Factors Contributing to Youth Educational Continuance in Sector Ocotillo, San Pedro Sula, Honduras

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Abstract

This thesis examines the factors that contribute to educational continuance among youth. The literature abounds in theories emphasizing the relationship with human, social, and financial capital in increasing children’s educational continuance. Further studies delve into specific case studies, especially in developing countries. Nevertheless, this case study presents original data from two communities in Sector Ocotillo, located on the periphery of San Pedro Sula, Honduras. The researcher conducted interviews with seven families and seven public and private sector representatives in order to understand the circumstances and conditions that allow for nine youth to remain in school. An analysis of these interviews yields several findings: 1) as the literature suggests, socioeconomic status of the parents plays an important role; 2) child employment varies in outcome; 3) family disintegration can negatively affect continuance; and 4) external and school financial assistance make a dramatic difference in educational outcomes. This case study reveals the range of factors that affect youth and their ability to stay in school. Based on these findings, this thesis highlights the opportunities for further investigations to examine the role of certain social ties within the community that contribute to educational continuance.
# Table of Contents

Introduction .................................................................................................................. 5

Chapter 1: A Review of the Literature ........................................................................ 9

Chapter 2: Methodology .............................................................................................. 25

Chapter 3: Parents’ Attitudes and Background of Education .................................. 33

Chapter 4: Economic Factors .................................................................................... 55

Chapter 5: Community Factors .................................................................................. 71

Conclusion ................................................................................................................... 89

Bibliography ................................................................................................................ 91

Appendix I: Interview Script ...................................................................................... 101

Appendix II: Domestic Household Survey and Index ............................................. 107
Introduction

In five years I see myself…

“much older and a better person with more knowledge.”¹ (Fernando)
“working, finishing my studies and having a home.”² (Iris)
“with my degree in teaching and being able to create my own school.”³ (Grecia)
“directing my own tech development company … with a wife and children too.”⁴ (Josué)
“changing... being a Christian.”⁵ (Antonio)
“working in a company and in an office.”⁶ (Carlos)
“as a more-learned woman.”⁷ (Claudia)
“struggling in order for me to be able to move forward... having a beautiful family.”⁸ (Amado)
“working in cosmetology.”⁹ (Liset)

How are these seven youth able to make their dreams come true? Each young person acknowledges that education is “very important” in order to have a better life, for themselves and for their families. According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, education is “an investment that can help foster economic growth, contribute to personal and social development and reduce social inequality”¹⁰ by increasing one’s ‘human capital’, or one’s level of education including knowledge and skills.

These seven young people, ranging in ages from 16 to 20, understand, like most youth around the world, that education is critical for their future. Nevertheless, many of these young people will not finish their studies. Existing literature has investigated this topic at length, examining the social, economic, and political factors that prevent children from continuing their

¹ “más viejo y una persona mayor con más conocimientos” (Fernando, interview by author, January 6, 2013).
² “trabajando, terminando mis estudios y teniendo una casa” (Iris, interview by author, January 3, 2013).
³ “con mi título de maestría y poder hacer mi propia escuela” (Grecia, interview by author, December 28, 2012).
⁴ “dirigiendo mi propia empresa de tecnología… con una esposa y niños también” (Josué, interview by author, January 2, 2013).
⁵ “cambiando... ser cristiano” (Antonio, interview by author, December 27, 2012).
⁶ “trabajando en una empresa y en una oficina” (Carlos, interview by author, January 4, 2013).
⁷ “como una mujer más aprenedora” (Claudia, interview by author, January 4, 2013).
⁸ “luchando para yo poder ser seguir adelante” (Amado, interview by author, December 26, 2012).
⁹ “trabajando en belleza” (Liset, interview by author, December 26, 2012).
formal education. Over the past 40 years, the literature has expanded to include more of the developing world, reaching populations in remote, marginalized areas.

The case study presented in this paper examines a community in the periphery of San Pedro Sula, Honduras. Residents of Sector Ocotillo, which is close to the city’s garbage dump, suffer from extreme poverty and marginalization. Since 2007, Sector Ocotillo has witnessed an increasing presence of social programs and initiatives administered by both the municipality and by various private sector organizations. Nevertheless, studies within this community are few, focusing primarily on the child workers in the garbage dump. The seven youth of this case study see education as a mechanism to overcome poverty or at least improve their lives. So, I raise the question: under what conditions or circumstances are youth from Sector Ocotillo able to attain higher educational outcomes? This research will examine the factors that allow the youth in Sector Ocotillo to remain in school.

Chapter 1 begins with a review of the existing literature on educational continuance. Previous case studies from the developing world, in particular Latin America and the Caribbean, add to the existing theories providing a more thorough context to the interest of this paper. Following the literature review, the paper presents an overview of Sector Ocotillo in San Pedro Sula, Honduras. Chapter 2 describes the methodology of the case study, including information about the sample size, respondents’ descriptions, and data collection methods.

Chapter 3 examines the parents’ educational background and their attitudes regarding education as a determinant in keeping children in school. This chapter describes several factors, including parents’ education and involvement in their children’s lives, household composition, and parents’ aspirations for their children. Chapter 4 discusses the economic factors that contribute to educational continuance, including household income, parent and youth
employment, and other external factors. Chapter 5 looks at how community factors shape educational continuance. These factors include the role of certain schools, youth participation in government and non-government programs, and the effect of the neighborhood. This paper concludes with a summary of the factors that appear to have the greatest influence on educational continuance among the youth for this case study.
Chapter 1: A Review of the Literature

The Problem

Education in Latin America continues to be plagued with low educational continuance, high drop out rates, and high retention. Despite increased coverage and access to education, educational attainment, measured in the number of years completed in the formal education system, remains low. Figure 1 identifies the trends in educational attainment in Latin America, illustrating the consistently low, yet rising levels of educational attainment. According to a study conducted by Filmer and Pritchett, the average grade attainment in Latin America is between four and six years.

Figure 1: Educational Attainment Trends in the Latin America and Caribbean Region (in years of education)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population aged 25+</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>4.97</td>
<td>5.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population aged 15+</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>5.32</td>
<td>6.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Enrollment rates in primary education have increased between 1990 and 1996 from 84% to over 93% as of 2010 World Bank data. Secondary education has also experienced an increase in net enrollment rates from 37% in 1990-1996 to over 60% in 2002-2003. Latin

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America and the Caribbean are characterized as a region following a pattern of high enrollment and high early dropout.\textsuperscript{14}

High enrollment rates demonstrate the accessibility of primary schools throughout the region. Latin America finds itself capable of placing children in school; however, educational continuation remains one of the region’s most difficult tasks. Only ten percent of students who come from the poorest forty percent of Latin America reach the ninth grade and complete their primary education.\textsuperscript{15} Furthermore, only half of the students who graduate from primary school go on to complete secondary education.\textsuperscript{16}

Central America is less developed and experiences greater poverty than South America, and, therefore, experiences greater disadvantages in the educational systems. According to the Center for Global Development, Central America lies two years below the world average in years of schooling and the quality remains inadequate and deficient.\textsuperscript{17}

Low quality of education is a principal obstacle for children’s educational continuance, preventing them from reaching higher grade levels.\textsuperscript{18} Furthermore, youth may be less motivated to complete their studies, as a consequence primarily due to the low quality of the schools. In addition, given the high rates of unemployment, youth may be less motivated to continue their education because of the perceived minimal return on their education.\textsuperscript{19} On the other hand, not

\textsuperscript{15} Zoraida Portillo, “Latin America Gets Poor Marks,” \textit{InterPress World News Agency}, April 8, 1999, Educational and Regional sections.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{18} José Luis Guasch et al., “Competitiveness in Central America,” 35.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., 36.
completing secondary school hurts one’s employment prospects and makes difficult any opportunities for further studies, such as tertiary or other higher education.  

Honduras experiences great challenges in its educational system, suffering from low quality schools and low educational development – low composite measure of adult literacy and average years of schooling developed by UNDP. Honduras, one of the poorest in the Western Hemisphere, has over half of its population under the age of 19. Average educational attainment remains low with a slight increase in recent years from 5.1 years in 2005-2006 to 5.9 years in 2009. Inequality in education is observed in the average years of educational attainment among the poor, 4.9 years, and that of the rich, 10.2 years.

**Literature on Educational Continuance**

Given the data above on educational continuance in Latin America, and Honduras specifically, why do some young people stay in school while others drop out?

Research on family background and school factors and their relationship with educational attainment and achievement was initiated with two principal projects, the Coleman Report in the United States and the Plowden Report in Great Britain. The conclusion of these studies, and many subsequent investigations, determined that family background was a more important determinant than school factors in children’s educational attainment and achievement. This

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20 Ibid., 36.
23 Ibid., 13.
24 Ibid., 13.
literature expanded to the developing world with Stephen Heyneman’s “Coleman Report for a developing country”, in which the opposite conclusion was reached – school factors play a greater role in determining academic achievement, than do family factors. Further research concluded that, “the poorer the country, the greater the impact of school and teacher quality on achievement.”

Additionally, social capital theory, developed by James Coleman serves as one of the primary theories regarding the attainment of human capital, or education. Coleman presents the idea of investing in one’s self and one’s immediate social contexts, particularly the household, school, and neighborhood. One’s involvement in these social relationships, in return, generates social capital as a resource for improving oneself and his or her future opportunities. Coleman illustrates the impact of a child’s immediate family, other families and community institutions (like schools and churches) on educational attainment.

*Family Factors*

Although Heyneman’s findings point towards a weak relationship between family background and educational achievement in developing countries, other significant research has demonstrated the importance of various family factors for educational outcomes.

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27 Stephen Heyneman. “Influences on academic achievement: a comparison of results from Uganda and more industrialized societies.” *Sociology of Education* 49 (1976).
The literature on parents’ education has consistently shown its positive relationship with children’s achievement. According to research in Latin American countries, Arends-Kuenning and Duryea conclude parents’ education has a positive correlation with school attendance and attainment. Furthermore, they identify that mothers who complete primary or secondary school correspond with higher school attendance among their children, in comparison to the mothers who do not attend school or only complete some primary education.

There is a strong relationship between the socioeconomic status of a family (which includes family income, parents’ occupation, parents’ education, or some combination of these) and various academic achievement variables, including staying in school. Studies in several Latin American countries conclude that socioeconomic status is associated with school enrollment and continuance. Parental education and employment, as well as the income, wealth, and size of families continue to shape schooling attainment in developing countries. Children are more likely to repeat a grade when their parents have both a lower education and lower income. Grade repetition happens in all socioeconomic backgrounds; however, it is experienced to

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34 Ibid., 274.
40 Laurence Wolff et al., “Improving the Quality of Primary Education in Latin America and the Caribbean, 27.
a larger extent by the poor and vulnerable. Grade repetition is particularly high in the Latin America and Caribbean region. For students who experience higher grade retention, there is a psychological effect where older youth feel uncomfortable being in the same classroom with younger students, affecting drop out rates.

Fewer studies have been devoted to the role of parental beliefs in the relationship between socioeconomic status and achievement outcomes. Eccles discusses the relationship between parent education and child achievement, suggesting that parental beliefs serve as a link between the two variables. Davis-King suggests that parents’ education influences positive child outcomes, such as educational achievement, as a result of its indirect impact on parental beliefs regarding school achievement and on parents’ home behavior.

Research has also highlighted the influence of family size and structure on educational outcomes. The number of siblings is a negative influence for academic achievement. Parent involvement per child is less when the number of siblings is greater. One or more siblings who dropout from school can also reduce a child’s achievement. Studies in some developing countries have suggested the negative relationship between the number of siblings and

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41 Ibid., 27.
49 Ibid., 56.
50 Ibid., 56.
educational outcomes. Nonetheless, other studies have posited that the number of siblings has no effect on educational attainment.

Several U.S. studies found that children in single-parent households reached a lower educational attainment than the children living in two-parent households. Single-parent households are poorer and tend to be less involved in their children’s lives compared to two-parent households. Furthermore, a study using data from four Latin American countries indicates that youth from single-mother households are less likely to be enrolled in school than youth from two-parent households. The lack of adult presence in the home also contributes to the absence of parental supervision of the children.

In addition to the structure and size of families, the literature has recognized parental beliefs and aspirations as another set of factors related to educational continuance. Parents formulate “self-fulfilling prophecies” because of their aspirations (the level of education they hope their child reaches) or their expectations (the level of education they realistically expect their child to reach). Parents’ expectations or aspirations contribute to the educational attainment and continuance of their children.

57 Mary Arends-Kuenning and Suzanne Duryea (2006).
58 Ibid.
Cognitive motivation theories argue that when individuals feel or experience success in a certain setting (such as school), they tend to value and appreciate success, and continue to remain and work towards success. In the event that individuals feel unsuccessful, they de-value its importance, leave or refrain from working hard and have no expectation of significantly high performance and benefits.6162 In the context of students’ continuance in school, students who perform well in school are more likely to want and even to expect to reach higher levels of education, as compared to students who perform poorly in school. Combining these theories, it appears that parents’ aspirations of their child’s educational continuance can be influenced by their child’s actual performance in school.

The home environment is a key factor for keeping young people in school. U.S. studies revealed that youth who feel a sense of connection to their parents and school are less likely to drop out.63 Similar results emerged in LAC, according to studies in Argentina, Dominican Republic, Honduras, and Peru, where students left school because of lack of encouragement to attend or do well in school.646566 Nineteen percent of Honduran youth whose parents do not spend time supporting them with school work have repeated grades or left school.67 In addition to encouraging and motivating their children, parents’ time and effort spent in shared activities with their children or helping with homework contribute to a child’s overall investment, making it more likely for a child to stay in school.68 In a rural study, it was found that parental assistance

63 R. Blum, C. McNeely, P. Rinehart. *Improving Odds: The Untapped Power of Schools to Improve the Health of Teens*. (Minneapolis: Center for Adolescent Health and Development, University of Minnesota, 2002).
or supervision of homework is negatively correlated with children staying in school.\textsuperscript{69} Although “counter to expectation,” it appears that parents who assist their children too often with homework “may be doing so” as a result of their child’s lack of motivation.\textsuperscript{70}

\textit{Child Labor}

The role of child labor in determining educational outcomes presents contradicting theories. Some theorize that school and work are mutually exclusive.\textsuperscript{71}\textsuperscript{72}\textsuperscript{73} Studies have found that child labor negatively impacts schooling.\textsuperscript{74}\textsuperscript{75} Psacharopoulos contributes to the literature with a study on Bolivia and Venezuela where his findings conclude that a working child lowers his or her educational attainment by approximately two years of schooling relative to the children who do not work.\textsuperscript{76} Furthermore, although working children add to the total household income, being forced to work negatively impacts their educational continuance. Working children are also more likely to miss classes, repeat grades, and drop out of school.\textsuperscript{77}

Other researchers posit that a household’s time allocation and budget planning vary in regards to school, work, and leisure. As a result, one cannot isolate the effects of work on

\textsuperscript{70} Ibid., 56.
\textsuperscript{76} George Psacharopoulos. “Child Labour Versus Educational Attainment” (1997).
school. Nieuwenhuys suggests ‘shift schooling’ whereby children engage in both activities, usually going to school in the morning and then working in the afternoon, or vice versa. Work may serve as an enabler for receiving education where one’s earnings meet school expenses.

Economic Factors

Financial costs for education remain an impediment for children to enroll in school as well as to continue their studies. Palmer et al. identify financial capital as an essential factor that allows individuals to invest in their futures. Family income directly or indirectly enhances children’s education. Indirectly, higher family income allows for expenditures in nutrition, medicine and healthcare services - all of which are related to educational performance. More income enables families to directly improve their children’s education by paying for more years of education, buying textbooks and other school supplies, transportation costs, and investing in a higher-quality education. In fact, many students leave school because their families lack financial resources required for school materials, transportation, and school fees.

Parental employment plays a significant role in the amount of earnings. Nonetheless, a loss of job experienced by a parent or even a child leads to a higher likelihood of youth leaving

83 Peter Orazem and Elizabeth King. *Schooling in Developing Countries: The Role of Supply, Demand and Government Policy* (2008).
school, according to a study conducted in Mexico and Argentina.\textsuperscript{86} Job loss can have a large negative effect on household income leading to a new and pressing need for the young person to contribute to that income.\textsuperscript{87,88} When household poverty causes children to find employment, children are usually forced to leave school due to the difficulty in managing both at a single time.

Remittances, or money sent from a foreign worker to his or her home country, are another economic factor that can increase household income. How the remittance money is spent is another question. In a case study in El Salvador, remittances assist children in completing primary education, but they do not have the same effect for secondary education.\textsuperscript{89}

\textit{Community Factors}

Coleman postulates that greater interaction and investment outside of the family, in addition to within the family, increases children’s educational attainment.\textsuperscript{90} Israel et al. recognize that social capital at the community level may not be the most significant factor.\textsuperscript{91} Nonetheless, they suggest that, “it may exert indirect effects [on educational achievement] through the variety of programs, organizations, and activities available in a locality.”\textsuperscript{92} Participation in activities of religious and non-religious organizations improves at-risk youths’ educational progress through more educational and occupational opportunities.\textsuperscript{93} Regnerus and Elder identify that youth from

\textsuperscript{87} Suzanne Duryea et al., eds. \textit{Critical Decisions at a Critical Age} (2003).
\textsuperscript{88} Wendy Cunningham and William Maloney. “School Dropout and Child Labor over the Business Cycle” (forthcoming).
\textsuperscript{90} James Coleman (1988).
\textsuperscript{92} Ibid., 62-63.
\textsuperscript{93} Ibid., 63.
low-income neighborhoods are more likely to experience academic progress when involved in their religious communities compared to their counterparts from high-income areas.\(^9^4\)

Another community factor that impacts school continuance is the social environment. Low-income neighborhoods experience a higher prevalence of gangs, drugs, and other forms of delinquency.\(^9^5\) Generally speaking, youth who engage in gang activity lack access to education or have minimal education attainment. Delinquency and crime lead youth to abandon or be expelled from school, further plaguing educational continuance.\(^9^6\)

In Heyneman’s (1976) study in Uganda, he posited that school factors outweigh family factors in determining educational outcomes. School factors include physical location of the school, the quality of its teachers and facilities, and access to the textbooks and supplies. In a World Bank report, Schiefelbein identifies the quality of education found in private schools and upper class public schools to be more advantageous for students in comparison to lower class and rural public schools.\(^9^7\) Low school quality is a persistent factor in contributing to school desertion, demonstrated in Argentina and Mexico.\(^9^8\) School location also may contribute to early school drop out for two reasons in particular. First, distance from a child’s home to the school can be overwhelmingly far, especially in rural areas. Second, for youth living in urban slums it may be too dangerous to walk to school, which is evident for Honduran youth having to walk through rival gang territories to reach their school.\(^9^9\)

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\(^9^6\) José Luis Guasch et al., “Competitiveness in Central America,” 36.


\(^9^9\) ESA Consultores. *Niños(as) y adolescentes en una sociedad en desarrollo: los riesgos de la exclusión y la desviación social* (2001).
Another factor is the teachers whose work entails two significant roles. First, they are educators, preparing children with the knowledge and skills necessary for further studies and the workforce. Nonetheless, former students in several Latin American countries, including Honduras, noted that they were not prepared with the appropriate skills for the labor market.\(^{100}\) Second, teachers act as disciplinarians. Latin American teachers are identified as overly penalizing, which has led some students to become disillusioned with the education system and, ultimately, to drop out of school.\(^{101}\)

Further literature has identified that certain material factors, such as school supplies, textbooks, libraries and faculty training, play a crucial role in influencing academic achievement.\(^{102}\)\(^{103}\) Characterized by scarce educational resources, developing countries find investments in basic materials to have a significant impact on children’s educational outcomes.

**Case Study: Sector Ocotillo, San Pedro Sula, Honduras**

An examination of the literature provides an impetus for further research. Current literature delves into education in the developing world, including various studies within Latin America, including Honduras. Nonetheless, questions remain as to whether these factors and conditions apply to other cases. This research focuses on the municipal garbage dump community in San Pedro Sula, Honduras. San Pedro Sula is the second largest city in Honduras and known as the industrial capital of the country. Throughout the world, garbage dumps and waste management generate significant employment. Waste management occurs primarily inside

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\(^{101}\) ESA Consultores. *Niños(as) y adolescentes en una sociedad en desarrollo: los riesgos de la exclusión y la desviación social* (2001).


public garbage dumps where sorting and collecting of materials provides an income for many individuals and families. The informal sector of waste management incorporates some of the most vulnerable populations of the world. The existing literature is extensive on garbage dumps, their management, and the working force that labors to various degrees in the collection, sorting, and recycling of the waste.\textsuperscript{104,105,106} This paper focuses on factors which influence school completion or desertion in communities surrounding the garbage dump where the principal \textit{pepenedores}, or waste collectors or gatherers, reside because the communities surrounding the garbage dump maintain a high level of poverty, marginalization and vulnerability similar to that experienced by the laborers in the garbage dump.

\textbf{Figure 2:} Relation between Sector Ocotillo and El Centro
San Pedro Sula, Honduras

Located 13 kilometers from the center of San Pedro Sula, Sector Ocotillo has a

\textsuperscript{106} Arnold Van de Klundert and Inge Lardinois. “Community and Private (formal and informal) Sector Involvement in Municipal Solid Waste Management in Developing Countries.” Prepared for the "Ittingen Workshop" in Ittingen, Switzerland, 1995.
population of 11,738 persons, or 2,062 families, as of September 2012 (see Figure 2). Known primarily for the municipal garbage dump, Sector Ocotillo is one of the most marginalized and vulnerable communities in the municipality of San Pedro Sula. Sector Ocotillo is comprised of several colonias, or smaller towns or communities, which include El Ocotillo, Anexo El Ocotillo, El Cosmul, and Colonia Dusan (see Figure 3). This research focuses on residents in the colonias of El Ocotillo and Anexo El Ocotillo. El Ocotillo was founded in 1994 with the majority of its then-new residents from Sector El Carmen, which is located between Sector Ocotillo and the central part of San Pedro Sula. Those who populated the then-newly found colonia tended to migrate and purchase land because they had been previously renting their homes and, therefore, Sector Ocotillo opened up the opportunity for families to purchase their own land and cease rental payments.

Figure 3: Map of Sector Ocotillo

Source: Programas Sociales Municipales, Municipalidad de San Pedro Sula.

In 2001, while Sector Ocotillo continued to grow, the *colonia* of Anexo El Ocotillo was formed to accommodate additional families interested in purchasing their own land. In addition, a population growth occurred because the municipal government was moving families from at-risk areas or displaced from their homes by environmental occurrences, such as the aftermath of Hurricane Mitch.\(^{109}\) Furthermore, Sector Ocotillo experienced an increase in population with squatting communities in the area adjacent to the school, *Escuela República de México*, and proximate to the path to the garbage dump. Some of the informal squatting communities, in fact, were granted formal recognition by the government, in particular *Colonia Dusan* located next to Anexo El Ocotillo. Another *colonia* of interest is El Cosmul, which differs substantially from the rest of Sector Ocotillo with paved streets in comparison to dirt roads, and homes constructed of high-quality materials. The sector’s primary employer is the municipal garbage dump where men, women, and children work from Monday through Saturday sifting through the trash of San Pedro Sula to earn an income to provide for themselves and their families.\(^{110}\) The majority of *pepenedores* come from El Ocotillo, Anexo El Ocotillo, and Colonia Dusan.

Given the poverty experienced at the household and community levels, the limited possibilities and opportunities as a result of the poverty and marginalization, and the educational limitations present in the community, this research focuses on a vulnerable youth population that has witnessed both success and difficulty in educational continuance. This research seeks to provide a detailed analysis of how some youth in Sector Ocotillo have been able to stay in school while others have withdrawn from their academic studies.

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\(^{110}\) Ibid., 27.
Chapter 2: Methodology

The purposes of this research are to (1) identify the factors that facilitate the attainment of higher educational outcomes of vulnerable youth in the garbage dump community of San Pedro Sula, Honduras; and (2) understand how these factors are linked to educational outcomes. This case study, “Education to Overcome Poverty: An Exploration of the Garbage Dump Community of San Pedro Sula,” took place from December 26, 2012 to January 8, 2013.

The case study is descriptive and cross-sectional; it entails the use of qualitative social science methods, ethnographic methods, and oral history, specifically by way of individual interviews with the subjects. The following categories of respondents are included in the research sample: 1) youth residing in the San Pedro Sula garbage dump community; 2) parents of youth residing in the San Pedro Sula garbage dump community; and 3) representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and public sector organizations serving youth residing in the San Pedro Sula garbage dump community.

Purposive and convenience sampling methods are used. The research is specifically directed toward the vulnerable youth of the San Pedro Sula garbage dump community and is thus purposive. The study is conducted in the communities of El Ocotillo and Anexo El Ocotillo, located near the San Pedro Sula Municipal Garbage Dump on the periphery of San Pedro Sula, Honduras (see Figure 4). As a result of prior experience with this community, I, the Principal Investigator (PI), know and maintain contact with nine youth and their respective parents. The single inclusion criterion for the youth respondents is age: 16-20 years. The PI interviewed nine youth. The inclusion criteria for parents are: 1) residence in the household with the youth respondent; and 2) maximum age of 65. The PI interviewed eleven parents (see Figure 5).
**Figure 4:** Sector Ocotillo and Municipal Garbage Dump of San Pedro Sula

![Map of Sector Ocotillo and Municipal Garbage Dump](image)


**Figure 5:** Families of Youth and Parents Interviewed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Youth</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Where do they live?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Fernando</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2/2 interviewed</td>
<td>El Ocotillo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Josué</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1/1 interviewed</td>
<td>El Ocotillo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Grecia</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1/2 interviewed</td>
<td>El Ocotillo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Iris</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1/1 guardian interviewed</td>
<td>El Ocotillo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>(1) Carlos</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2/2 interviewed</td>
<td>Anexo El Ocotillo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2) Claudia</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2/2 interviewed</td>
<td>Anexo El Ocotillo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Antonio</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2/2 interviewed</td>
<td>Anexo El Ocotillo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>(1) Amado</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2/2 interviewed</td>
<td>Anexo El Ocotillo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2) Liset</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2/2 interviewed</td>
<td>Anexo El Ocotillo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additionally, the PI interviewed representatives of three public sector and four non-profit non-governmental organizations. These included the municipal nursery and medical center.
located in Anexo El Ocotillo and Colonia Dusan, respectively, the local Patronato (or local collaborative and governing body of community members recognized and endorsed by the municipality), the local Catholic parish, the local Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints, International Samaritan, and RE.TE. International Samaritan is a U.S.-based NGO that works in garbage dump communities throughout the world. RE.TE is an international NGO that works with vulnerable populations, primarily children and youth working in waste collection.

Interviews were conducted with representatives of these governmental and non-governmental organizations because each of these groups plays a role in the community of El Ocotillo as shown in Figure 6. These organizations offer services to the community, collaborate with community members, and provide another perspective on the question of educational continuance among the youth of the community. These organizations’ extensive work and collaboration with the community of El Ocotillo and the previous contact initiated by the PI with these organizations serve as the principal reasoning behind selecting these specific groups.

**Figure 6: Public and Private Organizations Interviewed**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Public or Private</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guardería de San Ignacio</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Municipal nursery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centro de Salud Richard Flasck</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Municipal clinic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Patronato in Anexo El Ocotillo</strong></td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Governing body of community members of Anexo El Ocotillo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Antonio de Padua Catholic Church</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Local Catholic parish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Local Mormon church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Samaritan</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>U.S.-based NGO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RE.TE</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>International NGO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prior to starting the interviews, the study was explained in simple terms; an informed consent script was read and each participant was asked to verbally consent to participate,
including the verbal assent of minors and their parents or guardians’ verbal consent. Also prior to the interview, each participant was asked her or his preferred place of meeting. All interviews were individual. Parents were not present in the room during the interviews with minors. All meetings took place inside the home. The PI, who is fluent in Spanish, conducted the interviews. The interviews were also audio-recorded on a digital recorder with the permission of the participants.

Data was collected using an individual interview guide. The guide is modular; that is, a basic set of questions was asked of the youth, their parents and the public and private sector representatives. Specific questions were addressed to respondents in each of these categories. The individual interview guide is semi-structured, including both close-ended and open-ended questions so that participants are able to “share their story” and provide a holistic picture of their lives with respect to the foci of the study. The guide was designed for the interview to last between 30-45 minutes. The individual interview guide was submitted to and approved by Georgetown University’s Institutional Review Board on December 21, 2012. Prior to submission and approval, four experts, including two researchers, one Honduran researcher, and another native Spanish speaker, reviewed the individual interview guides.

The interview guide includes questions related to family composition (age, number of siblings or children), educational attainment, work experience (including job type and work hours), and parental involvement in the lives of their children. The parental involvement includes homework help, attendance at school meetings, activities, and participation in a religious community. Questions from the Duke University Religion Index were used as measures for various dimensions of religiosity, particularly organizational and non-organizational religious
activity. The interview guide also considers the importance of education, educational objectives or aspirations, factors that help facilitate reaching their goals, obstacles that prevent attaining their goals, and how the students see themselves in the near future. The interview guide for the representatives of organizations in the public and private sectors includes questions asking that they list and explain the factors and obstacles that help and hinder, respectively, the attainment of the youth’s educational objectives; to identify supportive programs offered by the respective organization and the extent to which these programs assist the youth in reaching their educational goals. The full list of questions in the interview guides is located in Appendix I. In addition to the individual interview guides, domestic household surveys, influenced by the Demographic and Health Surveys wealth index survey, were used to collect data on household wealth and assets. This can be located in Appendix II.

**Honduran Education System**

The Honduran education system is divided into four levels. Primary education consists of first through sixth grades, and is compulsory. Middle education, or *Plan Básico*, consists of seventh through ninth grades. Secondary education lasts two to three years, as students can enroll in one of two options: *bachillerato*, which focuses more on arts and sciences and is necessary in order to apply to a university, and *carrera*, which is a vocational approach where students engage in studies of business, computer science, etc. It is also possible to combine these two programs, where students graduate in three years with a degree in Arts and Sciences and a degree in a vocational profession. The final stage is tertiary education, or the university level.

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Limitations

A limitation of the case study is the sample size, which reaches a very small percentage of the total population. The sample used in this research does not claim to be representative of the entire population. Therefore, it is impossible to make general conclusions about the population as a whole. However, by focusing extensively on a few families with whom the Principal Investigator (PI) had previous contact, this research is able to provide an in-depth, holistic account of the interviewed families to understand the factors that allow for educational continuance among youth. Additionally, it is difficult to verify that the respondents were being truthful in their responses to the questions. It is impossible to fully understand and capture all factors that contribute to educational continuance without full knowledge of income levels, cognitive ability, IQ levels, and grades in school. Finally, since the PI had previous contact with the respondents in this research, the respondents were not selected at random. The argument made on behalf of this purposive and convenience study is that the previous contact between the PI and the respondents ensured a level of trust and comfort between both parties.

The collected data is taken from interviews with eleven adult subjects and nine youth subjects from seven families who have been living in the communities of El Ocotillo and Anexo El Ocotillo since shortly before or after the founding of these communities, and one family who arrived five years after the official creation of El Ocotillo. The following data analysis examines three main factors – parent, economic, and community – to determine the extent to which they influence or affect the educational continuance among the interviewed youth. The interviews determined that six of young people (A, B, C, D, E1 and E2) are still in school, while the

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remaining three (F, G1 and G2) have dropped out, as depicted in Figure 7 below.

**Figure 7**: Educational Continuance among Interviewed Youth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Youth</th>
<th>Highest level of educational attainment</th>
<th>Currently enrolled in formal schooling?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Fernando</td>
<td>First year of high school</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Josué</td>
<td>Second year of high school</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Grecia</td>
<td>First year of high school</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Iris</td>
<td>Second year of high school</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>(1) Carlos</td>
<td>9th grade</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2) Claudia</td>
<td>Third year of high school</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Antonio</td>
<td>6th grade</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>(1) Amado</td>
<td>7th grade</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2) Liset</td>
<td>5th grade</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 3: Parents’ Attitudes and Background of Education

This examines four areas regarding parents’ educational background and attitudes and how they are correlated or not to their children’s educational continuance. These include (1) parent educational attainment, (2) parent involvement in their children’s lives, (3) head(s) of household composition, and (4) parent expectations and aspirations for their children. Each factor is described and assessed separately, and the chapter concludes looking at a few cases combining the factors discussed.

Parent Educational Attainment

Do more years of school for parents lead to continuance in school among their children? The literature has shown that higher levels of education among parents are correlated to higher educational continuance among their children. In other words, more-educated parents are more likely to have their children stay in school.

As shown in Figure 7, we separate the data from the sample of seven families into two categories: youth who are still in school and youth who have dropped out. The data reveals that five of the families (A, B, C, D and E) have one parent who has at least six years of schooling (see Figure 8). In some cases, the parents achieved more years of schooling, such as for family B where the mother attained eight years of education, and for family C where the father completed fourteen years of schooling (see Figure 8). Each of these five families (A, B, C, D and E) has children who are still enrolled in school. In contrast, families F and G have parents with less

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years of schooling, and subsequently their children are not enrolled in school (see Figure 8). The parents of families F and G attained between two and five years of schooling, which, in comparison with the other five families, does not follow the same pattern in which parents that have at least six years of schooling witness their children remaining in school. It is therefore the case that when parents spend more years in school, their children stay in school.

Does the education level of both parents matter? The literature suggests that the mother’s educational level is more important than that of the father.\textsuperscript{117} This data sample does not provide any conclusive evidence to suggest that the mother’s educational level acts as the sole determinant for whether her children will remain in school. Although the data presents two families (A and E) comprised of both parents and whose children are still in school, the father of family A has a higher level of education, whereas the mother of family E has a higher education. (see Figure 8). Additionally, the parents of the seven families reveal that it is not essential for both parents, in the case of the two-parent households, to have completed primary school; rather, it is only essential for one of the parents according to the histories of these seven families. This data reveals that there is a pattern between having at least one parent or guardian to have graduated from primary school and the children’s likelihood of remaining in school.

\textsuperscript{117} Ibid.
**Figure 8:** Relationship between Parents’ Years of Schooling and Children’s School Continuance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Parents’ years of schooling</th>
<th>Highest level of educational attainment</th>
<th>Youth</th>
<th>Youth currently enrolled in formal schooling?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; grade</td>
<td>Fernando</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; grade</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; grade</td>
<td>Josué</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; year of university</td>
<td>Grecia</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guardian - Female</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; grade</td>
<td>Iris</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; grade</td>
<td>Carlos</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; grade</td>
<td>Claudia</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; grade</td>
<td>Antonio</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; grade</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; grade</td>
<td>Amado</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; grade</td>
<td>Liset</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additionally, the individual interview guides probed whether parents have the capability of reading, writing, and doing arithmetic. Given the focus and duration of this research, the interviews did not include examinations to determine the exact level of these three categories, but rather are based off the respondents’ yes or no answers.

Does a parent’s reading level affect his/her children’s educational continuance? The data does not present any interesting pattern linking parents’ ability to read and their children’s educational continuance (see Figure 9). Only one of the parents, from family G, cannot read well. Despite the fact that the children of this family have deserted their education, it cannot be concluded that a relationship between the father’s illiteracy and his children’s school desertion exists since in family F both parents are literate, yet their child is not enrolled in school.
Figure 9: Relationship between Parents’ Ability to Read and Children’s School Continuance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Can parents’ read?</th>
<th>Youth</th>
<th>Currently enrolled in formal schooling?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Fernando</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Josué</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Grecia</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Iris</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Iris</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Carlos</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Claudia</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Antonio</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Amado</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Liset</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Does a parent’s writing level affect his/her children’s ability to remain in school?

Similarly to the variable of reading ability discussed above, no distinct pattern exists between parents’ ability to write and their children’s educational continuance (see Figure 10). It is only in the case of one family (G) where neither parent is capable of writing, and their children are no longer enrolled in school. However, family F presents the opposite case where both parents are able to write, yet their children are no longer in school as well.
**Figure 10**: Relationship between Parents’ Ability to Write and Their Children’s School Continuance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Can parents’ write?</th>
<th>Youth</th>
<th>Currently enrolled in formal schooling?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Fernando</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Josué</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Grecia</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Iris</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Iris</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Carlos</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Claudia</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Antonio</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Amado</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Liset</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, does a parent’s ability to do arithmetic lead to his/her children’s educational continuance? The evidence from the data sample does not suggest a conclusive pattern. Nonetheless, the following table does indicate a possible pattern between the ability of parents to do arithmetic and their children’s ability to stay in school (see Figure 11). Families A to E comprise parents with arithmetic abilities. These parents have children who are currently enrolled in school. Looking at families F and G, the pattern is nearly the reverse whereby the parents lack the ability to do mathematics, except for the father in family F, and their children are no longer in formal schooling. Although this does not reveal a pattern to the extent of the initial variable (the number of years of parent schooling), it does demonstrate the likelihood of parents’ ability to do mathematics as having a stronger relationship with their children’s educational continuance than that of parents’ reading and writing abilities.
Figure 11: Relationship between Parents’ Ability to Do Arithmetic and Their Children’s School Continuance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Can parents’ do arithmetic?</th>
<th>Youth</th>
<th>Currently enrolled in formal schooling?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Fernando</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Josué</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Grecia</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Iris</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Iris</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Carlos</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Claudia</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Antonio</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Amado</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Liset</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data demonstrates the pervasive importance of parental education, which is a key factor to students’ educational continuance. The factor of parental education can be illustrated by looking briefly at the parents and children of two families. This demonstrates the positive relationship between the number of years of parents’ schooling and their children’s educational continuance.

In family C, Grecia’s father has attained the highest level of education among the other parents of the research’s sample. Her father studied in formal schooling for fourteen years, lacking only two years to graduate from the university and receive his licenciada (or undergraduate) degree.118 Grecia’s father responded that he is capable of reading, writing, and doing arithmetic, and, in fact, serves as a teacher in primary education and plan básico. Grecia, a 17-year-old student, finished her plan básico last year and is currently in her first year of studies in high school. This illustrates the positive relationship between her father’s educational

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attainment and Grecia’s continuance in school; that is, the pattern between parents’ educational attainment and their children’s educational continuance.

In a second case, family G, Liset’s father and mother never finished primary education, achieving second and third grades, respectively. In addition, neither parent is capable of writing or doing arithmetic, although the mother can read. Liset, 19 years old, completed the fifth grade seven years ago, and has not attended school since that time. She is currently looking for work and does not have plans to return to her studies at the present moment. In this case, her parents’ low levels of educational attainment, failing to finish primary education, has curtailed and paused Liset’s educational continuance. This pattern demonstrates that low levels of parent educational attainment negatively affect their children’s ability to remain in school and attain higher levels of education.

*Parent Involvement in Youth’s Lives*

A second factor of parents’ attitudes and experiences of education that contributes to educational continuance among youth is parents’ involvement in their children’s lives. In the parent interviews, three forms of parental involvement in children’s lives were examined. These include (1) the number of times that parents have attended a school meeting or have met with their children’s teachers during the school year; (2) the number of hours spent assisting their children in their homework in a two-week span; and (3) the number of days after school playing sports or doing cultural or artistic activities with their children over a two-week period.

Do higher levels of parent attendance at school meetings for their children lead to educational continuance among their children? It is expected that the higher levels of attendance by the parents would have a positive influence on educational continuance among their children.
These meetings include parent-teacher meetings, school assemblies, and parent association meetings. Participation in these meetings provides parents with an opportunity to be aware of their children’s progress in their classes as well as the work of the school administration and teachers in promoting learning and education.

The parents of the seven families of this sample vary in the number attended during the past school year. In gathering this data, it is difficult to determine how often the parents attended teacher meetings or other school gatherings for their child who was interviewed in this research or if they responded for the number of meetings for all of their children. Nonetheless, the data is divided into three groups: high-attending parents, low-attending parents and non-attending parents (see Figure 12). The first group of high-attending parents corresponds to parents who attended over five meetings in the previous academic year. The high-attending parents, which accounts for the parents of families F and G, participate in school events and meetings ten and six times in the academic year, respectively, yet their children are no longer enrolled in formal schooling. The group of low-attending parents, or those participating in less than five meetings in the past academic year, accounts for the parents in families E, B, C and D – whose children are still attending school. The final group consists of two youth from families A and G who are not included in this analysis because they were not enrolled in an academic program during the previous year and therefore their parents did not participate in school gatherings.
The data reveals an inverse pattern between the number of school functions attended by parents and their children’s educational continuance. Despite the high level of participation at school meetings among certain parents (F and G), their children have deserted their education. Expected to yield a positive relationship with youth’s educational continuance, high-attending parents constitute an inverse relationship, which can be a result of over-involvement by the parents or can suggest that their children required more attention due to academic challenges or behavioral problems in the classroom. It is, nevertheless, among the low-attending parents (E, B, C, and D) where educational continuance of their children occurs.

Another consideration for parent involvement in their children’s education is the amount of time dedicated to assisting children with their homework. Do parents who spend more time
helping their children with homework witness their children remaining in school? The data does not present any illuminating patterns. From the interviews with the youth, most of the youth generally complete their own homework or in collaboration with their classmates, which is primarily a result of the fact that the youth are studying academic subjects at grade levels higher than what their parents attained, constraining their parents’ ability to help. Only two parents (E and C), out of the eleven, spent time assisting their children with homework (see Figure 13). Two of the children of these families are continuing with their education. The attentiveness to ensuring that their children do their homework and assisting them where possible demonstrates a high level of interest in their children’s success and places a strong emphasis on doing well in school. It also reveals the importance of a parent’s role in monitoring their children’s progress in school. However, it cannot be concluded that parental homework assistance is necessary for educational continuance, given that several other families (A, B, D, E) have parents who do not assist with homework yet their children are still in school.
**Figure 13:** Relationship between Parents’ Assistance with Homework and Children’s Educational Continuance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Youth</th>
<th>Parent</th>
<th>Number of hours spent helping with homework (per parent, per week)</th>
<th>Total number of hours per week</th>
<th>Youth still enrolled in school?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>(1) Carlos</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Grecia</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Iris</td>
<td>Guardian</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Josué</td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>(2) Claudia</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>0*</td>
<td>0*</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>0*</td>
<td>0*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Fernando</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>0*</td>
<td>0*</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>0*</td>
<td>0*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Antonio</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>(1) Amado</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2) Liset</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>0*</td>
<td>0*</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>0*</td>
<td>0*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Youth who were not enrolled in school during the past academic year (Feb. 2012 – Nov. 2012), as the interview questions inquired about the school meeting attendance last year.

A final consideration regarding parent involvement is the extent of their participation in activities outside of school – athletic, cultural, artistic, etc. Does parents’ involvement increase the likelihood of educational continuance among their children? The data suggests that parents who do engage with their children in extracurricular activities, accounting for three of the seven families (A, C and E), witness educational continuance among their children (see Figure 14). The parents of these families indicated that they are involved in activities with their children on average three times over the two-week span.\(^{119}\) However, for the parents who do not spend time with their children doing various activities outside of school, two of these four families (B and D) have children who are still in school. The data, therefore, is inconclusive, as on the one hand

it identifies a possible relationship between parental involvement in extracurricular activities and educational continuance among their children, while at the same time the information suggests that parents’ non-participation in extracurricular activities with their children is not essential for their children’s educational continuance.

**Figure 14:** Relationship between Parents’ Participation in Activities with their Children and Children’s Educational Continuance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Youth</th>
<th>Parent</th>
<th>Number of times spent doing activities with children (per parent, per two weeks)</th>
<th>Total number of times during two weeks</th>
<th>Youth still enrolled in school?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Fernando</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Grecia</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>(1) Carlos</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2) Claudia</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Josué</td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Iris</td>
<td>Guardian</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Antonio</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>(1) Amado</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2) Liset</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The cases of two separate families provide illustrations to the relationship between parent involvement in their children’s lives and their children’s educational continuance.

In family F, Antonio’s mother attended “meetings at the end of each month [in the academic year],”\(^{120}\) totaling to ten gatherings at the school, for her son. Despite her consistent attendance to the school meetings, it did not ensure that Antonio remained in school. In examining the effect of parent assistance with homework, neither his mother nor stepfather

\(^{120}\) “reuniones cada fin de mes” (Antonio’s mother, interview by author, December 27, 2012).
assisted him; rather he completed it on his own.\textsuperscript{121} His parents’ lack of attentiveness to and help with his schoolwork, as well as their absence in participating in extracurricular activities with him may have contributed to Antonio’s decision to desert his education.

In family E, Carlos’ mother corresponds to the low-attending parents’ category, going to four school meetings in the previous academic year, and yet seeing continuance in her son’s education. Carlos’ mother has helped her children, including Carlos, with their homework assignments, spending roughly an hour per day. This provides a positive relationship between parent involvement and their child’s ability to remain in school. This pattern is also evident through the mother’s engagement with her children in activities outside of school and her son’s ability to maintain staying in school. The example of Carlos’ family illustrates the contribution of parent involvement in their children’s lives on educational continuance among their children.

\textit{Head(s) of Household Composition}

A third factor linking parents’ attitudes and experiences of education with educational continuance among their children is parent composition in the family household. The literature has shown studies that attest to the fact that disintegration of families correlates with school desertion, and therefore youth living in a one-parent household are less likely to advance in their education as those who live in a two-parent home.\textsuperscript{122,123} According to the representative of one of the churches, family disintegration “is a tremendous challenge,”\textsuperscript{124} as he has witnessed “many youth who have parents separated or divorced, or even dead. [And] this also increases poverty

\textsuperscript{121} Antonio, interview by author, December 27, 2012.
\textsuperscript{122} W. Jeynes. “Examining the effects of parental absence on the academic achievement of adolescents” (2002).
\textsuperscript{124} “Es un tremendo desafío” (Representative from LDS church, interview by author, December 29, 2012).
and affects one’s desire to study.”

Are households with both parents more likely to experience educational continuance among the children? The data from this sample is separated into three categories: families with the biological parents, those with only one biological parent and a stepparent, and those with only a single parent (see Figure 15). In the first category, each of the families (A, C and E) is comprised of the biological parents whose children are still in school. The second category constitutes two families (F and G) both in which the mother is the only biological parent and the father is a stepparent. In this case, the children are no longer in school. The final category represents the families (B and D) of a one-parent household. These families either have a single mother (B) or a female guardian, in the case of family D where both parents were killed when the children were younger. Both of their children are still in school.

125 “Muchos jóvenes que los padres han separados o divorciados, o han muerto. Esto también incrementa la pobreza y afecta el ánimo de estudiar” (Representative from LDS church, interview by author, December 29, 2012).
Figure 15: Relationship between Single vs. Two-Parent Household and Children’s Educational Continuance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Single- or two-parent household</th>
<th>Youth</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>Youth still enrolled in school?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Two-Parent Households</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Two-parent household</td>
<td>Fernando</td>
<td>Biological mother/father</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Two-parent household</td>
<td>Grecia</td>
<td>Biological mother/father</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Two-parent household</td>
<td>(1) Carlos</td>
<td>Biological mother/father</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(2) Claudia</td>
<td>Biological mother/father</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family Disintegration: Two-Parent Households</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Two-parent household</td>
<td>Antonio</td>
<td>Biological mother/stepfather</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Two-parent household</td>
<td>(1) Amado</td>
<td>Biological mother/stepfather</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(2) Liset</td>
<td>Biological mother/stepfather</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family Disintegration: Single-Parent Household</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Single-parent household</td>
<td>Josué</td>
<td>Single-mother</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Single-parent household</td>
<td>Iris</td>
<td>Raised by female guardian</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This data recognizes that there is a pattern between composition of household heads and educational continuance among the youth of the families. The theory above cites that children of two-parent households are more likely to remain in school compared to their counterparts in one-parent households. The data from this case study counters this theory. Instead, the data suggests that while two-parent households comprised of biological parents continue to lead to children’s educational continuance, so too do single-parent households have the same relationship.

This data provides an interesting addition to the existing literature, proposing that family disintegration plays a role in children’s school desertion. Family disintegration that involves the separation, divorce, or even death of one or both of the parents appears to result with the children
of this study remaining in school. On the other hand, family disintegration involving a stepparent leads to children leaving school. The data shows that school desertion becomes more prevalent when the biological mother or father is no longer a part of the immediate family and another individual takes her or his place as a stepparent.

Here we will look an example for each of the patterns discussed above. In the case of Fernando (A), he lives in a two-parent household with both of his biological parents. Fernando is still in school.

An example of a single-parent household is the family of Josué (B). His mother is a single mother who “has lacked someone else’s help, as much economically. [And] this has been an obstacle because when there are two people in the house one maintains more benefits while when there is only one…it is the absence of some effort.”126 Despite the fact that she is a single mother who works a significant portion of the week and she recognizes the absence of another parent in the household, Josué continues to study, reaching the halfway point of his high school education.

Amado’s family (G) demonstrates the case of a two-parent household that had previously experienced family disintegration with the departure of Amado’s biological father. Amado currently lives with his stepfather, his biological mother, and his siblings and is no longer enrolled in an academic program. He referenced that his father “helped him to be in school but later on [his father] did not want him to continue studying.”127 Amado’s mother believes that one of the obstacles constraining her children from achieving their educational goals is that her children “see disorder or problems between the parents or in the house… [and] when they see the

126 “He faltado la ayuda de alguien, tanto económicamente. Eso ha sido un obstáculo porque cuando hay dos personas en la casa sostiene más beneficios mientras que cuando un solo pues… como falta un poquito de esfuerzo” (Mother of Josué, interview by author, January 2, 2013).
127 “me apoyó a estar en la escuela pero después no quería que sigue estudiando” (Amado, interview by author, December 26, 2012).
problems it can be difficult to focus in [their] studies.” Losing a parent can cause children to become rebellious, dispassionate, and unfocused, which can have a dire effect on one’s studies. Furthermore, it can be difficult for children to adjust to a stepparent. These occurrences make it challenging for children to remain in school.

The examples of family disintegration demonstrate the importance of family unity and parent-child relationships in educational continuance among children.

*Parents’ Expectations and Aspirations for their Children*

A final element linking parents’ attitudes of education and their children’s ability to stay in school is the expectations and aspirations that parents hold for their children. Do parents’ expectations and aspirations regarding their children’s education contribute to a more likely occurrence of educational continuance? Previous research indicates that parents’ aspirations and expectations create “self-fulfilling prophecies” among their children.129

Given the variety of responses from the parents when asked about their expectations of their children, three general categories of aspirations emerged. Each of the categories captures some the principal aspirations of the parents for their children and provides various examples from the parents of this research.

This first category relates to the desire of parents that their children continue in their studies and graduate. Almost each and every parent referred to the aspiration that his or her child would continue in his or her studies and eventually graduate. The father of Grecia (C) hopes that his daughter will “graduate from high school, enter the mission of the [Mormon] church and

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128 “Ven desorden o problemas en sus padres o en la casa... cuando ven los problemas puede ser difícil a enfocar en los estudios” (Amado’s mother, interview by author, December 26, 2012).
enter the university,” emphasizing that one’s education is both academic and spiritual. Iris’ guardian (D) desires for Iris to “finish her studies [in order to] move forward and begin to work and have her [own] family.” Parents of families A, B and E also want their children to continue in school and graduate, eventually having their own family or finding work opportunities. All five of these families (A-E) have youth who are still in school.

The second category revolves around the concept of family. Several parents hope to see their children remain a part of the family unit (F), while other parents (G) want their children to listen to their advice and recognize the importance of “the education [that] comes from the house… [and] from the parents because the children spend more time in the house than in the school.” These parents tend to have a focus on the family unit and what occurs within the family. Interestingly, the youth of these two families (F and G) are no longer enrolled in academic studies. The mother of Amado and Liset (G) describes the importance of the education from within the household, such as “cleaning… [and] teach[ing] [her children] organization and to respect their teachers… [and] how to communicate with other people.” Whereas other parents emphasize education in the form of formal schooling, the mother of Amado and Liset believes that the most important education is from within the household.

A final category is that some aspirations for parents is that their children have a more prosperous life and that they are able to “become someone” in life. Most parents acknowledged that they want their children to end up better than themselves, insinuating to have more education, a better job, a better socioeconomic situation, etc. Fernando’s mother (A) wants her son “to be

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132 “Graduar del colegio, entrar la misión de la iglesia y entra la universidad” (Grecia’s father, interview by author, December 28, 2012).
133 “Terminar sus estudios [para] seguir adelante y empezar a trabajar y tener su familia” (Iris’ guardian, interview by author, January 3, 2013).
134 “la educación que sale de la casa… de los padres porque los niños pasan más tiempo en la casa que en la escuela” (Liset’s mother, interview by author, December 26, 2012).
135 “El aseo… enseñarles la organización y tener respeto a los maestros… como comunicar con otras personas” (Liset’s mother, interview by author, December 26, 2012).
someone and have a better life… [and] have better opportunities and find a good job.” These aspirations suggest that the parent hopes more for her children than what the mother was able to attain herself. Families B, E and F also mention this aspiration. Of these four families, four children (A, B, E1 and E2) are in school while one of them (F) did not continue in his studies.

The literature suggests that parents’ educational aspirations are important, but it is hard to demonstrate the exact relationship between the aspirations and the youth’s educational continuance. It appears that parents with external aspirations – looking at their child’s future, such as the hopes that they finish their academic studies and that they have a more prosperous life - find their children are still in school. Whereas the parents who had internal aspirations that emphasized family life and the importance of the education given by one’s parents, their children are no longer attending school. The relation is not too strong, but it does invoke a potential pattern that may be developed with further research.

In concluding this chapter on parents’ attitudes and background on education, it is important to recognize that some of factors discussed above have contributed more than others in influencing educational continuance among youth. The remainder of this chapter will connect the factors related to parents’ educational background in order to illustrate how they combine together in the cases of two individuals – Grecia and Antonio.

In family C, Grecia’s father has attained the highest level of education among the other parents of the research’s sample. Her father studied in formal schooling for fourteen years, falling short of only two years to graduate from the university. Grecia’s father responded that he is capable of reading, writing, and doing arithmetic, and, in fact, serves as a teacher in primary

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136 “Ser alguien y tener una vida mejor… tener mejor oportunidades y encontrar buen empleo (Fernando’s mother, interview by author, January 6, 2013).
137 (Grecia’s father, interview by author, December 28, 2012).
education and *plan básico*. Education for her father did not come naturally or easily for that matter. Prior to becoming a teacher and even before studying in high school and the university, Grecia’s father worked as a taxi driver. During this time, “the church always motivated him to prepare himself, and so he decided to finish high school and later took the exam to enter the university [where] he began to study for his education profession.”

For the past 17 years, Grecia has been influenced by her father directly and indirectly as “she never thought she could reach high school.” Grecia, completing *plan básico* last year, identified her mother and father as crucial components to her successful graduation since her studies “this year took more time because the classes were difficult for her.” Her father indicated that he assisted around three hours per week with her academic studies. Additionally her father attends parents meetings at her school throughout the year and engages in extracurricular activities with her and her siblings, mainly “leaving [the house] to visit other families.” She is currently attending high school as a first year student in a *bachillerato* program; in fact, the same program where her father studied and received his secondary education diploma. Grecia’s father hopes that his daughter will be able to “graduate from high school, enter the mission of the [Mormon] church and enter the university.” Grecia appears to be moving in the direction of her father’s aspirations, and is a positive example of educational continuance that is linked to her father’s high level of educational attainment.

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138 “La iglesia siempre me han motivado a prepararme entonces yo decidí terminar mi bachillerato en ciencias y letras y luego lo hice el examen para ingresar a la universidad y empecé a estudiar mi carrera educativa” (Grecia’s father, interview by author, December 28, 2012).
139 “Nunca pensé que logré tercer ciclo” (Grecia, interview by author, December 28, 2012).
140 “Este año fue más tiempo porque eran difíciles las clases para mí” (Grecia, interview by author, December 28, 2012).
141 “Salir a visitar otras familias” (Grecia’s father, interview by author, December 28, 2012).
142 “Graduar del colegio, entrar la misión de la iglesia y entra la universidad” (Grecia’s father, interview by author, December 28, 2012).
In the case of Antonio, his stepfather and mother finished only the second and fifth grades, respectively. These levels of educational attainment are among the lowest for the families in this study. Antonio graduated from primary school, or the sixth grade, last year, but has decided to suspend his academic studies. His parents’ low educational attainment has translated into his own low educational continuance. Additional factors appear to have contributed to Antonio’s decision to withdraw from school. His mother attended “[school] meetings at the end of each month [in the academic year],” totaling to ten gatherings at the school. This was the most out of all eleven youth in this research. While it might be assumed that higher parent attendance at school gatherings would increase their child’s staying in school, it had the opposite effect, contrary to the hypothesis. Antonio studied in three schools for six academic years. The primary reason for switching school so often was that he was either “not attending” or “he was fighting with a classmate.” It seems that his mother’s consistent attendance to school meetings may have been a result of his rebellious behavior.

Neither Antonio’s mother nor stepfather assisted him with homework; rather he completed it on his own. Antonio’s lack of interest in continuing his education might be attributed to his parents’ lack of attentiveness to his schoolwork, ensuring that he completed his assignments because “if his [parents] do not force him [to do his part] he will not study more.”

Although living in a two-parent household, Antonio’s father is a stepparent and lives with him and his mother. Antonio’s mother finds that one of the most significant obstacles for her son to continue in his education “has been the absence of a father.”

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143 “reuniones cada fin de mes” (Antonio’s mother, interview by author, December 27, 2012).
144 “No estaba asistiendo” (Antonio, interview by author, December 27, 2012).
145 “Me peleaba con un compañero” (Antonio, interview by author, December 27, 2012).
146 Antonio, interview by author, December 27, 2012.
147 “Si no me esforzaron no voy a estudiar más.” (Antonio, interview by author, December 27, 2012).
148 “ha sido la falta de un padre” (Antonio’s mother, interview by author, December 27, 2012).
around for some time, and although he lives with his mother and stepfather, Antonio does not have a good relationship with his stepfather. Their interaction is minimal, supported by the fact that his stepfather assists his own daughter daily with her homework, but not Antonio. The case of Antonio demonstrates the significance of parental factors, especially parents’ education, involvement in their child’s lives, and the difficulty of having a stepparent, on youth’s educational continuance.

149 Antonio’s mother, interview by author, December 27, 2012.
150 Antonio’s stepfather, interview by author, December 27, 2012.
Chapter 4: Economic Factors

While the previous chapter discussed the relationship between parents’ educational background and the education continuance among their children, this chapter focuses on the extent of the relationship between economic conditions experienced by the households and school continuance or school desertion among the youth. The interviews revealed four economic components that demonstrate varying connections with educational continuance: (1) household’s economic status; (2) parental employment; (3) youth employment; and (4) external economic factors. This chapter explores these four variables to determine their significance in increasing, decreasing, or playing a neutral role in youth educational continuance.

Household’s Economic Status

Do households with a higher economic standing experience greater educational continuance among their youth? The literature posits that a strong, positive correlation between income and educational continuance. Households with more wealth and assets are more likely to pay for school supplies, matriculation fees, and other educational expenses. Due to the difficulty involved in obtaining household income and expenditure data, this researcher utilized household observations of all seven households to determine the perceived household wealth and its relation with children’s educational continuance.

In order to perform the household observations, this researcher utilized a survey instrument from the wealth index of the Demographic and Health Surveys, which are nationally

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153 Peter Orazem and Elizabeth King. Schooling in Developing Countries (2008).
representative household survey instruments. The DHS survey instruments obtain data from large sample sizes and are normally conducted every few years to allow for comparisons over time. Given the scope of this research, the DHS wealth index survey instrument was utilized in order to suggest a household’s economic status. Additionally, it provided a mechanism to examine a household’s assets where inferences may be made to estimate a certain household’s economic standing, especially in relation to its ability to further children’s education.

To determine the economic status of each family household, each variable is aggregated with an ad hoc weight to form an index that provides a numerical value signifying the wealth of a given household. The major problem lies in choosing appropriate weights for each variable. Most variables are awarded one point, for the sake of simplicity, and increase in points based on multiple possessions of a certain variable or with certain better or more desirable housing characteristics, such as high-quality vs. low-quality materials used to construct a home and flush vs. latrine toilets. The rough total of the variables of the DHS wealth index, thus ideally the highest possible household wealth, reaches 126. For more information, see Appendix II.

The DHS wealth index survey includes three categories of questions related to the household’s economic position. The first category examines the possession and ownership of many assets, such as a television, mobile telephone, refrigerator, bicycle, or car. The second category quantifies household characteristics, the use of electricity, the source of water, the number of family members per sleeping room, and the type of materials used to construct the home. The third category includes indicators of landownership. The median family on this index has a score of 71, representing high-quality materials used to construct their home, a latrine toilet, piped water into the house, six family members, and a single telephone.

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The seven households fall on different sides of the spectrum of the perceived wealth index with two families on the lower end, two families on the higher end, and three families in the middle area (see Figure 16). Despite limitations in this data collection instrument, the DHS wealth index does provide a basic mechanism for the perceived wealth of a household. Therefore, a pattern exists between household wealth and educational continuance among the children.

**Figure 16: Wealth Index of Households**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>0</th>
<th>20</th>
<th>40</th>
<th>60</th>
<th>80</th>
<th>100</th>
<th>120</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: “Yes” applies to in school, whereas “No” applies to not in school.

The limitations of this index is that it does not show how income is spent in the household and to what extent income is spent on certain social services, such as the children’s education. This index is also unable to show the levels of income of families. These two sets of data, if present in this study, could possibly provide a more accurate display of a family’s finances and their ability to finance the education of their children. It is also impossible to determine the source of their household possessions and how certain housing materials and other housing characteristics were acquired. This could lend insight into other forms of financial assistance, such as through remittances or assistance from the government or non-governmental agencies. An additional limitation exists in the calculating of the point value of each variable, which was difficult to do because of the small sample size of the research.
**Figure 17:** Relationship between DHS Wealth Index and Educational Continuance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Youth</th>
<th>DHS Wealth Index</th>
<th>Variables that stand out…</th>
<th>Still in school?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Fernando</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>(+) Computer, washing machine, rents out second house, piped water into house, flush toilet, HQ materials for house</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Grecia</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>(+) Computer, washing machine, piped water into house, flush toilet, HQ materials for house, motorcycle</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>(1) Carlos</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>(+) Bicycle, piped water into house, HQ materials for housing; (-) latrine toilet</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2) Claudia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Josué</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>(+) Computer, piped water into house, HQ materials for house; (-) latrine toilet</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Iris</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>(+) Piped water into house, flush toilet, HQ materials for house</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Antonio</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>(+) bicycle, piped water into house; (-) minimal electronics, latrine toilet, LQ materials for housing, dirt flooring, minimal electronics</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>(1) Amado</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>(+) bicycles; (-) piped water does not reach house, latrine toilet, LQ materials for housing, no stove, minimal electronics, dirt flooring</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2) Liset</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: (+) refers to positive variables, whereas (-) refers to negative variables; HQ means high-quality and LQ means low-quality.*
The data in Figure 17 above illustrates a clear pattern between household wealth, estimated with the DHS wealth index, and the educational continuance among the youth. This data places households into one of two categories: greater household wealth and educational continuance, and lower household wealth and school drop outs. Families (A to E), maintaining significantly higher wealth indices, are more likely to attain more years of education, in comparison to the other families (F and G) who are characterized by lower household wealth indices. This data appears to follow the theories present in the review of the existing literature, identifying financial capital as a major determinant for keeping youth in school.

Families F and G find themselves at the lower end of the DHS wealth index spectrum and their children are no longer continuing with their education. Amado and Liset (G) cite financial constraints experienced by their family and having to work full time as the reasons for not currently being enrolled in an academic program.157 Amado was in his first year of plan básico, or seventh grade, and dropped out after that first year because “for economic [reasons] he could not continue [studying].”158 In Liset's case, her parents were unable to help her financially despite their desire to keep her in school. The mother of Amado and Liset expressed her desire to push her children forward but cited the lack of money and the difficulty in finding resources, which was confirmed by the father who said that they “need some money so that the children can continue studying.”159 A few key distinctions among the variables accounted for in this household observation offer evidence to the theory correlating lower wealth and school desertion. Amado and Liset’s home is constructed of low-quality materials, such as wood and aluminum, with dirt floor that is dangerous for sanitation purposes, especially given their latrine behind their

158 “Por económicamente no podía continuar” (Amado, interview by author, December 26, 2012).
159 “Necesitamos un principio de dinero para que los niños puedan estudiar” (Amado and Liset’s stepfather, interview by author, December 26, 2012).
home. In addition, they are one of the few household without piped water that enters the home, and use an outdoor fireplace, in place of an electric or gas stove, to prepare their food.

For the second family (F) that shows a pattern between low household wealth and school desertion, Antonio does not appear to have quit attending school for purely economic reasons, although it is possible to have played a role. Rather, his mother suggests “he likes working more than studying,” which led to him to drop out of school and enter the labor force. Nonetheless, his father recognizes the difficulties their family has faced when it comes to matriculating and purchasing the necessary school supplies for their children because “sometimes he cannot [help financially in his children’s education] because of the type of employment that he has because it does not have much income.” For Antonio’s household, some of the common variables from Amado and Liset’s household are the same – low-quality materials for the home’s construction, dirt flooring, minimal electronic equipment, and the use of a latrine toilet. The only difference between these two households is that Antonio’s home has piped water that goes directly into the home.

Some interesting key distinctions among the variables that offer evidence to the higher wealth index households include the possession of a motorcycle, computers, the use of high-quality material to build one’s home, possession of other electronics, having piped water directly into one’s home, a flush toilet, a washing machine, and the ownership of another house that is rented out. The use of high-quality materials, such as cement for the flooring, outer walls, and room dividers, illustrates an important variable that requires more funds in order to complete, in comparison to homes with wood and aluminum that require less money to purchase and less professional work to assemble.

160 “Le gusta más el trabajo que estudiar” (Antonio’s mother, interview by author, December 26, 2012).
161 “A veces no puedo porque el tipo del empleo que tengo porque no tiene muchos ingresos” (Antonio’s stepfather, interview by author, December 26, 2012).
Parent Employment and Occupation Type

Does parent employment contribute to their children’s educational continuance? Are certain occupations more suited to ensure that children remain in school? Parent employment contributes to family earnings, which in turn may be used for educational expenses for the children. Furthermore, research has shown that a parent’s job loss, affecting household income and spending, is likely to lead to children dropping out of school.162

As discussed above with household economic positions, income data is helpful to determine the extent to which a family can contribute to their child’s education. Accurately measuring household income in less developed countries is difficult for several reasons especially with more vulnerable populations. These reasons include: many individuals do not know their exact income and do not keep income records; others lack thorough records; some people may conceal their income from interviewers; multiple earners in a household increase the difficulty in accurate calculations; and, a household earner can have multiple income sources at a given time.163 Income can also vary depending on the occupation of the earner and can fluctuate on a daily, weekly, or seasonal basis.164 This is particularly evident in less developed countries where employment is especially realized in the agricultural, informal, and self-employed sectors. These sectors lend itself to inconsistent work hours, particularly for seasonal jobs and project-based jobs, and fluctuating wages that depend on the source and extent of employment.

Employment in Sector Ocotillo primarily comes from the municipal garbage dump. This work comes in the form of pepenedores, or garbage collectors, who gather specific materials, such as aluminum, glass, copper, paper, and plastic, and sell them to a ‘middleman’ or someone

164 Ibid., 2.
who pays a certain price for the materials and sells them to a corporation or company. Other forms of employment include construction, sweatshops, factory work, agricultural work, and employment in the city at department stores and small businesses, although this accounts for a small minority of the population. Home production is another major form of employment, including selling tortillas, fixing electronic appliances, sewing, and collecting and selling cooper.

The data from this case study reveals that eight of the eleven parents are working. Generally speaking, the male parents of this research, five of the eight employed parents, work the most hours in a week, ranging from 40 to 48 hours per week, whereas the female parents, three of the eight, generally work only 14 hours or 30 hours per week, with one female parent working 66 hours per week. In addition to the variation of working hours, the parents also differ in types of employment, primarily between formal and informal work. The working parents are split evenly between employment in the formal and informal sectors. Parents in the formal sector have occupations, such as primary school teacher, municipal garbage collector, professional security guard, and an attendant at a clothing store. On the other hand, four working parents are employed in the informal sector, which includes construction, agriculture, and home production, such as sewing and selling homemade tortillas. This work involves less stability in terms of income as well as job consistency and continuity, given that some of the jobs are temporary or seasonal, whereas others require a certain consumer demand.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Parent(s)</th>
<th>Work?</th>
<th>Employment type</th>
<th>Work hours/week</th>
<th>Income inferences</th>
<th>In school?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Informal</td>
<td>Varies; based on consumer need</td>
<td>Irregular income; higher income when working</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Informal</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Irregular, low income</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Formal</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>Fixed income</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Formal</td>
<td>30 (school year); 48 (Dec.-Jan.)</td>
<td>Fixed income</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Guardian</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Formal</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>Fixed income</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Informal</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Irregular, low income</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Informal</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Irregular, low income</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Formal</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Fixed, low income</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Workers in the informal sector tend to be less educated and have less experience than those in the formal sector. Additionally, informal workers are subject to longer working hours but find themselves, in general, earning less than formal workers. Female workers in the informal sector usually earn less than their male counterparts in the informal sector and their

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166 Ibid.
male and female counterparts in the formal sector.\textsuperscript{167} Formal sector work also maintains a certain degree of stability in comparison to work in the informal sector.

Are parents working in the formal sector more likely to see their children stay in school, compared to the informal sector workers? Although the literature would suggest that formal sector jobs provide more stability and greater income than in the informal sector, the data is inconclusive. Parents’ employment does not appear to have a consistent pattern with their children’s educational continuance. Parents working in the formal and informal sectors alike experience children who are still in school whereas others have dropped out.

Although the gathered information does not provide an income level per se, it does help deduce whether the income is fixed or irregular and whether it amounts to a certain general level of income. Are parents with a certain income characteristics more likely to see their children remaining in school?

The income inferences from the type of employment reveal minor patterns with children’s educational continuance. When at least one working parent in the households (B, C and E) has a fixed income, the family has a child who is still in school. Family A has both parents working, earning an irregular income and an irregular, low income, respectively. Despite both parents working in the informal sector, characterized mainly by lower income, the father works in construction, which sees significant increases in earnings when he is able to find work, particularly with the municipal building projects over recent years. As a result, these parents have been able to keep their son, Fernando, in school. Families F and G have one working parent in each family who earns an irregular, low income and a fixed, low income, respectively, and neither of their youth are still in school.

\textsuperscript{167} Ibid.
In the case of family B, Josué’s mother is the sole provider for the family, working 66 hours weekly to enable her children to attend the community’s strongest school, Línea de Vida (a private school including grades from pre-primary through plan básico). Josué is in his second year in high school, studying in San Pedro Sula, as a primary result of his mother’s stable, consistent job and her extensive work week.

Youth Employment

The literature surrounding employment and schooling for youth is ambivalent whether youth who work significant hours during their school days will continue with their education cease from attending school.\textsuperscript{168,169} Since the schools operate on a half-day schedule, students can work during the part of the day when they are not in school. Students’ work income can contribute to their educational expenditures allowing them to matriculate and pay for school supplies, in addition to receiving an education via their work environment.\textsuperscript{170} However, youth employment can also be an obstacle or distraction that prevents full and active participation in the school environment.\textsuperscript{171}

In Honduras, 42.3\% of the young working population by the age of 17 years has left their studies and has dedicated their time exclusively to working.\textsuperscript{172} In the case of Sector Ocotillo, youth employment remains significant, involving both formal and informal work, year-round and seasonal work, and continuous and odd-job employment. Given the level of poverty experienced by the households in this community, each and every extra hand bringing in some form of

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Organización Internacional del Trabajo. Estudio de línea de base: Trabajo infantil en el botadero de basura de San Pedro Sula (2004).
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
income is essential and undoubtedly helpful for these families. In this case study, four of the nine youth interviewed (B, E1, F and G1) are currently working. Of these four youth, two of them are still in school (B and E1). The ambivalence expressed in the literature appears to remain constant in this study as well (see Figure 19). Nonetheless, this section will examine youth employment as it contributes or not to further education among the youth interviewed.

**Figure 19: Relationship between Youth Employment and Youth Educational Continuance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Youth</th>
<th>Work?</th>
<th>Type of employment</th>
<th>Work hours/week</th>
<th>Income inferences</th>
<th>In school?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Fernando</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Josué</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Formal</td>
<td>66 (vacation); 15-20 (afternoons during school year)</td>
<td>Regular, low income</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Grecia</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Iris</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Carlos</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Formal</td>
<td>46.5 (weekends only)</td>
<td>Regular, low income</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Claudia</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Antonio</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Informal</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>Irregular, low income</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Amado</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Formal</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Regular, low income</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Liset</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The four employed youth work in both the formal and informal sectors. Those working in the formal sector (B, E1 and G1) find themselves employed in a department store, a factory, and a hardware store, respectively. The fourth youth (F) works in an electronic store in the informal
sector. All four of these employed youth are males, further emphasizing the disparity between female and male employment in marginalized and disadvantaged places like Sector Ocotillo. There does not appear to be any direct relationship between youth employment and educational continuance.

The existing literature postulates that youth whose parents oblige them to contribute to the household income tend to be unable to engage in ‘shift schooling’ and, therefore, are forced to drop out of school. In the case of Amado (G1), his parents needed him to work full time to contribute to the family’s income, making it impossible to attend classes in the morning and work in the afternoon, or vice versa. Carlos (E1), on the other hand, has been able to engage in both work and school by taking classes on the weekends and working full time during the week. Although the data does not show a direct relation between youth employment and staying in school, it appears that parents play a role in shaping their children’s ability to remain in school based upon the family’s financial status and the parents’ individual aspirations and desires for their children.

External Economic Factors

In addition to the economic components addressed above, such as household income and parent and youth employment, the data reveals a series of economic factors that may or may not have played a role in educational continuance among the interviewed youth. Among these economic factors, the data collection identifies the financial assistance from a non-traditional family member (like a sibling or relative), the use of remittances, and the role of godparents as

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contributors to educational continuance among several of the interviewed youth. In another case, the data uncovers the inability of external economic support to keep the young person in school.

Do remittances assist families in keeping their children in school? A recent study in El Salvador demonstrated that remittances play a more significant role in assisting children in completing primary education than secondary education. This case study draws from the experience of Fernando and his family (A). After nearly two years of waiting to return to his studies and despite his inability to find employment to pay for his schooling, Fernando has begun to receive financial support via the form of remittances from a family relative. Fernando began his secondary education in 2011 where “[he] went to Instituto Reyes and left because there were [teacher] strikes and [he] did not have more money for transportation as it was in el centro [or the main part of San Pedro Sula]. It was an economic question and a teachers’ problem.” Fernando was forced to stop attending this secondary school half way through the academic year because of the loss of classes due to teacher strikes that lasted for weeks, in addition to the lack of financial resources to cover transportation costs to and from school. The recent financial support from a family relative has facilitated his return to school. At the beginning of this year, Fernando entered his first of three years at a private high school in el centro where he “wants to graduate from high school with [a degree in] arts and sciences and computation.” If Fernando’s relative was not able to send money for his educational expenses, Fernando would not be studying.

Can non-traditional family assistance keep youth in school? We turn to Iris (D) who has grown up most of her life without her parents, living with her two siblings. She was raised by the

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175 “Fui al Instituto Reyes y me salí porque había mucha huelga y no tenía más dinero para el pasaje porque está en el centro. Fue una cuestión económica y problema de maestros” (Fernando, interview by author, January 6, 2013).
176 “quiero graduarme del bachillerato en artes y ciencias y computación” (Fernando, interview by author, January 6, 2013).
mother of the family next door since the age of four. Iris has experienced something similar to Fernando in that she has an older brother who helps. Her “brother helps her to continue studying… if he were not able to help, she would not continue studying.” For Iris, “he is the only factor” that ensures her ability to stay in school. This is further highlighted by the reality that “this year [her] brother could not pay [for school] and they removed her from school. But he paid [later] and [she] continued studying.” Iris’ neighbor, or guardian, also worries whether or not her brother will be able to continue his contributions to her education expenses. Another successful case is Claudia who is currently finishing her last year in high school. She discusses her decision to study outside of El Ocotillo because “there was no high school there and her parents did not have the finances to help her, so she went to where her godparents are in order to live with them and they have helped her to pay for her school.” Claudia seems to have faced a similar reality that is experienced by many youth in El Ocotillo that, generally speaking, parents feel only an obligation to support their children financially for their education through the plan básico. At that point parents believe their children should work in order to pay for their continuing studies, although most parents believe that high school and potentially even the university are the educational levels necessary to be successful. In addition, the education costs at the high school level are more expensive, not to mention the costs for a university education. Therefore, it is understandable that some youth must rely outside their traditional source of

177 “Mi hermano me ayuda a estudiar. Si él no me habría ayudado, no seguiré estudiando” (Iris, interview by author, January 3, 2013).
178 “Él es el único factor” (Iris, interview by author, January 3, 2013).
179 “Este año mi hermano no podía pagar y me sacaron del colegio. Pero él lo puso el dinero y me seguí estudiando” (Iris, interview by author, January 3, 2013).
180 Iris’ guardian, interview by author, January 3, 2013.
181 “No había colegio aquí y mis padres no tenían las finanzas para ayudarme entonces me fui por donde están mis padrinos para vivir con ellos y ellos me han ayudado para pagar por mi colegio” (Claudia, interview by author, January 4, 2013).
funding – their parents – in order to further their education. For Claudia, she believes that “in order to finish [high school] she only has hope in her godparents… [because] they always help her since her parents cannot.”

A final case is that of Antonio who, at the time of the interview, had recently decided to stop attending school after finishing the sixth grade. Antonio spent time in three schools from first through sixth grade, primarily due to problems with other students in his classes. Most recently, Antonio studied at Diez Flores para Ti because “his mother put him there because it was close to his aunt.” Antonio’s aunt is the director of the school and was able to help cover the matriculation fees and other school expenses. The importance of his aunt is also evident when Antonio explained that the person who has had the most influence on his life was “his aunt because she always supports him.” Unfortunately, the presence and financial support of Antonio’s aunt at this school was not enough to keep him from deciding to drop out of school. Nonetheless, this is another example of the support given from relatives to keep youth in school, but it also demonstrates this does not always result in educational continuance.

The accounts of the four youth above present some of the most interesting data obtained from this study. For Fernando (A), Iris (D), and Claudia (E2), they are able to study because of their relationship with someone else who is contributing the financial component to keep them in school. In comparison to the other youth, this makes a dramatic difference. It also shows that it is much more than a result of access to financial capital, albeit it does play a significant role. The relationships held by each of the three youth with another family member or close friends demonstrate the importance of social capital.

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183 “Para terminar solo tengo esperanza en mis padrinos… siempre me apoyan porque mis padres no pueden” (Claudia, interview by author, January 4, 2013).
184 “Mi mama me puso allá porque estaba cerca de mi tía” (Antonio, interview by author, December 27, 2012).
185 “Mi tía porque ella siempre me apoya” (Antonio, interview by author, December 27, 2012).
Chapter 5: Community Factors

The final chapter of data analysis examines the community effect on educational continuance among the interviewed youth in this case study. Coleman’s Social Capital Theory serves as the main literature guiding the analysis of the following data, intending to demonstrate the presence of a pattern between the community and educational continuance or the lack thereof. In addition, this chapter will highlight the intersection of financial assistance, as it contributes to educational continuance through the medium of social capital.

Schools

Does attendance at a particular school affect one’s educational continuance? Previous research suggests that low school quality results in school desertion. Other research indicates that certain schools, such as private schools and upper class public schools, are in a more advantageous position for educational quality and achievement in comparison to public schools of more disadvantaged and rural areas.

Formal schooling in Sector Ocotillo exists only at the primary and plan básico levels. After ninth grade, students who wish to continue in a high school program need to travel to the center of San Pedro Sula where most secondary schools are located, requiring students to take one or two buses each way. In Sector Ocotillo, the total number of primary schools is six. Three of these six schools have the plan básico component, incorporating seventh through ninth grade in addition to the six primary years. From the interviews, it was identified that the students

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primarily attended three of these schools: Línea de Vida, Escuela República de México and CEB Juan Lindo. Do students stay in school if they attend one, or a combination of these schools?

**Figure 20**: Relationship between Specific Schools in El Ocotillo and Youth Educational Continuance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Youth</th>
<th>School(s) Attended</th>
<th>Currently</th>
<th>In school?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Fernando</td>
<td>Línea de Vida (1-3 grades)</td>
<td>CEB Juan Lindo (4-9 grades)</td>
<td>high school (1st year)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Josué</td>
<td>Línea de Vida (1-9 grades)</td>
<td></td>
<td>high school (2nd year)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Iris</td>
<td>Línea de Vida (1-9 grades)</td>
<td></td>
<td>high school (2nd year)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Grecia</td>
<td>Aurora Mendes (6th grade)</td>
<td>IHER (7-9 grades)</td>
<td>high school (1st year)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Carlos</td>
<td>Escuela República de México (1-6 grades)</td>
<td>IHER (7-8 grades)</td>
<td>IHER (9th grade)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1) Claudia</td>
<td>Escuela República de México (1-6 grades)</td>
<td>Instituto Ademuenza (7-9 grades)</td>
<td>high school (3rd year)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Antonio</td>
<td>CEB Juan Lindo (1-3 grades)</td>
<td>Escuela República de Mexico (3-4 grade)</td>
<td>Diez Flores Para Ti (5-6 grades)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Amado</td>
<td>Escuela República de Mexico (1-6 grades)</td>
<td>Aurora Mendes (7th grade)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2) Liset</td>
<td>CEB Juan Lindo (1-2 grades)</td>
<td>Escuela República de Mexico (3 grade)</td>
<td>Apoyate Mi (4-5 grades)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Línea de Vida (or Life Line), the principal private school in Sector Ocotillo, was founded and remains supported by an international Christian organization based in the U.S.\textsuperscript{188} The school offers primary and \textit{plan básico} education, and maintains a clinic on the school’s grounds for the students and the greater community. One of the advantages of Línea de Vida, as a private school, is that the school community does not have to worry about teacher strikes that occur frequently in public schools. In addition, the school offers a program facilitating pairings between each student and a “godparent” in the U.S. who maintains contact with the students via letters and assists financially with school supplies and other expenses.\textsuperscript{189} Tuition is one of the main reasons that most families are unable to send their children here because in addition to the yearly matriculation fee, there are monthly fees as well as school supplies and uniform costs.

Are youth who attend Línea de Vida more likely to stay in school? Three of the nine youth (A, B, and D) attended Línea de Vida, with only two of them attending for the full nine years (B and D). The youth indicated that they attended this school because “it has a good education and was privatized,”\textsuperscript{190} in addition to “[having the] money”\textsuperscript{191} to pay the private school’s tuition bills. One of the youth also stated, “his mother liked how they taught [in the school] and they did not miss days of classes”\textsuperscript{192} like in the case of most public schools. Each of the three youth also mentioned the importance of the godparent program organized by the school. All three youth are currently studying at the secondary level either in their first or second year in private high schools in San Pedro Sula.

\textsuperscript{188} OIT-IPEC. \textit{Estudio de línea de base}” (2004), 29.
\textsuperscript{189} “En Línea de Vida, había padrinos de los Estados que enviaron cosas. Cada estudiante tenía su propio padrino” (Iris, interview by author, January 3, 2013).
\textsuperscript{190} “Es buena en educación y porque estaba privatizada” (Fernando, interview by author, January 6, 2013).
\textsuperscript{191} “...teníamos el dinero” (Iris, interview by author, January 3, 2013).
\textsuperscript{192} “Mi mama le gustó como enseñar y no perdieron días de clases” (Josué, interview by author, January 2, 2013).
Escuela República de México is a private school that receives its financial support from the municipality of San Pedro Sula and the government of Mexico, in addition to support from International Samaritan, an international NGO. This school only has the capacity for first through sixth grades, and students can attend either the morning or afternoon session. Tuition is not as expensive as Línea de Vida, as families are only required to pay a matriculation fee at the beginning of the academic year and a stipend fee for the school’s guard, in addition to any school supplies and uniform costs. RE.TE, an international NGO that partners with communities where there are high levels of child labor, assists families who are unable to purchase certain supplies or pay certain fees through monetary assistance. Parents have commented that they prefer to send their children to the Escuela República de México because this school is not as susceptible to teacher strikes that occur occasionally in Centro Educativo Básico Juan Lindo.

Five of the nine youth (E1, E2, F, G1 and G2) attended Escuela República de México: three youth (E1, E2 and G1) attended all six years, while the other two (F and G2) only attended for one or two years. Only two of the five youth (E1 and E2) are currently enrolled in a formal education program. Claudia is in her final year of the secondary level and Carlos is completing his final year in plan básico. Among the reasons for choosing this school, proximity appears to be one of the main factors as well as the fact that students do not miss class days as a result of teacher strikes or the inability of the Ministry of Education to pay the teachers.

On the weekends, one of the professors of Escuela República de México rents out the classroom space and the grounds of the school for a plan básico program for youth and adults. The program is called Instituto Hondureño de Educación por Radio (IHER) and operates only on Saturdays for the entire afternoon. Students are assigned large amounts of homework to do during the week in preparation for classes on Saturday. This program is particularly beneficial

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193 Representative of International Samaritan, interview by author, January 5, 2013
for youth and adults who work during the week and use the weekend to work towards the completion of their plan básico. Two of the youth (C and E1) have participated or are currently participating in this program. For Carlos, this program allows him to work during the week at a factory and continue his studies on the weekend, so as the two commitments do not interfere.\footnote{Carlos, interview by author, January 4, 2013.}

He emphasized that of the various subject offerings, the “English subjects have helped him a lot.”\footnote{“Las materias de ingles me han ayudado mucho” (Carlos, interview by author, January 4, 2013).}

For Grecia, her father decided to send her to Instituto Hondureño de Educación por Radio because “they only had to pay the matriculation fee and buy the [uniform] and so for [her parents] it was much easier and they had less expenses.”\footnote{“Solo tenían que pagar la matricula y la camisa y entonces para ellos era más fácil y habían menos gastos” (Grecia, interview by author, December 28, 2012).}

Both youth who have been involved with the IHER program are still continuing with their education.

Centro Educativo Básico (CEB) Juan Lindo is the sector’s main public school, including first through ninth grades in both the mornings and afternoons. Tuition at Juan Lindo is among the lowest of the schools in Sector Ocotillo. Families are required to pay a small fee at the beginning of the academic year and purchase school supplies and uniforms. Although the costs are much lower at CEB Juan Lindo, there are families who struggle to pay, and therefore RE.TE assists families unable to pay the matriculation fee or buy certain supplies.

Three of the youth (A, F and G2) spent part of their primary school studies in CEB Juan Lindo and only one of them (A) stayed to complete his plan básico studies there. This student, Fernando, is the only youth from the sample who completed the plan básico program in CEB Juan Lindo and is still in school. The two other youth (G2 and F) are no longer enrolled in an educational program and left school after fifth and sixth grade, respectively. Each of these youth attended CEB Juan Lindo for only two to three years during primary school.
In examining the influence of certain schools on the educational continuance of youth, the data from the youth interviews reveals several interesting points. First, Línea de Vida stands out above the other schools, especially in terms of fostering educational continuance. All three interviewed youth (A, B and C) who attended this school for all or a portion of their primary and middle educations are still in school. One of the interviewed youth (G2) who has since deserted her studies stated that “her parents chose the Escuela República de México because it was public, but the one she wanted [to attend] was the school of the gringos [or Línea de Vida, as it is funded by a U.S. Christian mission].” Most students, if economically able, prefer to attend this school because of its quality education, unlikelihood of missing many school days, and strong programs like the godparent initiative. The problem of a quality education in Sector Ocotillo was discussed by several of the representatives, stating that “the education is very bad and students attend classes 200 of the 365 days, which does not include vacations and other days off.” Furthermore, students “receive 80% of the scheduled classes because there are strikes and informative assemblies [for teachers and parents].”

A second point of interest is that all the students who have finished plan básico or are nearly finished have persevered in their education, remaining in school. This amounts to six of the nine youth from families A, B, C, D, and E. The three students (F, G1 and G2), who have discontinued their academic studies, at least for this moment, did not complete the plan básico and, in fact, only one of them was able to attain one year in the plan básico. It is inferred from this data that students experience greater success at staying in school once they complete the

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197 “Mis padres eligieron la Escuela República de México porque era público… pero lo más que yo quería era la escuela de los gringos” (Liset, interview with author, December 26, 2012)/
198 “La educación es súper mal y los niños solo asisten clases en 200 de 365 días en el año sin incluir las vacaciones y otros días que no tienen clases” (Representative of the St. Ignatius Nursery, interview with author, January 7, 2013).
199 “Los niños reciben 80 por ciento de las clases porque hay huelgas y asambleas informativas” (Representative of the St. Ignatius Nursery, interview with author, January 7, 2013).
ninth grade, finishing their primary and middle education studies. Several of the representatives of public and private sector organizations alluded to the lack of schools with the plan básico component and the need for a secondary school in Sector Ocotillo.\textsuperscript{200} The representatives emphasized the importance of the schools for preventing the youth from “going to the street or the garbage dump”\textsuperscript{201} where the youth encounter many “risk factors, such as drugs and gangs.”\textsuperscript{202} For most families who financially cannot matriculate their children in the plan básico program of Línea de Vida, they attempt to place their children in CEB Juan Lindo but “it cannot hold everyone”\textsuperscript{203} that applies to matriculate. The lack of schools with plan básico further exacerbates the reality that all children are unable to attain education through the ninth grade. More so, the absence of secondary education schools in Sector Ocotillo presents another obstacle that youth and their families struggle to overcome. Youth are forced to travel to the main part of the city taking up to two buses one-way and the representative of RE.TE identified a concern as to “how the families can pay for the bus fares that cost at least 100 lempiras weekly.”\textsuperscript{204}

A third point of interest gathered from the interview data is the weekend plan básico program, in which two of the youth (C and E1) have been or currently are students. Both of these students are still in school despite the inherent difference in the time spent in the classroom between students of the weekend IHER program and students attending a weekday public or private school. Additionally, this suggests that the weekend program fosters educational continuance among youth and provides an educational model that allows youth to work in

\textsuperscript{200} Interview with representatives from International Samaritan, RE.TE, the medical center, the nursery, and the local Catholic parish.

\textsuperscript{201} “…que vayan a la calle o al basurero” (Representative of the Patronato, interview by author, December 29, 2012).

\textsuperscript{202} “…factores de riesgo como las drogas y las maras” (Representative of International Samaritan, interview by author, January 5, 2013).

\textsuperscript{203} “No ocupa todos” (Representative of the Patronato, interview by author, December 29, 2012).

\textsuperscript{204} “Como pueden pagar por el pasaje que cuesta por lo menos 100 lempiras semanal” (Representative of RE.TE, interview by author, December 30, 2012).
addition to their studies, assuming the work does not conflict with the weekend courses. A final point of relevance from this data is that the seven currently enrolled youth of this case study, generally speaking, have a higher chance of staying in school if they complete their primary and plan básico education in one or two schools, compared to those who attended three or more schools between first and ninth grades. This serves as a place for further research to determine the extent to which multiple schools inhibit educational continuance.

**Government Programs**

According to a study conducted by the International Labor Organization, Sector Ocotillo and surrounding communities received minimal support and assistance from the municipality and federal government. International non-governmental and religious organizations provided the vast majority of social services to the families of these communities, particularly in regards to education and healthcare. Since 2007, the municipality and the federal government have been playing a more active role in El Ocotillo, partnering with NGOs, churches, and foreign governments to implement and sustain certain educational, economic, and health programs and initiatives. One, in particular, supported by the Honduran government since 1990 has only recently been targeting youth in the community of El Ocotillo. PRAF, or Programa de Asignación Familiar, offers a non-formal education program to male and female youth between the ages of 14 and 30 who live in extreme poverty through an initiative called Bono Juvenil. The purpose of Bono Juvenil is to raise the human capital levels among vulnerable youth populations in urban and rural environments in Honduras through participating in a two-month long

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vocational technical course in one of fifteen options, ranging from computer science to welding, auto mechanic, baking and sewing, and cosmetology to cite a few. The courses are offered on Saturdays and Sundays totaling 12 hours at the Centro de Capacitación Técnica Honduras-Corea, made possible through the collaboration between the Korea International Cooperation Agency and the Honduran government, represented by the municipality of San Pedro Sula. This program is free of charge and includes free transportation and meals while at the program’s site. Each classroom has 30 students on average.

Through the courses offered, students receive training in specific technical areas with the potential to translate into skills for the work force. Additionally, this initiative assists in integrating at-risk youth into society to become productive members of their communities, and to improve their lives and those of their families. This program also serves as a mechanism for keeping youth off of the streets where there is the high possibility for delinquency, gang participation, and drug usage.

Does participation in government sponsored programs, like Bono Juvenil and PRAF, lead to educational continuance? Six of nine youth (A, D, E1, E2, G1 and G2) have participated in courses offered by Bono Juvenil through the government’s PRAF program. However, only four of these youth (A, D, E1 and E2) are still in school (see Figure 21).

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208 Ibid.
209 Ibid.
Figure 21: Relationship between PRAF participation and staying in school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Youth</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Useful?</th>
<th>Still in school?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Fernando</td>
<td>PRAF</td>
<td>Computer Science</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Josué</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Grecia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Iris</td>
<td>PRAF</td>
<td>Sewing</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>(1) Carlos</td>
<td>PRAF</td>
<td>Auto mechanic</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2) Claudia</td>
<td>PRAF</td>
<td>Cooking</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Antonio</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>(1) Amado</td>
<td>PRAF</td>
<td>Computer Science</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2) Liset</td>
<td>PRAF</td>
<td>Cosmetology</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only three of these six youth (A, G1 and G2) who participated in a PRAF course found the skills and trades learned to be useful in what they hope to do in the future. It is uncertain for the reasoning as to why they chose or were placed into these courses, but for several of the youth the course they took was not in the field they desired to pursue. Four of the youth (A, D, E1 and E2) who completed a PRAF course are still in school, while two of the three students (B and C) who did not participate in PRAF are also still in school. It appears that participation in a PRAF course is not a requisite for educational continuance, nor does it necessarily lead youth to stay in school. For Fernando, his participation in the computation course in the PRAF program has further increased his desire to study and eventually find work in the computer science field. Fernando emphasized that his participation in PRAF is “where he learned a basic understanding of computation, like Microsoft Office”210 and he confirmed that “it is useful because he did not know [it] before and he learned it and now can be more advanced when he enters high

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210 “donde aprendí conocimiento básico de computación como Microsoft Office” (Fernando, interview by author, January 6, 2013).
Fernando is currently studying in a high school program where he will graduate in three years with a degree in Arts and Sciences, which is necessary for anyone to pursue an education at the university level, and a degree in computation. In the case of another youth, Liset found that “PRAF helped her a lot in cosmetology and baking skills [commenting] that it is good to study and learn things that maybe one does not know.” Although Liset is no longer enrolled in an educational program, she hopes to find a job in cosmetology.

**Faith Community**

The faith communities are numerous in Sector Ocotillo, stemming from the local Catholic parish, to the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints, various evangelical churches, Seventh Day Adventists, and Jehovah Witnesses. The faith backgrounds of the youth and parents of this research comprise only three religious traditions: the Catholic, Mormon, and Evangelical churches. Most of the youth are members of the same church as their parents, although that is not the case of all of the interviewed youth. Does participation in one’s faith community lead to educational continuance?

Six of the nine youth (B, C, D, E2, G1 and G2) are currently active in their faith community. Only four of them (B, C, D and E2) are still in school (see Figure 22). The remaining three youth who do not associate with a particular religious tradition were raised to be religious, but currently do not participate in any faith services or meetings and yet still find God to be present given their responses to several interview questions from the Duke University

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211 “Y es útil porque no sabía antes y lo aprendí y puedo ser avanzado cuando entro el bachillerato” (Fernando, interview by author, January 6, 2013).
212 “El PRAF me ayudó bastante en la belleza y repostería…es bueno para estudiar y aprender cosas que tal vez uno no sabe” (Liset, interview by author, December 26, 2012).
Religion Index.\textsuperscript{214} The Duke University Religion Index measures various dimensions of religiosity, including organizational and non-organizational religious activity.\textsuperscript{215} These three youth fall in the “spiritual, not religious” category, as they find God to be present in their lives or in the world but do not subscribe to a certain religious tradition nor participate in any organizational religious activity. Of the three “spiritual, not religious” youth, only two of them (A and E1) are still in school.

**Figure 22**: Relationship between Faith Community Participation and Staying in School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Youth</th>
<th>Currently attends a faith community</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Still in school?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Fernando</td>
<td>Scouts</td>
<td></td>
<td>Computer science; English</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Josué</td>
<td>LDS</td>
<td>BIT</td>
<td>Computer science; English</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Grecia</td>
<td>LDS</td>
<td>BIT</td>
<td>Computer science; English; Business management</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Iris</td>
<td>Linea de Vida</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>(1) Carlos</td>
<td>Linea de Vida</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2) Claudia</td>
<td>LDS</td>
<td>Sewing; cooking; crafts</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Antonio</td>
<td>Scouts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>(1) Amado</td>
<td>Evangelical</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2) Liset</td>
<td>Evangelical</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The relationship between the participation in one’s faith community and educational continuance is inconclusive. There is also no clear relationship between active involvement in the faith community of both the youth and his or her parents and educational continuance among

\textsuperscript{214} Fernando, interview by author, January 6, 2013; Antonio, interview by author, December 27, 2012; and, Carlos, interview by author, January 4, 2013.

youth, since several youth stay in school while their families are divided in their associations to a certain religious tradition and even their participation or lack thereof. It is interesting, however, that when asked whether the youth and their parents found their participation in their faith community to raise their level of education, all but one individual responded positively, indicating the importance of education from the lens of one’s religious tradition and community.

It may be more interesting to examine the specific programs that youth have taken advantage of in their respective faith traditions to see the extent to which they have increased one’s educational attainment. In addition to government programs, like PRAF, youth in El Ocotillo find themselves with opportunities in programs affiliated with churches and religious organizations and other non-governmental organizations. For members of the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints (LDS), the Business Institute of Technology (BIT) is available for Mormon youth and adults as well. The programs in BIT include English, computation, graphic design and business management courses, to name a few. Unlike the programs in PRAF, the duration of these courses can extend to a year. The LDS church, like other churches, such as the local parish of the Catholic Church, offer classes on baking, cooking, making artisan crafts, sewing, among other skills or trades.

Five of the youth (A, B, C, E2, F) have participated in programs offered by their churches. Interestingly, these five youth all highlighted programs offered by the LDS church, in particular the BIT program and Scouts. Two of these youth (B and C) participated in the BIT program, taking classes in English, computer science, and business management. Both are still studying in their respective high schools. One of the youth, Josué, studied computer science for a year and then took a course in English for another year. Both of these classes “have helped him a lot with

216 All parent and youth, interview by author.
foreign/international things and technology, “which is essential for Josué’s interests in becoming a businessman and having his own business. The BIT program has served as an extension of the formal academic studies in school for these two youth and has prepared and influenced what they hope will be their future work.

Two other youth (A and F) participated in the LDS church’s Scouts program, geared towards younger males and is similar to the Boy Scouts program in the U.S., although it is a religious program in the LDS context, providing boys with life skills and lessons that involve excursions to camps and other field trips. Although both youth who participated in this program expressed its usefulness, it does not appear to have had a significant effect on their educational continuance, particularly given that their participation was at a younger age. The fifth youth (E2) participated in smaller courses offered by the LDS church that included lessons in cooking, baking and craft-making skills. Despite learning a new skill that can be useful in the home setting, it has not had an effect on her ability to continue in her education.

In conclusion of the programs offered by the LDS church, the BIT program has proven to provide assistance to youth furthering their education, particularly in the areas of interest to them, as is the case of both Grecia and Josué who are utilizing their skills learned from the BIT program in the academic life in their respective high schools.

**Influence of One’s Social Ambiance**

In addition to the formal schooling and the course and trade skill offerings by public and private sector organizations, the neighborhood and extended community are also important to

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217 “Me han ayudado mucho con el extranjero y la tecnología” (Josué, interview by author, January 2, 2013).
218 Josué, interview by author, January 2, 2013.
consider. Given the marginalization and vulnerability of Sector Ocotillo, it is not surprising to find the problem of delinquency, drugs and gangs to be prevalent. These factors are enormous risks for the youth population in particular and can have detrimental consequences on the lives of the youth and those of their families. According to a representative of the local Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints, “the youth are more interested in the easy things and this contributes to the fact that the youth look for other paths like gangs where they have more perks that provide more economic opportunities. This is attractive for [the youth] as it is easy to follow this. And this has made them drop out of school.” Adding to the comment above, a representative of the Patronato, the local governing body, offers a suggestion that “a workshop could help so that the youth remain busy and also in order to avoid drugs and gangs… as it is important to have their mind occupied in something.” Further adding to the commentary surrounding the youth’s free time, a representative of the Richard Flasck Medical Center emphasizes that “the free time of the children after school is very important… maybe as important as the time in the school. The local gang will be waiting with open arms.”

The representatives of local public and private sector organizations in Sector Ocotillo offer a unique perspective as they work with many individuals and families. Important issues are brought to the forefront of the social environment that directly and indirectly influence and affect the youth and other members of the community. The responses of these representatives highlight

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221 “Los jóvenes están más interesados en las cosas fáciles y esto contribuya que los jóvenes buscan otras senderos como las pandillas donde tienen mejores prebendas que proveen más oportunidades económica… es atractivo para ellos como es fácil para perseguirlos. Y eso ha hecho que ellos deserten de las escuelas y los colegios” (Representative from the LDS church, interview by author, December 29, 2012).

222 “Un taller puede ayudar para que los jóvenes pasen ocupados y también para evitar las drogas y las maras… es importante que tiene su mente ocupada en algo” (Representative of the Patronato, interview by author, December 29, 2012).

223 “El tiempo libre de los niños después de la escuela es muy importante. Quizás tan importante que el tiempo en la escuela. La pandilla local va a estar esperando con brazos abiertos” (Representative of the Richard Flasck Medical Center, interview by author, January 3, 2013).
the problem of drugs and gangs, as being at the top of the social issues experienced throughout Sector Ocotillo. It is obvious that the youth experience a lack of opportunities after school, in the evenings and on the weekends. They also make the connection that these social problems have had a direct influence on educational continuance, further decreasing the probability that one would stay in school if involved in delinquency, drugs, or gangs.

Another important responsibility of one’s community that extends from within the family to the greater community, including NGOs and churches, involves the motivation of the youth. Many youth find themselves disillusioned with the educational system. Others find themselves to lack interest and to be less motivated to study, which can originate from a desire to work and not continue studying, while it can also come from the hard reality of unemployment that ranks high among the unfortunate challenges facing Honduran youth.

Chapter 3 addresses the responsibility of the parents to motivate their children and the correlation between motivation and educational continuance among youth. This chapter seeks to address the role of motivation in the community, including one’s neighborhood environment and public and private sector organizations. The interviews for this case study did not directly explore the role of social influences in one’s neighborhood. Nevertheless, in the course of conducting the interviews, the researcher noticed this important theme discussed by various members of the community. As demonstrated above, gangs and drugs are negative factors that lead youth away from staying in school. Therefore, in order to prevent this from becoming a reality, it is essential that youth receive the proper motivation from people outside of one’s family as well. The representative of the LDS church stresses the need to “motivate [the youth] and extend for them the vision of the future… what life do they want to have… what level of
education do they want to have.”

He continues by suggesting that the community needs to “help [the youth] because all of a sudden they do not have the economic part [to continue their studies] nor the psychological part… [as] there are youth who have been badly treated and do not have self-esteem.”

The case of one of the interviewed youth resonates with this challenge of motivation. Antonio found himself moving in and out of schools, forced to leave because he “fought with another student.” In the conversation with Antonio, it was made evident that he desires to “do the work of a mechanic” and recognizes that he needs to attain “all the grades until the course on technical profession” and even then “maybe the university as an industrial engineer.”

Despite his dream and understanding of what it takes to achieve that dream, Antonio “never puts his part” and “if he does not understand [something], he does not work to understand it [as it is] better to abandon it.” Antonio’s mother expressed distress when talking about her son and his decision to abandon his studies, as “he likes to work more than to study” as he lacks the drive and encouragement to continue studying. Her hope is that Antonio will return to participating in the church community and she believes that “advice from other people can help him to move forward” in his studies and his life. Others in the community can alleviate the lack of interest and motivation to continue one’s education through positive advice and encouragement, especially to prevent one from succumbing to a life of delinquency and

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224 “motivarles y ampliarles la visión del futuro…que vida quieren tener…que clase de educación quieren tener” (Representative of LDS church, interview by author, December 29, 2012).
225 “Ayudarles porque de repente no tienen el parte económico y también el parte psicológico… hay jóvenes que han sido maltratados y no tienen autoestima” (Representative of LDS Church, interview by author, December 29, 2012).
226 “me peleaba con un compañero” (Antonio, interview by author, December 27, 2012).
227 “hacer el trabajo de mecánico” (Antonio, interview by author, December 27, 2012).
228 “todos los grados hasta el curso de oficio de técnico” (Antonio, interview by author, December 27, 2012).
229 “quizás la Universidad como ingeniero industrial” (Antonio, interview by author, December 27, 2012).
231 “Si no entiende, no trabaja para entenderlo… mejor abandonarlo” (Antonio, interview by author, December 27, 2012).
232 “Le gusta más el trabajo que estudiar” (Mother of Antonio, interview by author, December 27, 2012).
233 “consejo de otras personas le pueden ayudar a él a seguir adelante” (Mother of Antonio, interview by author, December 27, 2012).
negative, harmful associations, such as gangs. This was the case for Josué who mentioned that one of the leaders of his church has been his major influence in life. Josué is in his second year of high school, hoping to operate his own business, and emphasized the support and advice from this church leader, stating that he “always tells me that I have to study and continue forward.”

234 “…siempre me dice que tengo que estudiar y seguir adelante” (Josué, interview by author, January 2, 2013).
Conclusion

The case study of seven families in Sector Ocotillo, San Pedro Sula, Honduras sought to examine the factors that influence educational continuance among children. This research reaches several conclusions which are restated below.

*Expected Factors*

Several hypotheses from existing literature were confirmed by my analysis. Parents’ socioeconomic status, defined by years of education and income, contributes to children’s educational continuance. The case study on Sector Ocotillo concluded the same outcome: children of parents who completed primary school and had a higher household wealth index, relative to other families, tend to stay longer in school; whereas the children whose parents had neither completed primary school nor possessed a high wealth index deserted their studies.

In addition, families with lower household wealth indices experienced parents who needed their children to contribute to the family income. Low household income obligated some of the children to leave school in order to support their family economically. The literature emphasized the difficulty of managing both school and work. Nonetheless, some students were able to handle both obligations, using the structure of the ‘shift schooling’ model.

*Factors of Interest*

More interesting than the factors above were several results that played a critical role in leading to school continuance or desertion. First, family disintegration plays a crucial role in affecting children. Although the study did not examine in-depth the effects of lack of family
unity, it was a game changer for three youth who have stepparents and no contact with their biological fathers. All three of these youth are no longer in school. Second, it was assumed that parent attendance at school meetings would lead to higher educational continuance among the youth. The opposite occurred, suggesting that parents’ attendance was for disciplinary or academic problems. Third, external financial assistance makes a dramatic difference. Whether receiving remittances or receiving financial help from an older sibling or godparents, this extra ‘income’ allowed for the youth recipients to remain in school. This factor suggests not only the importance of financial capital, but also social capital and the importance of relationships in facilitating financial assistance.

Fourth, the financial assistance program at Linea de Vida provides a form of assistance unlike any of the other schools in Sector Ocotillo. All three youth who attended this school are still continuing their studies. Fifth, the data showed that the youth who completed plan básico were more likely to stay in school, in comparison to those who failed to finish the ninth grade. Finally, it appears that youth perform better, remaining in school, when they complete their primary education and plan básico in one or two schools, as compared to three or more schools.

These findings leave multiple avenues for future research to be conducted. In addition to Sector Ocotillo as a prime location where few studies have been performed, this case study identifies several areas that would benefit from further exploration. The role of family disintegration, the extent to which youth and their families receive external assistance, and the significance of schools with financial assistance programs are additional factors that deserve investigation.
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Appendix I: Interview Script

(Note: Below is included one of individual interview scripts. The scripts for parents and public/private sector representatives were similar.)

Interview Script

Youth

1. Gender (Interviewer checks.)
   __ Female  __ Male

   Now, I’m going to ask you some questions about you and your family.

2. How old are you?

3. With whom are you living now? (Check only one.)
   1 – Both parents; 2 – Mother only; 3 – Father only; 4 – Grandparents; 5 – Other relatives; 6 – Other; 7 - Nobody

4. How many brothers and sisters do you have?
   ___ Brothers  ___Sisters

5. Are you currently attending school?
   ___Yes  ___No

6. What schools are you attending or did you attend, for what grades, and can you tell me why your parents selected these specific schools?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Grades Attended</th>
<th>Can you tell me why your parents selected this school? [Probe: scholarship available]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Escuela República de México</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Línea de Vida</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juan Lindo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   6.1 Were there special programs or activities in the school(s) that you attended that you believe helped you or are helping you to complete your education?

       ___Yes  ___No

       If so, please discuss these.

6.2 Did you ever repeat a grade?
   ___Yes  ___No

   6.2.1 If yes, what grade(s)? ________

   6.2.2 Comment: 
6.3 [ASK ONLY IF PARTICIPANT IS NOT CURRENTLY ATTENDING SCHOOL] When did you stop going to school?

6.3.1 At what grade level?

7. Who helps you with homework? [Prompt: One of your parents? One of your siblings?]

7.1 In the past two weeks, about how many hours did your parents or another relative spend time helping you with homework?

8. In the last two weeks, on how many days right after school, did you do sports, arts or other recreational activity? (Check one only.)

   None ..................
   1 to 3 days ............
   4 to 6 days...............  
   7 to 9 days...............  
   10 or more days .........

Questions about work
9. Do you work?
   ___Yes  [Go to 9.1]  ___No  [Go to 9.2]

9.1 If yes,
   9.1.1 What type of work do you do?
   9.1.2 In the past month (30 days) about how many hours did you work each week?
   9.1.3 Do you believe that your work interferes with your education?
       ___Yes  ___No

       9.1.3.1 If yes, what is the effect that this job has on your education?

9.2 If not working,
   9.2.1 Are you looking for work?
       ___Yes  ___No
   9.2.2 Comment:
9.3 What type of work do you want to do in the future? [Probe: your future plans for work]

9.3.1 What type of knowledge and or skills do you believe are necessary for this type of work?

9.3.2 What type of education do you believe is necessary for this type of work?

10. In addition to your formal education in school, have you participated in other forms of education or learning advancement like vocational workshops for example? [Probe: PRAF, programs sponsored by the Mormon Church]
   ___Yes   ___No

10.1 If yes, what is this program, or are these programs? Please tell me about how helpful you believe they have been (or are) to helping do the work you want to do.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Comment on Helpfulness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. Do you believe that you receive adequate healthcare; that is, care that helps you with your health problems or helps you to stay healthy?
   ___Yes   ___No

11.1 Please tell me about this.

12. Engagement with faith community [derived from the Duke religiosity scale]
   12.1 How often in the past month (30 days) would you say that you attended church services or other religious meetings?
      1 – Rarely or never; 2 – A few times; 3 – once per week; 4 – More than once a week; 5 – Daily; 6 – More than once a day
      
      12.1.1 Comment:

12.2 How often in the past month (30 days) would you say that you spent time in private religious activities, such as prayer or meditation?
   1 – Rarely or never; 2 – A few times; 3 – once per week; 4 – More than once a week; 5 – Daily; 6 – More than once a day
12.2.1 Comment:

12.3 How often in the past month (30 days) would you say that you spent time watching religious television?
1 – Rarely or never; 2 – A few times; 3 – once per week; 4 – More than once a week; 5 – Daily; 6 – More than once a day

12.3.1 Comment:

12.4 How often in the past month (30 days) would you say that you spent time reading the bible or in some form of bible study?
1 – Rarely or never; 2 – A few times; 3 – once per week; 4 – More than once a week; 5 – Daily; 6 – More than once a day

12.4.1 Comment:

12.5 In your life, do you experience the presence of the divine; that is, God or the Holy Spirit?
1 – Never; 2 – Almost never; 3 – Sometimes; 4 – Almost always; 5 – Always; 6 – Don’t understand

12.6 Do you believe that your participation in your faith community has led to more education or enhanced education?
___Yes  ___No

12.6.1 Comment:

Open-ended questions
13. How important do you believe education to be?
1 – Very important; 2 – Important; 3 – Neutral; 4 – A little important; 5 – Not important at all; 6 – Unsure

13.1 Comment:

14. What are your educational goals?

14.1 Are you reaching these goals?
___Yes  ___No

15. What factor helps the most in achieving your educational goals? Comment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor to Facilitate Goals</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16. What other factor helps to achieve your educational goals? Comment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor to Facilitate Goals</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
17. Is there any other factor that helps to achieve your educational goals? Comment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor to Facilitate Goals</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

18. What do you believe has been your biggest barrier in achieving your educational goals? How do you think this barrier can be overcome?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barrier to Achieving Goals</th>
<th>How to overcome it</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

19. What do you believe has been another barrier in achieving your educational goals? How do you think this barrier can be overcome?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barrier to Achieving Goals</th>
<th>How to overcome it</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20. Has there another barrier to achieving your educational goals? If yes, what is this barrier and how do you think this barrier can be overcome?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barrier to Achieving Goals</th>
<th>How to overcome it</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

21. Who has had the most influence on you with respect to your educational and life goals? (Probe: parent, a sibling, a relative, a friend, someone from the community).

17.1 Comment:
22. Where do you see yourself in five years? What do you need to do to get there? How can your faith community help you get there? How can NGOs in this community help you get there? How can the government help you get there?
## Appendix II: Domestic Household Survey with Ad Hoc Weights

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ad Hoc Weight</th>
<th>Electronics and Communications:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>-Radio</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-1/+1</td>
<td>-Television</td>
<td>B/W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>-Sound equipment (stereo, CD)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>-Video gaming system</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>-Video equipment (VCR/DVD, video camera)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>-Photographic camera</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>-Landline telephone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>-Mobile telephone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>-Computer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>-TV cable, satellite dish</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Appliances:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>-Refrigerator</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>-Stove/oven</td>
<td>Gas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>-Electric iron</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>-Fan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>-Air conditioner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>-Deep freezer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>-Washing machine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>-Sewing machine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>-Clock/watch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Type of Vehicle:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>-Bicycle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>-Motorcycle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>-Car</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(# of rooms)</td>
<td>Number of rooms in house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>-Separate room used as kitchen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (2-3 ppl)/</td>
<td>Number of members per sleeping room</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 (3-4 ppl)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Animals:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>-Chicken(s)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>-Dog(s)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>-Cat(s)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>-Pig(s)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>-Other animal(s)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>-Animals sleep inside</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>-Animals sleep outside</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Water Supply:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>-Piped drinking water in residence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>-Piped drinking water in public tap</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>-Purchased water</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>-Collected rainwater</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>-Tanker truck for water</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-River, canal, or surface water</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Other source of water</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sanitation Facilities:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2/3</th>
<th>-Flush toilet</th>
<th>Public</th>
<th>Private</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>-Latrine</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Private</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Type of Lighting:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4</th>
<th>-Electricity for lighting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>-Kerosene for lighting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>-Gas for lighting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>-Oil for lighting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Other lighting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Type of Cooking Fuel:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5</th>
<th>-Electricity for cooking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>-Wood cooking fuel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>-Coal cooking fuel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>-Charcoal cooking fuel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>-Kerosene cooking fuel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Other cooking fuel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**House:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5</th>
<th>-House from high-quality materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>-House from low-quality materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>-House form mixed quality materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/3/5</td>
<td>-Roofing Natural Aluminum Drop ceiling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/3/5/2</td>
<td>-Type of flooring Dirt Cement Ceramic/Tile Wood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/5/3/1</td>
<td>-Outer walls Wood Cement Aluminum Natural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/1</td>
<td>-Room dividers Concrete walls Bed sheets Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/3</td>
<td>-Windows Open Covered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/3/1</td>
<td>-If covered, Glass Cloth Wood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/3/5</td>
<td>-Furniture (sofas, beds, chairs, tables)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Ownership or rent?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5/1</th>
<th>-Agricultural land</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5/1</td>
<td>-Main Residence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/1</td>
<td>-Other residences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/1</td>
<td>-Commercial property</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/1</td>
<td>-Vacant land</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>