THE DELINQUENT, AMORAL, AND AMERICANIZED: SOCIAL CONCEPTIONS OF RETURN MIGRANTS IN MEXICO

Eleonore Rohrer

Honors Thesis
International Relations and Latin American Studies
Tufts University, May 2011

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF FIGURES

TABLE OF PHOTOGRAPHS

INTRODUCTION

The 2,000 miles of border that stretch between the United States and Mexico separate the most economically unequal neighbors in the world. It is also the most traversed international border on the planet (Gonzalez Velázquez 2008, 28). These facts, of course, are hardly coincidental. Since wage differentials between the two countries are 10 to one, it is no surprise that the United States has a greater number of immigrants from Mexico alone than any other country has immigrants in general. Today, 11 percent of people born in Mexico—12.7 million individuals—are living in the United States. Just over half do so illegally ("Mexican Immigrants" 2009, 1). The pace of this immigration is astounding: the Mexican immigrant population in the United States is 17 times larger now than it was 40 years ago ("Mexican Immigrants" 2009, 1).

In the face of this massive and largely illegal inflow of Mexicans, anti-immigrant hysteria has intensified across the United States. Americans fear that immigrants will introduce violence, job competition, and conflicting cultural values to their communities (D. González 2010). To protect themselves from this foreign threat, Americans have backed extreme measures of border security. A looming frontier equipped with infrared sensors, digital telescopes, helicopters, planes, and armed personnel has replaced the dotted line of barbed wire and picket fence that, until recently, traced America's southern border (Wilson 2000, 1). The budget for border enforcement surged 600 percent between 1993 and 2006 (Fitzgerald 2008, 4). To make sure that trespassing immigrants understand they are not welcome, coalitions of Americans, such as the Minuteman Project, take matters into their own, rifle-wielding hands.

The anti-immigrant sentiment is also evidenced by the following, questionably-constitutional initiatives: California's proposition 187 in 1994, denying undocumented migrants

select state-funded services; the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act in 1996, increasing criminal deportations; and the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, also in 1996, restricting immigrants' access to welfare benefits (Fitzgerald 2008, 4). Most recent was Arizona's 2010 Support Law Enforcement and Safe Neighborhoods Act, better known as SB 1070. Hailed as the "the nation's toughest law on illegal immigration," SB 1070 required police officers to detain and check the immigration status of anyone they suspected to be an undocumented immigrant ("Arizona" 2011). Though a federal judge blocked SB 1070 in July 2010, polls indicate that 51 percent of Americans would support a similar law in their own state (Quinnipiac 2010).

Photo 1. Governor Jan Brewer (R-AZ), who signed SB 1070 into law, portrays American anti-immigrant sentiment on the cover of the Phoenix New Times, published on July 29, 2010.

As it often does, this restrictionist environment coincided with an economic recession. The collapse of industries that typically employ migrants was speculated to cause a mass exodus of Mexican immigrants (see page 22 for a list of relevant news articles). Such a mass departure of Mexican immigrants might delight the three quarters of Americans who would like the number of immigrants currently living in the United States to decrease ("CNN" 2010, 2). Though many

Americans want Mexicans to "get out"—and stay out—of the United States, few bother to ask: what does the return of migrants[1] mean for Mexico?

While there are plenty of publications about Mexican immigration into the United States and its consequences, there are relatively few regarding the other half of the migratory phenomenon: the repatriation processes of migrants and its impact on the home society. Broad return migration theory and some policy guidelines have been established, but the general consensus in the academic community is that return migration is an understudied phenomenon. "Return migration," according to the International Organization for Migration, "remains the great unwritten chapter in the history of migration" ("Return Migration").

This lack of attention is a tremendous oversight considering that an estimated 400,000 to 500,000 migrants return to Mexico every year (Preston 2009). More than half do so by deportation (2009 Yearbook, 2010, 104). The consequential torrent of behaviors, identities, economic needs, and cultural practices that flows back into Mexico is silently changing the country and its people. It is reasonable to believe that Mexicans have many of the same fears that Americans do when presented with an inflow of migrants. Therefore, the same kinds of questions about immigration asked in American polls should be asked in Mexico too.

This is the premise of my thesis. I quantify the dynamics of return migration between 2007 and 2009, and describe the Mexican social reaction thereof. I ask and answer: How many Mexicans return and why? How do Mexicans feel about the migrants that return?

I begin Chapter 1 with a brief overview of Mexican-American migration history. Understanding the changing dynamics of Mexican migration provides the perspective needed to

[1] Due to the bidirectional nature of migration, the terms 'immigrant' and 'emigrant' are confusing and often irrelevant. Employing the neutral term 'migrant' avoids the confusion. I define a 'migrant' as any individual not born an American citizen that has lived in the United States for 4 months or longer. I define a return migrant, or a returnee, as a migrant who has returned to live in his country of origin. I only use the word 'immigrant' when referring to the migrant population living in the United States.

understand the theoretical framework of this thesis. I apply international return migration theory to the contemporary case in Mexico, and end the chapter with an analysis of the few existing works that target my specific research questions.

I describe in Chapter 2 the contemporary return migration trends between the United States and Mexico. I find that while the overall size of the flow has remained constant during the recession, the dynamics of the returning population have changed in important ways. The large majority of return migrants lived illegally in the United States, and over half of all those that return to Mexico do so involuntarily. These trends inform the discussion of how Mexicans react to the returnees elaborated in Chapters 4 and 5.

Chapter 3 is an explanation of my research methodology, which is based on the 500 public opinion surveys I conducted in Mexico, an analysis of the commentaries made during the surveying process, and 18 qualitative interviews. I emphasize that while my research is neither generalizable to Mexico nor comprehensive on the topic of return migration, it provides important insight into the phenomena described.

In Chapter 4, I use these materials along with my own research to build a vibrant and up-to-date account of my sample's conceptions about return migrants. I discuss the survey results and the trends respondents correlated to return migration, including: new Americanized identities, negative impacts on the local economy and traditions, culturally-charged behavioral patterns, increased tensions with authority, and changing family or gender roles. My research sample demonstrated predominantly negative sentiments towards returnees.

I conclude this thesis by connecting the return migration trends and theory to my findings about the Mexican social conceptions concerning return migrants. Given the dynamics of the contemporary return migration flow, I argue that the receiving environment in Mexico is hostile

to most returnees. This has the potential to generate caustic outcomes for migrants already arriving demoralized and vulnerable due to the migration experience. The data I discuss serve as a point of departure for future research on a current of Mexican migration that has remained largely concealed by the tremendous northward-bound stream.

CHAPTER 1. "THE GREAT NEGLECTED ASPECT:" MEXICAN RETURN MIGRATION BACKGROUND AND THEORY

To be able to apply international theory to the return migration phenomenon in Mexico, it is first necessary to understand the unique dynamics of the Mexican immigrant population in the United States. Thus, this chapter begins with an overview of Mexican-American migration history. Though literature about return migration typically takes the shape of European case studies, various typologies of return migration are salient to the Mexican case, where migrants are returning under a tremendous variety of circumstances. I apply this literature to contemporary Mexico to identify factors important to a successful return migration experience. Lastly, I review the literature about return migration in Mexico, focusing on the way it is perceived and dealt with from a Mexican perspective.

1.1 Contextualizing Mexican Return Migration in Migration History

Mexican migration to the United States has been prominent since the 1850s, when men became seasonal field hands in parts of the United States that had, until the Mexican Cession of 1848, belonged to Mexico anyway ("Mexican Immigrant Labor"). Emigration during the Mexican Revolution and a demand for (non-Asian) labor during World War I amplified the flow of Mexicans heading north. The expansion of the railroad networks in both countries promoted a greater diversity of Mexican immigrants in a more dispersed portion of the United States (Adler 2008, 14). The Mexican workforce was recognized as ideal: cheap and hardworking ("Mexican Immigrant Labor").

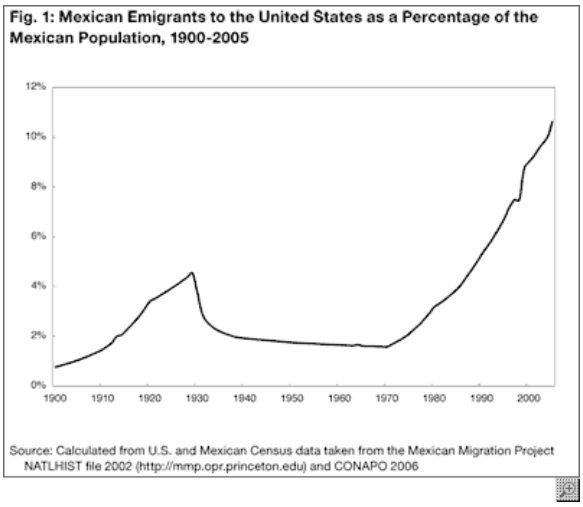
Job scarcity in the late 1920s meant for a standstill in immigration. The Border Patrol was created in 1924, giving rise to the term "illegal alien." Fears about job competition in the face of the Great Depression of 1929 spurred the notorious first instance of forced repatriation[2] of approximately 500,000 Mexican migrants and their family members over the course of the decade (Durand 2006, 172). A shortage of labor in the American farming and construction industries during World War II, though, meant for a renewed demand for Mexican laborers. The American government's response was the creation of the Bracero Program in 1942. The labor program would control immigration by granting seasonal contracts to Mexicans for several months of work in the United States. During the 22 years of the program, 4.5 million seasonal contracts were granted to migrant workers (Fitzgerald 2008, 2). In light of both the American Civil Rights movement (which viewed the program as exploitive), and restrictionist fears (which culminated in the 1954 "Operation Wetback"), the Bracero Program was terminated in 1964 (Cota-Cabrera et al. 2009, 7). Nonetheless, the "Bracero" cohort was successful in establishing significant social networks[3] between the United States and Mexico. These social bonds "anchored chain migration immigration" despite future restrictions in American immigration policy (Fitzgerald 2008, 2).

The wage differentials between Mexico and the United States, together with established social networks between Mexican communities in the United States and their hometowns, meant for a boom in Mexican immigration beginning in the late 1970s (see Figure 1 on the next page). Fears that the situation was "out of control" motivated the Immigration Reform and Control Act

[2] Repatriation of humans refers to bringing, or sending, a person back to their country of origin. While I use the term 'return migration' to include both voluntary and involuntary movement back to the country of origin, I use 'repatriation' only in reference to involuntary returns.

[3] Terms like "social networks" are widely used in contemporary migration studies. Social networks are the relationships and resources that migrants weave between their host country and community of origin. According to Adler, "the migrants' continued participation in their hometown transforms it to such an extent that non-migrants are also brought into the web of transnationalism…migration itself becomes increasingly attractive to non-migrants as it becomes normative practice" (Alder 3). Thus, social networks tend to enable future migrations between the community of origin and specific host site. Those established during the Bracero period largely explain the Mexican influence in the United States today.

of 1986 (IRCA), which issued sanctions to employers that knowingly hire illegal aliens, tightened border security, and granted amnesty to 2.3 million eligible undocumented Mexicans, who could in turn petition naturalization for their family members (Donato, Durand, and Massey 1992, 95). The IRCA greatly increased legal immigration, and did not stall illegal immigration for long. In 1994, the United States, Canada, and Mexico signed the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and the consequential agricultural crisis in Mexico intensified the inflow of Mexican migrants (Zúñiga and Hamann 2006, 43). By 2008, the Mexican immigrant population had reached an all-time high with 12.7 million Mexican-born individuals living in the United States ("Mexican Immigrants" 2009, 1).



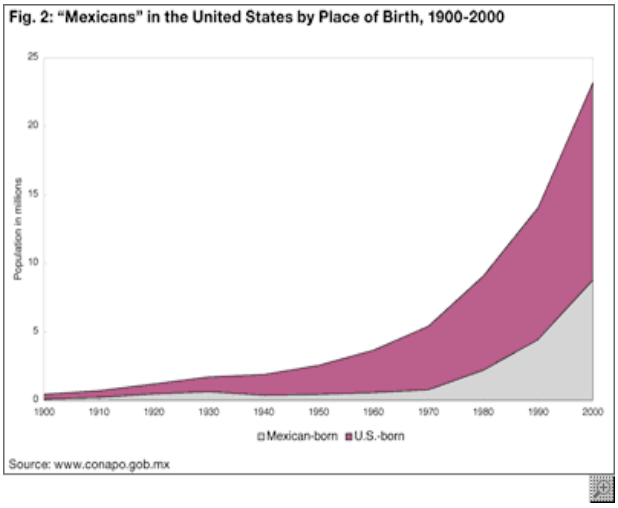


Figure 1. (LEFT) Graphic reprinted from Fitzgerald 2008, 4. Figure 1 shows the impact of the Great Depression on migrant flows, as well as the rapid increase in immigration since the 1970s.

Figure 2. (RIGHT) Graphic reprinted from Fitzgerald 2008, 4. The purple color illustrates the magnitude of the Chicano population**.**

Mexican immigration was historically characterized by a population of rural male migrants that traveled alone, purposing mainly to supplement their household economy with seasonal work in the United States (Zúñiga and Hamann 2006, 43). These migrants worked primarily as farmhands in border states like Arizona, Texas, and California. They were normally

from Mexico's Central West Plateau, namely from the states of Michoacán, Jalisco, and Guanajuato (Fitzgerald 2008, 3). I call this area the "traditional migrant-sending zone."

Three changes can be observed when comparing contemporary immigration patterns (those since the IRCA in 1986), and the historical patterns. First, migrants now have a strong presence in American communities far beyond the border zone (Zúñiga and Hamann 2006, 43). Among the top ten Mexican migrant-receiving states, for instance, are North Carolina, Georgia, and Florida (Fitzgerald 2009b). Secondly, migration is no longer a phenomenon reserved to single men. In 2008, 43 percent of the Mexican-born population in the United States was female ("Mexican Immigrants" 2009, 4). Nearly a third of immigrating Mexicans make the trip with their families, and one fifth have children in American public schools (Zúñiga and Hamann 2006, 44). Thirdly, migration is increasingly one-way. The border fence not only keeps undocumented migrants from coming into the United States; it also keeps them from leaving. Given that many migrants have established families in the United States now, those who have to risk an illegal re-entry into America are unlikely to return to Mexico for a visit (Zúñiga and Hamann 2006, 43).

A byproduct of these Mexican migration patterns is the emergence of new, "transnational" cultural spaces in both American and Mexican communities. "Transnationalism," a buzzword in contemporary migration studies, can be defined as "a process in which international migrants maintain their ties to the home country—despite its geographical distance—while living in the country of settlement" (Margolis 2007, 221). The ties that keep Mexicans linked to their homeland can take the form of periodical visits home, participation in hometown associations,[4] sending remittances, or simply maintaining contact with loved ones in Mexico (Fitzgerald 2009b, 14). The size of the Mexican population in the United States, especially concentrated in cities like

[4] Hometown associations (HTAs) are coalitions of immigrants from a particular migrant-sending region that institutionalize a financial and cultural exchange between the host community and the community of origin (Fitzgerald 2009b, 14).

Los Angeles, means that Mexican migrants have access to the Mexican culture without being in Mexico. At the same time, living in a pseudo-Mexican or transnational space implies the formation of an identity that borrows from both cultures, yet belongs to neither.

A myriad of transnational identities have evolved through the many decades of Mexican immigration. Some Mexican immigrants become Americanized, and some Americans strongly identify with Mexico despite never having lived there. Terms distinguish between these different identities. The word 'Pocho,' for instance, is "a pejorative term for *Mexicanos* who have become thoroughly Anglicized, who may be unable to understand or speak Spanish" (Meier and Gutiérrez 2003, 316). The Pocho is Mexican-born. The descendent of a Mexican-born immigrant, born in America, is a "Chicano" (Meier and Gutiérrez 2003, 89). To refer to Anglo-Americans, Mexicans use the terms "Gabacho" and "Gringo[5]" (Meier and Gutiérrez 2003, 148).[6] These slang words dominate the discourse of Mexican-American identity formation on both sides of the border.

1.2 Theoretical Perspectives: Typologies of Return Migration

Given the unique dynamics of Mexican migration history, a combination of different international return migration theories must be applied to establish a theoretical framework of return migration to the country. Starting at the beginning, the decision to migrate and return migrate is generally considered a function of push and pull factors. Push factors are the unfavorable circumstances in the country of residence[7] that drive emigration. Working

[5] Throughout the theis, I use the term "Gringo" freely, as it is used in Mexico. Though it may have an offensive connotation in the United States (and can be used pejoratively anywhere), it is the generic and neutral term most Mexicans use to refer to American citizens. "Americano" or "norteamericano" are used also, but less frequently.
[6] These terms are frequently used inaccurately in Mexico, often by way of insult. For instance, if a Mexican calls a Mexican return migrant a "Chicano," it is a manner of saying that the migrant is more American than Mexican. Similarly, though calling a first-generation return migrant a "Gabacho" is technically incorrect, it implies that the migrant has become totally Americanized.
[7] The country of residence refers to the country in which an actor considering migrating resides. Conversely, the country of destination is the country the actor plans to migrate to. I will normally make reference to the country of

simultaneously are pull factors, or the appealing aspects in the country of destination that motivate immigration. To explain patterns of return migration, different typologies organize these factors with emphasis on migrants' motivations and expectations, their legal repatriation status, or time spent abroad. Parts of various typologies can be applied to the Mexican return migration phenomenon.

One of the first and most referenced structural analyses of return migration is the book (1974) by Francesco Cerase, which separates return migrants into four categories based on their expectations and intentions. First, Cerase explains the *return of conservation*. Migrants in this category are characterized by making a calculated decision to work in the host country just until enough capital is saved to improve their quality of life upon return. The *return of innovation* refers to migrants who acquire skills and resources to create a new opportunity in the home country (249-251). In other words, this is the type of return migration home countries try to encourage because it implies the return of the "Diaspora entrepreneur," or human capital sometimes fabricated by a migratory experience, which is a key to development (Usher 2005, 17).[8] As the name implies, the *return of retirement* manifests itself when dissatisfaction with the host country motivates a desire to, in one's old age, return to the country of origin. Last is Cerase's *return of failure* category. Migrants in this category suffer feelings of humiliation, bewilderment, and disappointment in the host country, and return to the country of origin without

---

origin (also called the 'home country,' in this case Mexico), and a host country (also called the receiving country, in this case the United States).

[8] Both the "return of conservation" and "return of innovation" imply an economic cost-benefit analysis on behalf of migrants contemplating return. The economic models that explain migrants' decisions to return to the community of origin are not inverses of the models that exist to explain emigration from those communities. For instance, the way that the migrant invested in the community of origin while abroad, the changes in the local Mexican economy, and establishing a continuing source of U.S. dollars via remittances or a pension, are important considerations for a Mexican planning on return migrating (Lindstrom 1996, 371). While I recognize the value of these models, the economic motivations of individuals considering a return to Mexico lie beyond the scope of this thesis, which purposes to gauge the Mexican social reaction towards these returnees. For more on these models, see Lindstrom (1996), Chiquiar and Hanson (2005), or Gitter, Gitter, and Southgate (2008).

having met their objectives. Migrants' feelings towards their experience in America are marked by "a sense of suffering, fear, and abandonment mixed with the memory of "marvels, incomprehensible great things, seen through amazed eyes" (Cerase 250-251).

With the exception of "the return of failure," Cerase's typology is a series of pull factors that attract the migrant back to the home country. Given that he elaborated these categories observing the Italian return migrant cohort in the late 1960s, they are not particularly salient to the realities of Mexican return migration. More germane is the PhD dissertation by Augustín Hernández Ceja (2006), which details seven specific pull factors that motivate returns to Mexico: 1) to retire in Mexico, where an American pension can be stretched further; 2) to be with a family member who is ill; 3) to take a vacation to attend religious or social ceremonies, such as his community's *fiesta patronal*;[9] 4) a visa expires and there is work or a project to undertake at home; 5) to continue studies; 6) the objective is achieved, such as saving up money to buy a house, start a business, or get married; 7) the migrant reassesses the cultural influence of life in the United States on his[10] family, particularly when his children become involved with delinquent groups (149).

The typologies elaborated by Cerase and Hernández Ceja rest under an important—and, in the case of Mexico, flawed—assumption: the migrants voluntarily decide to go home. A typology that also addresses the push factors for return migration is needed to understand return migration from a Mexican perspective. Mexican migration expert, Jorge Durand, elaborates on Cerase's typology to create seven broad categories that can effectively include migrants from any country

[9] Communities across Mexico have their own patron saint, who they celebrate for a week each year.
[10] I use male pronouns throughout the thesis but I do not mean the discussion to be exclusive to male return migrants; I simply prefer the singular and know that most return migrants are men (91 percent of the migrants I spoke to were men).

(2006, 170-174). I tailor his classification to the contemporary case of return migration in Mexico using information from a personal interview with Durand, his book, and historical data.[11]

1. *Voluntary Return*[12] *of the Established Migrant*. This category includes all migrants that choose to come back to Mexico after having established themselves in the United States (Durand 2006, 170). This includes those that have been living abroad for decades, as well as Cerase's "return of innovation," "return of conservation," and "return of retirement." Though this category seems to umbrella many different factors that spur return migration, it describes a relatively small percentage of the Mexican migrants that go home (Durand 2006, 175).

2. *Return of the Temporary Migrant*. A "temporary migrant" can be defined as a Mexican citizen that is issued (and honors) a visa for seasonal work in the United States. In other words, the migrant resides in Mexico, and only spends part of the year in the United States. The Mexican cohort that best exemplified this type of return were the Braceros (Durand 2006, 170-171). Today, temporary returns are largely reserved for documented Mexican migrants and visa-holding professionals.

5. *The Return of Failure.* Durand recognizes the value of Cerase's category (2006, 170-171). This is an increasingly common outcome of immigration to the United States, especially given the current environment of economic crisis and anti-immigrant sentiment. The migrants most affected by such a hostile environment are those without documents.

---

[11] In an effort to maintain the flow of this chapter, I reordered his categories.

[12] The International Organization for Migration groups migrants into categories based on their legal motivations for return: *voluntary without compulsion* (migrants make a free choice to go home); *voluntary under compulsion* (migrants return because they are unable to extend visas for continuing a legal stay in the US, for example, or because they are given the choice to return versus be detained by legal authorities after having committed an offense); and *involuntary* (forced returns, also known as deportation or repatriation) ("Return Migration"). Durand's first category refers to a "voluntary without compulsion" return, because it is the only to represent a free choice to return to the home country.

4. *Forced Return.* One of the strengths of Durand's framework is his inclusion of this category. The phenomenon of forced return to Mexico is not unprecedented. The most notorious moments of such returns occurred after the Great Depression, as discussed, and during "Operation Wetback," motivated by restrictionist hysteria during the mid-20th century Red Scare (Meier and Gutiérrez 2003, 343). The magnitude of present-day deportations to Mexico, however, is unprecedented. Chapter 2 details the contemporary flows of forced return.

5. *Programmed Return*. The category applies to the organized movement of large groups of citizens to a new "home" country. Examples of a "programmed return" are American ex-slaves "returning" to Liberia, or Jews "returning" to Israel (Durand 2006, 173-174). For obvious reasons, this category is not relevant to the Mexican case.

6. *Transgenerational Return*. Durand defines this category as the return not of migrants, but of their descendants. For Mexico, transgenerational returns are overwhelmingly characterized by the importation of the Chicano identity and culture to Mexico.

1.3 Assessing the Outcome of Return Migration: The Structural Approach

As the typologies indicate, there are many push and pull factors that motivate return migration. This brings into question the factors that modify the *outcomes* of return. According to migration theorist Jean-Pierre Cassarino (2004), a *structural approach* to return migration emphasizes the outcome of the return migration process instead of the driving force behind it (260). In other words, this approach considers the local realities of the home countries, and the readjustment process of the migrant post-return. What variables modify return migrants' experiences and the way that members of the home community perceive them?

Cassarino emphasizes the concepts *resource mobilization* and *preparedness*, and the more general—but no less important—modifying dimensions of time and space. "Resource mobilization" refers to tangible resources (i.e. dollars, cars, or clothes) and the intangible resources (i.e. skills and social networks) that migrants gather to transition back to the home country (Cassarino 2004, 271). Since emigration *from* the home country is generally an act of economic desperation, society is unlikely to deem a return successful unless the migrant is able to mobilize and repatriate some of these resources. Having a successful return migration experience also depends on the migrant's psychological "preparedness." Preparedness, both in the emotional and physical senses, refers to the willingness to return based on careful considerations of "resources and information about post-return conditions at home" and having the sufficient time and capacity to plan accordingly (Cassarino 2004, 271). By definition, migrants that are forcibly repatriated lack preparedness, which explains some of the distress related to being a deportee.

The duration of the stay abroad is especially relevant to the reception the migrant will receive upon return. The time spent in the host country controls the magnitude of change, both on the migrant's (transnational) identity and on the political, economic, and social conditions in the country of origin (Cassarino 2004, 259). In other words, if a migrant stays away from home too long, he will return a stranger to an unrecognizable land. At the same time, if he returns too soon, he may not have mobilized the resources necessary to be considered successful by his community's standards (King 1978, 19).

1.4 Re-embeddedness and Dissimilation

For a migrant to ultimately be productive and comfortable in his society of origin, there must be a degree of "re-embeddedness" (Van Houte and Davids 2008, 5) in the society of origin.

As explained in a Dutch study, (re)embeddedness is "a multidimensional concept that refers to an individual finding his or her own position in society and feeling a sense of belonging to and participating in that society" (Van Houte and Davids 2008, 5). Becoming re-embedded is contingent upon the home society's perception of the migrant's return conditions. Returns that are involuntary or due to compulsion, that do not include a repatriation of financial assets, or that are accompanied by significant shifts in cultural attitudes or behaviors, for example, tend to be judged by the home country as negative. This often results in the social exclusion of and discrimination against return migrants, making the process of return all the more traumatic (Van Houte and Davids 2008, 5).

The degree of re-embeddedness—or, more generally, the social successfulness of a return migration experience—also depends largely on the values and characteristics of the home community. Social conceptions about return migrants and migrant "re-embeddedness" depend largely on whether the region is urban or rural, if the region is rich or poor, what employment opportunities exist, and what social networks the migrant has in the region; an individual scale, age, familiarity with returnees, education, and ideology also modify non-migrants' perceptions of returnees (Cassarino 2004, 260).

1.5 Contemporary Mexican Return Migration Research

Though international migration theory establishes an important conceptual framework for the analysis of return migration in Mexico, it does not target the specific questions asked in this thesis: Which migrants return to Mexico and why? How do Mexicans feel about the migrants that return?

A small number of studies address the first question. For instance, in a 1997 report with the Public Policy Institute of California, Belinda Reyes aims to understand how many Mexicans migrants return migrate and how they differ from those that stay in the United States. According to Reyes, "immigration is not a one-way process for a very high proportion of immigrants. In the study sample, about 50 percent return to Mexico after only two years, and by 10 years, almost 70 percent of those who came to the United States have returned" (1997, 7). Her contribution is important and her dataset strong[13]—but dated. The dynamics of Mexican return migration have changed considerably since her data started being collected in 1982. Voluntary returns and cyclic migrations have decreased dramatically, especially since the intensification of border enforcement in the mid-1990s. Return by deportations, on the other hand, increased 26-fold between 1982 and 2009 ("2009 Yearbook" 2010, 94).

In 2008, Seth Gitter, Robert Gitter, and Douglas Southgate (2008) published a paper about return migration and the probability of employment in Mexico. They begin by stating that almost half of Mexicans immigrating into the United States annually return to Mexico within a year (3). Unfortunately, this comment is based on data even more dated than Reyes' and the paper fails to specify how return migration flows may have changed in recent years.[14]

Both reports underscore the susceptibility of Mexican (return) migration flows to changing economic and political climates, illustrating how literature about its size and composition quickly

[13] The Mexican Migration Project (MMP)—an enormous database of migration statistics and information complied collaboratively by Douglas Massey at Princeton University and Jorge Durand at the University of Guadalajara—provides the data for Reyes' analysis. Reyes selects MMP data collected between 1982 and 1993 in 31 communities throughout western Mexico. This sample is strong because western Mexico is by far the largest migrant-sending region (Reyes 1997, 26).

[14] To justify their assertion, they cite a report by Brenda Reyes and L. Mameesh (2002), which is based on data from the MMP between 1970 and 1990. Gitter, Gitter, and Southgate (2008) realize that this data is out-of-date, but confirm the importance of the study by claiming that the large pool of Mexican immigrants in the United States implies a large pool of "potential return migrants." Though this logic makes sense, it is hardly an apt measure of return migration during the period of their study. Their assertions on the current dynamic between those arriving to the United States and those returning, then, should be subject to further verification.

becomes obsolete. There is, however, enough quantitative data available in annual polls, government documents, and print media inferences on both sides of the border to speculate the contemporary dynamics of the wave of Mexican return migration. The next chapter does precisely that.

To answer the second question—How do Mexicans feel about the migrants that return?—an analysis of existing literature falls short again. Months of research in Mexican, American, and online libraries have lead me to an alarmingly small number of publications that touch on return migration from the perspective of Mexican society. That being said, a handful of researchers make wonderful contributions to the field of contemporary return migration in Mexico.

First is Victor Espinoza (1998), who examines the way transnational migrants are received and processed, both in the United States and upon return to Mexico. Espinoza discusses how many migrant-sending regions in Mexico have become *chicanizados,*[15] or made into Mexican-American cultural spaces. In these regions, where migration influences all spheres of daily life, returnees can fluidly reinsert themselves into society (48). Such regions are copious along the border, but increasingly so too in tourist areas and central Mexican pueblos that expel disproportional quantities of migrants.

Also telling Mexico's side of the immigration story is David Fitzgerald with his recently published book, *A Nation of Emigrants: How Mexico Manages its Migration*. While much of the book discusses the impact on Mexico of the absences wrought by emigration, the last chapter is a groundbreaking analysis of Mexican public opinion regarding return migration (2009a).[16] His

[15] The suffix converts the word 'Chicano'—a Mexican-American—into an adjective. In typical Mexican fashion, using this word is a humorous way to make a serious comment about national identity.
[16] Fitzgerald used this chapter to elaborate a working paper called "Emigration's Impacts on Mexico" (2009b), of which he sent me an unpublished draft.

findings are important to this thesis both as part of this conceptual framework and as a point of comparison in my data chapter.

First, situating Mexican nationalism in the transnational space elaborated by Espinoza, Fitzgerald discusses how Mexicans make sense of the striking developmental discrepancy[17] between the United States and Mexico. According to Fitzgerald, Mexican contempt towards Americans lies to some extent in the internalization of a national inferiority complex (Fitzgerald 2009, 138). Fitzgerald elaborates the concept of "normative inversion" (2009a, 138):

> Despised groups reverse an established social ranking to assert their moral superiority over the dominant group. In this new ordering, *norteamericanos* may have more money and be more organized, but they are sexually loose, individualistic, cold in their interpersonal relationships, irreligious, and materialistic.

Return migrants are also associated with these negative, allegedly-"American" traits. Aforementioned cultural characteristics and habits like drug use or delinquency, for instance, are thought of as "foreign pathogens" imported by returnees (Fitzgerald 2009a, 135).[18]

Processing the migrants that return, then, requires the home community to find a "delicate balance between trying to take advantage of the economic[19] and cultural advantages of emigration while trying to prevent the seepage of undesirable foreign ideas and practices into the home

[17] The border between the United States and Mexico is one of very few that exist between a third world country and a first world country. The different standards of education, home-ownership rates, household income, etcetera, between these neighbors are truly unusual on an international scale. For more information, see González Velázquez 2008, 27-29.

[18] Ironically, the same allegations of cultural contamination are directed at Mexican migrants in the United States.

[19] Fitzgerald's research in Los Altos, an agricultural region of Jalisco, indicates overwhelmingly positive attitudes about the economic impact of emigration (Fitzgerald 2009, 127). Because of this, he assumes that the migrant is seen as an economic asset upon return. My research conflicts with this. My sample of Mexicans typically considered migrants a financial asset—when in the United States. Less than a quarter of respondents in my survey believe that return migrants improve the Mexican economy, because return migration implies fewer remittances and more job competition. See page 52 for more.

community" (Fitzgerald 2009a, 127). Fitzgerald calls this process "dissimilation." Dissimilation is the inverse of assimilation (the process of becoming similar, often proposed in the United States as a method of dealing with migrants of another linguistic or cultural background). Mexican communities and institutions attempt to dissimilate return migrants from the American culture, a necessary step to re-integrating them into Mexican society (Fitzgerald 2009a, 127), while protecting the hometown's authenticity from the so-called "foreign pathogens" imported by returnees (Fitzgerald 2009a, 135).

Also relevant is the Mexican PhD dissertation by Javier Serrano (2006). This paper highlights the migrant's expectation to return and resource mobilization in preparation for the return that never comes to fruition. His ethnographic study in two Jalisense towns explores, among other things, the houses that migrants build while abroad, hoping to one day come back and live in. The houses are built in part as showy symbols of success and American money, and in part to sustain the illusion that the migrant is still connected to the home community (237). More importantly, the houses often remain empty, because even the migrant who has the desire and resources to return often does not. Both Espinoza (1998, 41) and Durand (2006,174) make reference to the myth of an eventual return to the community of origin that most migrants sustain throughout their stay abroad.

1.6 Room for Research

Dwarfed by the attention paid to immigration, theoretical analysis about return migration is something of an afterthought. Return migration theory is not particularly useful in the abstract, and theory specific to Mexico is lacking. The framework elaborated by Durand (2006), however, is broad enough to include the myriad of motivations for Mexican return migration.

Very little has been studied about the social impact of these different types of return migration on Mexico. Though published in America, Fitzgerald's book (2009a) makes the greatest contribution. The works published from a Mexican point of view offer a picture of Mexican conceptions about return migration, but only in passing. Because they do not focus on return migration, and have no discussion of updated return migration flows, such studies are not adequate representations of a phenomenon currently affecting the lives of so many. Mexican migration experts including Durand himself, as well as Migration Studies professors and renowned authors Eduardo González Velázquez and Ana Leticia Gaspar, admitted in interviews research in this field is lacking. Gaspar stated that it is a field that she plans to begin researching next year (pers. comm.).

Working from the reviewed theories and generalizations about return migration, I will describe the contemporary return migration flows to Mexico, the reasons behind them, and the way Mexicans feel about it. My methodology brings new data to this field, hopefully shining a small ray of light into the obscure field of Mexican return migration.

CHAPTER 2: THE SIZE AND SHAPE OF CONTEMPORARY MEXICAN RETURN MIGRATION

Through the close of the last decade, headlines such as "Predicted Return of Thousands of Migrants," "Crisis Will Drive Out 1.5 Million Co-nationals," and "They Left With Nothing and Come Back Worse Today" topped newspapers across Mexico.[20] The country was bracing itself for a mass return of Mexican migrants living in the United States, the predicted consequence of the economic crisis and restrictionist U.S. immigration policies since 2007.[21] Media sources in the United States also followed a similar trend.[22] The topic evidently made for good news, but are these individual stories really reflective of an amplified return migration phenomenon? If so, how are the recent flows relevant to the process of social reintegration of return migrants in Mexico?

---

[20] *El Correo de Guanajuato*, "Prevén el Regreso de Miles de Migrantes," Nov 1, 2008; *El Universal,* "Crísis Expulsará de EU a 1.5 milliones de Paisanos," Oct 31, 2008; *El Universal,* "Se fueron sin nada y hoy regresan peor," Oct 13, 2008; *El Universal,* "Regresan mil 400 connacionales por frontera de Tamaulipas," Oct 15, 2008; *Mileno,* "Esperan en Zacatecas a Todos sus Migrantes," Oct 31, 2008. *La Jornada, "*INM: Al Menos 6 mil Chihuahuaenses que Vivían en EU Regresaron al País," Oct 26, 2008; *Nuevo Excelsior*, "Apoyarán a Migrantes que Regresen," Nov 1, 2008.

[21] The overlap between the economic crisis and "anti-immigrant" legislation makes it hard to pinpoint one specific cause for the perceived "restrictionist environment" that generated the abrupt slowdown of Mexican immigration and spurred predictions of a mass return. For more details on the influence of enforcement and the economy on the contemporary Mexican immigration patterns, please see: "Immigration Enforcement Actions: 2009," *Department of Homeland Security Annual Report 2010*, Office of Immigration Statistics, Department of Homeland Security; "Immigration and the United States: Recession Affects Flows, Prospects for Reform," Jan 2010, Migration Policy Institute; "Issue #1: Evidence from the Great Recession Is In: Migration Flows Dropped, Unemployment Among Certain Immigrants Rose," Dec 2010, Migration Policy Institute. To see how the "housing bubble" impacted job development in the construction sector, the largest sector hiring undocumented migrants, see Meins (2009).

[22] *USA Today, "*Economy forcing many Mexicans to leave United States," Dec 9, 2008; *Washington Post*, "As US Economy Sours, Some Migrants Return South," Oct 24, 2008; *Rocky Mountain News*, "Immigrants head home as jobs dry up," Dec 13, 2008; *Arizona Republic*, "Recession Sending Immigrants Home," Dec 10, 2008; *Washington Post*, "Slump Disrupts Migration; Fewer Mexicans are Going to the U.S. and Sending Money Home," May 29, 2009; *Boston Globe,* "Immigration Officials Announce Increase in Deportations," Nov 6, 2008; *Fox News, "*Illegal Immigrants Returning to Mexico in Record Numbers," Aug 22, 2008; *The Los Angeles Times,* "Deportation Brings Mixed Emotions for Illegal Immigrants," March 9, 2008; *The Seattle Times, "*Deportations Up to 40 Percent in Pacific Northwest," July 10, 2008; *Fort Wayne Journal Gazette*, "They Moved Away, Immigrants Leave Area Amid Legal Crackdown, Economic Lag," Mar 22, 2009; *Chattanooga Times Free Press*, "Job Losses Pushing Immigrants Out," Feb 16, 2009; *Christian Science Monitor, "*Arizona immigration aw: As SB1070 takes effect, Mexicans say 'Adios Arizona,'" Jul 29, 2010.

The latter question is much easier to answer. This thesis aims to assess the reintegration of returnees by answering the question "how do Mexicans feel about return migrants?" The size of the return migration flow is significant because a large surge in return would suggest stronger sentiments among Mexicans. Understanding the composition of the flow, or the characteristics of migrants returning, is also essential to gauging the social response to it. The welcoming behavior towards migrants returning destitute or disheartened by deportation, for instance, is inherently different from the behavior towards those who come back with dollar-stuffed pockets.

To answer the first question, a specific time period is required. Intrigued by the media claims of a mass exodus of Mexicans (and since migration patterns fluctuate so drastically within small time periods), I will focus my analysis of return migration flows on the time period surrounding the recent recession.[23] I call the months between January 2007 (pre-recession) and January 2010 (post-recession) my "target period."

Whether or not the anecdotal data predicted a true increase in return migration during this period is still under debate. There is no easy way to ascertain the number of migrants returning to live in Mexico. There is an accepted propensity to miscount the number of Mexican migrants in the United States, given their largely undocumented nature, and as a result it is difficult to know how many leave. Additionally, the Mexican government does not keep consistent counts of those coming back into Mexico, particularly those that cross the border on foot.[24] Given these inconsistencies and limitations within the available data, researchers are bound to rough estimates when assessing the flow of return migration to Mexico.

---

[23] The recession is considered to have begun in the fall of 2007 and to have ended in late 2009, though the rehabilitation of the U.S. economy has been slow (Passel and Cohn 2011, 3).

[24] When I entered Nogales, Mexico from Arizona in July 2010, I literally walked into the country and had to actively search for someone to stamp my passport).

Despite the difficulty in confirming the size of the return migration flow, recent evidence suggests that its composition has changed. I will explain that, since 2007, the overwhelming majority of those returning to Mexico were undocumented in the United States, and that most returned after being deported. This indicates a returning flow of less educated, younger, and poorer migrants. Ultimately, these new dynamics of the return flow have a more profound impact on general Mexican conceptions about return migrants than does the number of those coming home.

2.1 Trends in the Return Migrant Flow

Data from two American federal surveys[25] can be manipulated to estimate trends in return migration by measuring changes in the Mexican-born population living in the United States. Using this type of analysis, the Pew Hispanic Center and Migration Policy Institute, among others, reveal that the recession has slowed immigration rates, but did not generate an increase in Mexican return migration (Passel and Cohn 2009b; "Issue #1 2010). The Migration Policy Institute asserts, "the rate of Mexicans returning from abroad remained about the same, proving that the mass return some predicted simply did not materialize" ("Issue #1" 2010). Similarly, a *New York Times* article remarks, "despite collapsing job markets in construction and other low-wage work, there has been no exodus among Mexicans living in the United States….About the same number of migrants — 450,000 — returned to Mexico in 2008 as in 2007" (Preston 2009).

When the same type of analysis focuses on the changes in the estimated *undocumented* Mexican-born population, however, a clear decline since 2007 suggests increased return migration within this population. A recent Center for Immigration Studies (CIS) report explains:

[25] Most used by non-governmental institutions such as the Pew Hispanic Center and the Center for Immigration Studies is the Current Population Survey (CPS). The Department of Homeland Security, among others, uses the American Community Survey (ACS) instead.

"it is illegal immigrants whose migration patterns have fundamentally changed, not legal immigrants….These divergent trends may make it difficult to detect changes in migration trends for Mexico as a whole" (Camarota and Jensenius 2009).

The Pew Hispanic Center and the Department of Homeland Security have both issued reports stating that the undocumented Mexican immigrant population has fallen from its peak in 2007 (see Figure 3) (Passel and Cohn 2011, 1; Hoefer, Rytina, and Baker 2009, 3). This decrease, though relatively slight, is remarkable because it represents the first time in decades that the undocumented Mexican immigrant population has not increased, let alone fallen. Some experts attribute this to a slowdown in recent immigration flows. While new immigration has indeed slowed by about 50 percent since the recession,[26] enough Mexicans continue to enter the country illegally to counteract the decline in the illegal immigrant population caused by naturalizations and deaths (Camarota and Jensenius 2009). A decrease of half a million illegal immigrants over three years therefore implies a substantial upswing in return migration within that population (Camarota and Jensenius 2009).

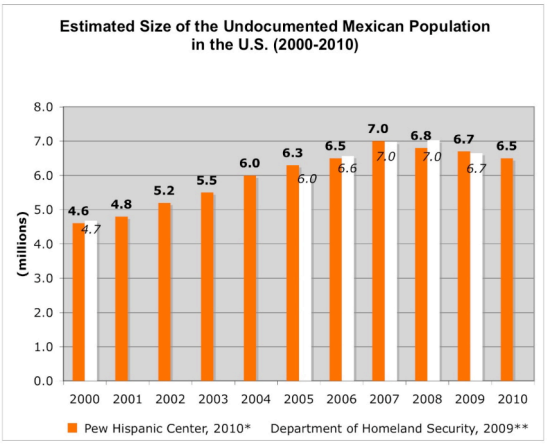


Figure 3. Sources: *Passel and Cohn 2011, 11. **Hoefer, Rytina, and Baker 2009, 7.

[26] The Mexican government noted a decrease in international emigration from 10.1 per 1,000 inhabitants in 2006-2007 (before the recession) to 4.9 per 1,000 inhabitants during 2009-2010 (Migration Policy Institute 2010a). Also see the *New York Times* article, "Mexican Data Show Migration to U.S. in Decline," May 16, 2009.

The Pew Hispanic Center has not published discussion about the relationship between return migration and legal status. They specify that in a 2009 report that "there is no indication of substantially higher outflows in 2007 or 2008" (Passel and Cohn 2009b). Yet, two years later the same authors report findings that the illegal Mexican population decreased by half a million people during the target period (2011). Given the Pew Hispanic Center's prominent role in the immigration research community, Passel and Cohn should publish a report clarifying the causes of the decrease in the illegal population and its relation to out-migration trends, which would imply re-assessing the validity of their 2009 report.

Using a different approach to analyzing the CPS data, researchers at the CIS assert that the number of "likely illegal" Hispanic immigrants leaving the United States has more than doubled between 2007 and 2009 (Camarota and Jensenius 2009). This assumption is based on research that 75 percent of less-educated foreign-born Hispanics between the ages of 18 and 40 are in the United States illegally. The CIS report then compares this population identified as the "likely illegal" Hispanic immigrant group—60 percent of which are Mexican-born—to the remainder of adult immigrants. By this measure, the "likely illegal" Hispanic population declined by 14 percent (the "likely illegal" Mexican population declined by 13 percent) during the target period. They explore possible explanations for this decrease—including decreased immigration rates and the aging, increasing education levels, and Hispanic morbidity—but conclude that "the decline…must reflect a very significant increase in out-migration for our target population" (Camarota and Jensenius 2009).

While the CIS researchers' technique targets the need to demark between legal and illegal migrants when discussing return migration, their figures are likely to be inaccurate given that they are wholly based on assumed demographic characteristics of illegal immigrants. Moreover,

though the CIS is officially nonpartisan, its publications are typically viewed as anti-immigrant. This report, for instance, insists that the decline in illegal immigrants is largely due to the "energetic steps" (Camarota and Jensenius 2009) taken to enforce immigration policy, and publishing a report attesting such a substantial decrease in the illegal immigrant population might be part of the institute's agenda to promote the "success" enforcement actions. This data, then, should be subject to further verification.

Regardless of the potential flaws in the CIS methodology and lack of in-depth research on the topic, the decrease observed only in the undocumented Mexican immigrant population indicates that an increased portion of those returning to Mexico are migrants who were in the United States illegally. This has important ramifications for Mexico, since illegal immigrants are demographically different from legal Mexican immigrants, U.S. residents or dual citizens. Undocumented Mexican immigrants tend to be poorly-educated: among the adults ages 25 to 64, only 4 percent hold a college degree and 64 percent have not completed high school. Illegal immigrants also earn less than legal migrants or U.S. citizens; the median household income was only $32,000 in 2007. They work primarily in construction and agriculture industries. Given the relative youth of illegal immigrants, many have children. In fact, nearly 7 percent of children in American schools (kindergarten through high school) have at least one parent who is illegally in the United States—74 percent of these parents are Mexican. The large majority of these children are American citizens by birth (Passel and Cohn 2009a). In brief, it is reasonable to believe that most migrants that returned to Mexico during the target period belonged to the lowest social class in the United States, lived in economic hardship and lived restricted by fears of deportation. Despite these conditions, many migrants had settled and started families in the United States.

2.2 Involuntary Returns and Returns Under Compulsion

The flow of voluntary return migration motivated by a faltering economy in the United States was overestimated. The number of people returning due to increased border security, on the other hand, was more likely underrated. Pushing "comprehensive immigration reform," a path towards citizenship, and the passage of pro-immigrant legislation like the Dream Act, the Obama administration has taken a stance about deportations that has surprised many ("Barack Obama" 2009). His deportations agenda is harsher than any other president's. According to the U.S. Office of Immigration Statistics, 282,666 Mexicans were deported in 2009 alone—a figure much larger than ever before ("2009 Yearbook" 2010, 104). Before discussing these trends, the distinction between the Department of Homeland Security's categories of "return" and "removal" is in order.

Return refers to "the compulsory and confirmed movement of an inadmissible[27] or deportable[28] alien out of the United States not based on an order of removal" ("Immigrant Enforcement Actions" 2009, 2). About 80 percent of returns are of Mexicans who were apprehended by the Border Patrol, consented to their own illegal entry and waived their immigration hearing ("Immigrant Enforcement Actions" 2009, 2). This return, voluntary under compulsion, does not add to the stock of return migrants entering Mexico, since the migrants were apprehended while or shortly after crossing. The return of migrants typically involves bussing migrants to a Mexican consulate along the border, where they are repatriated—in other words, screened, warned about the dangers of migration, then let go—by Mexican government officials ("Immigrant Enforcement Actions" 2009, 2). Of course, given the amount many migrants paid to

[27] Inadmissible aliens are those who do not meet the entry requirements as stipulated by the INA: Act 212, "General Classes of Aliens Ineligible to Receive Visas and Ineligible for Admission" ("Enforcement Actions" 2009, 2).
[28] Deportable aliens are those who were admitted into the United States but are subject to removal under the provisions of INA: ACT 237, "General Classes of Deportable Aliens" ("Enforcement Actions" 2009, 2).

be crossed,[29] the dollars to be made, and the shame in going home, many of these migrants turn around and try to cross the border again. For less than a third of migrants returned is it their first time being returned ("Encuesta" 2007). This is a big point of criticism toward the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) approach—placing migrants with huge incentives to return into the United States *right across the border* is hardly an efficient method of combating illegal immigration.[30]

*Removal*s, also called deportations, are different from returns because the movement *is* based on an order of removal. In other words, migrants are detained, placed in an immigration detention center, and have a hearing with an immigration judge. Immigration courts do not appoint public attorneys to detainees that cannot afford private representation in the way that criminal courts do. Thus, approximately 90 percent of detained migrants (in the Florence, Arizona courts) plead their case without representation (Kara Hartzler[31] pers. comm.). Migrants deemed "deportable" are also usually bussed to a Mexican consulate along the border for repatriation. They now face "administrative or criminal consequences placed on subsequent reentry" into the United States ("Enforcement Actions" 2009, 2).

While returns decreased by more than half over the course of the past decade,[32] the number of deportations has doubled (see Figure 4). Those deported are much more likely to have

[29] According to González Velázquez (2008), "coyotes"—people hired to cross migrants into the United States—have increased their prices drastically since the September 11th, 2001 terrorist attacks. Now, crossing from Mexico into the United States typically ranges between US$ 1,100 and US$ 3,500 (52). In a country where minimum wage is less than five dollars per day, paying for a coyote—and indeed the chance to emigrate—is often a group effort and a luxury rarely afforded to the poorest Mexicans.

[30] An example of a more pragmatic and humanitarian (yet expensive) voluntary under compulsion return mechanism is the bilaterally-funded Mexican Interior Repatriation Program (MIRP). Created in 2004 to mitigate repeated immigration attempts and protect Mexicans from immigration-related fatalities, this program flies eligible and willing migrants to their hometowns at no cost. Over 116,000 migrants have been safely returned to Mexico in this way during the seven summers of the program's operation ("ICE" 2010).

[31] Kara Hartzler is an immigration lawyer that gives "Know-Your-Rights" presentations in the immigrant detention facilities in Florence, Arizona.

[32] Since returns result primarily from apprehensions of incoming migrants along the Mexican-American border, the recent decrease in returns under compulsion can be largely attributed to a decrease in incoming migrants per year.

established lives—and families—in the United States than those returned while attempting to cross the border. This makes deportation a much more violent psychological process than return, and a criminal re-entry seem like a reasonable option. Obama's claim of solidarity with the immigrant population by highlighting a decrease in the number of immigrants apprehended does not reflect the tremendous humanitarian implications his changes have incurred.

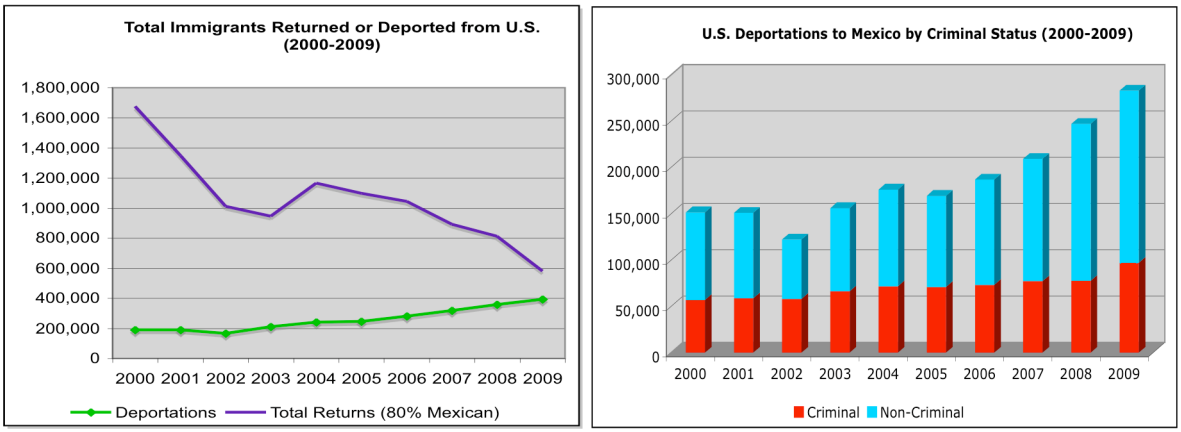


Figure 4. (LEFT) Source: *2009 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics* 2010, 95, Table 36.
Figure 5. (RIGHT) Source: *2009 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics* 2010, 97-105, Table 38.

The current administration has made it a point, in particular, to deport criminals. As illustrated in Figure 5, the number of criminals deported to Mexico increased by 25 percent between 2008 and 2009 ("2009 Yearbook" 2010, 102-104). During the same period, non-criminal deportations also increased by 10 percent. The Department of Homeland Security publishes no information about the migrants it deports beyond their nationalities. According to a lecture by Daniel Kanstroom (2011), professor of Migration Law at Boston College and founder of the Post-Deportation Human Rights Project, these statistics are not published so as to avoid political backlash. Kanstroon claims that 65 to 70 percent of criminals deported[33] are low-level offenders, convicted for crimes like possession of marijuana or shoplifting. These offenders await

[33] In 2009, 75 percent of criminal deportees and 70 percent of non-criminal deportees were Mexican ("2009 Yearbook" 2010, 103-104).

immigration trials in deportation centers, typically for about 3 months, before being deported (Kanstroom 2011). More serious offenders are processed in criminal court, and punished with the corresponding jail sentence to be served in America. Unless they are American citizens, Mexican immigrants are deported after serving their full sentence—in essence, they receive "double punishment" (Kanstroom 2011). According to Kanstroom, migrants (of all nationalities) deported for criminal reasons tend to be young—around 19- or 20-years-old—and have lived an average of 14 years in the United States. In other words, many migrants are totally unfamiliar with the country they are deported to. Without the social network or language skills necessary to be successful in Mexico, deported migrants are placed in a tremendously vulnerable situation. This strategy of "double punishment" is known to stoke violence in the countries of origin (particularly visible in Central American countries) and has damaging consequences on the migrant's wellbeing (Kanstroom 2011).

2.3 Insights from Mexico

The American data does not describe the composition of the return migration flow beyond legal status and nationality. More informative is the "*Encuesta sobre Migración en la Frontera Norte de Mexico*" (EMIF Norte), a comprehensive survey of all incoming Mexicans conducted by the Mexican National Government Secretary. Their definition of the word 'migrant,'[34] however, includes much more than my definition does. The EMIF Norte considers Mexicans who have "permanently emigrated" (those whose residence is in the United States) who return to visit

[34] According to the EMIF Norte methodology, a 'Migrant Arriving from the United States' is a person "over 12-years old, not born in the United States, who self-identifies his/her residence as the United States or Mexico, who does not live in the city of the interview and that is arriving from the United States, where they remained due to labor motives or change of residence, independently from the duration of time of the visit; or, for motives of education, tourism, visiting family or friends, but only if their stay in the United States was greater than one month" ("Aspectos metodológicos" 2005, 19).

Mexico, as well as Mexican residents who travel to the United States on tourist visas, to be "migrants" ("Aspectos metodológicos," 2005). Migrants are differentiated by their self-identified country of residence, which is confusing and likely inaccurate since the survey is conducted during the return process, a period of residential transition for non-tourist returnees. Also, given that the last EMIF Norte publication was in 2007, this source is not useful in discussing changes in the return flow since the recession.

Nevertheless, the EMIF Norte's unique description of "migrants" returning in 2007 offers valuable details about the composition of the return migrant flow. Given that migrants who reside in the United States are unlikely returning to live in Mexico, most do not belong to the population I defined earlier as 'return migrants' (see footnote, page 3).[35] I focus my analysis on the 404,494 Mexican residents in this survey. Figure 6 illustrates some of the characteristics of this population. Of the return migrants who reside in Mexico, 71 percent were undocumented in the United States and 41 percent returned involuntarily.[36] Most (78 percent) were men, and just 17 percent had finished high school ("Encuesta" 2009, 183). Only 37 percent had a job in the United States before returning to the United States, most typically in the construction, services, and manufacturing sectors (in that order); nearly half (48 percent) of those that had been employed in the United States sent home remittances ("Encuesta" 2009, 185). This data indicates that the majority of "migrants" returning in 2007 were male, poorly educated, not highly skilled, and unemployed (these characteristics have likely been amplified since the recession). The high levels of unemployment within this population were presumably an important incentive to return migrate among the 56 percent that returned voluntarily. The majority (58 percent) of the sample

[35] More migrants that resided in the United States returned in 2007 than migrants that resided in Mexico (Chart 1). These findings underscore the notion that Mexican migrants are unlikely to return migrate unless they can secure means—documentation—to return to the United States without problems.

[36] Deportations increased 35 percent between 2007 and 2009. The statistics from EMIF Norte are likely to have changed substantially since they were collected.

was a head of household and/or married, which exposes the depth of the social impact caused by return migration ("Encuesta" 2009, 186).

The 2007 sample of returning migrants, residents in Mexico, are most commonly from states in Southeastern or Central Mexico, namely Chiapas, Michoacán, Guanajuato, Jalisco, and Veracruz (in this order) ("Encuesta" 2009, 179-180). This implies a long trek home, or repeated attempts at immigration into the United States. Since most Mexican residents in the 2007 sample stayed in the United States less than three months, it is logical that 77 percent speak no English ("Encuesta" 2009, 185). The ability to speak English, however, is an important way that migrants can contribute to their home communities upon return; the small percentage of English-speaking returnees in this survey is relevant to how the migrant is received.

Characteristics of Returnees: Residents of Mexico, 2007

	Count	Percentage
TYPE OF RETURN		
Voluntary	225,931	56%
Involuntary	178,252	44%
Total	404,494	
LANGUAGE		
Speaks English	94,167	23%
Speaks No English	310,328	77%
Total	404,495	
WORK STATUS		
Employed	148,261	37%
Unemployed	256,233	63%
Total	404,494	
LEGAL STATUS		
With Documents	115,300	29%
Undocumented	289,194	71%
Total	404,494	
AGE		
15-19	28,537	7%
20-29	174,624	44%
30-39	106,099	27%
40-49	50,542	13%
50+	33,684	9%
Total	393,486	
FAMILY ROLE		
Head of Household	227,080	58%
Spouse	36,816	9%
Child	127,004	32%
Total	390,900	
MARITAL STATUS		
Married	202,246	61%
Single	130,618	39%
Total	332,864	
TIME SPENT IN U.S.		
Less than a Day	34,318	8%
1 Day - 1 Month	132,474	33%
1 Month - 3 Months	88,123	22%
3 Months -1 Year	53,573	13%
1 Year - 3 Years	56,248	14%
3 Years +	39,671	10%
Total	404,407	

Figure 6. Source "Encuesta" 2009, 179-188.

In addition to the 404,494 Mexican residents and 649,303 American residents entering Mexico in 2007, the EMIF counted 536,255 Mexicans that were returned (but not deported) under the compulsion of the U.S. Border Patrol. Again, while Mexicans returned under compulsion are not considered return migrants, they are likely to influence Mexican conceptions about return migrants given the sheer scale of the returned population. Before emigrating, the large majority of returned migrants were employed in Mexico, with 83 percent making more than minimum wage. Nearly all (96 percent) were returned within a month of crossing into the United States. Half had hired help to cross, and in 69 percent of such cases, the migrant was abandoned. Those who returned were young: 43 percent were under 25-years-old, and another 37 percent under 35-years-old ("Encuesta" 2009, 203). Only 7 percent had finished high school ("Encuesta" 2009, 203). The vast majority (85 percent) of migrants returned under compulsion lived far away from the border; states of origin most represented were the Southeast and traditional migrant-sending Mexican states: Oaxaca, Chiapas, Guanajuato, Veracruz, and Michoacan were the top five ("Encuesta" 2009, 202). These states are very far away from the Mexican consulate along the border to which they are returned. Consequently, 81 percent stated that they would try to cross into the United States again within the next seven days ("Encuesta" 2009, 209). Nearly half (46 percent) came from non-urban areas, which is significant considering that 77 percent of Mexicans live in urban areas ("World Factbook").

Intergenerational Returns

According to the 2009 report by the Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (the Mexican equivalent of the Census Bureau), half of the foreign-born that were living in Mexico in 2000 were from the United States. The vast majority of these 343,591 American-born immigrants in Mexico were children—56.6 percent between the ages of 0 and 9, and another 19.4 percent

between the ages of 10 and 19 ("Aspectos Generales" 2009). This implies the presence of *transgenerational* returns, as discussed in Chapter 1.

2.4 Discussion

Examining data from both sides of the border does not provide a precise description of the numbers of Mexicans returning, which underscores the lack of attention paid to return migration. As a rough estimate, between 400,000 and 500,000 of Mexicans living in the United States returned to Mexico per year between 2007 and 2009. Approximately half of these returned involuntarily.

It is reasonable to believe that the number of Mexicans returning to Mexico has not increased significantly during this time period, but that the composition of the flow increasingly represents deportees and undocumented migrants. This trend thus subjects Mexicans to the statistically "lowest class" of the American immigrant population. Conceptions about returnees drawn from a cohort of deportees and returns of failure set the stage for unfavorable reactions towards return migrants.

These trends have a double consequence on the process of reintegrating migrants back into Mexican communities. First, the repeated exposure to certain types of returnees informs the general Mexican public of what return migrants are like. The characteristics of the flow shape stereotypes, which in turn control the (un)welcoming behavior of Mexicans towards returnees. For instance, if Mexican communities noticed that most migrants came back more educated, the social environment might be more receptive to those coming home. Conversely, if communities were repeatedly met with "Spanglish"-speaking, pant-sagging, delinquents, society would likely be more hostile to returnees, complicating their capacity to reintegrate.

Secondly, the observed trends have strong implications on the preparedness, resource mobilization, and emotional capacity of the individual return migrants to re-embed themselves into their home society (see Chapter One). The embarrassment of going empty-handed crystallizes the already traumatic experience of a return of failure or deportation.

CHAPTER 3: A NOTE ON METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

In the months between June and September 2010, I executed field research in Mexico with the objective of recording Mexican perspectives about return migrants.[37] I collected original data in the Mexican states of Jalisco, Michoacán, Sonora, and San Luís Potosí, in three forms:

1. Answers to survey questions (quantitative data)
2. Observations made by survey respondents (qualitative data)
3. In-depth personal interviews (qualitative data)

First, I conducted an 11-question survey aimed at measuring Mexican respondents' conceptions about return migrants (see the appendix for the survey and its results). The survey was designed to include the views of both return migrants and non-migrants and typically took 5 to 10 minutes to complete. I surveyed 476 respondents orally in public locations in towns and cities across the four Mexican states. I collected an additional 52 surveys though e-mail. All survey respondents remained anonymous, though I kept track of salient variables about the survey location and the respondent's age group. I made every effort to have a survey sample as representative of the four states as possible.

The survey questions typically spurred interesting commentaries by the respondents, which I would also annotate. I would hear certain remarks repeatedly, indicating stronger and

[37] I do not claim my research to be generalizable to all Mexicans. See page 40 for Data Limitations.

more specific opinions about return migrants than what my survey could capture. The patterns formed by these remarks are an integral part of this chapter. The surveying process, then, provided both quantitative and qualitative forms of descriptive data.

For more insight on the qualitative aspect of my survey, I sat down with experts, returnees, and Mexican families, recording 18 in-depth interviews. All interviews were conducted within the same four Mexican states as well as in Arizona (during the week that the controversial anti-immigrant SB 1070 threatened to pass).

3.2 Independent Variables and Definitions

In Chapters 4 and 5, I discuss the correlation between the sentiments formed about return migrants (measured by the survey) and six independent variables: respondent's age group, respondent's gender, respondent's familiarity with returnees; as well as the state, region and class of the location in which the interview was collected. I define and measure the categories as follows:

Characteristics of the survey respondent:

1. Age group	**Definition**
"Young"	19 to 34-years-old
"Middle"	35 to 59-years-old
"Older"	60+ years-old

2. Gender (Directly surveyed, Question #1): Man; Woman.

3. Familiarity with returnees (Directly surveyed, Question #2): I am a return migrant; I know many return migrants; I know some return migrants; I know none.

Characteristics of the survey location:

4. Region	**Population-Based Definition**	**Breakdown of Survey Sample by Region** including the region's state and population[38]
Urban	750,000+	Guadalajara, Jalisco (1,496,189[39]) San Luís Potosí (SLP), SLP (772,604) Hermosillo, Sonora (755,916)
"Semi-urban"	100,000-749,999	Nogales, Sonora (193,517) Ciudad Valles, SLP (167, 713)
"Semi-rural"	0-99,999	Zapotlanejo, Jalisco (63,636) Arandas, Jalisco (72,812) Sahuayo, Michoacán (59,316)

5. Region	**Definition**	**Breakdown of Survey Sample by Class**
"Popular"	The survey location does not suggest the respondent is wealthier than the average survey respondent.	Public parks in Guadalajara, Ciudad Valles, San Luís Potosí, Zapotlanejo, Sahuayo, and Arandas; Local busses in Michoacán, Sonora, and Jalisco; Waiting rooms of free clinics in Guadalajara.
"Upscale"	The survey location suggests the respondent is wealthier than the average survey respondent.	Airports in Guadalajara and Hermosillo; ITESO, a high-end private university in Guadalajara; Lawyers dispatch office in Guadalajara; Online (the written comments are used, but statistics are not incorporated).

6. Mexican state (State in which survey is conducted**):** Sonora (along the border); and Jalisco, San Luís Potosí (SLP), and Michoacán (Central Mexico).

3.3 Limitations of the Survey Data

As a single researcher without any funding, I was not able to conduct the survey in a truly random way. Because of this, I cannot confirm the statistical significance of my data. The main flaws in my methodology regard my role as a researcher and the independent variables 'age,' 'class,' and 'state' (see the following section for definitions). I am a blonde Swiss-American with accented Spanish. My appearance and nationality likely influenced the way that respondents

[38] Population in 2010, from the INEGI website http://www.inegi.org.mx/
[39] The population of the Guadalajara metropolitan area (including suburbs) is nearly five times as big.

answered some questions, particularly those regarding Gringos. Also, the Mexicans willing to interact with me long enough to complete the survey are inherently different from the many that were unwilling to do so.

As a young, noticeably foreign, researcher, I did not feel comfortable asking all respondents their exact age. Instead, I estimated the generation to which the respondent belonged (if I was unsure, I did ask). I made the "middle-aged" group the largest because, to me, it is easier to identify people who are over 60 than people who are over 50. There is significant room for error here. Also unwilling to ask respondents about their socioeconomic status, I kept track of the "class," or prestige, of location where my survey was conducted. The class of the location should not be assumed to describe the social class of the returnee, though they are to some degree correlated. Lastly, the sample of 24 respondents in San Luís Potosí is so small that the variable 'state' is not particularly informative. I include 'state' in the presentation of the data, but do not discuss it within the chapters.

Except for 'state,' every independent variable in my survey describes between 67 and 350 respondents.[40] Such a wide range of respondents in each category is a flaw in my data, to some extent mitigated by the fact that Mexicans are not split evenly by these variables. There are indeed more people in large cities than towns, more young and middle-aged Mexicans than old, and more people in Jalisco than in San Luís Potosí. Calculating column totals, as described in the following section, helps minimize additional confounding.

Because of these methodological limitations, the survey is not central to my research analysis. Blending the survey statistics, survey comments, and interviews, I voice the opinions of hundreds of Mexicans without claiming to paint a comprehensive portrait of the Mexican

[40] See page 96 for the counts and percentages of each independent variable.

receiving environment. The data is descriptive and serves as a point of departure for future research.

3.4 Data Analysis and Presentation

Qualitative Data

When I quote the survey commentaries, I include relevant information in a footnote (the date of the survey, the state and class of the survey location, and the respondent's age group, gender, and familiarity with returnees). As will be indicated, many of these viewpoints were shared, meaning that while the particular phrasing of the remark belongs to one respondent, the opinion is not necessarily specific to the respondent and his or her characteristics.

I complement the opinions captured by my survey with in-depth interviews of people familiar with return migration in Mexico. Unless the name of the individual interviewed is important to his or her point of view, I use pseudonyms. I have written consent to use all of the interviews in accordance with Tuft University's Institutional Review Board's protocol (see appendix).

Quantitative Data

I present the survey results by question (see the appendix). My data is not linear, meaning that I cannot run regressions or correlations. Instead, I show the percent and count of the total survey sample that chose each response to the survey's questions. Next, I run contingency tables for each question and the six independent variables,[41] and list the percentage of the column total

[41] Questions 1 and 2 are independent variables themselves (gender and familiarity with returnees), and are therefore broken down by five independent variables.

for each response.[42] This simply shows the percent of respondents in each independent category (defined above) that selected each response to the survey question. The row totals—or percent of the question response selected by each category of respondent—are irrelevant because the number of respondents varies across categories.[43]

While percent column totals are a good way to present this kind of data, they are not ideal tools for comparison. Six of my questions have answers that suggest positive or negative sentiments towards returnees (or Gringos).[44] Simply looking at the column totals for each question, broken down by the independent variables (defined above), does not give a clear sense of how the negative answers mitigate the positive answers. To get a sense of net sentiment, either positive or negative, that is comparable across the independent variables, I have developed a value I call the "Net Sentiment Measure" (NSM).

The "Net Sentiment Measure" (NSM) is the difference between the percentage of respondents who answer a question in a way that demonstrates positive sentiments towards returnees (or Gringos) and the percentage of respondents who express negative sentiments towards them.[45] To more clearly describe the meaning and usefulness of the NSMs, I calculate the NSMs for question Question 6 (How do you think that migrants who return to Mexico after having lived in the United States change Mexico's economy?):

---

[42] The column shows, for example, the percentage of men who answer "Yes" to Question 3 compared to the percentage of men who answer "No," or "It depends." The column total is assumed to be 100 percent (with minor variance due to rounding), which means that 100 percent of men had an answer to Question 3. See Annex B.

[43] There are, for instance, more men than women in my sample. Because of that, calculating what percentage of the respondents answering "Yes" on Question #3 are men provides an answer intrinsically skewed by the shape of my population.

[44] This includes answers "Yes" and "No" to Question #3; "Higher" and "Lower" to Question #4; "Better" and "Worse" to Question #6; "Better" and "Worse" to Question #7; "Yes" and "No" to Question #8; "Like" and "Don't like" to Question #10; "Prefer migrant" and "Prefer Gringo" to Question #11.

[45] In Footnote 43, I identify six questions and their two responses that demonstrate sentiments. For each question, the first response of the pair is the "positive answer," from which the second response (the "negative answer") is subtracted.

NSM_{Q6} = % of all respondents who answer "for the better" on Q6
- % of all respondents who answer "for the worse" on Q6

NSM_{Q6} = 21% - 37%

NSM_{Q6} = -16 (%)

This means that after the positive and negative values cancel each other out, a remaining 16 percent of respondents had negative sentiments about the impact that return migration has on the Mexican economy. This value is a percentage that is not particularly informative by itself. It is, however, a useful tool for comparison within and across each independent category. To illustrate this, I calculate the NSM for Question 6, controlling for gender:

$NSM_{Q6:MEN}$ = % of men who answer Q6 "for the better"
- % of men who answer Q6 "for the worse"
$NSM_{Q6:MEN}$ = 29% - 37%
$NSM_{Q6:MEN}$ = -8 (%)

$NSM_{Q6:WOMEN}$ = % of women who answered "for the better" on Q6
-% of women who answer "for the worse" on Q6

$NSM_{Q6:WOMEN}$ = 11% - 38%

$NSM_{Q6:WOMEN}$ = -27 (%)

The NSMs for Question 6 shows us that sampled women are more than triple as likely as sampled men to have net negative feelings about the impact of return migration on the Mexican economy. By just comparing the 37 percent of male respondents to the 38 percent of female respondents

who think that returnees impact the Mexican economy "for the worse," it would not be evident that a larger percentage of men than women have positive views about returnees' impact, meaning that their overall sentiments about this impact are less negative than are female respondents'. It is not necessary to think of the NSM as a percentage, but rather as a value that shows direction and magnitude after eliminating indifference and ambivalence.

Only six of my questions lend themselves to NSM calculations. For each of these questions, I calculate the NSMs controlling for the six independent variables. This gives me 19 NSMs to compare for each of the 6 questions. Again, this value does not mean much on its own; it is a tool to compare the responses to each question across the independent variables. The NSMs are listed at the base of each contingency table in the appendix.

CHAPTER 4: MEXICAN SOCIAL CONCEPTIONS ABOUT RETURN MIGRANTS

Despite recent headlines, dealing with return migration is not a political focal point in the "nation of emigrants."[46] Sentiments about return migrants are not formed along party lines or shaped by macroeconomic principles. Instead, personal encounters with and assumptions about returnees inform the Mexican public about the impact of return migration. How the migrant is depicted, categorized, and made sense of by Mexicans explains the society's role in reintegrating returnees. This process influences migrants' immediate wellbeing and long-term welfare.

My goal is to present the colorful dialogue about return migrants that is intensifying in the public spheres I surveyed. This is a tall order, given the myriad of perspectives to be taken on an issue so multifaceted. I begin with an examination of conceptions about return migrants' national identities. How do Mexicans make sense of the "Americanization" of returnees? Next, I explore the perceived economic repercussions of return migration. A discussion about money, returnee behavior, symbols, and style ensues. This unearths the social predilection to correlate return migrants with delinquency. The chapter culminates with the alleged impact of return migration on Mexican culture, especially in regards to family dynamics and gender relations.

My presentation of these trends follows a trajectory that arose organically from my park bench conversations. It is neither comprehensive nor generalizable; I identify gaps to be filled with further research. Nevertheless, all of the facets of return migration I explore are woven together with one simple and disheartening finding: Mexican conceptions about return migration are much more negative than might be expected. A welcoming environment for returnees is reserved for the successful and "culturally authentic" returnee.

---

[46] This is the title of Fitzgerald's book, 2009.

4.1 Processing "Americanized" Migrant Identities

If any people in the world understand migration, it is the Mexican people. A quarter of Mexicans have been to the United States and most have a relative living there (Fitzgerald 2008, 3). Consequently, the majority of Mexicans know at least some returnees.[47] Most Mexicans also understand that the migration experience—being immersed in a different culture—fundamentally changes a person. The receiving community has an important function in processing these changes. Community members identify and try to take advantage of the positive contributions that return migrants bring, while preventing infiltration of negative values. This is the logic of community-controlled *disassimilation* (described in Chapter 1), an important step in returnee reintegration. At the crux of this reintegration process is the dilemma of how to deal with the varying degrees of "Americanization" of the migrants' national identities. This dilemma rests upon a shaky foundation of Mexican-American relations. The nationalistic logic of "cultural authenticity," explained to me by many survey respondents, underscores the relationship between migrant identity and the capacity to be reaccepted into society.

Tensions between Patriotism and Americanization

The complicated historical and political relationship between Mexico and the United States is a topic of its own. The mixed feelings Mexicans have towards Gringos today, though, are salient to the way that Mexicans react towards Americanized returnees (migrants returning from any other country would be received differently). While only 11 percent of Mexicans in my

[47] 75 percent of respondents in my survey know at least some returnees.

sample overtly said that they do not like Americans,[48] comments revealed many points of contention towards Gringos. Respondents commonly stated that they dislike how Americans regard Mexicans as inferior. The word 'racist' was frequently used, especially during the summer the controversial Arizona SB 1070 was threatening to pass. Other respondents discussed perceived shortcomings of American culture: "in Mexico there are relationships, but in the United States there is only money."[49] Criticism of a culture of consumerism, competition, lax moral values, and atheism were also voiced on various occasions. More than half of the respondents had no desire to live and work in the United States,[50] despite the considerable financial benefits in doing so.

Though Mexicans are apt to criticize Americans along cultural lines, 39 percent of Mexicans that I surveyed stated that they like Americans (and half had mixed feelings or were indifferent).[51] Those that said they like Gringos generally explained their reasoning along the generic lines: "I judge all human beings equally" or "I like the ones I meet here." Some acknowledged the achievements of their northern neighbor. Gringos were described as entrepreneurial, well mannered, and educated. The unwavering revere for American commodities[52] and certain aspects of the American lifestyle adds to the messy and contradictory nature of Mexican social conceptions about Americans.

---

[48] Respondents that knew no returnees, older respondents and respondents in upscale locations had the least positive sentiments (lowest NSMs) towards Gringos.

[49] Survey respondent. August 3, 2010. Nogales, Sonora (popular location). Older man. Knows many returnees.

[50] Similarly, the Zogby Poll (Camarota 2009) asserts that 60 percent of Mexicans would not emigrate to the United States if given the opportunity (the 7 percent difference between our survey results can be attributed partly to phrasing, as their question was a dichotomy and mine offered the opportunity to go for different time spans.) The six independent variables in my sample had little impact on the way the question was answered; 47 to 61 percent of respondents across age groups, genders, familiarity with returnees, region, state, and class responded that they would "not go" to the United States if given a chance. The only outlier is among returnees: only 37 percent of returnees in my sample would "not go."

[51] Returnees and middle-aged respondents demonstrated much more positive feelings about Gringos than did the rest of the sample. NSM_{Q10}=28%; $NSM_{Q10:RETURNEE}$ = 60%; $NSM_{Q10:\ MIDDLE\ AGE}$ = 40%

[52] Many manufactured products are much cheaper in the United States and, because of perceived superior quality and style, are especially desirable in Mexico. See, for instance, Fitzgerald 2009a, 128.

To test the assumption that patriotism would trump the positive conceptions about Gringos, I asked: "Who do you like more, the return migrant or the Gringo?" Using dichotomized answers,[53] a third of respondents actually prefer Gringos to Mexican returnees. This is inconsistent with the criticisms of American culture and the strength of Mexican patriotism. When prompted to explain this question's responses, respondents revealed a double standard of patriotism; the discourse of "cultural authenticity" surged.

Defining "Cultural Authenticity"

To many Mexicans, being "Mexican" simply means meeting the requirements to have citizenship. Accordingly, when asked whether migrants are "still Mexican" after spending more than half of their lives in the United States, a large majority of respondents (69 percent[54]) instinctively said 'yes.' "A person born in Mexico is always a Mexican,"[55] was a comment I heard very often. This is rooted in logic as much as it is in patriotism.

Being an "authentic Mexican," however, places demands on the migrant's cultural allegiance. The Americanized Mexican (the "Pocho") and the Mexican-American (the "Chicano") are not only great sources of contempt and derision among Mexicans, their identities are considered illegitimate or, at best, disoriented. The following are only some of the numerous comments about the returnees that come back *agringado*, or Americanized:

"They think that they are Gringos, but they are a new race and no one wants them."[56]

[53] Calculated by subtracting the 47 percent of respondents who gave neutral answers 1 (I feel the same way about the migrants as I do about "Gringos") or 4 (The way I feel about the "Gringos" is unrelated to how I feel about the migrants) from the column total, and recalculating the percentages of those who preferred migrants or Gringos.
[54] This is exactly the same percentage of Mexicans believe that the "primary loyalty of Mexican-Americans should be to Mexico" versus the United States according to a 2009 Zogby Poll (Camarota 2009). I believe Mexicans interpreted the questions similarly.
[55] Survey respondent. July 23, 2010. Sahuayo, Michoacán (popular location). Older woman. Knows many returnees.
[56] Survey respondent. August 3, 2010b. Nogales, Sonora (popular location). Middle-aged man. Knows some migrants.

> "I consider [the return migrant] Mexican by birth…but if he lived more than half of his life over there, I definitely think that he is neither Mexican nor American—he is what we call a 'Pocho'—but if I had to pick, I would say that he is more Gringo than Mexican."[57]

> "The Gringo is Gringo. The Chicano doesn't know who he is and feels different from other Mexicans."[58]

> "They are not Mexican, not like they should be…they sell themselves for dollars."[59]

> "Gringos are more natural than Pochos."[60]

In effect, these transnational migrants have dissimilated from the Mexican culture, but have not quite been assimilated into the (non-transnational) American culture. As a result, migrants that return after having spent long periods of time in the United States may no longer be identified as members of their home community. Ana Leticia Gaspar, researcher and professor of Migration Studies at the Universidad del Valle de Atemajac in Jalisco, explains in an interview:

> There is a group of young Mexicans that do integrate in the United States, so that when they return to Mexico, they are the Pochos, or Gabachos,[61] etc. So these kids are neither American nor Mexican, they return with certain values assimilated and others no. And so this provokes problems with reintegration in the community. At the beginning, it's fine, it's funny that they act that way. But not in the long-term. In the long-term, they suffer profound social and familiar rejection.

---

[57] Online survey response to Question 2. June 28, 2010. Young woman. Knows no migrants.
[58] Survey respondent. July 7, 2010. Guadalajara, Jalisco (popular location). Middle-aged man. The respondent is a return migrant himself.
[59] Survey respondent. July 12, 2010. Zapotlanejo, Jalisco (popular location). Middle-aged man. Was a migrant himself (he spent a year and a half in Los Angeles).
[60] Survey respondent. August 18, 2010. Guadalajara, Jalisco (upscale location). Young man. Knows some returnees.
[61] Though "Gabacho" refers to Anglo-Americans, Gaspar and several survey respondents used the term incorrectly to exaggerate how Anglicized some migrants become.

The marginalization of the Americanized return migrant—the "unauthentic" Mexican—is a way of protecting the national identity from the "negative influences" of the United States. In this case, social reintegration is ultimately contingent upon the migrant's ability to readapt to Mexican cultural practices and demonstrate a preference for the Mexican national identity over that of "Gringolandia."

Of course, most respondents recognized that not all migrants come back "Pochos." Time spent in the United States, region lived in, place of birth, and cultural practices were frequently mentioned as factors that regulate identity (trans)formation while abroad. The variety of characteristics that mitigate the migrant's propensity to return Americanized help explain why two thirds of respondents do, in fact, prefer migrants to Gringos.

4.2 How are Returnees Thought to Impact the Economy?

In the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis, Mexicans I surveyed were not inclined to believe return migration benefits the Mexican economy. Most Mexicans do see *emigration* as an important tool for economic development,[62] and in many ways it is. Emigration helps curtail unemployment rates and decrease pressures on national education, social security, and health systems, among others. In addition, emigrants send back billions of dollars in remittances annually (González Velázquez, pers. comm.).[63] In a country where a fifth of the population lives

[62] According to Fitzgerald's research, 88 percent of returnees and 77 percent of non-migrants felt that emigration had a positive impact on the community's economy. His data was collected in 2003 from households in towns in the Los Altos region of Jalisco, Mexico (2009, 128).
[63] According to a report from the World Bank, remittances to Mexico dropped from 27.1 billion U.S. dollars in 2007 to 22.2 billion U.S. dollars 2009 ("Migration and Remittances" 2011).

below the poverty line,[64] emigration is recognized as an important socioeconomic lifeline. So when migrants return to Mexico, the gains of emigration are inversed, replanting expensive pressures on public institutions, severing remittance flows, and disrupting employment patterns.

My research cohort indicated sentiments consistent with this logic. While many were ambivalent, more Mexicans in my survey believed that return migration has a negative impact on the economy (37 percent) than a positive one (21 percent). These inclinations are most pronounced for respondents who knew no return migrants, were in upscale locations, among women, and/or the middle-aged (in that order). Among the middle-aged, respondents in upscale locations, and those unfamiliar with returnees, return migration is most often correlated to job competition. Return migration also implies cutting remittance flows, something more often pointed out by women and older Mexicans.

At the same time, nearly a quarter of respondents believed that return migration improves the economy. The most common justification these respondents articulated was that return migrants bring back money to invest in the community. Return migrants were alleged to set up businesses or spend their pensions, contributing to the local economy. Eleven percent of survey respondents believed that the most common reason for which migrants return is to invest their dollars in Mexico. Mexican migration expert, Eduardo González Velazquez (pers. comm.), is not convinced:

> Right now, we do not know the economic standing of the returning migrants—the data does not yet exist. I doubt, though, that they come back with a higher economic status [than when they left]. If they have a saving habit, it is unusual. They arrive to Mexico with

[64] Using food-based definition of poverty, 18 percent of Mexicans are poor; using the asset-based poverty definition, 47 percent of Mexicans are poor ("World Factbook").

> little wealth in cash, though perhaps with a truck, some clothes, or the like. But that people think they come back with enough money right now to put up a business? I doubt it.

Given that most Mexicans returning now do so under economic or political pressures, it is reasonable to believe that the economic burdens of return migration outweigh the flow of cash and goods that some migrants bring back with them.

The "Good Migrant"

That being said, the economic contributions imported by a select group of returning migrants are recognized at national and regional levels.[65] Upon return, the dollar-wielding migrants are celebrated as national heroes. During many communities' *fiestas patronales*, for instance, there is a succession called the *Fiesta del Hijo Ausente* (Party of the Absent Son). After a church procession aimed at purifying the returnees from the migration experience, community leaders praise the returnees for having sent remittances to or invested in the community. A celebration of regional music and food ensues. The premise of this ceremony, and others like it, is to maintain migrants' ties to Mexico so as to ensure continued funding.[66] Such initiatives reaffirm the social the distinction between the "good" migrant, and the typical, "undesirable" returnee.[67]

[65] The Mexican Congress had these contributions in mind when it changed the constitution to allow for dual nationality in 1997 (Fitzgerald 2008, 3). Other such initiative includes the *Programa Paisano*, which protects migrants from police extortion in airports, the *Programa de Repatriación Humana*, and improvements in transnational banking (Fitzgerald 2008, 6).

[66] For more on this dynamic, see the wonderful Seattle Times article by Lornet Turnbull, "Across the border a humanitarian crisis is brewing" (April 7, 2008).

[67] The same distinction is made in the United States too. In a 1903 address to the U.S. Congress, for instance, President Theodore Roosevelt spoke of the need "to devise some system by which undesirable immigrants shall be kept out entirely, while desirable immigrants are properly distributed throughout our country" (DeLaet 2000, 23).

Photo 2. (LEFT) The voluntary return of the established migrant. All four men are the "good" kind of return migrant. The man in the white Abercrombie and Fitch t-shirt spent one year in the United States and returned with enough money to open this shoe store.

Photo 3. (RIGHT) The forced return. A Grupo Beta worker attends to a group of migrants that try to re-emigrate after being deported (photo by Enrique Enriquez Palafox, used with permission). This is the class of returnees most Mexicans are not eager to deal with. The difference between the two photos is striking.

4.3 Social Reactions to Migrants' Money, Symbols, and Behaviors

Showing off Symbols of Success

The relationship between money and return migration is more obvious when noticed on a local scale, such as when a family member stops sending remittances, or when a neighbor imports fancy American merchandise. Certain symbols, in particular, are associated with migrants. Vehicles—trucks, chiefly—with American license plates are the most obvious indications of previous migration experience. They are a ubiquitous reminder—and, for some, an inspiration—of migration's material rewards. Similarly, building houses in Mexico is often part of the resource mobilization for aspiring returnees; construction can be paid for and monitored from the United

States. The houses built with dollars stand out conspicuously and fuel resentment in communities across Mexico.[68]

Photo 4. (LEFT) Houses built with American dollars, like this one in rural Jalisco, stand out from their neighbors.

Photo 5. (RIGHT**)** Businesses advertising "Legalization of Pick-Ups" and "Insurance" line the border wall around the point of entry in Nogales, Mexico.

One of the most common commentaries about returnee behavior was that they "just come home to show off." Given the motivations for emigration, many could sympathize with the migrant wanting to show off his success. Other respondents were less understanding, claiming that returnee behavior was profoundly condescending: "they come back with money and all of a sudden think they can look down on us."[69]

I sat down with the Montes[70] family in Sahuayo, Michoacán to discuss these findings.[71] Asked about the "showing off" behavior, the oldest son explained:

> Let us look at the antecedent to why they feel superior. The poor [that emigrate] just want to better their lives, right? Their dream is usually to own a vehicle, or to dress well and

[68] To be fair, "the boundary between inevitable exhibition and ostentatious exhibition is hard to define" (Serrano 2006, 241). See Chapter 1 for his research about migration and house-building.
[69] Survey respondent. July 7, 2010. Guadalajara, Jalisco (popular location). Young woman. Knows many returnees.
[70] Pseudonym
[71] The Montes' are a typical family from Michoacán (the state that sends the most emigrants): tight-knit, staunchly Catholic, traditionalist, and with plenty of family living in the United States. The two adult sons are well-educated and successful local real estate developers, placing the household in Sahuayo's small middle class.

> have money. When they have all that, they want to come back [to Mexico] and show the world that they rose above their previous reality. There are many that do not come back until they have something to show. If it goes badly, they do not come back at all because they will feel like a failure. And so they wait until they have a truck or something valuable to come back…this is part of saying that they were successful there.
>
> Those [in Mexico] that are also poor admire [the returnees] and consider them an example. If someone from a very poor class sees a migrant with a truck, they think to themselves that they also need to go to the United States if they want to buy a truck, because here it is nearly impossible to access the economic level needed to buy such a commodity.
> …
> Those that have a higher socioeconomic status or education reject these migrants. They think to themselves, "Well what are you coming back here for? You are still poor. We know the way they worked you there [in the United States]; there you were nothing too.

In line with this discourse, respondents that knew many migrants and/or lived in semi-rural areas were most prone to believe that return migrants come back with a higher social status.[72] Mexicans that I surveyed in urban and/or upscale locations had much more critical views (more negative NSMs), particularly about the returnees' impact on the culture and economy, than did those in semi-rural and/or popular locations. Respondents with these negative views were also likely to discredit the returnees' accounts of success by pointing out the migrants' degrading conditions in the United States. I regularly heard remarks like: "over there they lived like animals, but they do not tell us about that."[73]

[72] NSM_{Q4}=31; $NSM_{Q4:KNOW\ MANY}$ = 50; $NSM_{Q4:\ SEMI\text{-}RURAL}$= 40. I am unsure why the class of the survey location had little impact on feelings about migrant social status upon return: $NSM_{Q4:UPSCALE}$=32; $NSM_{Q4:POPULAR}$= 30.
[73] Survey respondent. August 13, 2010. Guadalajara, Jalisco (popular location). Older man. Knows some returnees.

The Cholo

The symbols and behaviors ascribed to returnees spearhead a discussion about how to visually identify return migrants. By far the most common stereotype about the returnee—mentioned by the majority of the sample—was the "Cholo." In Mexico, the word refers to a hoodlum or delinquent.[74] The Cholo is described as a young man, often with a shaved head, tattoos, pierced ears, wearing oversized clothes and perhaps a baseball cap. One woman in Arandas told me with wide eyes that the "new fashion" in the United States is to wear sneakers with the laces untied, and that her nephew had just returned from the United States dressed like a Cholo and barely able to walk.[75] To many, especially the older generations, the fashions simply do not make sense and are a discernible source of rebellion against a cultural dress code (see Photos 6 and 7).

Importantly, though, not all Cholos are return migrants. Dressing like an American gangster is considered cool among Mexican youth. While this trend is often blamed on return migrants, it is also the result of globalization. Conversely, not all returnees are Cholos. Some respondents, particularly the older generations, think of the return migrant as a retiree or a businessman.[76] Despite these contradictions, I believe that Mexicans are apt to picture a Cholo when prompted to imagine a return migrant.

[74] *Cholo* is not used in Mexico as it is in other parts of Latin America, where it is used as a pejorative term (or one of endearment) for people of indigenous descent.
[75] Survey respondent, January 12, 2010. Arandas, Jalisco (popular location). Middle-aged woman. Knows many migrants.
[76] Older respondents were nearly six times more likely than the other age groups to think that Mexicans return to Mexico to invest their dollars in Mexico, often stating that returnees do so upon retirement.

Photo 6. (LEFT) Men sit in the plaza of Zapotlanejo, a town in Jalisco. The Mexican dress code of jeans, a button-up shirt, and a cowboy hat is not just a stereotype, although it is more prevalent among older generations.

Photo 7. (RIGHT) These two men returned to Mexico for the *Fiesta del hijo ausente* in Arandas, another town in Jalisco. The Cholo/ return migrant dress code is not just a stereotype either.

4.4 Delinquency, Drugs, and Deportees

The Mexican returnee, so often portrayed as a gangster, is also associated with increased levels of delinquency. Respondents rationalized this claim in two different ways. First, delinquent behavior was blamed as a cultural import from the United States. Alternatively, respondents explained the returnees' involvement with delinquency as a result of economic desperation generated by returning to a land with few jobs.

A police officer in Zapotlanejo, an agricultural municipality of Jalisco, Anna Burgos Vázquez[77] describes her professional experience with Cholo returnees (pers. comm.):

> After living restricted in the United States, they think they can come back here and break all the rules...They drive with the volume excessively loud, and we [the police] cannot get their attention because they think they're Gringos, you know? The recently arrived disregard the police, they drink and throw the bottles out of the window…They come

[77] Pseudonym. This woman is 36-years-old and was a migrant in Chicago for two years, which she recalls as a very negative experience.

> back with another lifestyle, be it with tattoos, with new drugs, they are not the same as when they left.
>
> I would say 60 percent of people arrested for disrupting the peace in this municipality are [return migrants]. It is obvious to us because when we pull them over, they say, "I don't care about this. I just got back from the States, how many dollars do you need to leave me alone?"

Her vehemence about the Cholo returnee being at the root of local recklessness was echoed by many of my survey's respondents. "The young return and dedicate themselves to vices"[78] was a common assertion. The Cholo returnee is blamed for the introduction of these behaviors into communities.

Less frequently, respondents justified the correlation they observe between return migration and crime through the lack of employment opportunities in Mexico. "Since they find no work, they get desperate and steal."[79] Professor Eduardo González concedes:

> I am not saying that poverty or migration generates criminals, but I do believe that if migrants return to Mexico and cannot find adequate—minimum—employment conditions, the opportunity to become involved in organized crime will always be open and surely some will take it.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the young, involuntarily returned Mexicans arrive in conditions that make them particularly susceptible to become involved with crime. Not having a social safety net, lacking skills marketable in a country essentially foreign to them and marred with unemployment,

[78] Survey respondent. August 11, 2009. Guadalajara, Jalisco (popular location). Middle-aged man. Knows many returnees.
[79] Survey respondent. August 3, 2009. Nogales, Sonora (popular location). Middle-aged woman. Knows some returnees.

committing crimes may be a survival technique. An immigrations lawyer from Ciudad Juarez elaborates on the relationship between deportation and violence in his state:

> The people that are returned here from the United States search for a way to get back into the States…but they do not have the economic means to do so. So they look for work, but there is no work right now. They become potential delinquents because the necessity, well, is hunger. And so they might begin to cross drugs, terrorism, they stretch the limits, they become involved with drugs, with homicides, because they cannot find other options.

Migration expert Jorge Durand adamantly denied the correlation between drug trafficking and migration. He explained that drug cartels are professional and have sufficient resources to smuggle drugs through more sophisticated conduits. They do not need migrants to do this kind of work (pers. comm.). While I do not doubt the truth of his statements, I do not believe most Mexicans agree with him. The returnee, particularly the deportee, was considered by much of my sample to be culturally and economically predisposed to violent behavior.

Playing with the relationship between deportees and crime is the acclaimed 2010 Mexican film, El Infierno.[80] The film, a satire about the Mexican drug industry, opens with the main character, "Benny," getting repatriated by the U.S. Border Patrol after 20 years in the United States. Benny's bus ride to and first impression of his hometown is shocking: everything is desolate, friends are in the United States or dead, and his family shuns him when he returns empty-handed. Only through his lucrative involvement in the *narco* business does Benny find a place in his community. The movie, which pokes fun at Benny's *agringado* ways, underscores the tendency to correlate deportees with crime.

[80] Produced by Luis Estrada, *Bandido Films*, 2010.

4.5 Family Dynamics

In Mexico, the family comes first. Mexicans are much less individualistic than Americans, meaning that there is a greater propensity for Mexican (extended) families to share homes, time, and experiences. The separation of families caused by emigration is particularly difficult given these values. Because of the important role of the family, over a fifth of Mexicans in my survey believed that the family was the primary motivation for migrants to return—the second-most frequent choice of seven options (first was for lack of work in the United States).

I believe, however, that the positive implications of going home tend to be overestimated—by the migrants, by their families, and in general. Placing a migrant in the United States is an endeavor typically motivated and/or funded by the family; financial returns are expected. The dollars of remittances and return migration reshape relationships within the home. The way the migration experience changes both the migrant and his family, who adapts to his absence, influences the way Mexican family reacts towards their loved one returning.

The Homecoming and the Role of Gifts

The reunification with a loved one that returns from abroad is a wonderful thing. There is little need to elaborate on this. An important part of a joyful homecoming experience is gifts for the family. Juan Luis, a two-time undocumented migrant and father of two, explains his homecoming after spending 10 months in the United States (2010):

> I didn't tell them I was going home…I arrived home around midnight, knocked on the door, [my wife] saw it was me, and well, screamed with joy. We went and woke up the kids, "Dad is home!" And then we started unpacking my bags, I had brought home lots of presents, there were a lot of things, and they were very happy, very happy, and, well, so was I.

A culture of "bring something back for me!" broods in migrant households—families *expect* gifts from the United States. It is common for adult returning migrants to bring expensive household appliances for their parents or spouses, and games, electronics or brand-name clothes for their children. Part of the resource mobilization for migrants expecting to return is a trip to a discount store like *Marshall's*. This may seem superficial, but American products are important status symbols within Mexican communities, where such items are expensive luxuries. While buying a TV for a household that lives in poverty may not seem like the wisest expenditure of a migrant's small savings, it is a common investment returnees make to elevate the social status of their family.

Often times, migrants make great sacrifices or take out loans to be able to buy such gifts. If a migrant emigrated in the face of economic hardship, returning with goods that improve the socioeconomic status of the family is essentially the fulfillment of the goal. Consequently, returning home empty-handed is a tremendous embarrassment both to the returnee and his family.

Photo 8. (LEFT) Juan Luis, the father quoted above, on a lunch break at his new construction job in Sahuayo, Michoacán.

Photo 9. (RIGHT) Three adults and two children live in this home, in a rural community in Jalisco.

Presence Inside the Household

The stories told and gifts brought are exciting only temporarily. The migrant quickly becomes another body inside of the household, which implies more costs and less space. For low-income households, this can be a great burden and the family may suggest the migrant re-emigrate. Adjusting to the cultural change of the returnee is also a challenge that quickly looses its charm. If the migrant is unable to adjust to his family's cultural and economic reality, reintegration will be problematic.

In a personal interview, Ana Leticia Gaspar, a Mexican professor and researcher about female migration, discusses the need to think of migration as a cultural, not just economic, phenomenon. According to Gaspar, the return of a father[81] disrupts the childrearing patterns within the home. Children become accustomed to the way that their mother determines the house rules. When their father returns, he wants—consciously or subconsciously—to move these structures around. The clash between a father's desire to have authority and the children's routines and preferences can be detrimental to the family. Children tend to rebel or leave the house. Conflicts can escalate to violent proportions (Gaspar pers. comm. 2010).

A long-term return of the father can also mean the re-adaptation of women to a restrictive environment within the home. It is important to remember that migrant-sending (and thus return migrant- receiving) communities are largely traditional *pueblos* in central or southern Mexico. An exaggerated sense of male virtue and entitlement, or *machismo*, typically dominates gender relations in the public and private spheres of these regions.[82] Though the wife is under vigilance when her husband is in the United States—by the husband's family and by the *pueblo*—she has

[81] It is highly unusual that a mother emigrates and leaves her children with their father (Gaspar pers. comm.).
[82] Mexican men suffer the bad reputation of being *machistas*. This, of course, is not the case for all Mexicans, particularly not for the younger generations or those in urban areas. Nonetheless, *machista* ideology is a recognized phenomenon in Mexico and was made explicit to me in many conversations.

certain freedoms inside her home that she did not when her husband was there. Gaspar claims that for marriages marred with domestic violence, emigration is a particularly sought-after respite for women. The return migration of husbands, then, implies the retraction of such gains for women (Gaspar pers. comm.).

4.6 Female Returnees

Machismo also influences the migration patterns of women. Gaspar identifies the two primary reasons the women she studied emigrated: to follow the "imaginary lover" (the man that she had a (sexual) relationship with), or to escape social stigma (such as an affair with a married man or an unplanned pregnancy). The reasons for emigration can also be motivations to return migrate. As Gaspar explains (pers. comm.):

> They return to show that they were successful, even if it was not true. It is interesting because many of them confessed to me that it was not going well for them in the North but that they returned here with gifts so that [the community] would think that they were successful. Some even took out loans to do so. Because it is one way of saying "I am not a prostitute, there they respect me and it is going well for me." It is a way to erase their stigma.

Often, the community does not appreciate the example set by women returning. Women who enjoyed a more empowering climate in the United States are more likely to complain about or rebel against gender roles upon return. Particularly in traditional and indigenous regions, female returnees are marginalized for their assumed loss in "cultural values" or, more accurately, sexual

restraint (pers. comm. González Velázquez). Comments like "women are freer over there,"[83] call attention to a topic Mexicans feel very strongly about.

4.7 How are Returnees Thought to Impact the Culture?

The most overtly negative reaction towards returnees in my survey arose in response to the question: "How do you think that migrants who return to Mexico after having lived in the United States change Mexican culture and traditions?" Respondents were nearly triple as likely to think that returnees have a negative impact on culture (44 percent) as a positive one (16 percent). Women, respondents in upscale locations, young respondents, and respondents who knew no returnees had the most negative feelings about the cultural impact return migrants have on Mexico (these categories had the most negative NSMs). Women were double as likely as men to have a net negative sentiment about the cultural impact of return migration. Older respondents were three times more likely than young respondents to do so too. No groups had net positive feelings about the cultural impact of return migration. These sentiments are reflective of the Mexican animosity toward the American influence.[84]

Many aspects of return migration already discussed—returnee identities, behaviors, dress codes, family dynamics, and gender roles—fall under the umbrella of culture. The negative perceptions of returnee's impact on these dynamics explain, in part, the negative responses to a question about culture. The influence of return migration on traditions was less specifically

[83] Survey respondent. January 10, 2010. Arandas, Jalisco (popular location). Older man. Is a returnee himself.
[84] "National surveys show that 44 percent of Mexicans believe the cultural influence of the United States on Mexico is unfavorable; half as many (21 percent) that think it is favorable" (Zogby and Rubio quoted in Fitzgerald 2009, 128).

discussed (though on three separate occasions, older respondents spoke incredulously of returnees coming back and wanting to celebrate Halloween![85]).

Several respondents, all returnees or Mexicans that knew many returnees, claimed the exact opposite: that living in the United States reinforces the Mexican culture. According to this reasoning, missing the home community makes migrants value their traditions more. "My cousins in Dallas always celebrate *cinco de mayo*, even though we never do,"[86] comments one young woman, highlighting the way that Mexican cultural practices are changed with the cross-border movements.

Another important and frequently mentioned dynamic taken into account is the loss of religion. In a predominantly Roman Catholic country,[87] the amoral and salacious tendencies related to secularization are assumed part of the returnees' detrimental cultural impact. Respondents would often speak of returnees "lacking morals," who "think nothing of divorce"[88] and "do not have time for Church."[89] One older woman expressed bitterness about her daughters, who used to go to church with her every Sunday until they moved to North Carolina. Now, when they return to visit, they refused to go to church with her "even just once a year."[90]

4.8 The Returnees' Perspective

Return migrants' responses to my survey suggest that they recognize their own estrangement from Mexican community life and that they identify with American ways. Only

[85] Survey respondents. July 27, 2010. Hermosillo, Sonora (upscale location). Older man. Knows many returnees; August 11, 2010. Guadalajara, Jalisco (popular location). Older man. Knows some returnees; August 14, 2010, Guadalajara, Jalisco (popular location). Older man. Knows many returnees.
[86] Survey respondent. August 11, 2010. Guadalajara, Jalisco (upscale). Young woman. Knows some returnees.
[87] 77 percent of Mexicans are Roman Catholic (Fitzgerald 2008, 1).
[88] Survey respondent. July 13, 2010. Ciudad Valles, SLP (popular location). Middle-aged woman. Knows no returnees.
[89] Survey respondent. August 1, 2010. Nogales, Sonora (popular location). Older man. Is a returnee himself.
[90] Survey respondent. January 10, 2011. Arandas, Jalisco (popular location). Older woman. Knows many returnees.

migrants preferred Gringos to other returnees. They often explained their experiences with other Mexicans in the United States as very competitive and unsupportive. Two respondents described this competition as "a pot full of live crabs on the fire:" the crabs need to fight each other, climb on each other's backs, and knock each other down in order to succeed.[91] In this vein, one man told me that he was deported from Texas after he got into a conflict with a friend, also an undocumented Mexican: "He called the police and told them my boss hired illegal immigrants. We all got sent home."[92] Commentaries like "There, the Mexican isn't your brother; he's your enemy"[93] stress the mixed feelings many migrants have about Mexican migrants when they are in the United States.

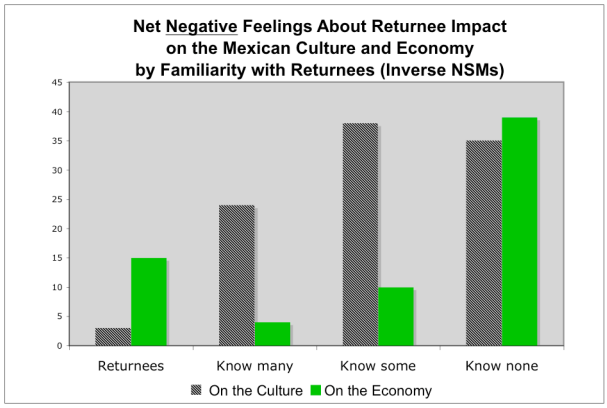
Their evaluation of returnees' impact on the economy and the improvement of returnee's social status was also less favorable than the same evaluation by Mexicans who knew many returnees. The returnees might have been speaking from experience, since trends suggest that migrants are not returning to Mexico with large savings to contribute to the local economy.

Returnees were the least likely of all to think that a migrant who lived in the United States for more than half of his life is "still Mexican," which suggests that returnees recognize that the migration experience has profoundly changed them. They seemed to think that this change was a positive thing for Mexico: return migrants had the most favorable opinions about the impact of return migration on Mexican culture. They were also the most likely to befriend a returnee.

Much more so than the sampled non-migrants, returnees had positive feelings towards Americans. Seventy percent of return migrants in my survey liked Americans, while only 10

[91] Survey respondent. July 12, 2010. Zapotlanejo, Jalisco (popular location). Middle-aged man. Was a migrant himself (spent four years in Phoenix, Arizona and one in Chicago, Illinois); August 2, 2010b. Nogales, Sonora (popular location). Young man. Was a migrant himself (spent 10 months in San Diego, California).
[92] Survey respondent. July 28, 2010. Nogales, Sonora (popular location). Young male. Is a return migrant himself.
[93] Survey respondent. July 27, 2010. Nogales, Sonora (popular location). Middle-aged male. Is a return migrant himself.

percent did not.[94] In other words, net positive feelings about Americans are nearly three times stronger among sampled returnees as compared to sampled non-migrants. Moreover, returnees were significantly more likely to want to go to the United States and stay for longer than were non-migrants. These responses indicate strong favorable views of the United States among the returnees of my sample, which is something that non-migrants criticized with the discourse of cultural authenticity and commentaries about migrant's desire to be Gringos.



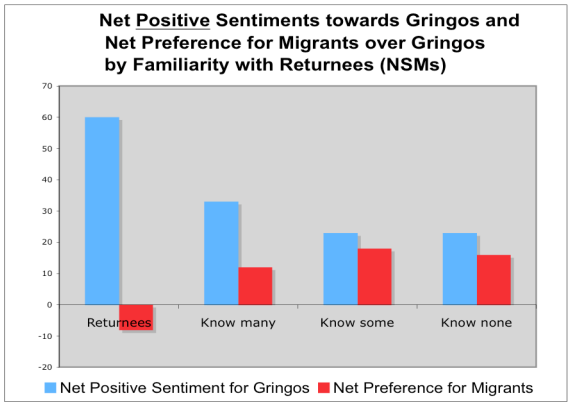


Figure 7. (LEFT) Source: Survey responses to Questions 6 and 7.
Figure 8. (RIGHT) Source: Survey responses to Questions 10 and 11**.**

Returnees in the sample responded along relatively unpatriotic lines, indicated by their very positive conceptions about Gringos and their mixed views about return migration. Does the unwelcoming social environment in Mexico cause these less patriotic views, or does the perceived lack in returnee patriotism generate the unwelcoming social climate? Regardless of the causal order of return migration and sentiment formation, Mexican preconceptions about returning individuals are have a strong impact on returnees' capacity to reintegrate themselves into Mexican society.

[94] I was surprised by how many migrants said that they were treated well in the United States and were awed by how respectful and well-educated Gringos are. Migrants quite adamantly explained that their greatest social conflict in the United States was not the Gringo, but rather the competitive fellow migrant.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF THE "MULTIFACETED TRAUMA"

The recent trends of "return of failure" and "forced return" have two overlapping implications on the social reintegration process of returnees in Mexico. First, the trends suggest that migrants are returning in a state of extreme vulnerability, after having suffered negative migration and repatriation experiences. Secondly, the trends imply that Mexicans are being exposed to the "undesirable" return migrant, whose behaviors and ideologies clash with local norms, and that Mexicans react to them accordingly. For many migrants, then, crossing back into Mexican territory does not provide the sought-after respite from the disparaging stigma associated with being a migrant. This unfortunate reality is likely to have profound implications on long-term returnee welfare.

5.1 Return Migration Patterns and Respondent Sentiment Formation

The sample of Mexicans I surveyed voiced opinions about return migrants that were more negative than I had originally anticipated. Deconstructing the composition of the return migration flow, however, has helped me understand why this might be.

A population larger than that of Miami flows back into Mexico every year.[95] More than half of this population returns involuntarily, after months confined to prison-like detention centers that are known to generate organized crime.[96] Deportees are characterized as young males that lived in the United States for most of their lives. The large majority of return migrants were

[95] According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the city of Miami, Florida had 404,048 residents in 2006 ("State and Country QuickFacts" 2009)

[96] According to the Detention Watch Network, "although DHS owns and operates its own detention centers, it also "buys" bed space from over 312 county and city prisons nationwide to hold the majority of those who are detained (over 67%). Immigrants detained in these local jails are mixed in with the local prison population who is serving time for crimes" ("About the U.S. Detention and Deportations System" 2011).

undocumented in the United States. A significant portion of those that return voluntarily do so out of economic desperation.

Given the reality of contemporary return migration trends, many of the allegations that my survey respondents made make sense. The repeated identifications of the returnee as a Cholo or a Pocho are consistent with the likely demographic characteristics of the return migration flow. Similarly, the allegation that "no one wants them"[97] is, to some extent, accurate. Policymakers on both sides of the border consider the Mexican-American delinquent's behaviors and style as a "foreign pathogen" (Fitzgerald 2009a, 128).

Unaware of the magnitude of deportations, respondents did not generally correlate the phenomenon to return migrant behaviors. They do not think of return migration from the returnee's perspective. In fact, most of my survey's respondents were off base about the reasons why migrants return to Mexico. Less than a fifth of my sample stated that the primary reason for return migration was related to legal problems and deportations,[98] and less than a quarter thought that it was because there was no work in the United States. In other words, 60 percent of the sample thought that migrants were drawn back to Mexico by "pull factors" like homesickness, wanting to invest their dollars in Mexico, or missing loved ones. Partly because of this, many Mexicans are apt to focus on the material or behavioral changes they witness among return migrants, instead of considering the psychological damage and needs of the return migrant. The lack of compassion towards migrants returning in vulnerable conditions may be rooted, then, in a lack of awareness about the current return migration trends.

The way that each Mexican community identifies and processes the series of symbols and behaviors that its own returnees bring back from the United States has more realistic implications

[97] Survey respondent. August 3, 2010. Nogales, Sonora (popular location). Middle-aged man. Knows some migrants.
[98] Of the interviews I collected along the border in Sonora, 40 percent of respondents believed that legal problems and deportations were the primary reasons for return migration. In Michoacán, on the other hand, only 7 percent thought the same, even though a significant portion of deportees is from Michoacán.

on Mexican social conceptions about return migrants than do my survey results. Opinions vary considerably across my survey's classes, regions, and states. That being said, the respondents who knew many returnees consistently had more favorable views towards them as compared to migrants who knew few or many. Perhaps as return migration increases, and more Mexicans are familiarized with the hardships return migrants face, migrants' homecomings will be met with more compassion.

"Paseo de la humanidad," by Alberto Morackis and Guadalupe Serrano. Painted metal figures are nailed onto the border wall separating Nogales, Sonora from Nogales, Arizona. There are dozens of figures "walking" towards a border (painted onto the border on the far right of the first photo).

Photo 10. (LEFT) The figures, presumably emigrating from Mexico, are depicted with classic Mexican symbols like corn or a baby strapped to the back.

Photo 11. (RIGHT) This art depicts migrants headed back into Mexico. With them they carry a body, a washing machine, and weapons, among other things. One migrant has the face of the Statue of Liberty. The symbolism and expression of the "return migrants" is rather unfavorable.

5.2 Return Migration Patterns and Migrant Vulnerability

The Trauma of Migration

It is not wanderlust that motivates hundreds of thousands of Mexicans to immigrate to the United States every year. Fueled largely by economic desperation, emigration is considered a survival strategy that comes with costs nearly as substantial as the profits to be made. The

collective blow of homesickness, separation anxiety from family members left behind, and unfamiliarity with the language, land, and culture in the United States, is emotionally taxing for many. Moreover, the majority of Mexican immigrants are "illegal aliens" whose daily life is restricted by the fear of deportation. In the United States, these migrants have no voice, no vote, and no security in the face of exploitation, racial profiling, and profound social marginalization, even within their own immigrant communities.

Living under these adverse conditions, the notion of one day returning to Mexico, with a bank account well stocked with dollars, is the "Mexican Dream."[99] Migrants envision the conditions of their ideal return, and have great expectations for the way they will be received. They dream of returning to bring gifts to loved ones in Mexico, of returning to raise families with Mexican values, or of returning to retire (Durand 2006, 174).

The increasing number of deportations and returns of failure suggests that return migration does not resemble migrants' expectations of return. Migrants are returning without the foresight or capacity to mobilize adequate resources to constitute a successful return. Without gifts to give to the family, or symbols to tout among peers, the process of social reintegration is made more difficult. Given the spontaneous nature of deportation, migrants also lack the emotional preparedness to face the profoundly abasing and violent process.

The Trauma of Return

Describing the difference in the morale of migrants crossing into the United States versus those coming back into Mexico is Enrique Enriquez Palafox, a coordinator at Grupo Beta, the Mexican government-funded organization responsible for protecting migrants (pers. comm.) :

[99] This is the title of Javier Serrano's thesis, 2006.

> When migrants first get to the border, they are very excited, they think *we're going to be able to pass*…but when they arrive back [to Nogales, Mexico] they have lost their ambition…because they do not have any money, because they are tired, because they come beaten, because they have suffered and realize that they do not even have resources to return to their hometowns.

According to Kara Hartzler, an immigration lawyer and consultant at the Florence Immigrant and Refugee Rights Project in Florence, Arizona, migrants returned involuntarily are subjected to tremendously distressing conditions (pers. comm.):

> A lot of [detained immigrants] do not know what's going on. They know that they got picked up and arrested. They have no idea where they are going, how long they will be here, they do not know if there is any way to fight their case or what will happen to them. It is a complete feeling of helplessness. You stop believing in your own ability to control your life…it is very dehumanizing, in a lot of ways.

Migrants in the Florence detention centers usually stay there for six months to a year. During this period, psychological traumas—including profound depression and grief—are exacerbated by the dismal conditions of detention (Hartzler pers. comm.).

Furthermore, many of the migrants detained have lived most of their lives in the United States. They are effectively "more Gringos than Mexicans"[100] and their family, their children, now live in "forbidden territory." Many have nothing to return to in Mexico. Being deported, then, leaves the migrant in a situation of utmost vulnerability to a foreign social environment (Hartzler pers. comm.).

[100] Online survey response to Question 2. June 28, 2010. Young woman. Knows no migrants.

Photo 12. (LEFT) The Eloy Detention Center in Eloy, Arizona.

Photo 13. (RIGHT) A deported migrant sleeps outside of a Grupa Beta center in Nogales, Sonora (photo by Enrique Enriquez Palafox, used with permission).

5.3 Outcomes and Recommendations

When migrants step foot in the United States, they are rarely met with a warm welcome. Nationalistic resentment, fears of job competition, allegations of cultural change and violence dictate the degree to which the migrant will be able to live peacefully, let alone integrate into American society. A hostile welcome to the United States is expected, though, and is quickly overshadowed by the financial profits to be made.

My research indicates that the receiving environment in Mexico is also hostile, particularly towards returnees popularly deemed "unsuccessful." It stands to reason that, given the state of vulnerability migrants are now returning in, this hostility is neither expected nor quickly overcome. As González Velázquez articulates (pers. comm.):

> "The issue of deportations has to do with the logic of a "double expulsion." At the beginning, the migrant suffers the expulsion from his *tierra* in Mexico. In his homeland there is no work, there is nothing, so he is essentially forced to emigrate. So he migrates to the United States. When he is deported, the migrant suffers a second expulsion. Upon return to Mexico, the migrant is confronted with the fact

> that the country cannot receive him, because to the society, to the family, to the friends, the migrant became foreign, strange, he "lost his culture," he has new habits. The economy does not receive him either because there is no work for him, he is not insured, etcetera. So for migrants, it is another traumatic process to return to their "homeland" and realize that neither the people, nor the government, nor the reality in general receives them with open arms….The trauma of repatriation, of deportation, is a multifaceted trauma. It has many sides that crash into the migrant in a way that generates incredibly violent psychological processes.

While presumably devastating, the humanitarian and social consequences of this "double expulsion" are not yet understood. As this is not the first, nor is it the last, moment of repatriation in Mexican-American migration history, the millions of voices impacted by return migration ought to be heard.

The first step to continuing research in this field is having a better understanding of the conditions under which migrants return. At the border, data should be collected systematically and comprehensively about those entering Mexico. It would be even more helpful if the U.S. Department of Homeland Security would release basic information about migrants detained and deported. Publishing such information would generate social awareness and academic interest in the topic of return migration.

With a detailed and consistently updated record of migrants returning to Mexico, a wealth of research can be gathered to assess the impact of return migration on both the migrants and the communities that receive them. Formal surveys and community-specific case studies would provide new insight on the role the community plays in migrant reintegration. My research suggests that particular attention should be paid to the way that communities process the cultural changes imported by the migrant, and the way that national identities inform the process. Lastly, the consequences of the social reception on long-term migrant welfare must be further examined.

Given the climate of increased deportations and returns of failure, longitudinal studies following migrants post-return would be particularly enlightening.

Research is just one way to acknowledge the plight of migrants returning to Mexico and the challenges their communities are faced with. Restoring dignity to the process of return migration, however, requires much more than words written on paper.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

2009 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics. 2010. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Statistics. 92-104. http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/statistics/yearbook/2009/ois_yb_2009.pdf.

"About the U.S. Detention and Deportation System." 2011. Detention Watch Network. http://www.detentionwatchnetwork.org/aboutdetention.

Adler, Rachel H. 2008. *Yucatecans in Dallas, Texas: Breaching the Border, Bridging the Distance.* Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

"Aspectos generales de la inmigración actual en México." 2009. Centro de Estudios Migratorios, Instituto Nacional de Migración. http://www.inm.gob.mx/static/Centro_de_Estudios/Avances_Investigacion/Aspectos_Grales.pdf.

"Aspectos metodológicos." 2005. *Encuesta sobre migración en la Frontera Norte de Mexico, 2007*. Secretaría de Gobernación, Consejo Nacional de Población, Instituto Nacional de Migración, Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, Secretaría del Trabajo y Previsión Social, El Colegio de la Frontera Norte. 15-31. http://www.conapo.gob.mx/EMIF_NORTE/DOCUM/MetodologiaEMIF_NORTE.PDF.

"Barack Obama on Immigration." 2009. Ontheissues.org. http://www.ontheissues.org/international/barack_obama_immigration.htm.

Camarota, Steven A. 2009. "Public Opinion in Mexico on U.S. Immigration: Zogby Poll Examines Attitudes." Washington, DC: Center for Immigration Studies (October). http://www.cis.org/ZogbyPoll-EffectsOfAmnesty.

— and Karen Jensenius. 2009. "A Shifting Tide: Recent Trends in the Illegal Immigrant Population." Washington, DC: Center for Immigration Studies. http://www.cis.org/print/IllegalImmigration-ShiftingTide.

Cassarino, Jean-Pierre. 2004. "Theorizing Return Migration: The Conceptual Approach to Return Migrants Revisited." *International Journal on Multicultural Societies* 7 (2): 253-279.

http://www.unesco.org/shs/ijms/vol6/issue2/art4.

Cerase, Francesco P. 1974. "Expectations and Reality: A Case Study of Return Migration from the United States to Southern Italy." *International Migration Review* 8 (2): 245-262. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3002783.

Chiquiar, Daniel and Gordon H. Hanson. 2005. "International Migration, Self-Selection, and the Distribution of Wages: Evidence from Mexico and the United States." *The Journal of Political Economy* 113 (2): 239-281.

"CNN Opinion Research Poll." 2010. Opinion Research Corporation (May 26). http://politicalticker.blogs.cnn.com.

Cota-Cabrera, Bribrilia, Emily Hildreth, Andrea Rodríquez, Viridiana Canseco Zárate. 2009. "San Miguel Tlacotepec as a Community of Emigration." In *Migration from the Mexican Mixteca,* edited by Wayne A. Cornelius, David Fitzgerald, Jorge Hernandez-Diaz, and Scott Borger. San Diego: Center for Comparative Immigration Studies, University of California.

DeLaet, Debra L. 2000. *U.S. Immigration Policy in an Age of Rights.* Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers.

Donato, Katherine M., Jorge Durand and Douglas S. Massey. 1992. "Changing Conditions in the US Labor Market: Effects of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986." *Population Research and Policy Review*, 11 (2): 93-115. http://www.jstor.org/stable/40229812.

Durand. 2006. "Los inmigrantes también emigran: la migración de retorno como corolario del proceso," *Revista Interdisciplinar da Mobilidade Humana*. 14: 26-27.

"Encuesta sobre migración en la Frontera Norte de Mexico, 2007." 2009. Secretaría de Gobernación, Consejo Nacional de Población, Instituto Nacional de Migración, Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, Secretaría del Trabajo y Previsión Social, El Colegio de la Frontera Norte. 165-209, 251. http://www.colef.mx/emif/conteni2/publicaciones.html

Espinoza, Victor M. 1998. *El dilema del retorno: migración, género y pertenencía en un contexto transnacional*. Michoacán, Mexico: El Colegio de Michoacán, El Colegio de Jalisco.

Fitzgerald, David. 2008. "Country Profile: Mexico." *Focus Migration*. Hamburg, Germany: Hamburg Institute of International Economics. http://focus-migration.hwwi.de/Country-Profiles.1349.0.html?&L=1.

—. 2009a. *A Nation of Emigrants: How Mexico Manages its Migration.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

—. 2009b. "Emigration's Impacts on Mexico." Pardee Center for the Study of the Longer-Range Future, Boston University (Sep. 25). Unpublished chapter.

Gitter, Seth, Robert Gitter and Douglas Southgate. 2008. "The Impact of Return Migration to Mexico." *Estudios Económicos* 23 (1): 3-23.

González, David-James. 2010. "Public Opinion and Federal Immigration Policy." *Prospect, Journal of International Affairs at UCSD* (November). http://prospectjournal.ucsd.edu/index.php/2010/11/public-opinion-and-federal-immigration-policy/.

González Velázquez, Eduardo. 2008. *Con todo y triques: crónicas de migración.* Guadalajara, Mexico: Universidad de Guadalajara.

Hernández Ceja, Augustín. 2006. "El retorno a la tierra soñada entre los alteños de Jalisco." PhD diss., Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social en Occidente.

Hoefer, Micheal, Nancy Rytina, Bryan C. Baker. 2009. "Estimates of the Unauthorized Immigrant Population Residing in the United States: January 2009." *Population Estimates.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Statistics. http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/statistics/publications/ois_ill_pe_2009.pdf.

"ICE announces results of repatriation program." 2010. U.S. Department of Homeland Security

(September 30).
http://www.ice.gov/news/releases/1009/100930tucson.htm.

"Immigration Enforcement Actions: 2009," 2010. *Office of Immigration Statistics Annual Report.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Statistics.
http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/statistics/publications/enforcement_ar_2009.pdf.

"Issue #1: Evidence from the Great Recession Is In: Migration Flows Dropped, Unemployment Among Certain Immigrants Rose." 2010. Migration Policy Institute.
http://www.migrationinformation.org/Feature/display.cfm?id=808.

Kanstroom, Daniel. 2011. Lecture. Fletcher School, Tufts University, Medford, MA (March 8).

King, Russel. 1978. "Return Migration: A Neglected Aspect of Population Geography." *Area* 10 (3): 175-182. http://www.jstor.org/stable/20001343.

Lindstrom, David P. 1996. "Economic opportunity in Mexico and return migration from the United States." *Demography* 33 (3): 357-374.
http://www.jstor.org/stable/2061767.

Margolis, Maxine L. 2007 "Becoming *Brazucas*: Brazilian Identity in the United States." In *The Other Latinos: Central and South Americans in the United States*, edited by José Luis Falconi and José Antonio Mazzotti. Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press.

Massey, Douglas S. Joaquín Arango, Graeme Hugo, Ali Kouaouci, Adela Pellegrino, and J. Edward Taylor. 1998. *Worlds in Motion: Understanding International Migration at the End of the Millennium*. Oxford: Clarendon

Meier, Matt S. and Margot Gutiérrez. 2003. *The Mexican American Experience: An Encyclopedia.* Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Meins, Robert. 2009. *Remittances in Times of Financial Instability*. Washington, DC: Inter-American Development Bank (March).
http://idbdocs.iadb.org/wsdocs/getdocument.aspx?docnum=1913678.

"Mexican Immigrants in the United States, 2008." 2009. Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center (April 15). http://pewhispanic.org/factsheets/factsheet.php?FactsheetID=47.

“Mexican Immigrant Labor History.” 2010. Public Broadcasting Service. http://www.pbs.org/kpbs/theborder/history/timeline/17.html.

“Migration and Remittances Factbook: Mexico.” 2011. World Bank. http://econ.worldbank.org.

Passel, Jeffrey S. and D’Vera Cohn. 2005. "Estimates of the Size and Characteristics of the Undocumented Population." Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center (March 21). http://pewhispanic.org/reports/report.php?ReportID=44.

—. 2008. “Trends in Unauthorized Immigration: Undocumented Inflow Now Trails Legal Inflow.” Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center (October 2). http://pewhispanic.org/files/reports/94.pdf.

—. 2009a. “A Portrait of Unauthorized Immigrants in the United States.” Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center (April 14). http://pewhispanic.org/files/reports/107.pdf.

—. 2009b. “Mexican Immigrants: How Many Come? How Many Leave?” Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center (July 22). http://pewhispanic.org/files/reports/112.pdf.

—. 2011. “Unauthorized Immigrant Population: National and State Trends, 2010.” Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center (Feb 1). http://pewhispanic.org/files/reports/133.pdf.

Passel, Jeffrey S. and Roberto Suro. 2005. “Rise, Peak, and Decline: Trends in U.S. Immigration 1992-2004.” Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center (September 27). http://pewhispanic.org/files/reports/53.pdf.

Preston, Julia. 2009. “Mexican Data Show Migration to U.S. in Decline.” *The New York Times* (May 15). http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/15/us/15immig.html.

“Quinnipiac University Poll.” 2010. (July 13-19) http://www.pollingreport.com/immigration.htm.

"Return Migration." International Organization for Migration. http://iom.int/jahia/Jahia/about-migration/managing-migration/managing-migration-return-migration/cache/offonce/.

Reyes, Belinda I. 1997. *Dynamics of Immigration : Return Migration to Western Mexico.* San Francisco: Public Policy Institute of California.

Serrano, Javier. 2006. "El Sueño Mexicano: retorno imaginado en las migraciones internacionales de Tapalpa y Tlacotalpan." PhD diss., Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social en Occidente.

"State and Country QuickFacts: Miami, Florida" (2009). U.S. Census Bureau. http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/12/1245000.html.

Usher, Erica. 2005. *The Millennium Development Goals and Migration.* Geneva: International Organization for Migration.

Van Houte, Marieke and Tine Davdis. 2008. "Development and Return Migration: From Policy Panacea to Migrant Perspective Sustainability." *Third World Quarterly* 29 (7): 1411-1429. doi: 10.1080/01436590802386658.

"World Factbook: Mexico." United States Central Intelligence Agency. https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/mx.html.

Wilson, Tamar Diana. 2000. "Anti-immigrant Sentiment and the Problem of Reproduction/Maintenance in Mexican Immigration to the United States." *Critique of Anthropology* 20 (191). DOI: 10.1177/0308275X0002000206.

Zúñiga, Víctor and Edmund T. Hamann. 2006. "Going Home? Schooling in Mexico of Transnational Children." *CONfines* 2 (4): 41-57. http://confines.mty.itesm.mx/articulos4/VZuniga.pdf.

APPENDIX: SURVEY FORMAT

Q1. Your gender is:
1. Male
2. Female
3. I would rather not specify

Q2. I am studying the process of social re-integration of Mexicans that have lived in the United States for at least 6 months and that have now returned to live in Mexico. Do you know anyone that fits that description?
1. Yes, I fit that description
2. Yes, I know many people that fit that description
3. Yes, I know a few people that fit that description
4. No, I do not know anyone that fits that description

Q3. Do you consider someone Mexican if they have lived in the United States for more than half of their life?
1. Yes
2. No
3. Depends (Please explain)

Q4. Do you think that Mexicans who have lived in the United States a significant portion of their lives have a higher or lower social status when they return to Mexico compared to the status they had before leaving Mexico?
1. Higher than before they left
2. Lower than before they left
3. The same as before they left
4. Neither / Incomparable

Q5. What do you think is the main reason why Mexicans who are in the United States come back to Mexico?
1. They miss their loved ones
2. They can invest their dollars in Mexico and have a higher standard of living here than they could in the United States
3. They miss the Mexican culture and lifestyle
4. They do not feel socially integrated in the United States
5. They cannot find work in the United States and have to return to Mexico for economic reasons
6. They get into problems with the American law or have been deported
7. Other (Please explain)

Q6. How do you think that migrants who return to Mexico after having lived in the United States change Mexico's economy?
1. For the worse
2. No difference
3. For the better
4. None of the above (Please explain)

Q7. How do you think that migrants who return to Mexico after having lived in the United States change Mexican culture and traditions?
1. For the worse
2. No difference
3. For the better
4. None of the above (Please explain)

Q8. Imagine making a new friend in Mexico. Would having lived in the United States be a quality you consider positive in this new friend?
a. Yes, it would be a quality I find positive
b. No, it would not be a particularly positive quality
c. No, I would in fact consider that a negative quality
d. It would not influence my feelings about the person at all

Q9. If you had the opportunity to go work in the United States right now, would you take it? If so, how long would you stay in the United States?
1. Not go
2. Go, but only for a little while (less than 2 years)
3. Go and stay for a long time (more than two years, but not forever)
4. Go and never come back to live in Mexico
5. I don't know

Q10. What is your general feeling about "Gringos" (Americans)?
1. In general, I do not like them
2. In general, I have mixed feelings
3. In general, they are fine with me
4. Indifference

Q11. Do these feelings about "Gringos" influence the way you feel about Mexican migrants who have lived in the United States for a considerable portion of their lives?
1. Yes, I feel the same way about the migrants as I do about "Gringos"
2. No, I generally prefer the migrants to "Gringos"
3. No, I generally prefer "Gringos" to the migrants
4. Neither, the way I feel about "Gringos" is unrelated to how I feel about the migrants

APPENDIX: SURVEY RESPONSES

Q1. Your gender is:

ALL RESPONDENTS: PERCENT COLUMN TOTAL AND RESPONSE COUNTS

	Percent Total	Counts
1. Men	54%	258
2. Women	45%	214

BY AGE AND GENDER (percent column total)

	18-34	35-59	60+
1. Men	53%	50%	67%
2. Women	47%	49%	31%

BY FAMILIARITY WITH RETURNEES (percent column total)

	Me	I know many	I know some	I know none
1. Men	91%	60%	47%	37%
2. Women	9%	39%	53%	62%

BY LOCATION OF SURVEY: REGION AND CLASS (percent column total)

	Urban	Semi-Urban	Semi-Rural	Upscale	Popular
1. Men	55%	43%	59%	60%	51%
2. Women	45%	55%	39%	41%	47%

BY MEXICAN STATE (percent column total)

	Jalisco	SLP	Michoacán	Sonora
1. Men	56%	42%	59%	48%
2. Women	44%	58%	40%	49%

Q2. I am studying the process of social re-integration of Mexicans that have lived in the United States for at least 6 months and that have now returned to live in Mexico. Do you know anyone that fits that description?

ALL RESPONDENTS: PERCENT COLUMN TOTAL AND RESPONSE COUNTS

	Percent Total	Counts
1. Returnee	14%	67
2. I know many	29%	136
3. I know some	33%	156
4. I know none	25%	117

BY AGE AND GENDER (percent column total)

	18-34	**35-59**	**60+**	**Men**	**Women**
1. Returnee	8%	19%	16%	24%	3%
2. I know many	26%	29%	33%	31%	25%
3. I know some	39%	32%	20%	28%	38%
4. I know none	27%	20%	31%	17%	34%

BY LOCATION OF SURVEY: REGION AND CLASS (percent column total)

	Urban	**Semi-Urban**	**Semi-Rural**	**Upscale**	**Popular**
1. Returnee	7%	21%	25%	2%	19%
2. I know many	24%	25%	40%	21%	31%
3. I know some	37%	36%	23%	45%	28%
4. I know none	32%	18%	13%	33%	22%

BY MEXICAN STATE (percent column total)

	Jalisco	**SLP**	**Michoacán**	**Sonora**
1. Returnee	11%	8%	26%	17%
2. I know many	29%	29%	37%	20%
3. I know some	34%	33%	20%	39%
4. I know none	26%	29%	17%	25%

Q3. Do you consider someone a Mexican if they have lived in the United States for more than half of their life?

ALL RESPONDENTS: PERCENT COLUMN TOTAL AND RESPONSE COUNTS

	Percent Total	Counts
1. Yes	69%	327
2. No	19%	90
3. Depends	12%	59
NSM (Yes-No)	*50*	

BY AGE AND GENDER (percent column total)

	18-34	35-59	60+	Men	Women
1. Yes	70%	67%	70%	69%	69%
2. No	18%	21%	17%	20%	18%
3. Depends	12%	13%	12%	12%	13%
NSM (Yes-No)	*52*	*46*	*53*	*49*	*51*

BY FAMILIARITY WITH RETURNEES (percent column total)

	Me	I know many	I know some	I know none
1. Yes	63%	74%	70%	64%
2. No	21%	18%	20%	17%
3. Depends	16%	7%	10%	19%
NSM (Yes-No)	*42*	*56*	*50*	*47*

BY LOCATION OF SURVEY: REGION AND CLASS (percent column total)

	Urban	Semi-Urban	Semi-Rural	Upscale	Popular
1. Yes	71%	70%	64%	73%	67%
2. No	15%	17%	27%	14%	21%
3. Depends	14%	13%	9%	13%	12%
NSM (Yes-No)	*56*	*53*	*37*	*59*	*46*

BY MEXICAN STATE (percent column total)

	Jalisco	SLP	Michoacán	Sonora
1. Yes	70%	58%	62%	73%
2. No	18%	21%	28%	13%
3. Depends	12%	21%	11%	14%
NSM (Yes-No)	*52*	*37*	*34*	*60*

Q4. Do you think that Mexicans who have lived in the United States a significant portion of their lives have a higher or lower social status when they return to Mexico compared to the status they had before leaving Mexico?

ALL RESPONDENTS: PERCENT COLUMN TOTAL AND RESPONSE COUNTS

	Percent Total	Counts
1. Higher	45%	212
2. Lower	14%	66
3. The same	25%	118
4. Neither	17%	80
NSM (Higher-Lower)	31	

BY AGE AND GENDER (percent column total)

	18-34	35-59	60+	Men	Women
1. Higher	40%	46%	51%	46%	43%
2. Lower	10%	18%	14%	12%	17%
3. The same	34%	20%	16%	26%	24%
4. Neither	16%	16%	20%	16%	17%
NSM (Higher-Lower)	*30*	*28*	*37*	*34*	*26*

BY FAMILIARITY WITH RETURNEES (percent column total)

	Me	I know many	I know some	I know none
1. Higher	51%	60%	39%	30%
2. Lower	16%	10%	17%	13%
3. The same	19%	17%	29%	32%
4. Neither	13%	13%	15%	26%
NSM (Higher-Lower)	*35*	*50*	*22*	*17*

BY LOCATION OF SURVEY: REGION AND CLASS (percent column total)

	Urban	Semi-Urban	Semi-Rural	Upscale	Popular
1. Higher	38%	42%	59%	37%	47%
2. Lower	12%	16%	17%	5%	17%
3. The same	33%	25%	8%	40%	19%
4. Neither	17%	18%	16%	19%	16%
NSM (Higher-Lower)	*26*	*26*	*42*	*32*	*30*

BY MEXICAN STATE (percent column total)

	Jalisco	SLP	Michoacán	Sonora
1. Higher	43%	29%	57%	42%
2. Lower	13%	13%	18%	12%
3. The same	26%	38%	8%	32%
4. Neither	17%	21%	17%	14%
NSM (Higher-Lower)	30	16	39	30

Q5. What is the main reason why Mexicans who are in the United States come back to Mexico?
ALL RESPONDENTS: PERCENT COLUMN TOTAL AND RESPONSE COUNTS

	Percent Total	Counts
1. Loved ones	22%	103
2. Invest dollars	11%	52
3. Miss culture	16%	74
4. Not incorporated	9%	42
5. No work	23%	109
6. Legal Problems	18%	87
7. Other	2%	9

BY AGE AND GENDER (percent column total)

	18-34	35-59	60+	Men	Women
1. Loved ones	29%	17%	16%	21%	23%
2. Invest dollars	5%	9%	28%	16%	5%
3. Miss culture	17%	16%	11%	17%	14%
4. Not incorporated	9%	8%	10%	8%	10%
5. No work	23%	27%	14%	18%	29%
6. Legal Problems	16%	20%	20%	19%	18%
7. Other	1%	3%	1%	2%	2%

BY FAMILIARITY WITH RETURNEES (percent column total)

	Me	I know many	I know some	I know none
1. Loved ones	15%	19%	26%	23%
2. Invest dollars	16%	14%	6%	10%
3. Miss culture	19%	21%	12%	11%
4. Not incorporated	12%	6%	9%	10%
5. No work	15%	24%	27%	21%
6. Legal Problems	19%	15%	18%	22%
7. Other	3%	2%	2%	2%

BY LOCATION OF SURVEY: REGION AND CLASS (percent column total)

	Urban	Semi-Urban	Semi-Rural	Upscale	Popular
1. Loved ones	23%	9%	26%	21%	22%
2. Invest dollars	10%	14%	11%	8%	12%
3. Miss culture	16%	12%	17%	18%	15%
4. Not incorporated	9%	9%	8%	11%	8%
5. No work	22%	17%	30%	24%	23%
6. Legal Problems	18%	39%	7%	17%	19%
7. Other	2%	1%	3%	2%	2%

BY MEXICAN STATE (percent column total)

	Jalisco	SLP	Michoacán	Sonora
1. Loved ones	26%	25%	26%	2%
2. Invest dollars	10%	4%	9%	18%
3. Miss culture	18%	13%	16%	9%
4. Not incorporated	7%	17%	12%	12%
5. No work	23%	25%	28%	19%
6. Legal Problems	16%	13%	7%	40%
7. Other	2%	4%	3%	0%

Q6. How do you think that migrants who return to Mexico after having lived in the United States change Mexico's economy?

ALL RESPONDENTS: PERCENT COLUMN TOTAL AND RESPONSE COUNTS

	Percent Total	Counts
1. Worse	37%	178
2. No difference	35%	164
3. Better	21%	101
4. Neither	7%	33
NSM (Better-Worse)	*-16*	

BY AGE AND GENDER (percent column total)

	18-34	35-59	60+	Men	Women
1. Worse	33%	41%	39%	37%	38%
2. No difference	42%	30%	21%	28%	43%
3. Better	20%	20%	26%	29%	11%
4. Neither	5%	8%	14%	6%	8%
NSM (Better-Worse)	*-13*	*-21*	*-13*	*-8*	*-27*

BY FAMILIARITY WITH RETURNEES (percent column total)

	Me	I know many	I know some	I know none
1. Worse	40%	35%	30%	48%
2. No difference	22%	29%	44%	36%
3. Better	25%	31%	20%	9%
4. Neither	12%	5%	6%	7%
NSM (Better-Worse)	*-15*	*-4*	*-10*	*-39*

BY LOCATION OF SURVEY: REGION AND CLASS (percent column total)

	Urban	Semi-Urban	Semi-Rural	Upscale	Popular
1. Worse	39%	27%	37%	41%	36%
2. No difference	38%	33%	29%	40%	33%
3. Better	16%	26%	29%	14%	24%
4. Neither	7%	11%	5%	6%	7%
NSM (Better-Worse)	*-23*	*-1*	*-8*	*-27*	*-12*

BY MEXICAN STATE (percent column total)

	Jalisco	SLP	Michoacán	Sonora
1. Worse	42%	29%	34%	21%
2. No difference	33%	29%	32%	45%
3. Better	19%	33%	28%	20%
4. Neither	6%	8%	7%	14%
NSM (Better-Worse)	*-23*	*-4*	*-6*	*-1*

Q7. How do you think that migrants who return to Mexico after having lived in the United States change Mexican culture and traditions?

ALL RESPONDENTS: PERCENT COLUMN TOTAL AND RESPONSE COUNTS

	Percent Total	Counts
1. Worse	44%	211
2. No difference	28%	135
3. Better	16%	77
4. Neither	11%	53
NSM (Better-Worse)	*-28*	

BY AGE AND GENDER (percent column total)

	18-34	35-59	60+	Men	Women
1. Worse	45%	48%	36%	41%	49%
2. No difference	33%	25%	28%	26%	29%
3. Better	9%	20%	24%	22%	10%
4. Neither	14%	8%	12%	11%	12%
NSM (Better-Worse)	*-36*	*-28*	*-12*	*-19*	*-39*

BY FAMILIARITY WITH RETURNEES (percent column total)

	Me	I know many	I know some	I know none
1. Worse	39%	40%	46%	50%
2. No difference	24%	31%	31%	25%
3. Better	36%	16%	8%	15%
4. Neither	2%	13%	15%	10%
NSM (Better-Worse)	*-3*	*-24*	*-38*	*-35*

BY LOCATION OF SURVEY: REGION AND CLASS (percent column total)

	Urban	Semi-Urban	Semi-Rural	Upscale	Popular
1. Worse	47%	23%	50%	49%	43%
2. No difference	29%	44%	19%	27%	29%
3. Better	12%	26%	20%	11%	18%
4. Neither	12%	7%	11%	13%	11%
NSM (Better-Worse)	*-35*	*-3*	*-30*	*-38*	*-25*

BY MEXICAN STATE (percent column total)

	Jalisco	SLP	Michoacán	Sonora
1. Worse	48%	38%	55%	25%
2. No difference	26%	33%	17%	45%
3. Better	14%	21%	16%	24%
4. Neither	12%	8%	12%	7%
NSM (Better-Worse)	*-34*	*-17*	*-39*	*-1*

Q8. Imagine making a new friend in Mexico. Would having lived in the United States be a quality you consider positive in this new friend?

ALL RESPONDENTS: PERCENT COLUMN TOTAL AND RESPONSE COUNTS

	Percent Total	Counts
1. Yes, positive	41%	193
2. Not really	22%	103
3. No, negative	12%	59
4. Irrelevant	25%	121
NSM (Yes-No)	*29*	

BY AGE AND GENDER (percent column total)

	18-34	35-59	60+	Men	Women
1. Yes, positive	41%	42%	35%	48%	33%
2. Not really	28%	18%	16%	21%	23%
3. No, negative	7%	13%	25%	12%	13%
4. Irrelevant	24%	28%	25%	20%	31%
NSM (Yes-No)	*34*	*29*	*10*	*36*	*20*

BY FAMILIARITY WITH RETURNEES (percent column total)

	Me	I know many	I know some	I know none
1. Yes, positive	55%	48%	35%	31%
2. Not really	12%	15%	24%	30%
3. No, negative	15%	13%	12%	11%
4. Irrelevant	18%	24%	28%	27%
NSM (Yes-No)	*40*	*35*	*23*	*20*

BY LOCATION OF SURVEY: REGION AND CLASS (percent column total)

	Urban	Semi-Urban	Semi-Rural	Upscale	Popular
1. Yes, positive	41%	33%	45%	40%	41%
2. Not really	27%	26%	9%	29%	19%
3. No, negative	10%	8%	20%	7%	14%
4. Irrelevant	23%	34%	26%	24%	26%
NSM (Yes-No)	*31*	*25*	*25*	*33*	*27*

BY MEXICAN STATE (percent column total)

	Jalisco	SLP	Michoacán	Sonora
1. Yes, positive	41%	33%	54%	28%
2. Not really	24%	8%	13%	26%
3. No, negative	12%	8%	17%	9%
4. Irrelevant	23%	50%	16%	37%
NSM (Yes-No)	*29*	*25*	*37*	*19*

Q9. If you had the opportunity to go work in the United States right now, would you take it? If so, how long would you stay in the United States?

ALL RESPONDENTS: PERCENT COLUMN TOTAL AND RESPONSE COUNTS

	Percent Total	Counts
1. Not go	53%	253
2. Little while	23%	109
3. Long while	12%	58
4. Forever	7%	33
5. Don't know	5%	23

BY AGE AND GENDER (percent column total)

	18-34	35-59	60+	Men	Women
1. Not go	50%	55%	56%	48%	59%
2. Little while	26%	19%	26%	24%	22%
3. Long while	15%	12%	6%	16%	8%
4. Forever	6%	8%	5%	9%	5%
5. Don't know	3%	5%	7%	4%	7%

BY FAMILIARITY WITH RETURNEES (percent column total)

	Me	I know many	I know some	I know none
1. Not go	37%	61%	50%	57%
2. Little while	21%	21%	25%	23%
3. Long while	27%	10%	12%	8%
4. Forever	12%	6%	6%	7%
5. Don't know	3%	2%	8%	5%

BY LOCATION OF SURVEY: REGION AND CLASS (percent column total)

	Urban	Semi-Urban	Semi-Rural	Upscale	Popular
1. Not go	54%	61%	47%	51%	54%
2. Little while	24%	9%	29%	22%	23%
3. Long while	11%	12%	15%	10%	13%
4. Forever	7%	8%	7%	10%	6%
5. Don't know	5%	10%	2%	7%	4%

BY MEXICAN STATE (percent column total)

	Jalisco	SLP	Michoacán	Sonora
1. Not go	53%	50%	50%	58%
2. Little while	27%	21%	24%	9%
3. Long while	11%	13%	16%	12%
4. Forever	6%	8%	9%	9%
5. Don't know	3%	8%	1%	12%

Q10. What is your general feeling about "Gringos" (Americans)?

ALL RESPONDENTS: PERCENT COLUMN TOTAL AND RESPONSE COUNTS

	Percent Total	Counts
1. Don't like	11%	52
2. Mixed	20%	93
3. Like	39%	186
4. Indifference	31%	145
NSM (Like-Don't)	*28*	

BY AGE AND GENDER (percent column total)

	18-34	35-59	60+	Men	Women
1. Don't like	10%	7%	24%	11%	11%
2. Mixed	19%	22%	16%	17%	23%
3. Like	31%	47%	37%	45%	31%
4. Indifference	40%	25%	24%	27%	35%
NSM (Like-Don't)	*21*	*40*	*13*	*34*	*20*

BY FAMILIARITY WITH RETURNEES (percent column total)

	Me	I know many	I know some	I know none
1. Don't like	10%	10%	10%	13%
2. Mixed	6%	19%	22%	24%
3. Like	70%	43%	33%	25%
4. Indifference	13%	27%	35%	39%
NSM (Like-Don't)	*60*	*33*	*23*	*12*

BY LOCATION OF SURVEY: REGION AND CLASS (percent column total)

	Urban	Semi-Urban	Semi-Rural	Upscale	Popular
1. Don't them	10%	3%	17%	10%	11%
2. Mixed	23%	21%	13%	19%	20%
3. Like	34%	34%	53%	28%	43%
4. Indifference	34%	43%	17%	43%	26%
NSM (Like-Don't)	*24*	*31*	*37*	*18*	*32*

BY MEXICAN STATE (percent column total)

	Jalisco	SLP	Michoacán	Sonora
1. Don't like	11%	4%	20%	4%
2. Mixed	20%	33%	9%	24%
3. Like	40%	25%	50%	32%
4. Indifference	29%	38%	21%	41%
NSM (Like-Don't)	*29*	*21*	*30*	*28*

Q11. Do these feelings about "Gringos" influence the way you feel about Mexicans who have lived in the United States for a considerable portion of their lives?

ALL RESPONDENTS: PERCENT COLUMN TOTAL AND RESPONSE COUNTS

	Percent Total	Counts
1. Yes, same	39%	186
2. Prefer migrants	25%	120
3. Prefer Gringos	13%	62
4. Irrelevant	23%	108
NSM (Migrant-Gringo)	*12*	

BY AGE AND GENDER (percent column total)

	18-34	35-59	60+	Men	Women
1. Yes, same	40%	40%	35%	41%	36%
2. Prefer migrants	32%	21%	21%	24%	28%
3. Prefer Gringos	11%	10%	25%	17%	8%
4. Irrelevant	17%	29%	20%	18%	28%
NSM (Migrant-Gringo)	*21*	*11*	*-4*	*7*	*20*

BY FAMILIARITY WITH RETURNEES (percent column total)

	Me	I know many	I know some	I know none
1. Yes, same	49%	39%	31%	44%
2. Prefer migrants	19%	25%	28%	25%
3. Prefer Gringos	27%	13%	10%	9%
4. Irrelevant	5%	23%	31%	22%
NSM (Migrant-Gringo)	*-8*	*12*	*18*	*16*

BY LOCATION OF SURVEY: REGION AND CLASS (percent column total)

	Urban	Semi-Urban	Semi-Rural	Upscale	Popular
1. Yes, same	32%	49%	48%	27%	43%
2. Prefer migrants	29%	12%	26%	29%	24%
3. Prefer Gringos	14%	16%	11%	11%	14%
4. Irrelevant	26%	23%	16%	33%	19%
NSM (Migrant-Gringo)	*15*	*-4*	*15*	*18*	*10*

BY MEXICAN STATE (percent column total)

	Jalisco	SLP	Michoacán	Sonora
1. Yes, same	38%	33%	46%	39%
2. Prefer migrants	30%	13%	26%	13%
3. Prefer Gringos	14%	8%	11%	13%
4. Irrelevant	19%	46%	17%	35%
NSM (Migrant-Gringo)	*16*	*5*	*15*	*0*

SURVEY TOTALS: COUNTS AND PERCENTAGES

AGE AND GENDER

	18-34	35-59	60+	Men	Women
Counts	191	204	81	258	214
Percent Row Total	40%	43%	17%	54%	45%

FAMILIARITY WITH RETURNEES

	Me	I know many	I know some	I know none
Counts	67	136	156	117
Percent Row Tota	14%	29%	33%	26%

LOCATION OF SURVEY: REGION AND CLASS

	Urban	Semi-Urban	Semi-Rural	Upscale	Popular
Counts	266	77	133	126	350
Percent Row Total	56%	28%	16%	26%	74%

MEXICAN STATE

	Jalisco	SLP	Michoacán	Sonora
Counts	291	24	76	85
Percent Row Total	61%	5%	16%	18%

APPENDIX: RESEARCH MAP