# Chapter 1
# Population Dynamics of Mexican Migration on Both Sides of the Border

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## 1.1 Introduction

The first decade of the twenty-first century was remarkable in terms of migration between Mexico and the United States. For the first time since the 1930s, the net flow of Mexicans to the United States declined to approximately zero for an extended period, and in fact, may have been negative (with more Mexicans returning to Mexico than going to the U.S.). Flows in both directions changed dramatically over a very short period. Movement to the United States decreased after 2005 reaching low levels not seen since the 1970s. At the same time, migration from the U.S. to Mexico—mostly Mexican-born former immigrants and some U.S.-born children of Mexicans—more than doubled from the levels of the late 1990s.[1]

[1] See, Passel, J. S., D. V. Cohn & A. Gonzalez-Barrera. (2012). *Net Migration from Mexico Falls to Zero-and Perhaps Less*. Washington D.C. <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2012/04/23/net-migration-from-mexico-falls-to-zero-and-perhaps-less/>; and Zenteno, R. (2012). Saldo migratorio nulo: el retorno y la política anti-inmigrante. *Coyuntura Demográfica*, (2), 17–21.

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These dramatic changes in migration occurred at a time when the economic "boom" of the end of the 1990s in the United States was replaced by the Great Recession and financial crisis that began in 2007–2008. The difficult economic circumstances faced by potential migrants to the United States undoubtedly depressed migration flows and encouraged some return migration. In addition, pervasive border and interior enforcement plus recent legislative changes in many states and cities (for example Arizona's SB1070 law) have presented other challenges to migrants living in the U.S. and those considering leaving Mexico. Significant increases in deportations began after 2005 reaching almost 400,000 in fiscal year 2009 or more than double their 2000 level of 188,000; deportations have remained at this level through 2011. About three-quarters of these removals were Mexican; most of the removals were classified as non-criminals but a significant minority (over 40 percent in 2010–2011) was described by DHS as criminals.[2]

This chapter places the Mexico-U.S. migration in the context of these recent trends and events in both countries. We briefly trace the history of Mexican migration to the United States and provide numbers and profiles of Mexican migrants in the United States and those who have returned to Mexico. We also examine the large number of Mexican-origin persons who were born in the U.S.—most of whom live in the U.S., but some of whom moved to Mexico with their families. The profiles and estimates are based primarily on official U.S. and Mexican data sources from the last decade. The chapter also describes major features of the migration process including basic characteristics such as age, gender and education, geographical distribution, family formation, and fertility patterns, plus changes in mobility patterns and selectivity by age, gender and education. We explicitly examine changes in selection of return migrants in the context of the recent economic recession.

## 1.2 History of Mexico-U.S. Migration

### *1.2.1 Migration in the Twentieth Century*

The movement of Mexicans into and out of the United States has a long history (Fig. 1.1). The number of Mexican immigrants living in the U.S. increased steadily in the early twentieth century from about 100,000 in 1900 to a peak of more than 600,000 in 1930. In the next decade, the Mexican-born population in the U.S. fell by more than 40 percent during the Great Depression as a result of both voluntary and forced return migration. The numbers settling in the U.S. began to grow again in the 1940s and the Bracero program, which lasted from 1942 until 1964, allowed a large number of Mexicans to work legally in the U.S. on a temporary basis. By

[2] Lopez, M. H., A. Gonzalez-Barrera & S. Motel (2011). As Deportations Rise to Record Level, Most Latinos Oppose Obama's Policy. <http://www.pewhispanic.org/files/2011/12/Deportations-and-Latinos.pdf>.

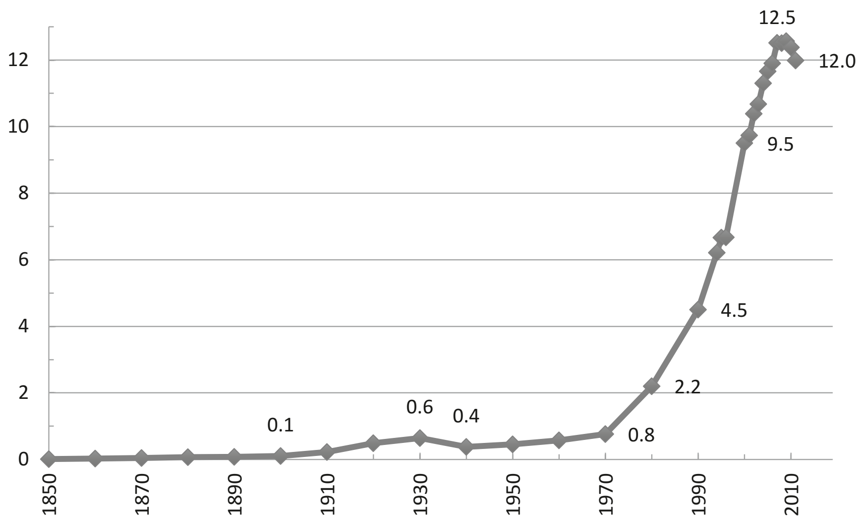


**Fig. 1.1** Mexican-Born population in the U. S.: 1850–2011
Source: U.S. Census and Current Population Survey

1970, there were 760,000 Mexican migrants living in the U.S., the first time the population exceeded the 1930 peak. The Mexicans represented about 8 percent of immigrants in the U.S. at that time (1970) and were outnumbered by Italian, German, and Canadian immigrants.[3]

The end of the Bracero worker program in 1964, the introduction of U.S. immigration reform in 1965 and demographic-economic shifts in Mexico led to substantial changes in the nature of Mexican migration to the United States. What had been a largely legal and modest flow of immigrant settlers accompanied by a regulated temporary flow changed into a growing volume of authorized immigration and rapid increases in unauthorized migration. Between 1965 and 2010 more than 13 million Mexicans moved from Mexico into the United States, creating one of the largest mass migrations in modern history.[4] The Mexican migrant population tripled to 2.2 million by 1980 and became by far the largest immigrant group in the U.S. The Mexican-born population in the U.S. more than doubled again to 4.5 million by 1990 as annual inflows averaged more than 300,000 during the 1980s.

Migration from Mexico into the U.S. grew substantially throughout the 1990s. At the beginning of the decade, some 370,000 migrants from Mexico arrived in the

[3] Gibson, C. & K. Jung (2006). *The Foreign-Born Population of the United States, 1850–2000.* New York: Novinka Books, Nova Science Publishers Inc.

[4] See Passel, J. S., D. V. Cohn & A. Gonzalez-Barrera. (2012). *Net Migration from Mexico Falls to Zero-and Perhaps Less*. Washington D.C. <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2012/04/23/net-migration-from-mexico-falls-to-zero-and-perhaps-less/>; and Zenteno, R. (2012). Saldo migratorio nulo: el retorno y la política anti-inmigrante. *Coyuntura Demográfica*, (2), 17–21.

U.S. The number of immigrants crossing the border rose throughout the decade, reaching 570,000 in 1995, and then 700,000 in 1999.[5]

### *1.2.2 Migration Since 2000*

Migration from Mexico remained high at the turn of the twenty-first century. In 2000, Mexican immigration to the U.S. peaked, when more than three-quarters of a million Mexicans migrated to the U.S. As a result of a decade of very high immigration, the Mexican-born population in the U.S. more than doubled from 1990 levels to 9.5 million in 2000. Migration slowed somewhat after 2000 with the post-2001 recession but still averaged about 600,000 per year for the next 5 years. By 2007, the Mexican-born population in the U.S. reached a peak of 12.5 million.[6] However, migration patterns changed after 2007. For the five-year period from mid-2005 through mid-2010, the U.S. experienced a sustained period of zero net migration from Mexico—something that had not occurred since the 1930s. This is the result of two key factors: (1) very large declines in the amount of immigration from Mexico, and (2) increases in the amount of return migration from the U.S. to Mexico.[7]

## 1.3 Reduced Migration from Mexico to the U.S.

In 2010, only about 140,000 Mexicans migrated to the U.S., less than 20 percent of the peak flow in 2000 and probably the lowest figure in the last 40 years. As a result of this reduced migration flow, growth in the number of Mexican immigrants living in the United States slowed before reaching a peak of 12.5 million in 2007. Growth then stopped and by 2010 that number had dropped to about 12 million—the first notable drop in the number of Mexicans in the U.S. since the exclusionary policies of the 1930s.

Data from both sides of the border indicates that the bulk of the decline in immigration from Mexico to the U.S. after 2005 is due to a large decline in unauthorized immigration as opposed to legal immigration. In fact, admission of legal immigrants

[5] Passel, J. S., D. V. Cohn & A. Gonzalez-Barrerra (2012). *Net Migration from Mexico Falls to Zero-and Perhaps Less*. Washington D.C. <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2012/04/23/net-migration-from-mexico-falls-to-zero-and-perhaps-less/>.

[6] Passel, J. S., D. V. Cohn & A. Gonzalez-Barrerra (2012). *Net Migration from Mexico Falls to Zero-and Perhaps Less*. Washington D.C. <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2012/04/23/net-migration-from-mexico-falls-to-zero-and-perhaps-less/>.

[7] Passel, J. S., D. V. Cohn & A. Gonzalez-Barrerra (2012). *Net Migration from Mexico Falls to Zero-and Perhaps Less*. Washington D.C. <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2012/04/23/net-migration-from-mexico-falls-to-zero-and-perhaps-less/>.

*increased* from 1996–2000, when 760,000 Mexicans were granted green cards, to 2006–2010, when 816,000 Mexicans were admitted as legal permanent residents. This continuing admission of legal immigrants was sufficient to cause a slight increase in the total number of legal Mexican immigrants living in the U.S., from 5.4 million in 2005 up to 5.8 million in 2011.[8]

In contrast to the sustained flow of legal immigrants, unauthorized flows apparently decreased substantially by 2010 from the high levels of the late 1990s.[9] Legal admissions for 1996–2000 (noted above) represented less than one-quarter of the total estimate flow to the US; by 2006–2010, green cards represented more than two-thirds of the total arrivals and an even higher share in 2010 than 2006. The changing flows had a marked impact on the total number of unauthorized Mexicans living in the U.S. The number increased steadily from 4.5 million in 2000 to 6.3 million in 2005 and reached a peak of 7.0 million unauthorized Mexican immigrants in the U.S. in 2007. By 2011 this population had dropped to 6.1 million implying that more unauthorized immigrants left the U.S. than arrived between 2007 and 2011.

In addition to the flows of legal permanent residents moving to the U.S. and unauthorized migrants settling in the U.S. is a large flow of legal temporary migrants admitted for specific purposes and specific durations. These include students admitted temporarily to study in the U.S. (on F and M visas), seasonal workers (H2A and H2B), workers with specific skills, occupations or employers (H1B, L, O, P), exchange visitors (J), treaty traders and investors (E visas), and NAFTA workers (TN visas) coming to the U.S. The number of annual admissions from Mexico is dominated by temporary visitors for business or pleasure (B1 and B2 visas). Although the published data suggest an upward trend in arrivals from Mexico over the last decade,[10] changes in the way arrivals have been counted appear to be responsible for much of the increase and the underlying pattern is one of level or slightly declining arrivals of legal temporary migrants from Mexico.[11] While most of the movement is temporary, its huge scale (over 17 million arrivals in fiscal year 2011) does translate into some settlement—legally for some groups (e.g., students) and unauthorized for others (e.g., visa overstays). Using the Nonimmigrant Information System, the Department of Homeland Security estimates that about 110,000 legal

[8] Passel, J. S., D. V. Cohn & A. Gonzalez-Barrera (2012). *Net Migration from Mexico Falls to Zero-and Perhaps Less*. Washington D.C. <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2012/04/23/net-migration-from-mexico-falls-to-zero-and-perhaps-less/>.

[9] The green card data do not directly measure inflows of legal immigrants because some of the migrants receiving green cards are already in the US. Further, information on unauthorized inflows must be derived from changes in the resident population.

[10] U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) (2012). *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics: 2011*. Washington D.C.: DHS, Office of Immigration Statistics.

[11] For example, see Monger, R. (2012). *The Impact of Counting Changes on Nonimmigrant Admissions: An Update*: <http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/immigration-statistics/ois_individuals_update_fs.pdf>.

**Box 1.1 Concepts Used to Measure Migration in Mexican Data Sources**

The analysis presented here uses a broad definition of migration from the U.S. to Mexico. The principal focus is the Mexican-born population who used to live in the U.S. (or still does). The analysis also includes the population born in the U.S. but living in Mexico, most of whom are children of Mexican migrants to the U.S.

**Previous Residence in U.S.** Several Mexican data sources (including the census, the population count or Conteo, and the Survey of Demographic Dynamics or ENADID) have questions about previous residence at a specific time point, either 5 years or one-year before the data collection. Those in Mexico who report living in the U.S. at the previous time are persons who migrated to Mexico during the period. These migrants are designated "intercensal migrants."

If they were born in Mexico, then they are "return migrants".

Those not born in Mexico (most of whom were born in the U.S.) are "new immigrants" to Mexico. If these U.S.-born migrants have at least one parent who is Mexican, then they are "U.S.-born children of Mexican migrants."

**Recent Emigrants from Mexico.** The Mexican census and ENADID include questions to identify persons who left Mexico in the five years before the data collection. They also ask whether the emigrant has returned to Mexico. Those who returned by the time of the census/survey are designated as "intracensal migrants."

Intracensal migrants who are back in Mexico are also "return migrants."

Intracensal migrants who are still in the U.S. at the time of the data collection are "emigrants to the U.S."

**Return Migrants.** Return migrants are persons born in Mexico who lived in the U.S. at some point but are observed in Mexico in the Census, Conteo, or ENADID.

Intercensal migrants lived in the U.S. five years before the data collection; i.e., they left Mexico more than five years ago.

Intracensal return migrants left Mexico in the five-year interval before the data collection and returned during the same five-year period (also referred to as circular migrants).

**U.S.-born Migrants.** Individuals born in the U.S. who are observed in Mexico in the Census, Conteo or ENADID are "U.S.-born migrants to Mexico."

Those in the same dwelling as their mother or father who was born in Mexico can also be classified as "U.S.-born children of Mexican parent(s)."

temporary residents from Mexico were residing in the U.S. as of January 2011.[12] However, most of the temporary admissions (even other than tourists) do not lead to long-term settlement in the U.S. and the group is only incompletely covered in U.S. data sources on Mexican residents.

Mexican data sources tell a similar story. Temporary visa holders do account for a significant and growing share of the departures from Mexico, as captured by the 2009 Mexican Survey of Demographic Dynamics (ENADID). In 2008, nonimmigrant visa holders represented 20 percent of the departures, up from 13.5 percent in 2005. Most of these people would not be entitled to long-term residency in the U.S. and while most are likely to return to Mexico, evidence from the past decade suggests some overstay illegally or eventually become legal residents.[13] However, there are no data on the emigration behavior of legal temporary visa holders.

The Mexican Censuses of 2000 and 2010 document reduced migration to the United States. Emigration data from Mexico based on data for "intracensal" departures from Mexico (see box on "concepts")[14] show that almost 1.5 million Mexicans left for the U.S. between 1995 and 2000. Ten years later, the number had dropped by almost one-third to 995,000 departures to the U.S. during the 2005–2010 period (Table 1.1).

## 1.4 Increased Migration to Mexico from the U.S.

Return migration to Mexico by people who were in the U.S. 5 years previously increased dramatically over the past decade. In 2000, there were 280,000 people in the Mexican Census who had been in the U.S. in 1995; in 2005, there were 238,000 migrants from the U.S. in Mexico; by 2010, the number was almost 4 times larger than in 2000 at 985,000 (see Table 1.2). These larger return flows occurred at the same time that emigration from Mexico was decreasing. In fact, even though emigration from Mexico was decreasing (Table 1.1), the share of intracensal migrants who returned to Mexico after less than 5 years in the U.S. increased dramatically. Of the 1.5 million Mexicans who left Mexico between 1995 and 2000, about 18 percent returned by 2000 (Table 1.1). The share of 2005–2010 emigrants who had returned by 2010 was almost 31 percent.[15]

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[12] Baker, B. (2012). *Estimates of the Size and Characteristics of the Resident Nonimmigrant Population in the United States: January 2011*. <http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/immigration-statistics/ois_ni_pe_2011.pdf>.

[13] For example, see Massey, D. & N. Malone (2002). Pathways to Legal Immigration. *Population Research and Policy Review*, 21(6), 473–504.

[14] To compare the definitions of return migration used in this chapter with that of the rest of the book, please refer to the note on the different definitions used by chapter.

[15] Another possible explanation for the increase in return is the increase in trip duration. As mentioned earlier, return migration defined by residence five years ago could include longer-term

**Table 1.1** Mexico: Emigration to the U.S. and return to Mexico over the five previous years from 1995, 2000 and 2010

| | Emigration over the period[a] | | | Return over the period | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1990–1995[a] | 1995–2000[b] | 2005–2010[c] | 1990–1995 | 1995–2000 | 2005–2010 |
| Total | 1,737,160 | 1,471,485 | 994,869 | 387,907 | 260,650 | 307,783 |
| Percentage | 100 | 100 | 100 | 22.3% | 17.7% | 30.9% |
| Sex | | | | | | |
| Male | 69.3% | 75.3% | 76.7% | 69.1% | 78.1% | 79.6% |
| Female | 30.6% | 24.7% | 23.3% | 30.9% | 21.9% | 20.4% |
| Mean age at departure | 25.1 | 25.5 | 27.87 | 27.3 | 28.5 | 29.5 |
| Median | 22 | 23 | 25 | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| Duration of the trip for those who have returned to Mexico (in days)[f] | | | | | | |
| Median | | | | 273 | 303 | 548 |
| Mean | | | | 414.19 | 442.3 | 620.8 |

Source: 10 percent sample of the Mexican 1995 Population Count, 2000 Population Census and 2010 Population Census
Notes
[a]Refers to the population that migrated to the United States over the 5 year period
[b]Refers to the population that migrated but was residing in Mexico at the time where the data was captured
[c]The period 1990–1995 is captured in the 1995 Population Count
[d]The period 1995–2000 is captured in the 2000 Population Census
[e]The period 2005–2010 is captured in the 2010 Population Census
[f]Refers to the last trip made

"Intercensal migration" to Mexico includes a significant number of people who are not "return migrants" because they were born in the U.S., not in Mexico. The number of these U.S.-born migrants to Mexico increased threefold from 58,000 in 2000 to 153,000 in 2010 (Table 1.2). This increase is mainly driven by minors born in the United States to Mexican parents.

### 1.4.1 U.S.-Born Mexican Minors

The U.S.-born population living in Mexico more than doubled from 343,000 to 739,000 between 2000 and 2010. This increase was not driven by a rise in the number of American expatriates that decided to retire in Mexico or otherwise move to Mexico. Rather, there was a dramatic increase in the number of minors (under 18 years old) in Mexico who were born in the U.S.— from 251,000 in 2000 (representing 73 percent of all U.S.-born immigrants to Mexico) to 570,000 in 2010 (77

migrants, i.e. migrants from earlier cohorts of arrival to the US. However, this measurement or methodological issue is hard to disentangle with the current available data.

**Table 1.2** Mexico: Selected characteristics for the population aged 5 years and older who resided in the U.S. 5 years before: 2000, 2005 and 2010 (Mexico)

| | 2000 | | 2005 | | 2010 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| Total [a] | 280,051 | | 238,331 | | 985,383 | |
| Total by gender [a] | 167,497 | 109,715 | 156,058 | 82,273 | 648,655 | 286,914 |
| Percent | 60.5% | 39.5% | 65.5% | 34.5% | 68.7% | 31.3% |
| Age [b] | | | | | | |
| Mean age | 29.5 | 26.4 | 32.5 | 29.4 | 32.1 | 28.1 |
| Age group | | | | | | |
| 5–14 | 18.7% | 28.4% | 12.4% | 23% | 11.6% | 24.7% |
| 15–24 | 16.3% | 19.1% | 14.4% | 17.6% | 13.8% | 16.7% |
| 25–49 | 55.2% | 43.1% | 61% | 46.1% | 64.2% | 48.8% |
| 50 and more | 9.8% | 9.4% | 12.5% | 13.3% | 10.4% | 9.8% |
| Place of birth | | | | | | |
| Mexico | 136,946 | 80,611 | NA | | 593,677 | 230,737 |
| United States | 30,161 | 28,168 | NA | | 78,318 | 74,275 |

Source: Complete set of individual records of the 2000 Mexican Census and 2005 Count, and 10 percent sample of the 2010 Census
Notes: Includes non-institutionalized individuals only
[a]The subtotals may not add up to the total due to missing values in the variables of interest
[b]The percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding effects

percent of the U.S.-born). This increase indirectly reflects the growing number of return migrants who have spent longer periods in the U.S. and formed families there. The relative presence of minors, increased from 73 to 77 percent of the U.S. born population from 2000 to 2010.[16] In addition to this increasing share of minors among the U.S.-born population in Mexico, there is a growing presence of young adults reflecting the aging into adulthood of U.S.-born minors from the previous decade.

Most of the U.S.-born migrants living in Mexico appear to be the U.S.-born children of Mexican migrants to the U.S. who have moved back to Mexico. Using 2010 Mexican census data we can identify an individual's parents if they are in the same dwelling. With this linkage we can determine whether the U.S.-born individual have at least one Mexican parent.[17] This measure underestimates the actual number of Americans living in Mexico who were born to Mexican parents, because it is not possible to determine an individual's parentage if the parents are not living with their children. The children may be living with relatives other than their parents if the parents are still in the United States, or if the parents left children with other

[16] Unfortunately, the lack of information regarding place of birth and intra-censal migration in the 2005 Population Count, as well as year of arrival for the inter-censal migrants and emigration of the foreign-born makes it difficult to fully explain the absolute increase.

[17] This was impossible to calculate in previous censuses and population counts where it was only possible to know the relationship with the individual characterized as the head of the household.

relatives while establishing a new household in Mexico after entering a union or to work or study, for example.

The U.S.-born children of Mexican parents are especially important because, according to Mexican law, all individuals born abroad with a Mexican parent are entitled to Mexican citizenship[18] In order to receive citizenship, Mexican parents need to register their U.S.-born children at Mexican consulates or at the Civil Registry once they are in Mexico. In 2010, 71 percent of those born in the U.S. were actually living in Mexico with at least one Mexican parent, i.e. more than half a million were entitled to Mexican citizenship and a considerable share have likely already applied for dual citizenship. Note that a similar percentage of those Americans who were living in the U.S. in 2005 are actually living with at least one Mexican parent. Seven out of ten of those U.S. born who had arrived in the last 5 years are actually living with a Mexican parent. Thus, much of the immigration from the U.S. (i.e., U.S.-born individuals moving to Mexico) is related to return migration to Mexico (by Mexican-born residents).

The U.S.-born population that is living in Mexico and has Mexican parentage spans all ages, implying that the parents went to the U.S. in quite different eras (see Table 1.3). About 6000 U.S.-born migrants over 30 years old still live with at least one Mexican parent. Given their age (meaning that they were born before 1980), they are likely to be children of early migrants, possibly former braceros. On the other hand, almost half a million migrants are minors under 18 (i.e., born in 1992 or later) and thus are sons and daughters of more recent migrants who were in the U.S. after passage of the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) in 1986. Of these, most are children of Mexicans who were probably in the U.S. after passage of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) in 1996; after which the number of deportations exploded.

Although the census data do not provide detailed information on the migration experiences of these U.S.-born children in Mexico, they do provide information on their diverse living arrangements. In 2010, 22 percent of the minors born in the U.S. and living in Mexico were grandchildren of the household head, whereas for the total Mexican population in this age group this percentage is only 16 percent. This phenomenon of return over the generations has increasing relevance in transnational literature; i.e., the descendants of migrants—siblings, grandchildren, children—return in order to live with grandparents and other family members left behind so that they are exposed to the homeland culture of the migrants.[19] Thirteen

[18] Actually, recent changes to the citizenship law (Ley de Nacionalidad) were made on the 23rd of April, 2012 to allow children born abroad with a Mexican grandparent to have access to Mexican citizenship. This was approved in the Mexican Senate to respond to U.S. state legislatures that might attempt to remove the U.S. citizenship of the children of undocumented parents: see Ballinas, V. & A. Becerril (2012). Senado reforma la Ley de Nacionalidad para acoger a menores deportados por EU. *La Jornada*, March 9, p. 16, <http://www.jornada.unam.mx/2012/03/09/politica/016n1pol>.

[19] For example, see Durand, J. (2004). Ensayo teórico sobre la migración de retorno. El principio del rendimiento decreciente. *Cuadernos Geográficos*, 35(2), 103–116.

**Table 1.3** Mexico: Population born in the U.S. living in the U.S. 5 years before and coresidence with Mexican parent, 2000 and 2010

| | 2000 | | 2010 | | 2010 | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | All born in the US | | | | Born in the U.S. and living in the US in 2005 | |
| | Born in the U.S. and living in the US in 1995 | | Born in the U.S. and living in the US in 2005 | | Total | | Living in 2010 with at least one Mexican parent [a] | | Living in 2010 with at least one Mexican parent | |
| Age group | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % of Total US born, 2010 | N | % of total US born living in US, 2005 |
| Total | 58,329 | 100 | 152,541 | 100 | 739,634 | 100 | 525,549 | 71.1 | 106,823 | 70.0 |
| 0–4 [b] | NA | NA | NA | NA | 203,003 | 27.4 | 182,306 | 24.6 | NA | NA |
| 5–9 | 29,095 | 50 | 78,899 | 51.7 | 209,415 | 28.3 | 188,377 | 25.5 | 70,873 | 46.5 |
| 10–17 | 11,029 | 18.95 | 34,735 | 22.8 | 157,725 | 21.3 | 105,137 | 14.2 | 29,958 | 19.6 |
| 18–29 | 8327 | 14.3 | 19,639 | 12.9 | 83,080 | 11.2 | 43,060 | 5.8 | 5282 | 3.5 |
| 30–49 | 5357 | 9.21 | 11,622 | 7.6 | 45,242 | 6.1 | 6508 | 1 | 689 | 0 |
| 50 + | 4383 | 7.53 | 7646 | 5.0 | 41,169 | 5.6 | 161 | 0 | 21 | 0 |

Source: Ten percent sample of the 2010 Mexican Population Census
Notes
[a]This information is not available in the 2000 Census
[b]The place of residence 5 years ago is only asked to the population 5 years and older

thousand minors born in the United States are not living with any of their parents and 44 percent of them are actually the grandchildren of the head of the household.

Among the U.S.-born children of Mexicans who were in Mexico in 2010, almost 300,000 moved to Mexico between 2005 and 2010. About 182,000 of these minors are under 5 years old and another 100,000 are 5–17 years old and were in the U.S. in 2005 (Table 1.3). About one-third of these dual national children live in border states—11.6 percent in Baja California, 10.4 percent in Chihuahua, 7.1 percent in Tamaulipas and 5.4 in Sonora—and another one-sixth are in traditional migrant sending areas—9.3 percent in Jalisco and 7.3 percent in Michoacán. Among those under 5 years old, there is an even larger concentration in these states along the U.S. border.[20] On the other hand, for the older minors, we see a larger relative

[20] This pattern suggests two somewhat different processes that deserve further examination in future studies: Mexican population in border areas opting to deliver their children on the U.S. side of the border or Mexican deported parents living in the border area with their U.S.-born children while waiting to cross back to the U.S.

presence in states like Jalisco and Michoacán suggesting a significant presence of households returning to their Mexican homes, although still a large share is living in states along the U.S. border.

## 1.5 The Changing Geography of Migration

The demographic changes of Mexican migration to the United States in the last decade have been associated with geographic changes in both countries. Just as the diversification in the places in the U.S. evolved over time moving away from the old traditional receiving states of California, Texas, Arizona and Illinois, the states of origin in Mexico have also diversified away from the West-central region.[21] A recent study using the 2006 ENADID finds a link between the changes in the origins in Mexico and the changes in the destinations in the U.S.—the growth of immigration to new destinations in southern and eastern states in the U.S. is driven by migration from non-traditional sending areas in Mexico.[22]

Changes in the geography of return migration are also linked to these changes in the geography of emigration and immigration. Previous work using the 2005 Mexican Population Count and the 2010 Mexican Population Census finds that destinations for return migrants had been border cities, prosperous communities and metropolitan areas.[23] The U.S.-Mexico border region played a key role in the migration process. Not only has the region had an advantageous economic position with ample employment opportunities, but its convenient proximity to the U.S. allowed for the concentration of a floating population, especially deportees, with intentions of crossing the border into the U.S. However, conditions at the Northern Mexican border changed over the period 2005–2010 with an increase in violence and insecurity related to organized crime and drug smuggling, and a decline in employment related to the global financial crisis late in the 2000–2010 decade, the decline of the *maquiladora* industry in the region and business closures.[24]

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[21] For example, see Donato, K. M., C. Tolbert, A. Nucci & Y. Kawano (2008). Changing Faces, Changing Places: The Emergence of New Nonmetropolitan Immigrant Gateways. In: D. Massey (ed.). *New Faces in New Places: The Changing Geography of American Immigration* (pp. 75–98). New York: Russell Sage Foundation; and Zúñiga, V. & R. Hernández-León (2005). *New Destinations. Mexican Immigration in the United States*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

[22] For full details, see Riosmena, F. & D. S. Massey (2012). Pathways to El Norte: Origins, Destinations, and Characteristics of Mexican Migrants to the United States. *International Migration Review*, 46(1), 3–36, <doi:10.1111/j.1747-7379.2012.00879.x>.

[23] Masferrer, C. & B. Roberts (2012). Going Back Home? Changing Demography and Geography of Mexican Return Migration. *Population Research and Policy Review*, 31(4), 465–496.

[24] This is reflected in the increase of poverty related to earnings as measured by CONEVAL using the Index of Labor and Poverty trends. The index calculated using ENOE from 2005 to 2010 show the clear deterioration of economic conditions in the northern states of Baja California, Baja California Sur, Coahuila, Chihuahua, Nuevo León, Sonora and Tamaulipas: Consejo Nacional de

Regional comparisons of 1995–2000 to 2005–2010 show a continued decline of relative return (using the definition of residence in the U.S. 5 years previously) to traditional sending states and a sustained increase to the South and Southeastern states where migration to the U.S. is a more recent phenomenon. Similarly, the percentage of circular return migration by region shows that the only region which experienced a sustained decrease of return within the five-year period is the traditional sending states, while all others show an increase.[25] This reflects the declining importance of traditional sending states in attracting returnees either as a result of local conditions in Mexico or a well-established community in the U.S. In this sense, communities from states that introduced themselves later into the migration process may be at earlier stages of the migration and settlement process, and therefore tend to return more. The process of return migration to one's home state involves assessing conditions in that area, economic and otherwise, in comparison with alternative destinations. The traditional sending areas may not be as attractive to potential return migrants as other options, including alternative destinations in Mexico or staying in the U.S. The disproportionate return to states which had low out-migration levels and to metropolitan areas which provide employment opportunities suggests an increasing share of migrants that do not return to their communities of origin and a possible link between international and internal migration in Mexico.[26]

### *1.5.1 Profile of Mexican Migrants in the U.S. and Mexico*

As dramatic changes have taken place in patterns of migration over the past decade, the profiles of Mexican immigrants living in the U.S., and those who have returned to Mexico have changed in some ways, but in other ways have remained somewhat stable. Some of stability can be attributed, in part, to the notable changes in the migration process prior to the recent declines engendered by legalization programs of IRCA, legislative changes in the 1990s and their aftermath. In particular, over the post-IRCA period, Mexican migration to the United States has gone through an increasing process of settlement where migrants are staying longer in the U.S. (and possibly settling more). The diversification of the demographic composition of the flow influenced by family reunification, increasing family formation in the U.S. (i.e., couples having U.S.-born children), as well as legalization programs like IRCA[27]

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Evaluación de la Política de Desarrollo Social (Coneval) (2011). *Tendencias económicas y sociales de corto plazo. Resultados por entidad federativa*. Mexico: Coneval.

[25] Masferrer, C. & B. Roberts (2012). Going Back Home? Changing Demography and Geography of Mexican Return Migration. *Population Research and Policy Review*, 31(4), 465–496.

[26] Masferrer, C. & B. Roberts (2012). Going Back Home? Changing Demography and Geography of Mexican Return Migration. *Population Research and Policy Review*, 31(4), 465–496.

[27] For understanding the effects of legalization and its relationship to return migration in the case of the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act, see Riosmena, F. (2004). Return versus

and enhanced border control and immigration enforcement that make cross-border mobility more difficult[28] all contributed to significant population changes even before the recent slowdown in migration to the U.S.

The decision to return depends not only on the migratory experience itself but on the economic, social and political conditions both in Mexico and the United States. Return migration is embedded in two interrelated selection processes: emigration and return. The literature on emigrant selection is vast and it is well known that migrants are not randomly selected.[29] Selectivity of return migrants has received much less attention in the literature; however, some evidence shows that the selectivity of the return is inversely related to the selectivity of the arrival.[30] A recently published article shows that selection of Mexican returnees from the U.S. differs from that of non-Mexicans in terms of economic integration, age and gender. Using data from 1996 to 2009, the authors do not find a strong association between education or economic factors and return. But, the structure of families and social ties in the U.S.—in particular, marital status, household size, and the presence of children—were more strongly associated.[31]

This section of the chapter examines some of the process-related features of the migrant population both in Mexico and the U.S. Specifically we describe the changing length of time migrants are spending in the U.S. and changes in the legal status composition of the flow. Finally, we present information on the family structure of Mexican migrants in the U.S. and those who have returned to Mexico with a special focus on the presence and status of children. With these factors as background, we turn in the next section to the topic of "selectivity" of migration, i.e., who among the Mexican population is more likely to migrate to the U.S. and who among those in the U.S. is more likely to return to Mexico.

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Settlement among Undocumented Mexican Migrants, 1980 to 1996. In J. Durand & D. Massey (eds.). *Crossing the Border. Research from the Mexican Migration Project* (pp. 265–280). Nueva York: Russell Sage Foundation.

[28] The increasing immigration control has been found to be preventing some migrants from engaging in circular movements as they did before and making them stay put in the U.S. longer periods, for example, in Massey, D. (2005). *Backfire at the Border. Why Enforcement Without Legalization Cannot Stop Illegal Immigration*. Washington D.C.

[29] Borjas, G. J. (1987). Self-Selection and the Earnings of Immigrants. *The American Economic Review*, 77(4), 531–553; Lindstrom, D. & A. López (2010). Pioneers and Followers: Migrant Selectivity and the Development of U.S. Migration Streams in Latin America. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 630(1), 53–77; and McKenzie, D. & H. Rapoport (2010). Self-Selection Patterns in Mexico-U.S. Migration: The Role of Migration Networks. *The Review of Economics and Statistics*, 92(4), 811–821.

[30] See Borjas, G. J. & B. Bratsberg (1996). Who Leaves? The Outmigration of the Foreign-Born. *The Review of Economics and Statistics*, 78(1), 165–176.

[31] Van Hook, J. & W. Zhang (2011). Who Stays? Who Goes? Selective Emigration among the Foreign-Born. *Population Research and Policy Review*, 30(1), 1–24, <doi:10.1007/s11113-010-9183-0>.

### 1.5.2 *Duration of Residence in U.S. and Re-Emigration*

The slowdown in immigration during the 2000s has meant that the duration of stay in the U.S. for Mexican immigrants is increasing. As fewer new migrants arrive, there are fewer with short durations of residence. Moreover, the increasing levels of migration from the 1970s through the 1990s mean that there were initially more migrants who could stay and become "long duration migrants." U.S. data shows exactly this pattern. In 2000, more than one-fifth (22 percent) of immigrants had arrived in the past 5 years; just over half (51 percent) had been in the U.S. for more than 10 years; and 37 percent had been in the U.S. for 15 years or more. By 2010, the share of recent migrants dropped to only 9 percent, and more than half (52 percent) reported living in the U.S. for 15 years or more (see Fig. 1.2).

Mexican Census data show this same pattern of extended stays in the U.S. among return migrants in Mexico. Table 1.1 shows the duration of trips to the U.S. for those who left and came back within a 5-year period. The mean duration of the last trip increased from about 16 months to more than 21 months (i.e., from 442 to 620 days).[32] This pattern is consistent with an increase in the settlement of the Mexican population and decreasing fresh inflows.

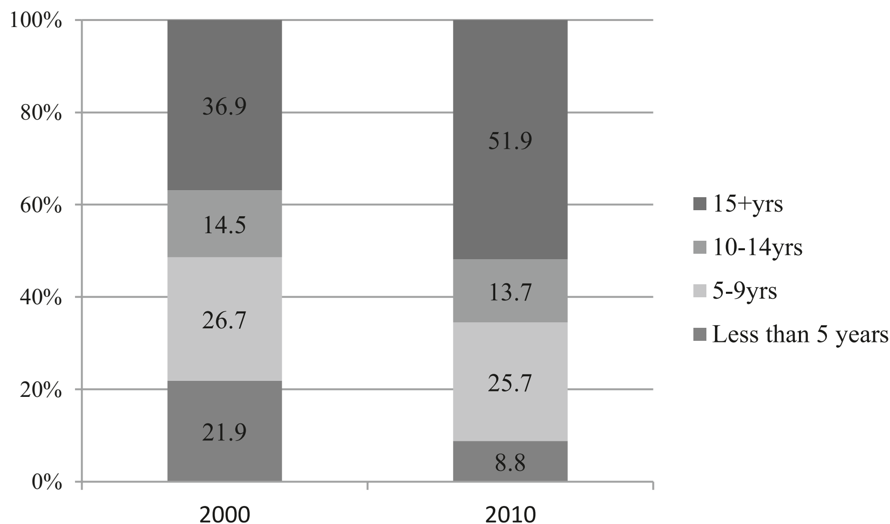


**Fig. 1.2** Share of U.S. Mexican immigrant population, by years spent in U.S.
Source: U.S. Current Population Survey 2000 and 2010

[32] Unfortunately, there is no information available to estimate the duration of U.S. trips for return migrants who were out of Mexico for longer than 5 years.

### 1.5.3 Documentation Status

Even though the flow of unauthorized Mexicans has dropped in the last decade, data from both sides of the border show that individuals migrating without documents still comprise the largest group. Data from the U.S. show that in 2000, almost 85 percent of immigrants arriving in the previous 5 years were unauthorized; 10 years later in 2010, the share without documents was about 70 percent.[33] Mexican data from the Survey of Demographic Dynamics (ENADID) show that more than 60 percent of all Mexican migrants who left within the 5 years prior to the Survey entered the U.S. without documents. Among those ones who left and returned to Mexico during the same period, the percentage with no documents is only slightly smaller.[34]

However, migrants who managed to cross the border without documents were the least likely to return among all migrants who left Mexico during the five-year period (see Fig. 1.3). Migrants without documents may be especially reluctant to return to their country since they are not sure of whether they will be able to get back to the U.S. in the future. Green card holders who left Mexico within the previous 5 years are the most likely to return within the period. Some of the green card holders may actually be circular migrants who spend part of the year working in the U.S. and the rest of the year in Mexico with movement between the countries facilitated by their legal status. In addition, some other green card holders may be joining deported family members in Mexico.

Returnees who left Mexico without documents comprise a much larger percentage of migrants in younger age groups (see Fig. 1.4). Around two-thirds of returned migrants who left at ages 20–39 in the five-year period before the Survey, left with no documents. Older returnees who left during the same period were more likely to have migrated with a visa, a working permit or a residence permit. The percentage of migrants who migrated with U.S. citizenship increases greatly among those returned migrants aged 60 or older at time of migration. Since we consider only individuals born in Mexico, the large percentage of U.S. citizens may be reflecting migrants who have spent a large portion of their life in the U.S, or moving back and forth to the U.S.

While long-term settlement is increasing markedly among Mexican immigrants in the U.S., the link between long-term settlement and legal status has weakened a

[33] These data are drawn from unpublished analytic estimates using the March Current Population Surveys (CPS) of 2000 and 2010. They are consistent with estimates published in Passel, J. S. & D. V. Cohn (2011). *How Many Hispanics? Comparing New Census Counts with the Latest Census Estimates*. Washington D.C.: Pew Research Center.

[34] It is important to recall here that if anything this is an underestimate of migrants lacking documentation, because this information regarding type of document at the time of entry does not inform us completely about whether or not their document was still valid at the time of return, and if migrants were deported from the U.S. For example, those entering the U.S. with a tourist visa (around 10 percent) may have overstayed and green card holders are also susceptible for deportation.

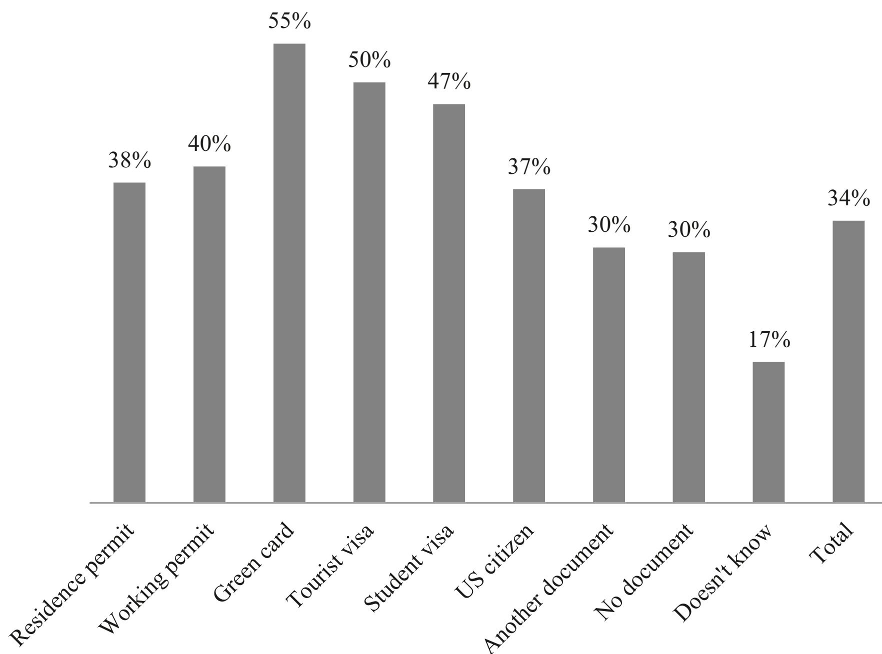


**Fig. 1.3** Percentage returned by type of document at U.S. entry
Source: Encuesta Nacional de la Dinámica Demográfica, 2009

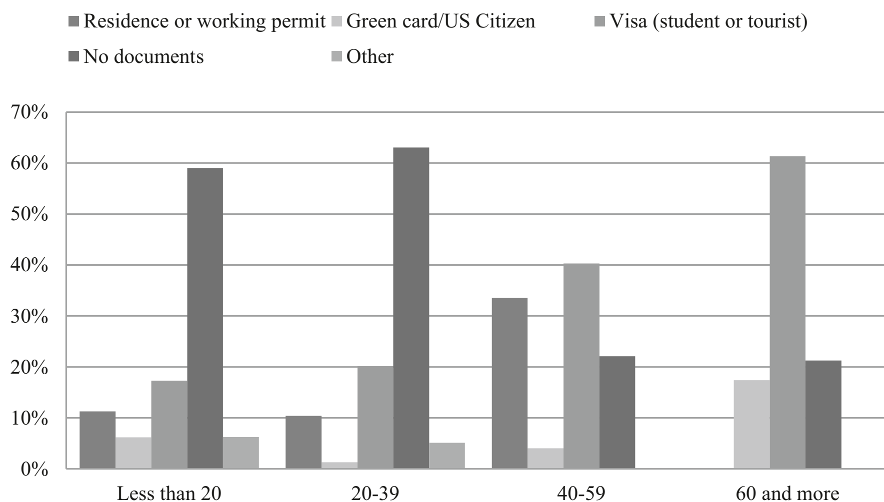


**Fig. 1.4** Returned Migrants by type of document and age group (at U.S. entry)
Source: Encuesta Nacional de la Dinámica Demográfica, 2009

bit over time. The bulk of arrivals during the 1990s were unauthorized and virtually all pre-1980 entrants had acquired legal status through IRCA, so the profile of unauthorized adults was quite different from legal Mexican immigrants in 2000. Among unauthorized adults, only about one-third (35 percent) had been in the U.S. for 10 years or more compared with almost three-quarters (73 percent) of legal residents. In contrast, by 2010, 58 percent of unauthorized adults, and 81 percent of legal residents had been in the States for 10 years or more.[35] Thinking about it another way, in 2000, some 81 percent of Mexican immigrants who had been in the U.S. for at least 15 years were documented. By 2010, that share was down to 61 percent. Rates of documentation among more recent immigrants remained significantly lower than those of long-term immigrants in both periods—from 28 percent for immigrants in the U.S. for less than 5 years, to 36 percent for those in the U.S. for 10–14 years.

### *1.5.4 Mexican Families in the U.S.*

Persons of Mexican origin comprise by far the largest share of Hispanics in the U.S., and the population continues to grow and change. As the number of Mexican adult immigrants in the U.S. increased and they lived longer in the U.S., they formed families and had children. While the growth of the Mexican-origin population in the U.S. was dominated by immigration between 1970 and 2000, during 2000–2010, growth was fueled by U.S. births to Mexican-origin persons.[36]

In 2010, about 37 percent of Mexican-origin persons in the U.S. were foreign-born, while one-third were second generation (the U.S.-born children of immigrants), and 30 percent were born to U.S. natives. This represents a long-term shift towards an increasingly native-born Mexican population in the U.S., but generational change can take time and has been quite moderate since the turn of this century, when 40 percent of Mexican-origin persons were foreign-born in 2000, 30 percent were second generation, and 29 percent had U.S.-native parents. After all, it took 30 years for the immigrant dominated Mexican origin population to fully emerge. In 1970, at the very beginning of the era of large-scale Mexican immigration, only 17 percent of the Mexican-origin population was foreign-born, 29 percent were the U.S.-born children of immigrants and fully 54 percent had U.S.-native parents.

However, focusing on Mexican-origin children (under 18) in the U.S. reveals more dramatic change in the past decade, which in turn signals changes to come in the future. In 2000, the 8.2 million Mexican born adults in the U.S. had 5.8 million children. About 1.3 million or 22 percent of the children were themselves

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[35] Taylor, P., M. Hugo, J. S. Passel & S. Motel (2011). *Unauthorized Immigrants: Length of Residency, Patterns of Parenthood.* Washington D.C.: Pew Research Center.

[36] Pew Research Center (PRC) (2011). *The Mexican-American Boom: Births Overtake Immigration*: <http://www.pewhispanic.org/files/reports/144.pdf>.

immigrants from Mexico and 4.5 million or 78 percent were U.S. born. By 2010 there were 39 percent more Mexican-born adults—11.4 million. The number of second generation children increased by 32 percent to 7.6 million. The number of immigrant children actually fell because of the decrease in new arrivals during the second half of the decade. As a result 87 percent of the children of immigrants or 6.7 million children were U.S. born. The very large increase in U.S.-born children created a larger pool of potential return migrants to Mexico that is reflected in the results of the 2010 Mexican census, as we have noted above.

Over the years, the profile of Mexican migrants in the U.S. has evolved to include more varied family situations. In 2010, 61 percent of Mexican immigrants aged 18 and older were married—a share 10 percentage points greater than that of the U.S. population as a whole. Two-thirds (66 percent) of female migrants, who often come to the U.S. with a partner, are married, as are 57 percent of male migrants.

A sizeable share of Mexican immigrants are married, but a notable minority are living apart from their spouses. In 2010, among married immigrants, 8 percent are separated from their spouse. Only 4 percent of female immigrants are living away from their spouses, but among men, the share rises to 12 percent. Overall, 5 percent of all Mexican immigrants are married but living apart from their spouse. The share of spouses living apart from each other was similar in 2000.

Being married and living with a spouse are linked to documentation status, which is of course linked to the amount of time an immigrant has spent in the U.S. In 2010, some 61 percent of household heads of Mexican immigrant families who are in the U.S. legally are married, and about 8 percent of these married heads are living apart from their spouses. In contrast, among unauthorized immigrant families, who on average have been in the U.S. for less time, some 45 percent are headed by a married person, and 20 percent of these married heads report that they are living apart from their spouse.

As is the case in their homeland, which has experienced a dramatic fertility drop, the fertility of Mexican immigrants in the U.S. is declining, as well. Nonetheless, their fertility is relatively high by U.S. standards. Around 2000, the average Mexican immigrant woman at the end of her childbearing years in the U.S. had 3.0 children (with some having been born in Mexico and some in the U.S.). By 2010, this average had dropped to 2.6 children. In comparison, among all U.S. women, the average number of children ever born was essentially unchanged at 1.9 for both 2000 and 2010.

The increasingly long durations that Mexican immigrants spend in the U.S., along with their relatively high fertility, have led to the accumulation of larger numbers of children and the creation of more complex "mixed-status" families, which typically include at least one foreign-born parent and one U.S.-born child. In 2000, there were about 900,000 unauthorized immigrant children from Mexico. By 2010, the number had dropped to about 600,000 because fewer new unauthorized immigrants were arriving in the U.S. and many of the unauthorized immigrant children from earlier years had become adults (i.e., they turned 18).

In contrast, the number of U.S.-born children with unauthorized Mexican parents had increased dramatically, more than doubling from 1.4 million in 2000 to 3.3

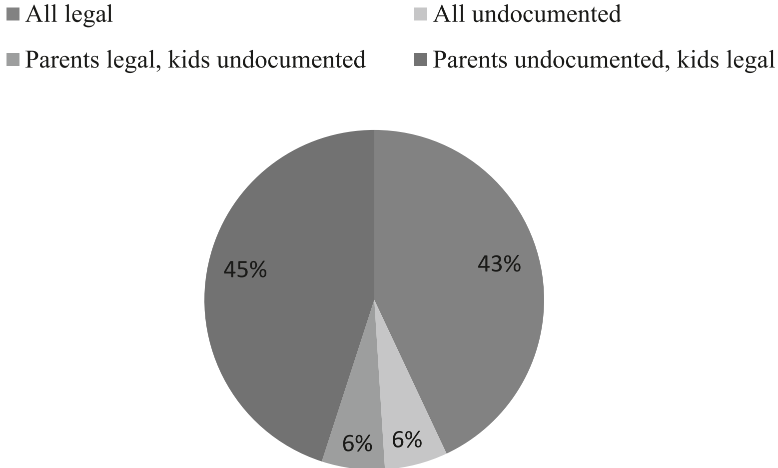


**Fig. 1.5** U.S.: Legal status of Mexican immigrant families with kids, 2010
Source: U.S. Current Population Survey
Note: Based on families with children under age 18

million in 2010. More of the unauthorized Mexican adults were staying in the U.S. longer, forming families, and having children. The prevalence of children in unauthorized families was very apparent by 2010, when 44 percent of Mexican immigrant households included children under the age of 18. Just over half (51 percent) of these households were "mixed status" households (i.e., either legal parents and unauthorized children or, most likely unauthorized parents and US-born children). This share represents a marked increase from 2000 when 41 percent of Mexican-immigrant households with children included parents and children of mixed documentation status. Not surprisingly, all of the growth in mixed status families is driven by growth in the presence of families with an undocumented parent and U.S.-born children. While in 2000, some 33 percent of Mexican immigrant families fell into this category, in 2010, the share had risen to 45 percent (See Fig. 1.5).

Looking at this situation from the perspective of the children, 59 percent of children in Mexican immigrant households had documented parents in 2000, and by 2010, that share had dropped to 50 percent (see Table 1.4). For the U.S.-born children of Mexican immigrants, the change in parental legal status over 10 years was especially notable. In 2000, about than one-third (32 percent) of U.S.-born children of Mexican immigrants had an undocumented parent. By 2010, almost half (48 percent) did.

**Table 1.4** U.S.: Parent documentation among kids in Mexican immigrant families, 2000–2010

| | 2000 | 2010 |
|---|---|---|
| *Total* | | |
| Parents legal | 57.8 | 49.9 |
| Parents undocumented | 42.2 | 50.1 |
| *Kids ages 6 years or less* | | |
| Parents legal | 56.9 | 47.8 |
| Parents undocumented | 43.1 | 52.3 |
| *Kids ages 6–17 years* | | |
| Parents legal | 60.3 | 51.2 |
| Parents undocumented | 39.7 | 48.8 |

Source: U.S. Current Population Survey

### *1.5.5 Kinship and Living Arrangements of Return Migrants in Mexico*

Migration not only affects an individual, it affects the entire family. In the case of return migration, a broader range of families and family members can be affected. In the destination country (i.e., the U.S.) the entire family may not return so that some family members may remain in the U.S. In the origin country (i.e. Mexico) some or all family members may return and they may be returning to an existing family unit or they may have a range of relatives in Mexico. Mexican immigrants living in the U.S. who decide to leave and go back home depend more heavily on family and social considerations in reaching that decision than other immigrants.[37] In addition to family members left in Mexico, family members already in the U.S., life cycle stage, the presence of U.S. born children and other social attachments have an impact on migrants' decision to make the U.S. their home.

In 2010, the census shows that 3.7 million individuals in Mexico lived in households exposed to return migration[38] (broadly defined as households where either one or more members lived in the U.S. 5 years previously or where a member is a U.S.-born minor with a Mexican parent).[39] Some 200 thousand of these return migrants

[37] See Van Hook, J. & W. Zhang (2011). Who Stays? Who Goes? Selective Emigration among the Foreign-Born. *Population Research and Policy Review*, 30(1), 1–24, <doi:10.1007/s11113-010-9183-0>.

[38] In the 2010 Mexican census the definition of a household comprised all members living in the dwelling. We will use the term "household" although the correct term would be "dwelling". INEGI used the term "censal household" for 2010.

[39] Note that this is underestimating the actual number of individuals exposed to return migration since this number does not include returnees who were in the U.S. in 2005, returned and then left again without having come back. Using the 2009 ENADID we see that this number is very similar to the number of individuals exposed to return migration in the period 2004–2009: 3.3 million. We did other comparisons to check the estimations made by ENADID and overall the small differences suggested that return is well captured. This allowed us to use ENADID to study the type of document that returnees had at the moment of arrival to the US; information which is not available in the censuses or population counts.

lived in households where all the members were returnees and 50 thousand were returnees living alone. In terms of households, 840 thousand households were exposed to return migration; 60 percent of them being nuclear households, 33 percent extended households and 6 percent were comprised of returnees living alone.

In more than half of the nuclear-family households exposed to return migration only one returnee is present: the head or their spouse (Table 1.5). In less than a third of extended family households, the only returnee is the head or the spouse. Among non-nuclear family households (extended families, mixed families, non-familial households), the most common configuration is one in which the returnees are children of the household head. The high percentage of households where returnees live with other family members shows that return is still related to family reunification. However, the number of returnees living alone shows that for others, return does not occur to the same dwelling or household from which they left. This could be explained by the stage in the life cycle and its relationship to leaving the parental

**Table 1.5** Mexico: Household by returnee participation (2009 and 2010)

| | Type of household | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Returnees present in the household [a] | 2010 Census[a] | | 2009 ENADID | |
| Households with more than one person | Nuclear [b] | Non-nuclear [c] | Nuclear [b] | Non-nuclear [c] |
| Total | 449,600 | 244,782 | 424,970 | 282,032 |
| Head or spouse | 284,724 | 69,183 | 271,178 | 80,395 |
| Head and spouse | 52,322 | 8039 | 35,499 | 6296 |
| Head or spouse and son(s) or daughter(s) of head | 15,646 | 7866 | 16,821 | 6054 |
| Head, spouse and at least a son or daughter | 24,495 | 4498 | 22,379 | 2315 |
| Only son(s) or daughter(s) of head | 72,154 | 89,925 | 79,093 | 89,378 |
| Only members with other relationship with the head | NA | 63,489 | NA | 63,742 |
| Return of complete households | | | | |
| All the members of the household are returnees | 26,020 | 3306 | 20,737 | 2034 |
| % of households with all members returnees | 5.79 | 1.35 | 4.88 | 0.72 |
| Unipersonal household | 49,534 | | 33,852 | |

Source: Ten percent sample of the 2010 Census and 2009 Survey of Demographic Dynamics (ENADID)

Notes

[a]By returnee here we refer to the population born in Mexico who resided in the United States five years before as well as the population who left and came back during the five previous years. ENADID returnees include also those individuals who lived in the United States one year before the survey but were living in Mexico at the time of the survey

[b]Refers to dwellings, not households since the 2010 Census changed the definition of household previously used by INEGI

[c]Refers to households formed by head and/or a spouse with or without a son or daughter of the head

[d]Refers to households with members with other relationship to head than spouse or son or daughter

home and creating new households.[40] Another possible explanation could be that upon return, after a long period in the United States, individuals live with other family members only until they are able to settle in a new household of their own.[41]

Although the number of returnees increased dramatically from 2005 to 2010, there was not a major change in the relationship of returnees to the households. There was a notable increase in the share who were household heads (from 36 percent in 2000 to 43 percent in 2010), offset by small decreases in spouses or partners (from 15 to 12.6 percent), children of the head (from 34.8 to 30.8 percent) and individuals with other relationships.[42] These small distribution changes relate to the increase in male returnees, concentrated in the 25–49 year old age group and other characteristics that will be discussed in the next section.

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss specific impacts of changes in the magnitude and family structure of return migration because these will be dealt in subsequent chapters. However, it is important to note that the impact on impact family life and their economic status varies in different ways based on which family member returns. By definition, return implies the interruption of the remittance flows. However, remittance behavior varies depending on the migrant or returnee position in the household. Target or "planned" return normally occurs after the achievement of saving a considerable amount of money, and differs from "unplanned return," for example, a deportation, which occurs without the achievement of a specific goal. But, not every emigrant remits money to the family members left behind. It is not easy to predict remittance behavior from Census data. However, we can tell that two-thirds of the emigrants who left during the 2005–2010 period and had not returned by 2010 left from dwellings where no remittances were reported. Households which receive financial support from more than one source may still be receiving remittances after the return of one member. Data from the 2010 Mexican census shows that 14 percent of the 745,000 households exposed to return migration in the period 2005–2010 receive international remittances suggesting that other members of the household in the U.S. are still sending money back to them.

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[40] Masferrer, C. (2012). Cuando el origen no es destino: el ciclo de vida y el retorno como posibles vínculos entre la migración interna e internacional. *Coyuntura Demográfica*, 2, 45–50.

[41] It is known that migrants in the U.S. live in extended households as a way to cope economically, as noted in Van Hook, J. & J. E. Glick (2007). Immigration and Living Arrangements: Moving beyond Economic Need versus Acculturation. *Demography*, 44(2), 225–249. This could also explain living arrangements among returnees, especially among recent returnees who spent long periods in the U.S.

[42] This is true for all types of relationship except for the category of other relationships with the head. Due to the changes in Census design, the greater prevalence of members with other relationship in 2010 is influenced by the fact that in 2010 instead of households we are dealing with dwellings.

## 1.6 Composition and Selectivity: Selected Demographic Characteristics of the Mexican Population on Both Sides of the Border

**Box 1.2 Measuring return migration rates**

**"Returnees to Mexico"** from the U.S. are measured with Mexican census and survey data. Two groups are included:

(1) Persons born in Mexico, living in the U.S. 5 years before the census/survey and in Mexico for the data collection;
(2) Persons born in Mexico who left Mexico during the 5 years before the census/survey and were back in Mexico by the Census/survey date.

**"Population at Risk of Returning"** to Mexico from the U.S. is measured with U.S. data from the American Community Survey. It includes:

(1) Persons born in Mexico and living in the U.S. at the time of the survey.

**"Distribution of Return Migrants"** is a percentage distribution of the return migrants with a broader sociodemographic group. An example would be the share of female return migrants in each age group.

**"Rate of Return Migration"** compares the number of return migrants in Mexico in a group (e.g. male college graduates) with the U.S. population of potential return migrants in the same group (can be expressed as a percentage or per 1000 Mexicans living in the U.S.):

$$\text{Risk of Return}\left(2010,5\,\text{years}\right)=\frac{\text{All returnees}\left(2005-2010\right)}{\text{Population at Risk}\left(2005\right)}$$

This section presents data on the gender, age and educational composition of the Mexican population on both sides of the border using the most recent data from both countries—the 2010 Mexican Census and the 2010 American Community Survey.[43] Comparison of the Mexican immigrants in the U.S. with the Mexican population highlights which groups and individuals are most likely to have migrated to the U.S. and returned.

To better understand the process of return migration to Mexico, we address selectivity by comparing returns during the period 2005–2010 with the Mexican population in the U.S. at the beginning of the period (2005). Through this comparison, we develop rates of return which take into account the population at risk of

[43] Special considerations were addressed in order to allow for the appropriate comparability between data sources from both countries.

returning (see box on "Return Rates").[44] Our focus on differences in return rates before and after 2008 (i.e., after the full onset of the Great Recession) helps explain the impact of the adverse environment (economic and enforcement) on the selectivity of return migration.

### *1.6.1 Sex*

The sex ratio among Mexicans living in the United States continues to favor men somewhat, with little overall change evident in the last decade. In 2000, about 56 percent of Mexican immigrants in the U.S. were men and 44 percent were women. These numbers were unchanged in 2010. As was the case in 2000, men comprise the majority at virtually all ages in 2010.

Although intercensal return migration increased dramatically during the period, the gender composition of the returnee population that resided in the U.S. 5 years prior to the Mexican census has not changed much over time. Men still comprise a large majority of this population and the share of male returnees increased over time. Men comprised about 61 percent of intercensal returns in 2000 (i.e., Mexicans who had been living in the U.S. in 1995); 66 percent in 2005; and an even higher 69 percent in 2010 (see Table 1.2).

The gender composition of intercensal migrants from Mexico (those departing from Mexico during the 5 years before the census) is also dominated by males. In concert with the large share of males among Mexicans in the US, the emigration flow from Mexico shows an even larger male share and a share that has increased over the past 20 years. Of those who left for the U.S. during the 2005–2010, fully 77 percent were men, compared with 75 percent for 1995–2000 departures, and 69 percent for those departing from Mexico during 1990–1995 (Table 1.1). Most of these emigrants did not return to Mexico during the five-year period, but those that did were even more heavily male. Further, the percentage male among the return migrants increased significantly from 69 percent among 1990–1995 returnees to 79 percent among 2005–2010 returnees (Table 1.1). Thus, while the overall share of women in the migration stream was decreasing, a larger share of those who left Mexico was likely to return, comparing the periods 1995–2000 and 2005–2010.

[44] In order to measure a rate of return which takes into account the Mexican population at risk of returning we calculate the next proportions as follows: $\mathrm{R}(2010{,}5) = \text{Proportion of return over the last 5 years} = \frac{\text{All returnees}(2005-2010)}{\text{MBPUS}(2005)}$ Where the number of returnees includes all migrants who were living in the U.S. in 2005 as well as those who left and returned over the 5 year period previous to the Survey, and MBPUS (2005) is the Mexican Born Population in the U.S. in 2005. Different rates are calculated by sex and age group, as well as by educational level. In this last case, we restrict the population of interest to adults, i.e., persons aged 18 to 59 in 2005, because we are interested in the population in the prime working and family years; as we have seen the greatest rates of Mexican emigration and return occur at these ages.

Over the course of the 1990s, Mexican female participation in migration decreased, while female settlement in the United States, relative to males increased. These divergent trends have been explained by the fact that women tend to migrate once the entire household has established in the U.S. and, since they are especially affected by greater deterrence at the border, they tend to stay in the United States once they enter. Therefore, while females have been relatively less likely to migrate from Mexico; females who do migrate to the United States have a greater tendency to remain.[45] The gender differentials in settlement and return patterns are linked to differentials in documentation status. With the exception of migrants with a student visa, women are less likely to return than men, regardless of the type of document they use to migrate, as shown in Fig. 1.6. This fits with previous findings regarding gender differentials in settlement and return patterns.

Comparing the intercensal migrants in Mexico in 2010 (i.e., those who were in theU.S.in 2005 and Mexico in 2010) with U.S. population data for 2005 shows the proportion of the 2005 U.S. population that left. (See box.) Among Mexican-born females in the U.S. in 2005, only 3.7 percent returned to Mexico by 2010. For Mexican-born men, the proportion returning is much higher—13.9 percent.[46]Thus, once women migrate, they are more likely to stay than men. The detailed mechanisms behind this pattern are not directly available from the data but a number of reasons have been offered. Women migrants in the U.S. are more likely to be in

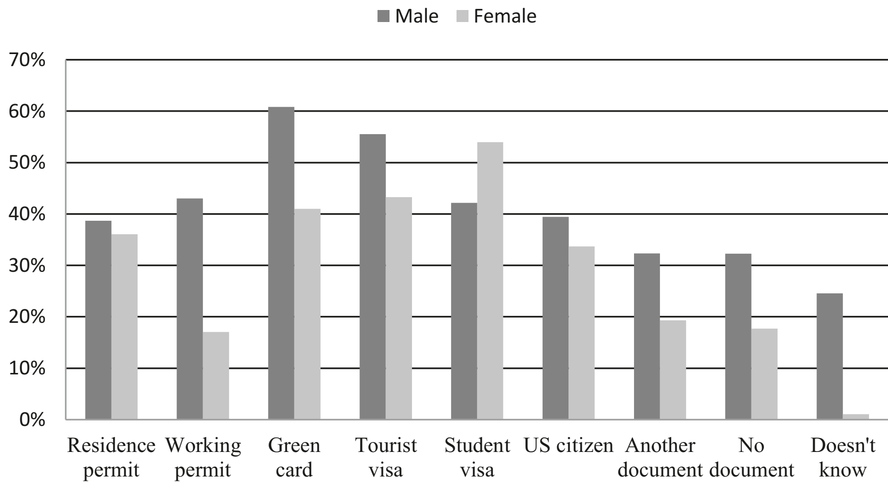


**Fig. 1.6** Percentage of returned migrants by gender and type of document at U.S. entry
Source: Encuesta Nacional de la Dinámica Demográfica, 2009

[45] Lowell, L., C. Pederzini & J. S. Passel (2008). The Demography of Mexico-U.S. Migration. In: A. Escobar & S. Martin (eds.). *Mexico-U.S. Migration Management: A Binational Approach* (pp. 1–32). Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books.

[46] Rates of return calculated with ENADID data are similar for men and slightly lower for women: 33.4.

families with children than male migrants. It is also possible they were less affected by unemployment since the types of jobs they perform were less affected by the economic crisis. Also, the type of activities performed by Mexican women in the U.S., often linked to domestic work, are less visible and, hence, less subject to deportation.

### *1.6.2 Age*

The Mexican-born population in the U.S. has long been dominated by young, working age persons. This continued to be the case in 2010, but there was also evidence that the immigrant population had aged considerably as arrival of new immigrants slowed and the average duration of residence lengthened. In 2000, the plurality of immigrants (16 percent) was in the 25–29 year old age group, and an almost equal share (15 percent) were 30–34. By 2010, the modal age category was 30–34, with 12.9 percent of the Mexican-born population falling into this age range. While this difference in and of itself is not too dramatic, a quick glance across all age groups reveals that the share of the Mexican-born population in every 5-year age group below age 35 was considerably larger in 2000 than in 2010. For instance, in 2000, 13 percent of the Mexican-born population was 20–24, while this number dropped to 8 percent in 2010. Conversely, there have been marked increases in the share of Mexican-born population in each age group above 35 years (see Fig. 1.7). More simply, the median age of Mexican immigrants living in the U.S. increased from 31.0 years in 2000 to 37.1 in 2010.

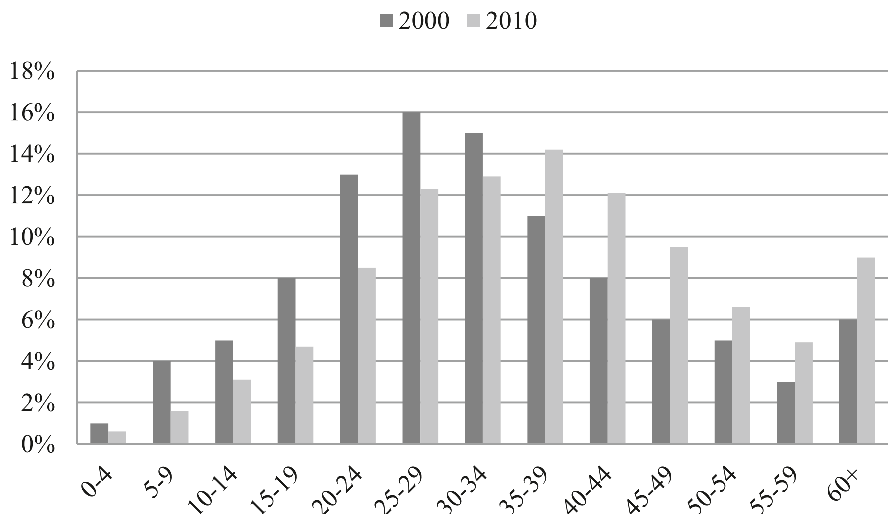


**Fig. 1.7** Age composition of the Mexican-born population in the U.S., 2000–2010
Source: U.S. Current Population Survey

The aging of the Mexican population in the U.S. has been accompanied by a smaller shift in ages of return migrants. Among return migrants in Mexico who left and came back over the five-year period before the census, there has been a small increase in the age at departure from 27.3 for 1990–1995 returnees to 28.5 for 1995–2000 returnees to 29.5 for 2005–2010 returnees (see Table 1.1). Although mean age at departure for female returnees over the period is very similar to that of males, the male population is more dispersed in terms of age at departure, with a larger share of older returnees.

The stage in the life cycle of returnees and the relationship between age and gender has different implications for the types of services needed for return migrants in Mexico. For example, health needs clearly differ by age and older return migrants may require specialized services if they are not healthy.[47] However, individuals aged 50 and older constitute a very small proportion (10 percent) of the returnees during the 2005–2010 period. One in every five (20.2 percent) of the population who arrived in Mexico during the last 5 years whose residence was the U.S. in 2005 were in the 5 to 17 year old age group in 2010. This second group is likely to have had experience in the U.S. educational system and will have different reintegration challenges than those of older returnees. Thus, the increase in individuals whose residence 5 years previously was in the U.S. is driven by an increase in the return of males between the ages of 25 to 49 years old.

Mexican population in the U.S. is concentrated in the most productive working age groups. One of every five Mexican men in the age group 25–44 resides in the U.S.[48] When we look at the composition of returnees we find that 75.6 percent[49] of all returned migrants during the period 2005–2010 were in the age group 20–44. Since most Mexican immigrants belong to this age group, it is logical to suppose that young people will comprise the larger percentage of all returned migrants. However, when we examine return rates, we see that the highest is for men in the 25–29 age group—fully 22 percent of Mexican men in the 25–29 age group who were in the U.S. in 2005 had returned to Mexico by 2010 (Fig. 1.8).

There are large gender differences in the age pattern of return migration, as shown by the likelihood of return (Fig. 1.8). Male return rates are higher for every age group and among prime working ages (here defined as 15–54), the men's return rates are much higher than women's. Return rates for men increase up to ages 25–29 from 11.5 percent for ages 15–19 to 22 percent for 25–29. Then they decrease smoothly to 10.4 percent for men in the 50–54 year old age group. For women, the return rates are much lower and vary little by age, falling generally between 3 and 5 percent for adult women. Adult women are less likely to return to Mexico than children in the 5–14-year-old age group.

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[47] Palloni, A. & E. Arias (2004). Paradox Lost: Explaining the Hispanic Adult Mortality Advantage. *Demography*, 41(3), 385–415.

[48] Pederzini, C. (2012). Mexican Labour Market Performance and Emigration. *Migration Letters*, 9(1).

[49] In ENADID the percentage is lower: 71 percent.

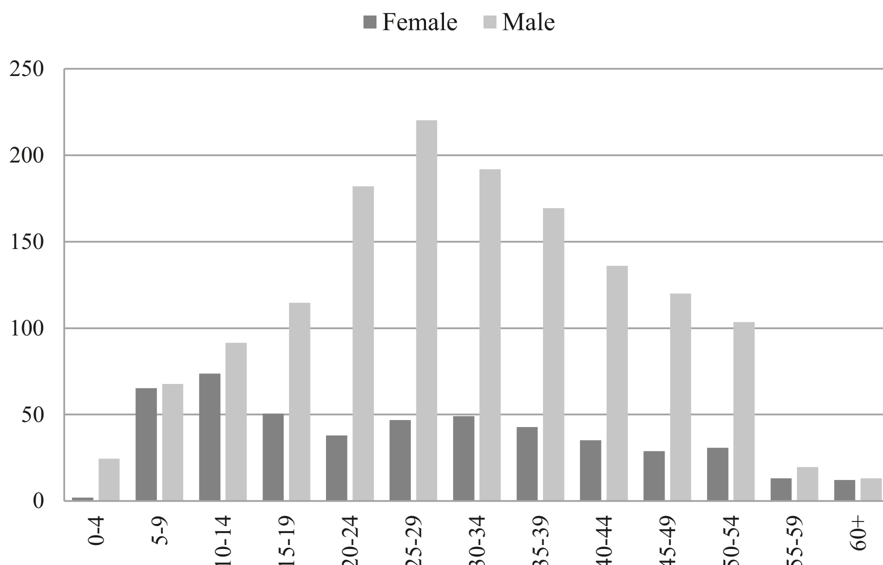


**Fig. 1.8** Mexico: Returnees in 2010 out of 1000 Mexicans in the U.S. in 2005 by age group
Source: 2010 Mexican Population Census and 2005 American Community Survey

### *1.6.3 Level of Education*

Since 2000, the educational attainment of the Mexican-born population in the U.S. has gone up notably (see Fig. 1.9). The shape of the distribution is more or less the same, with the plurality of immigrants having some education beyond 6th grade, but lacking a high school diploma. However, there have been large declines in the share of immigrants with less education. In 2000, some 39 percent of immigrants living in the U.S. had gone no further than the 6th grade, and by 2010, that share dropped to 29 percent. The biggest gains are seen among high school graduates. In 2000, 21 percent of immigrants had completed high school, and in 2010, the share had risen to 26 percent. Small increases occurred in the share with more advanced education, as well.

While the exact pattern has changed somewhat over time, in both 2000 and 2010, educational attainment among Mexican immigrants was inversely related to the age at which the immigrant moved to the U.S. (see Table 1.6). For instance, 28 percent of Mexican immigrants who arrived in the U.S. prior to age 6 had not completed high school. This share increases to 36 percent for those arriving between the ages of 6 and 11; 53 percent for those arriving between the ages of 12 and 17 years; and 62 percent for those arriving at age 18 or older. The immigrants who arrive in the U.S. as young children have an educational profile closely resembling U.S. born Hispanics.

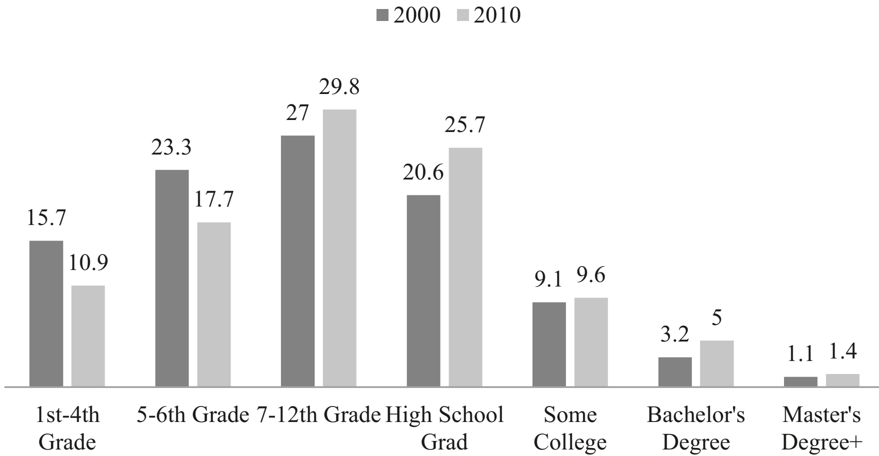


**Fig. 1.9** U.S.: Share of U.S. Mexican immigrant population, by educational attainment, 2000–2010
Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, March. Note: Includes persons ages 25 years and older

**Table 1.6** Educational attainment of Mexican immigrants by age at entry into the U.S., 2010

| | <6 yrs | 6-11 yrs | 12-17 yrs | 18 + yrs |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1st-fourth grade | 2.9 | 2.4 | 5.2 | 12.8 |
| 5-sixth grade | 4.6 | 7.4 | 12.1 | 20 |
| 7–12th grade | 20 | 26.3 | 35.3 | 29.6 |
| High school graduated | 34.1 | 31.7 | 29 | 24.2 |
| Some college | 21.6 | 23.4 | 13.4 | 7.3 |
| Bachelor's degree | 14.6 | 6.2 | 3.5 | 4.7 |
| Master's degree+ | 2.2 | 2.5 | 1.4 | 1.3 |

Source: U.S. Current Population Survey, 2010
Note: Includes persons ages 25 years and older

There are very large differences in return migration depending on the educational level of the migrants in the U.S. The comparison of Mexican data on completed education of returned migrants with U.S. data on the immigrants at risk of returning is not perfect because the definitions of completed education differ between the two countries' data systems.[50] However, Mexico and the United States have roughly similar system of education, and we use standard categories from the

[50] Completed education is a preferred measure for many reasons, as contrasted with years of education which is useful as a rough measure of schooling but does not capture the value added of a completed degree).

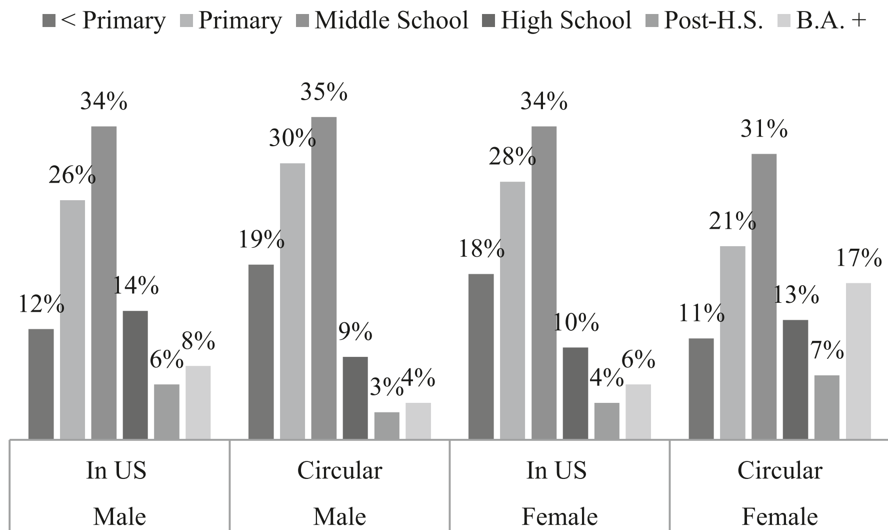


**Fig. 1.10** Mexico: Educational attainment by migration status and sex, 2010
Source: 2010 Mexican Population Census

Mexican Census, ENADID and the ACS[51] to generate relatively comparable profiles from both countries.

Middle school graduates comprise the largest share of returned migrants as more than 30 percent fall into this category (see Fig. 1.10). The second largest educational group is comprised of those who attended primary school. Although only a small share of the return migrants have gone beyond high school, the share is much larger among female returnees (27 percent) than males (19 percent). Figure 1.10 also shows a gender difference in terms of educational composition: the share of male circular returnees with lower levels of education is larger than the share for returnees using the definition of residence in the U.S. in 2005. However, for women the opposite is true.

The economic recession of 2008–2009 may have led to changes in the distribution of the educational level of return migrants. Plus, around the same time border and interior enforcement and legislative changes such as Arizona's SB1070 law,

[51] The comparison is made as follows: less than primary education includes all adults who have not completed at least 5 years of education, while primary completers report having completed five or 6 years of education (primaria). Middle school is the first level of secondary education (secundaria) and includes adults who report up to 12 years of education but not having completed high school (preparatoria); and we include here non-tertiary type technical degrees granted in Mexico. A high school or secondary completion includes a "GED" in the United States and is similar in Mexico. A post high school level of completion includes all adults reporting at least 1 year of post-secondary education including technical degrees. A bachelor's degree includes adults reporting having completed that degree, as does a master's degree and the doctorate or professional degree.

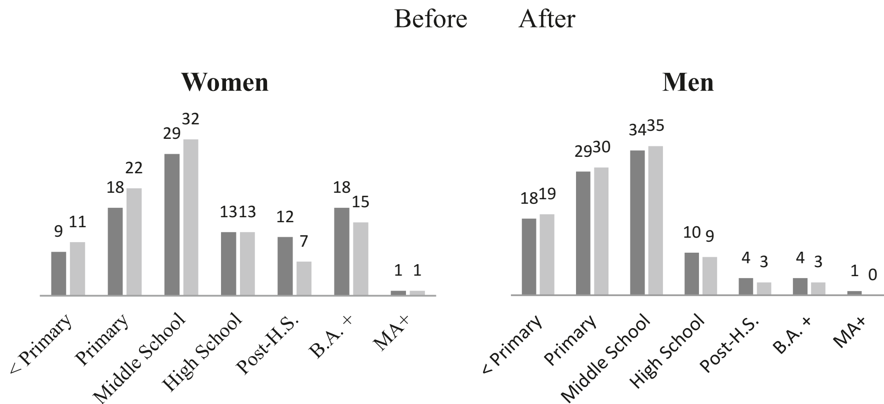


**Fig. 1.11** Educational composition by gender and date of return (pre−/post-crisis) for returnees ages 18–59 in 2005–2010
Source: 2010 Mexican Population Census
Note: The pre-crisis period corresponds to 2005–2007 and the post-crisis period corresponds to 2008–2010.

may have differentially influenced return decisions of migrants in different educational groups. In fact, Fig. 1.11 shows that migrants returning after the crisis have less education than those who returned before. This difference is found among return migrants of both sexes but the change is more pronounced for women than men.

These changes suggest that 2008 may be an inflexion point in terms of the patterns of return although further research is needed to test the impacts of the recession and enhanced enforcement environment on different populations. Here we have restricted the analysis to those who left during the period. However, from the previous discussion, we expect to find different impacts for those who had remained in the U.S. longer periods and might have stronger attachments there. Unfortunately, we do not have data on date of arrival and return for the return migrant population that was living in the U.S. in 2005.

The comparisons above relate to the educational distribution across different groups of migrants. However, using information on risks of return offers a clearer perspective on how education affects the decision to return to Mexico. Among Mexican immigrants in the U.S. in 2005, those with the least educational attainment were the most likely to return to Mexico (Fig. 1.12). Male migrants in the U.S. who had not completed high school were very likely to return to Mexico after 2005; about 30 percent of those with less than primary education and 20 percent of those who had gone no further than middle school did so. Return rates are much lower for women with these low levels of education, however. The lowest probabilities of return are found among those who completed high school and those who had some college experience (for both men and women). Interestingly, possession of a bachelor's degree greatly increases the likelihood of return for both men (14.5 percent)

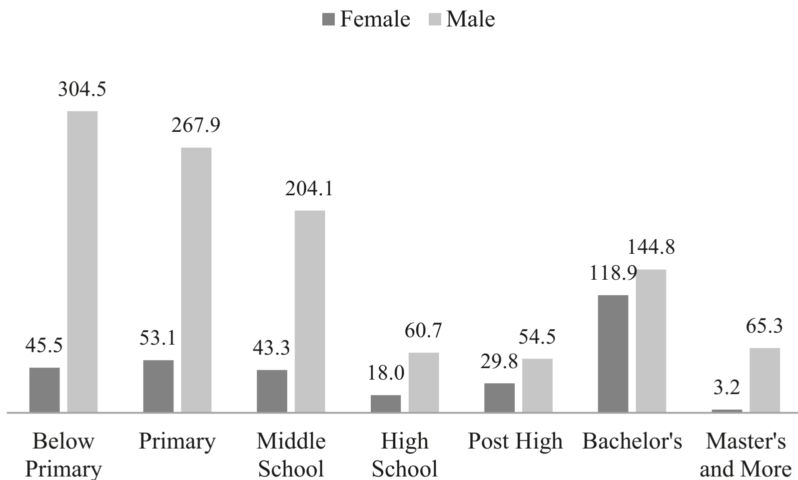


**Fig. 1.12** Mexico: Returnees in 2010 out of 1000 Mexicans in U.S. in 2005 by educational level
Source: 2010 Mexican Population Census

and especially women (11.9 percent).[52] These differentials may be tied to the economic conditions in the U.S. since migrants in low skilled occupations such as construction apparently lost more jobs during the crisis. In addition, migrants with the lowest educational levels are likely the ones with the highest probability being unauthorized and thus, more vulnerable to enforcement actions.

## 1.7 Conclusion

### *1.7.1 Discussion*

The changes in the demographic characteristics of the Mexican migrant population on both sides of the border reflect the new conditions affecting the Mexico--U.S. migration system. Greatly reduced movement to the U.S. and increased movement to Mexico have led to a more settled migrant population in the U.S. and a larger number of U.S.-born children in Mexico. Whether the new patterns will persist or are momentary, and due to the adverse economic situation, is yet to be determined. However, the increased deportations, especially under a criminal charge resulting from a minor offense, along with new, local laws targeting immigrants are

[52] This could be tied to graduation of those with study permits since the sample of returnees includes people with a non-immigrant visa (NIV) and immigrants.

likely to be around for at least a few years. Our results show returnees to Mexico are concentrated in active and productive ages. While a significant challenge facing this population is reintegration into the Mexican labor market (if they settle in the country and do not leave again), the arrival of younger returnees and U.S.-born minors with Mexican parents (i.e., U.S.-born Mexicans) presents a different set of challenges to the Mexican educational system. Additionally, although a minority of the return migrants is elderly, their return (and the potential return of more elderly in the future) poses other challenges associated with health care and pension programs. These issues will be discussed more broadly in the next chapters.

### *1.7.2 Policy Recommendations*

As highlighted in this Binational project, the well-being of the Mexican migrant population needs to be understood comprehensively on both sides of the border. With the increase in the United States of a more settled Mexican-born population (i.e., those who have been in the U.S. more than 15 years) and a growing second generation, it is important for policy makers to reconceptualize the Mexican population in the U.S. as families, rather than a group dominated by young, male sojourners.[53] Doing so should bring more attention to the second generation (U.S.-born Mexicans), a group that is increasingly moving into young adulthood and perhaps shift the immigration debate towards a broad definition that includes the U.S.-born Mexicans.

The recently announced program of deferred deportations for unauthorized immigrants who were brought to the U.S. as children[54] and have completed high school (or more) in the U.S. may provide some impetus to move discussions about immigration reform forward. This group is large (up to 1.7 million by some

[53] Results using the National Survey of Labor and Occupation (ENOE, for *Encuesta Nacional de Ocupación y Empleo*) show that the number of persons arriving in Mexico from the United States has not increased, but held steady at 260–430 thousand persons per year over the period 2005–2010 (see pages 12–17 of the Final Report of the Binational Dialogue). One possible explanation may be that return migrants are staying in Mexico. Although it may be a useful source for measuring outflows, the authors of this chapter believe that ENOE presents problems for measuring return flows. Inflows captured in ENOE are limited to returns to *existing* households, but do not capture the arrival and establishment of whole households in Mexico. In other words, ENOE data best reflect the circular or seasonal migration flows or what we refer here as intra-censal migration. Given the increase in the migration of complete households including returnees and their U.S. born children, observed using the 2000 and 2010 Mexican population censuses and 2005 count, and confirmed by the National Survey of Demographic Dynamics (ENADID, for *Encuesta Nacional de Dinámica Demográfica*), we opt to limit the analysis of this chapter to results using the Mexican censuses and ENADID.

[54] U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) (2012). *Memorandum: Exercising Prosecutorial Discretion with Respect to Individuals who Came to the United States as Children*. Washington D.C., <http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/s1-exercising-prosecutorial-discretion-individuals-who-came-to-us-as-children.pdf>.

estimates) and dominated by Mexican immigrants.[55] Most discussions to date have focused on the numbers of such immigrants and their impact on U.S. institutions. These young immigrants are, in general, related to other unauthorized immigrants and many to U.S. citizen siblings. Clearly, their participation in this program can have significant implications for their families, but the full impact is, as of today, still unknown.

Current laws and enforcement efforts to punish and remove undocumented immigrants are likely to affect not only those born in Mexico, but, increasingly, those born in the United States as well. U.S.-born children living in mixed-status families are situated in a vulnerable position and live at risk of family separation. U.S. policy makers need to recognize more explicitly and take seriously the demographic profile of the Mexican population in the U.S. and move beyond the old model of male circular labor migrants.

The phenomenon of increased return migration clearly has implications for the Mexican government. One of the major limitations for a public policy regarding return migration is the lack of knowledge about the characteristics of return migrants in Mexico and their needs upon return. Therefore, we suggest that the government design and implement vehicles to collect more data about this new population in Mexico.

Data collection should consider the characteristics of migrant population on both sides of the border in order to learn about the conditions of those who have returned as well as their family members who have stayed behind in the United States. The recent trends show the need to move beyond the conception of migration within the old framework of males migrating to work temporarily where women were left behind. Thus, data collection should take into account the differences between circular migration and return migration, better capturing the migrant trajectories and time of residence in the U.S. Currently this data is only collected for emigrants over the previous five-year period, but not for the population whose residence was the U.S. 5 years before the census.

Although women are less prevalent among return migrants, their numbers are not insignificant. Differences in selectivity of return migration by gender and education indicate the need to better understand female return, which is likely to impact other variables such as fertility, union formation, and family structure. In order to plan and design social policy, both the U.S. and Mexico need to understand and take into account the potential returnee increase, as well as the increase in time spent in the U.S. by those migrants returning to Mexico which makes resettlement more problematic. Thus, we recommend a broad conception of the migrant population that includes Mexican born as well as U.S. born individuals with a Mexican parent, what we have called U.S. born Mexicans.

Changes in demographic patterns of return also have implications for family separation, which is likely to impact children and parents in different ways. Return

[55] Passel, J. S. & M. H. Lopez (2012). *Up to 1.7 Million Unauthorized Immigrant Youth May Benefit from New Deportation Rules*. Washington D.C.: Pew Research Center.

migration could be actually occurring in order to avoid family separation once one member of the family has been deported, for example. But further research is needed to understand more clearly the role of deportation and return of complete households, and its relationship with selectivity patterns due to the U.S. economy, stage in the life course or family-building. The effects of deportation or unprepared return are likely to affect differently the dimensions of migrants' well-being. Not every returnee has been deported. Some could have actually decided that it was the right time to go back in order to settle back where their family members have stayed behind, to open a business, to transfer skills to others, and so on. Thus, beyond labeling return as a success or failure, we suggest that policy should conceive return with an integral perspective promoting reintegration into Mexican society. Educational, financial and occupational policies should be considered in order to help return migrants reintegrate and, thus, contribute to development in Mexico. In this sense, we recommend that Mexican policy-makers consider return migration policy as a tool for reintegration within a similar perspective of that of immigrant integration policy.

Finally, our main recommendation for policy makers on both sides of the border is to conceive the migration phenomenon as a family affair beyond the individual, movement of single males. The mature stage of Mexico-U.S. migration has produced a dynamic and complex phenomenon of return that spans beyond the economic cycles and border enforcement policies. Thus, enforcement, admission and proactive policies impact family ties and dynamics across borders. A clear picture of the demographic and social characteristics of returnees is a first step in the design of an appropriate social policy agenda that takes into account the current complexity of migration and family life.

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