make you into a shipping clerk and we're gonna hand you in charge of the shipping and the crew."

But as Morando (Forthcoming) has argued, by marketing their bilingual skills to English monolingual managers, second-generation men also placed themselves in the midst of both class and racial cleavages. Bilingual supervisors and trainers had to bridge the demands of a predominantly white

managerial class constantly looking for ways to increase worker productivity, on the one hand, and fellow Latino operatives seeking to limit physical exertion and possible injuries, on the other. In doing so, second-generation males were becoming what Lopez-Sanders (2010) has called “embedded brokers,” namely, bilingual co-ethnics charged with both mediating relations between workers and employers and using their authority to socialize employees about the aims and norms of the company (see also Hagan, Lowe and Iskander 2010). Esteban described the tensions and divided loyalty dilemmas that accompanied the use of his bilingual skills to supervise co-ethnics:

Well, it’s just a little stressful. I mean, you’re kind of in the middle. You have your bosses that are asking you for production, efficiencies, and quality, and they’re pushing you so you have to push the people, and sometimes the people don’t understand or they don’t want to understand, so that makes it a little bit harder. We have the most expensive designs, so my bosses expect a lot from us, so we need to have high expectations from our employees too.

These tensions also derived in challenges to the authority of second-generation supervisors on the shop floor. Carlos explained how an immigrant co-ethnic ignored his orders and even questioned his right to fire him.

The first [worker] I had to fire was a 48 year-old man. 'Cause he just refused to listen to me. So, it took me two days to fire him. And he just said, "I'm fired?" I go, "Yes." [He said], "You're not firin' me. I want the real boss to fire me." I go, "Who's that?" [He replied] "I want *el güero* [the American] to fire me, not you."

The pressures and conflicts that these bilingual brokers face when overseeing co-ethnics have been heightened in the midst of the recent recession and simultaneous decline of the carpet industry. As reported in follow-up phone interviews conducted in 2010 with respondents employed in supervisory jobs, economic uncertainty has prompted many plant managers to downsize their carpet production workforces while simultaneously forcing remaining employees to run several machines at once.

In addition to gender, language, and education, the willingness of second-generation men to take on authority roles and conflict-ridden supervisory positions is also explained by their generational

position. In short, these men are able to seize opportunities for upward mobility and deal with the potential loyalty trade-offs mentioned above because they are less dependent on tightly-knit and homogeneous social networks than their immigrant subordinates (and, by extension, their parents). The testimony of bank teller Veronica regarding the experiences of her bilingual immigrant father in the carpet industry speaks, albeit indirectly, to our claim:

Because [my father] was fluent in both languages, he was the one that would translate during the meetings. I guess [management] gave him the job of the supervisor, but he never wanted to take the supervisor job [because] he didn't want to go above his other Spanish-speaking co-workers. He wanted to be [at] the same [level].

Second-generation women also banked on their bilingual skills to obtain jobs and promotions, giving them a competitive edge over monolingual job seekers. Like Nora, a twenty-five year-old insurance agent, many of them bluntly asserted: "if I wouldn't have been bilingual, they wouldn't have hired me here." But with female respondents holding jobs largely concentrated in services and retail, it became clear that the skill of bilingualism had an entirely different function and value for the women in our sample than it did for the men. Our interviews with female informants suggest that their bilingual skills were being used by employers to support broadening a customer base with a growing Spanish-speaking clientele. This "how can I help you?" type of bilingualism was altogether a friendlier and subordinated use of their linguistic capital compared to the men's more authoritative and contentious one. Clara describes how she used her bilingual skills as a sales employee at a beauty supply store:

I would speak Spanish and English, yes. Because we'd have Hispanic customers and they wouldn't speak English. Sometimes...[t]he white people could understand what they would say, but sometimes it's more specific things and words that don't sound like they do in English and Spanish. And that's when we would come and help out.

Women who were employed in settings where clients' access to service in Spanish and customer satisfaction were paramount described receiving affirmative praise from bosses. However, they also reported how their superiors imposed clear limits on the use of Spanish in the workplace. Hired as a bank

teller because of her dual language skills, Linda explained that managers asked bilingual employees not to use Spanish in front of co-workers who did not speak this language since “they don’t know if we are talking about them or not.” In addition, she described how her supervisor required her to follow a strict protocol with Hispanic customers, greeting them in English first and addressing them in Spanish only when they explicitly communicated in this language. According to Linda, her boss thought that this would “educate our Spanish” speakers by “encourag[ing] them to speak English.”

Although they enjoyed helping fellow co-ethnics and felt their language skills were important to the success of the firms they worked at, second-generation women also recounted tensions with English-speaking customers who seemingly avoided them because they spoke Spanish.

Conclusion

We have analyzed the occupational experiences of the children of Mexican immigrants during the early stages of their labor market participation, a period in which individuals identify employment opportunities, acquire work experience, and engage pathways that might allow or thwart subsequent mobility. Because our study examines a limited time and geography - the first ten years of labor market incorporation in one locale - we cannot make definitive predictions about the long-term mobility outcomes of the Mexican second generation. Instead, this article shows the complex roles that gender, bilingualism, education, and generation play in forging distinct opportunity structures for female and male members of the second generation in a new destination of Mexican immigration.

Our findings suggest that in Dalton, Georgia, a small city long dominated by carpet manufacturing, the children of Mexican immigrants are not simply becoming a new cohort of mill workers. On the contrary, we observe key occupational differences between these young adults and their parents that point to the significant advancement of the second generation to better-paid and higher status jobs. In order to access such jobs, women and men draw from their human capital traits that clearly distinguish them from their immigrant parents, in particular formal education and bilingual skills. But the members of the *first* Mexican second generation to emerge in this southern locale are also taking advantage of a unique “strategic hole” no other cohort can fill. Unencumbered by competition from the multiple waves of bilingual co-

ethnics present in traditional gateways, the men and women of the pioneering second generation in this new destination derive distinct occupational opportunities from bridging between native and foreign populations.

However, the early occupational careers of our respondents reveal a noticeable and consequential bifurcation of employment alternatives along gender lines. While men bet on the mobility opportunities offered by the carpet industry, especially as bilingual supervisors, trainers, and crew leaders, women largely flock to the service and retail sectors. Our findings indicate that, as a social process, gender has actively shaped this bifurcated pathway, sorting and channeling women and men in different directions. The few second-generation females with experience in the mills sought to exit this sector, which they saw as fraught with stress, sexual harassment, and blocked mobility. We interpret that this discriminatory environment has effectively turned women away from supervisory positions, which de facto have become “men’s jobs.” Still, in traversing these gendered pathways, second-generation women have also exercised their own agency. In contrast with their mothers, whose limited human capital mostly restricts opportunities to the mills, second-generation women are able to pursue jobs in retail and services.

Second generation men have also departed significantly from their fathers’ occupational niches but have followed a different path from their female counterparts. They have seized jobs as supervisors and trainers, taking advantage of their bilingual skills and the internal mobility ladders offered by the carpet industry. In this context, men use their bilingualism to exercise authority and negotiate the tensions arising on the shop floor between a largely Spanish-speaking, Latino immigrant workforce and an English-monolingual, white managerial class. While women’s bilingual skills are similarly in demand, albeit in separate sectors, their dual language abilities take on a different function: to support employers’ efforts to attract Spanish-speaking customers.

What do these findings suggest about the mid- and long-term occupational and mobility prospects of the Mexican second generation in Dalton? Clearly, men have made real gains in terms of salary by assuming supervisory positions in carpet manufacturing, even beyond their female counterparts. But the decline of the industry in recent years might prove these gains to be short lived. Even though the

downsizing and closing of carpet mills are likely to affect immigrant operatives disproportionately, these trends are also likely to impact second-generation crew leaders, trainers, and inspectors. We do not forecast a doomsday scenario for second-generation males. But there is reason to ponder how these men will fare in a deindustrialized regional economy where opportunities in carpet manufacturing are not as readily available as they have been in the past and how successfully men will transition, if need be, from the industrial world to other employment sectors. In fact, some of our male respondents already spoke of transferring the skills acquired in supervisory positions in the mills to future jobs as police officers and nurses. For now, though, they remain firmly ensconced in the carpet industry. By comparison, second-generation females might be better prepared for the demands of a post-industrial local economy. Higher levels of formal education, as well as bilingual and customer-oriented service sector skills, some of which are by definition portable across jobs, are likely to be vital resources for women's future occupational careers.

Our findings make several contributions to theories of assimilation and the second generation. Despite well-documented barriers, some of the children of working-class immigrants attain occupational mobility. Theories should be able to predict and explain the paths to modest but steady mobility of this segment of the second generation. This study shows that a key factor in explaining occupational mobility is the second generation's bilingualism. The ability to communicate in the immigrant *and* the host population languages is a distinctive characteristic of the second generation that attests to the impact of international migration on subsequent birth cohorts. Theories of linguistic assimilation in particular have primarily focused on the disadvantages of immigrant-language retention and usage and have not adequately addressed how bilingualism may offer the second generation a critical resource to get ahead (López and Stanton-Salazar 2001; Jiménez 2008; Schneider et al. 2012). In certain contexts, bilingual men and women can take advantage of immigrant niching in occupations and industries to broker newcomers' relations in the workplace. In turn, as newcomers concentrate spatially and become a sizeable population of consumers, members of the second generation also facilitate immigrants' access to

the market of goods and services. Unrestrained by competition from other cohorts in new immigrant destinations, the members of the *first* second generation have these opportunities largely to themselves.

Our study also demonstrates that the opportunity structures and mobility outcomes of the Mexican second generation are gendered. Theories that address the assimilation and mobility of the second generation have not systematically considered gender as a cause of intra-group differentiation. These theories need to address how gender interacts with class, educational, and cultural resources to produce segmented paths of mobility for second-generation young adults, particularly as the post-1965 cohort of Mexican-origin children of immigrants enters the U.S. labor market in significant numbers (Zhou 2001). Assimilation theories have also mostly ignored how geographic and historical variations in economic conditions can open and close mobility opportunities to the children of immigrants. As we have shown, gender has the potential to interact with local economic contexts to sort male and female children of immigrants to distinct occupational and industrial ladders.

Notes

(1) By 2011, Latinos had increased their share of the national workforce employed in carpet manufacturing to nearly thirty-three percent. However, in the post-recession period, the total number of jobs in the industry nationwide had declined dramatically. Still, the number of Latinos employed in carpet manufacturing in the United States in 2000 as compared to 2011 increased by a figure of 4,233, from 12,719 to 16,952.

(2) By pointing out the absence of occupational segregation by gender among first-generation workers, we do not mean to suggest that other forms of segregation and discrimination are not present in the carpet mills.

(3) It is worth noting that female as well as male interviewees produced accounts referencing sexual harassment of and gender discrimination against women.

References

Agius Vallejo, Jody. 2009. "Latina Spaces: Middle-Class Ethnic Capital and Professional Associations in the Latino Community." *City and Community* 8(2):129-153.

- Alba, Richard, and Victor Nee. 2003. *Remaking the American Mainstream: Assimilation and Contemporary Immigration*. Harvard University Press.
- Bean, Frank D., and Gillian Stevens. 2003. *America's Newcomers and the Dynamics of Diversity*. Russell Sage Foundation.
- Blair, Sampson L., and Jose A. Cobas. 2006. "Gender Differences in Young Latino Adults' Status Attainment: Understanding Bilingualism in the Familial Context." *Family Relations* 55:292-305
- Cammarota, Julio. 2004. "The Gendered and Racialized Pathways of Latina and Latino Youth: Different Struggles, Different Resistances in the Urban Context." *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 35(1):53-74.
- Espiritu, Yen Le. 2003. *Home Bound: Filipino American Lives across Cultures, Communities, and Countries*. University of California Press.
- Farley, Reynolds, and Richard Alba. 2002. "The New Second Generation in the United States." *International Migration Review* 36(3):669-701.
- Feliciano, Cynthia, and Rubén G. Rumbaut. 2005. "Gendered Paths: Educational and Occupational Expectations and Outcomes among Adult Children of Immigrants." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28(6):1087-1118.
- Flores, Glenda M. 2011. "Racialized Tokens: Latina Teachers Negotiating, Surviving, and Thriving in a White Woman's Profession." *Qualitative Sociology* 34:313-335.
- Foner, Nancy. 2000. *From Ellis Island to JFK: New York's Two Great Waves of Immigration*. Yale University Press.
- Gandara, Patricia C. 1995. *Over the Ivy Walls: The Educational Mobility of Low-Income Chicanos*. State University of New York Press.
- Grasmuck, Sherri, and Patricia R. Pessar. 1991. *Between Two Islands: Dominican International Migration*. University of California Press.
- Greene, Barbara A., and Teresa K. DeBacker. 2004. "Gender and Orientations Toward the Future: Links to Motivation." *Educational Psychology Review* 16(2):91-120.

- Hagan, Jacqueline, Nichola Lowe, and Natasha Iskander. 2011. "Skills on the Move: Rethinking the Relationship Between Human Capital and Immigrant Economic Mobility." *Work and Occupations* 38(2): 149-178.
- Hernández-León, Rubén, and Víctor Zúñiga. 2000. "'Making Carpet by the Mile:' The Emergence of a Mexican Immigrant Community in an Industrial Region of the U.S. Historic South." *Social Science Quarterly* 81(1):49-66.
- Hernández-León, Rubén, and Víctor Zúñiga. 2005. "Appalachia Meets Aztlán: Mexican Immigration and Inter-Group Relations in Dalton, Georgia." *New Destinations: Mexican Immigration in the United States*. Pp. 244-73. Víctor Zúñiga and Rubén Hernández-León, editors. Russell Sage Foundation.
- Jiménez, Tomás R. 2008. "Mexican Immigrant Replenishment and the Continuing Significance of Ethnicity and Race." *American Journal of Sociology* 113:1527-1567.
- Kao, Grace, and Marta Tienda. 1995. "Optimism and Achievement: The Educational Performance of Immigrant Youth." *Social Science Quarterly* 76(1):1-19.
- Kasinitz, Philip, John H. Mollenkopf, Mary C. Waters, and Jennifer Holdaway. 2008. *Inheriting the City: The Children of Immigrants Come of Age*. Russell Sage Foundation.
- Kimmel, Michael S. 2000. *The Gendered Society*. Oxford University Press.
- Lazenby, Brian. 2009. "Closing of Pilgrim's Pride Dalton plant leads to 280 job losses."
<http://northgeorgia.timesfreepress.com/news/2009/apr/14/closing-pilgrims-pride-dalton-plant-leads-280-job-/>
- López, David and Ricardo D. Stanton-Salazar. 2001. "Mexican-Americans: A Generation at Risk." In *Ethnicities: Children of Immigrants in America*. Pp. 57-90. Rubén G. Rumbaut and Alejandro Portes, editors. University of California Press.
- Lopez, Nancy. 2003. *Hopeful Girls, Troubled Boys: Race and Gender Disparity in Urban Education*. Routledge.

- Lopez-Sanders, Laura. 2010. "Embedded and External Brokers: The Distinct Roles of Intermediaries in Immigrant Labor Market Incorporation." Unpublished manuscript.
- Marrow, Helen B. 2011. *New Destination Dreaming: Immigration, Race, and Legal Status in the Rural American South*. Stanford University Press.
- Menjívar, Cecilia. 2000. *Fragmented Ties: Salvadoran Immigrant Networks in America*. University of California Press.
- Mickelson, Roslyn A. 1989. "Why Does Jane Read and Write so Well? The Anomaly of Women's Achievement." *Sociology of Education* 62(1):47-63.
- Morando, Sarah J. Forthcoming. "Paths to Mobility: The Mexican Second Generation at Work in a New Destination." *The Sociological Quarterly*.
- Moss, Philip, and Chris Tilly. 1996. "'Soft' Skills and Race: An Investigation of Black Men's Employment Problems." *Work and Occupations* 23(3):252-76.
- Odem, Mary E., and Elaine Lacy (eds.). 2009. *Latino immigrants and the transformation of the U.S. South*. University of Georgia Press.
- Orellana, Marjorie F. 2009. *Translating Childhoods: Immigrant Youth, Language, and Culture*. Rutgers University Press.
- Padavic, Irene, and Barbara F. 2002. "Men's Behavior and Women's Interest in Blue Collar Jobs." *Social Problems* 37(4):613-28.
- Patton, Randall L. 2010. "A History of the U.S. Carpet Industry." Found at <http://eh.net/encyclopedia/article/patton.carpet>
- Portes, Alejandro, and Rubén G. Rumbaut. 2001. *Legacies: The Story of the Immigrant Second Generation*. University of California Press.
- Portes, Alejandro, and Richard Schaufliker. 1994. "Language and the Second Generation: Bilingualism Yesterday and Today." *International Migration Review* 28(4):640-661.
- Ruggles, Steven J., Trent Alexander, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Matthew B. Schroeder, and Matthew Sobek. 2010. Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 5.0 [Machine-readable

- database]. University of Minnesota. Data extracted on 01/18/2013 using the IPUMS SDA system, <http://usa.ipums.org/usa/sda/>.
- Schneider, Jens et al. 2012. "Belonging." *The Changing Face of World Cities: Young Adult Children of Immigrants in Europe and the United States*. Pp. 206-232. Maurice Crul and John Mollenkopf, editors. Russell Sage Foundation.
- Smith, James P. 2003. "Assimilation Across the Latino Generations." *American Economic Review* 93(2):315-19.
- Smith, Robert C. 2002. "Gender, Ethnicity, and Race in School and Work Outcomes of Second Generation Mexican Americans." *Latinos remaking America*. Pp. 110-25. Marcelo M. Suarez-Orozco and Mariela Páez, editors. University of California Press.
- Smith, Robert C. 2006. *Mexican New York: Transnational Lives of New Immigrants*. University of California Press.
- Snyder, Thomas D., Sally A. Dillow and Charlene M. Hoffman. 2009. *Digest of Education Statistics 2008* (NCES 2009-020). National Center for Education Statistics. Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Found at <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2009020>
- The Carpet and Rug Institute. 2007. *Carpet and Rug Industry Statistics*. Found at <http://www.carpet-rug.org/carpet-and-rug-industry/carpet-and-rug-industry-statistics.cfm>
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2012. *Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey*. Found at <http://www.bls.gov/cps/tables.htm#annual>.
- U.S. Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies. 2009. "Quarterly Workforce Indicators Online [NAICS]." Last revised: December 17, 2009. Found at <http://lehd.did.census.gov/led/datatools/qwiapp.html>
- Valenzuela, Jr., Abel. 1999. "Gender Roles and Settlement Activities among Children and their Immigrant Families." *American Behavioral Scientist* 42(4):720-42.

- Vasquez, Olga A., Lucinda Pease-Alvarez, Sheila M. Shannon, and Luis Moll. 1994. *Pushing at the Boundaries: Language Use and Culture in a Mexicano Community*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Waldinger, Roger, and Cynthia Feliciano. 2004. "Will the New Second Generation Experience 'Downward Assimilation'? Segmented Assimilation Re-Assessed." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 27(3):376-402.
- Waldinger, Roger, Nelson Lim and David Cort. 2007. "Bad Jobs, Good Jobs, no Jobs? The Employment Experience of the Mexican American Second Generation." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 33(1):1-35.
- Waldinger, Roger, and Joel Perlmann. 1998. "Second Generations: Past, Present, Future." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 24(1):5-20.
- Waters, Mary C. 1999. *Black Identities: West Indian Immigrant Dreams and American Realities*. Harvard University Press.
- Zhou, Min. 2001. "Progress, Decline, Stagnation? The New Second Generation Comes of Age." *Strangers at the Gates: New Immigrants in Urban America*. Pp. 272-307. Roger Waldinger, editor. University of California Press.
- Zhou, Min, and Carl L. 2001. "Family Pressure and the Educational Experience of the Daughters of Vietnamese Refugees." *International Migration* 39(4):133-51.
- Zúñiga, Víctor, and Rubén Hernández-Léon. 2009. "The Dalton Story: Mexican Immigration and Social Transformation in the Carpet Capital of the World." *Latino Immigrants and the Transformation of the U.S. South*. Pp. 34-50. Mary E. Odem and Elaine Lacy, editors. University of Georgia Press.

Tables

**Non-Hispanic White
(%)**

Non-Hispanic Black

Asian

Native American

Hispanic

Total

*This table excludes data on respondents who in 2000 identified as non-Hispanic "other race" (13) and non-Hispanic "two major races" (286). It also excludes data on respondents in 2010 who identified as non-Hispanic "two major races" (695); no respondents identified as non-Hispanic "other race" in 2010.

Source: Ruggles, Steven J., Trent Alexander, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Matthew Schroeder, and Matthew Sobek.

5.0 [Machine-readable database]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2010. Accessed on 01/18/2013 using the IPUMS SDA system, <http://usa.ipums.org/usa/sda/>.

Table 2. Demographic and Socio-Economic Characteristics of Second-Generation Mexican Respondents (Rounded percentages in parentheses)		
	Men (n = 26)	Women (n = 32)
Age range	18-33	18-36
Second generation / 1.5 generation	24 / 2 (92% / 8%)	21 / 11 (66% / 34%)
Second-generation birth place GA / CA / Other U.S. states	3 / 11 / 10 (12% / 46% / 42%)	4 / 10 / 7 (19% / 48% / 33%)
High school completed	18 (69%)	32 (100%)
Completion of at least one semester of college	12 (46%)	28 (88%)
Median wage in first job	\$7.00/hour	\$6.50/hour
Median wage at time of interview	\$13.50/hour	\$11.00/hour
Median years in labor market	9	8
Ever employed in carpet industry	20 (77%)	10 (31%)
Employed in carpet industry at time of interview	13 (50%)	2 (6%)

* Note: Wages not adjusted for inflation.