

PIONEER AND SETTLER MEXICAN MIGRATION
TO NEW DESTINATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES:
THIRTY YEARS OF DEVELOPMENT

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During the 1990s, the Mexican origin population of the United States accelerated its transformation from a mostly regionally concentrated ethnic group to one that is more widely distributed around the country (Durand, Massey and Charvet 1999). The growth in the number of Mexican origin persons outside the Southwest took place in both relative and absolute terms and was largely driven by migration of Mexican-born persons, both from origins within the United States and directly from Mexico. In 1970, for example, only 8.4 percent of the foreign-born Mexican origin population resided outside the five traditional destination states (California, Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, and Illinois), which were at that time the states in which the greatest concentrations of Mexican origin persons in general resided. By 2000, almost one in four, or 24.5 percent of the foreign-born Mexican origin population, lived outside these states, an increase in population size of over 2 million migrants.

This paper explores the dynamics of this transformation both theoretically and empirically. We develop a theoretical framework drawing upon theories of migration (Massey, et al, 1994). Our first proposition is that in the U.S. case the very first migrants, who we term “pre-pioneer” migrants, are persons who have migrated to new locales for much the same reasons as usual migrants (i.e., persons who move for combinations of economic and family-based life course reasons). We then theorize that these persons, in conjunction with the occurrence of certain economic transformations and often the emergence of associated labor

recruitment, set the stage for subsequent pioneer migration, which in turn, eventually becomes supplanted by settler migration.

Empirically, we use micro-data from the 1970, 1980, 1990, and 2000 Censuses to chart the basic components of Mexican origin population increase (net internal migration of both foreign- and native-born persons, net international migration, and net natural increase) in the "new" Mexican destination states. We then focus in particular on the social, economic and policy changes that led to rapid growth of Mexican origin population in some regions but not in others. First, combining data from all four Censuses, we chart changes in the numbers and characteristics of migrants in the new states of Mexican migration. In other words, we set forth a set of procedures for identifying the nature and magnitude of those particular forms of early migration likely to represent "pioneer" migration and thus to have constituted the "template" for later migration. We also ascertain the numbers and identify the characteristics and locations that are likely to represent "settler" migration, or later migrants who settle in the new locales after the early pioneer labor migrants had begun the migration process, to understand how they were different from their predecessors.

As expected based on the theoretical framework, preliminary results for the new Mexican migration states suggest that family-based theories better explain earlier "pre-pioneer" migration patterns, new economic theories the "pioneer" patterns, and neo-classical and social causation theories the later "settler" migration that follows the pioneers. This is ascertained by observing the characteristics of Mexican migrants who moved into new destinations at different stages of growth in the foreign-born Mexican origin population of new destination states. Along with simple bivariate trends, we enlist multivariate techniques to further understand the changes that occurred in the migration flows to new destinations, particularly in the 1980s and 1990s, seeking

to uncover the determinants of both increased migration into new destinations and shifting origins from within the United States to Mexico. We first use factor analysis to identify the predominate characteristics of Mexican migration into new destinations in both the 1975 to 1980 and 1985 and 1990 time periods. We then use ordinary least squares regression to analyze changes in the migration flows in the following decade.

Our preliminary results confirm and further elaborate the findings based on the bivariate trends. Focusing first on migration in the 1975 to 1980 period and the determinants of change in the 1980s, preliminary results from regression models (Table 1) show that the characteristics of the migrants and the industries in which they work are associated with changes in the migration flow in the following decade. For example, once the migration flow into a state shifts from families with children, or “pre-pioneer” migrants, to being primarily young males who work in food and agricultural industries, or “pioneer” migrants, the cumulative effects are seen in the following decade when increased internal migration into those states occurs. Alternatively, for states where larger Mexican origin populations are already present, what we call “settler” migration, large proportions of the migration flow in the following decade arrives directly from Mexico. The precursor of greatest change in the 1980s from internal migration to international flows is the proportion of the Mexican origin population that are young male migrants.

Table 1

Regression Results Using 1980 Principal Factor Scores to Predict 1990 Dependent Variables

Independent Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
	1995 to 2000 % Foreign-born Mexican In-Migrants, Intl Origins	1990-2000 Change in % Foreign-born Mexican In-Migrants, Intl Origins	1990-2000 Annual Growth Rate of Foreign-born Mexican Intl In-Migrants
Constant	0.519 *** (19.54)	-0.039 (-0.89)	0.172 *** (6.22)
F1: Male Migrants, Young Population, Large Ag and Food Industry	-0.073 ** (-2.5)	-0.068 (-1.4)	0.007 (0.24)
F2: Recent, Male Population, Less Time in US	0.029 (0.98)	-0.132 *** (-2.7)	-0.066 ** (-2.15)
F3: Larger Mexican Origin Pop, Large Service Industry	0.090 *** (2.97)	0.063 (1.27)	-0.016 (-0.51)
R ²	0.27	0.22	0.11

t-ratios in parenthesis; * p<.10; ** p<.05; *** p<.01

The dynamics of Mexican migration changed in the 1990s from the 1980s, both due to economic and policy changes (Bean and Stevens 2003, Massey et al. 2002). Although these changes are evident in our results, the association between the characteristics of the migrants in the 1980s and changes in the migration flows in the 1990s is still evident. The preliminary results are provided in Table 2. Similar to the 1980s, larger international migration flows were preceded by higher proportions of male Mexican origin populations. Alternatively, the presence of older migrants with more experience in the United States and who migrated internally from other U.S. states, or “pre-pioneer” migration, is followed by lower overall proportions of international migration. However, looking to Models 2 and 3, we see this factor is also strongly associated with positive changes and growth in international migration in the 90s. Again, the internal male migrants were the agents of change with regards to the future growth of pioneer and setter migration directly from Mexico.

Table 2

Regression Results Using 1990 Principal Factor Scores to Predict 2000 Dependent Variables

Independent Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
	1995 to 2000 % Foreign-born Mexican In-Migrants, Intl Origins	1990-2000 Change in % Foreign-born Mexican In-Migrants, Intl Origins	1990-2000 Annual Growth Rate of Foreign-born Mexican Intl In-Migrants
Constant	0.613 *** (33.74)	0.093 *** (3.85)	0.19052 *** (12.28)
F1: Male, Intl Migrants, Male Population, No spouses	0.066 *** (3.47)	-0.047 * (-1.84)	-0.02575 (-1.57)
F2: Older, Internal Migrants, More Time in US	-0.061 *** (-3.12)	0.068 ** (2.65)	0.05645 *** (3.41)
F3: Native-born, Settled Population, Older Women, More Time in US	-0.047 ** (-2.4)	-0.103 *** (-3.9)	-0.01582 (-0.94)
F4: Less Food & Ag, More Service, Larger Mexican Population	-0.026 (-1.25)	-0.108 *** (-3.96)	-0.06411 *** (-3.66)
R ²	0.44	0.50	0.42

t-ratios in parenthesis; * p<.10; ** p<.05; *** p<.01

These preliminary results are indicative of transformations that occurring over the past 40 years in Mexican origin migration flows into new destinations. Building upon these initial results, our paper will further explicate the theoretical framework, explore these ideas and results more in depth, and include other important economic and policy factors in the analysis. The policy and theoretical implications of the results will also be discussed.