

Extended abstract

Mexican Adolescents in a Family Migration System:
Movers, Stayers, and Those Left Behind

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The role of international migration in shaping the circumstances of children is a growing concern of social scientists. Migration is an event that profoundly impacts families in both origin and destination countries. It can promote or delay family formation, separate kin, and influence the economic chances and social lives of both migrant and non-migrant family members. In the case of proximate countries, migratory movements back and forth can lead to transnational families comprised of family members living in different nations. There is growing concern about the impact of such complex family circumstances on children, especially when they are separated from their parents (Mazzucato and Schans, 2011). Yet few studies have been able to provide comprehensive data on the intersection between migration and children's family circumstances in origin and destination countries, and even fewer of these studies focus on adolescents.

Adolescents are at a particular stage in the life course in which they further define their sense of selfhood and begin the transition into adulthood. Families provide key resources to adolescents that impact their development and future outcomes. Yet, older children display higher proportions living without parents in the household than younger children. Given a family context of migration, adolescents may experience limited resources, adaptation problems, changes in values and aspirations that may generate conflict, and increased vulnerability to exploitation and abuse. All of these stresses may negatively impact their outcomes in education, health and labor.

We focus on the implications of migration between Mexico and the United States for the family circumstances of Mexican-origin adolescents in both countries. Due to the surge of immigration from Mexico during the last decades of the 20th century, immigrants from Mexico accounted for a large share of legal and illegal immigration to the United States. Although Mexico-U.S. migration has recently declined (Massey, 2012), a well-established migration system continues to impact children in ways that scholars are only now beginning to unravel. Our study addresses several key research gaps in this field. The first is the lack of binational studies that quantify the size of groups of adolescents with various family migration histories. The second is the paucity of information on the family circumstances of adolescents with complex current and recent family migration patterns. The third is the need for additional information on the circumstances of youth without a parent present in the household.

We use the 2009-2011 American Community Survey estimates and the 2010 Mexico Census to provide new information on the distribution of Mexican-origin adolescents ages 15-17 by parental and

child nativity and place of residence five years ago. Both descriptive and multivariate logistic regression analyses of parental presence and family extension will be conducted. Detailed information on adolescents in Mexico who live in households that include current U.S. emigrants and recent return migrants from the United States will be analyzed.

Analyses of adolescent's living arrangements reveal striking differences by family migration patterns and country of residence. Table 1 shows that 9% of Mexican adolescents ages 15-17 in the United States live without any parents in the household, a figure much higher than U.S. adolescents in general. Although their counterparts in Mexico are even more likely to live independent of their parents (13%), they may be less vulnerable because of the presence of extended kin. As is shown in Table 3, fully 41% of recent U.S. migrants (Mexico-born adolescents in the United States who lived in Mexico five years earlier) have no parent present in their household, compared to 13% of their non-migrant counterparts in Mexico.

Table 1 shows that among Mexican-origin adolescents in the United States who have at least one parent in the household, 16% were born in Mexico, 48% are U.S.-born children of Mexico-born parents, and 32% are U.S.-born offspring of U.S.-born parents. Table 2 reveals that U.S.-born children of Mexico-born parents are more likely to live with both parents (over 77%) than U.S.-born youth with a U.S.-born parent (57%). The latter group is more likely to live with a single mother or single father than youth with a Mexico-born parent.

Based on nativity and residence five years ago, adolescents in Mexico can be disaggregated into those with no parental or adolescent migration experience (98%) and those with some parental or adolescent migrant experience (2%; shown in Table 1). The Mexican census also includes information with which to determine whether a household has a current U.S. emigrant or includes a recent return migrant from the United States. About 3% of adolescents in Mexico live in households with a current U.S. migrant and about 1% live in households with a recent return migrant. In Table 2, we examine family structure among these two groups. About two thirds of Mexican youth with no current migrant from the household live with both parents, compared to half of Mexican youth with a current U.S. emigrant. Mexican youth with a current U.S. emigrant were more likely to live with a single mother (32%) or without a parent present (16%) than adolescents with no U.S. emigrants (18% and 13% respectively). The contributions of the study are evaluated in the context of prior research on the implications of family migration for Mexican-origin adolescent's lives.

References

- Massey, Douglas S. (2012). The Great Decline in American Immigration? *Pathways* Fall 2012.
- Mazzucato, Valentina and Djamilia Schans. (2011). Transnational Families and the Well-Being of Children: Conceptual and Methodological Challenges. *Journal of Marriage and Family* 73: 704-712.

Table 1. Distribution of Mexican-origin children ages 15-17 by child/parent nativity and residence five years ago, 2009-2011 ACS-IPUMS & 2010 Mexico Census

Variables	United States		Mexico			
	Unweighted Total	Weighted %	Unweighted Total	Weighted %	Current US migrant %	Return migrant %
All children	46,237	100.0	775,741	100.0	3.0	1.0
All children with parent	41,886	91.3	670,688	86.6	2.9	1.0
Children with no parent	4,351	8.6	105,053	13.3	3.6	0.9
Residence 5 years ago						
Children with parent	41,886	100.0	670,688	100.0	2.9	1.0
MX/MX MX/MX	191	0.5	656,374	97.6	2.8	0.8
MX/MX MX/US	579	1.4	8,441	0.9	9.5	23.6
MX/MX US/MX	76	0.2	195	0.0	15.0	13.6
MX/MX US/US	5,605	13.7	1,296	0.2	5.0	6.3
MX/US MX/MX		0.0	345	0.1	2.1	2.1
MX/US MX/US	26	0.1	22	0.0	1.1	6.8
MX/US US/MX						
MX/US US/US	105	0.2	9	0.0	0.0	7.8
US/MX MX/MX		0.0	2,951	0.5	5.6	2.3
US/MX MX/US		0.0	151	0.0	6.4	23.9
US/MX US/MX	320	0.8	133	0.0	2.8	13.9
US/MX US/US	20,668	48.0	582	0.1	11.3	7.7
US/US MX/MX		0.0	127	0.0	2.2	1.9
US/US MX/US		0.0	11	0.0	0.0	12.2
US/US US/MX		0.0	3	0.0	0.0	0.0
US/US US/US	14,316	32.5	48	0.0	2.1	6.9
Children with no parent	4,351	100.0	105,053	100.0	3.6	0.9
MX MX	351	8.1	103,896	98.9	3.5	0.8
MX US	636	14.6	403	0.4	6.7	3.6
US MX	0	0.0	573	0.5	5.2	2.4
US US	3,364	77.3	181	0.2	5.8	5.0

Notes: First country corresponds to child, second to parent, MX=Mexico, US=United States.

Residence 5 years ago based on year of entry for the US.

Totals exclude children with unspecified own or parental birthplace or residence five years ago, or country other than the US or MX.

Source: 2009-2011 ACS-IPUMS, 2010 Mexico Census, tabulations by authors.

Table 2. Parental Presence by Nativity and Residence 5 years ago for 15-17 year old Mexican-origin children with at least one parent present, 2009-2011 ACS-IPUMS & 2010 Mexico Census, Weighted Percentages.

Variables		United States				Mexico							
						No Current US Migrant from Household				Current US Migrant from Household			
Nativity	Residence 5 years ago	Both parents	Mother only	Father only	No parent	Both parents	Mother only	Father only	No parent	Both parents	Mother only	Father only	No parent
Unweighted total		27,915	9,578	1,920	3,850	500,620	139,294	22,497	102,599	11,460	7,488	613	3,757
All children		64.5	22.1	4.4	8.9	65.4	18.2	2.9	13.4	49.1	32.1	2.6	16.1
All children with parent		70.8	24.3	4.9	0.0	75.6	21.0	3.4	0.0	58.6	38.3	3.1	0.0
MX/MX	MX/MX	60.5	33.1	6.4		75.5	21.1	3.4		57.6	39.3	3.1	
MX/MX	MX/US	80.6	10.9	8.5		90.2	5.7	4.1		87.1	8.1	4.8	
MX/MX	US/MX	83.8	10.9	5.3		50.8	36.0	13.2		50.0	47.8	2.2	
MX/MX	US/US	78.5	17.3	4.2		64.5	31.2	4.4		51.3	48.7	0.0	
US/MX	MX/MX					67.1	28.2	4.7		61.2	35.8	3.1	
US/MX	MX/US					91.3	3.4	5.3		48.5	39.7	11.8	
US/MX	US/MX	80.7	14.6	4.7		46.6	45.4	8.0		53.1	46.9	0.0	
US/MX	US/US	77.5	18.9	3.6		67.7	27.6	4.6		91.4	8.0	0.6	
US/US	US/US	57.3	35.9	6.8		93.7	2.2	4.2		100.0	0.0	0.0	

Notes: First country corresponds to child, second to parent, MX=Mexico, US=United States.

Residence 5 years ago based on year of entry for the US.

Source: 2009-2011 ACS-IPUMS, 2010 Mexico Census, tabulations by authors.

Table 3. Percent of Mexican-Origin children with no parent present ages 15-17 by place of birth and residence five years ago, 2009-2011 ACS-IPUMS & 2010 Mexico Census,

Variables		United States		Mexico			
		Unweighted Total	No Parent Present, Weighted %	Unweighted Total	No Parent Present, Weighted %	Current US migrant %	Return migrant %
Place of birth	Residence 5 years ago						
Total		46,237	8.8	775,741	13.3	3.0	0.9
MX	MX	938	41.1	763,549	13.4	2.9	0.7
MX	US	27,488	2.4	10,873	4.5	8.7	16.3
US	MX	0	0.0	1,048	47.3	3.6	1.9
US	US	17,811	17.2	271	56.1	3.9	8.3

Notes: First country corresponds to child, second to parent, MX=Mexico, US=United States.

Residence 5 years ago based on year of entry for the US.

Totals exclude children with unspecified own or parental birthplace or residence five years ago, or country other than the US or MX.

Source: 2009-2011 ACS-IPUMS, 2010 Mexico Census, tabulations by authors.