

The Changing Geography of Mexican Immigration to the United States: 1910–1996*

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Objective. We seek to describe trends in the geographic destination of Mexican immigrants to the United States. *Methods.* Using the Integrated Public Use Microdata Samples for 1910–90 and the 1996 Current Population Survey, we tabulate the distribution of all foreign-born Mexicans and recent Mexican immigrants (those arriving in the prior five years) by state and metropolitan area. *Results.* We find that early in the century, Mexicans went primarily to Texas, but after 1910, California emerged as a growing pole of attraction. California continued to gain at the expense of Texas through the 1920s and 1930s, but it did not surpass Texas until the Bracero Program of 1942–1964. Following the demise of this program, California came to dominate all other destinations; but since 1990, Mexican immigration has shifted away from it toward new states that never before have received significant numbers of Mexicans. *Conclusions.* During the 1990s, Mexican immigration was transformed from a regional to a national phenomenon. By 1996, nearly a third of new arrivals were going to places other than the five traditional gateway states, which historically have absorbed 90% of all Mexican immigrants.

Mexican immigration has never been spread evenly among the fifty United States. Historically, a few key states, mostly in the Southwest, have attracted a large majority of immigrants from Mexico. This pattern of regional concentration is partly a matter of geography, of course, as the four states that border Mexico (California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas) naturally assume greater importance than others; but even among border states, geography isn't everything, as some states consistently outdraw others; and one nonborder state—Illinois—has for many years been an important destination. In addition to simple geography, the rhythms of

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economic growth and the evolution of U.S. policy also play significant roles.

In this paper we undertake a descriptive analysis of the changing geography of Mexican immigration to the United States using representative census and survey data. Beginning early this century and continuing up to the present, we focus on four key historical junctures: the *classic era* of open immigration before the restrictive policies of the 1920s; the *Bracero era* of 1942 to 1964, when the U.S. sponsored a large temporary worker program; the *era of undocumented migration*, spanning the time between the end of the Bracero Program and the passage of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA); and the *post-IRCA era* from 1987 to the present, during which time the U.S. government has sought to suppress undocumented migration through increasingly repressive actions. For each period we interpret changing geographic patterns by linking them to policies and economic conditions in both the United States and Mexico.

Data and Methods

Our analysis relies on two basic data sources. The first is the Integrated Public Use Microdata Samples (IPUMS), a machine-readable file of public use samples of individual records from the U.S. Censuses of 1900–1920 and 1940–1990, prepared by Ruggles and Sobek (1997). These data are publicly available from the world wide web (<http://www.ipums.umn.edu>). For each census year, we selected records for all persons born in Mexico. The number of such records was too small in 1900 to sustain reliable analysis, so we dropped that year from consideration, yielding an IPUMS-based data set from 1910 to 1990, excluding the Census of 1930 (its manuscripts have not yet been released into the public domain).

Our second source of data is the March supplement of the 1996 Current Population Survey (CPS), which included a question on place of birth as part of its demographic module. The CPS is a representative household survey of the noninstitutionalized civilian population of the United States. Because we anticipated significant shifts in Mexican immigration as a result of economic and political changes during the 1990s, and given that the census occurs only once per decade, we sought to use the CPS to capture late-breaking developments. As with the IPUMS, we selected all persons born in Mexico to capture roughly the population of Mexican immigrants.

For the period 1910 to 1960, we tabulated foreign-born Mexicans by state of U.S. residence to view the overall geographic distribution of immigration during the classic and Bracero eras. For the period 1970 to 1996, we also present these distributions; but because the geographic distribution of all immigrants in any year is heavily influenced by the behavior of those in the past, we developed an alternative set of tabulations for *recent* immigrants who entered the United States during the five years prior to the

census or survey. Finally, we considered trends in the distribution of Mexican immigrants by metropolitan area since 1990.

For all geographic distributions, we compute Theil's (1972) entropy index to summarize the diversity of destinations (henceforth simply called the diversity index):

$$E = \frac{-\sum_{i=1}^n p_i \log(p_i)}{\log(n)} \times 100, \tag{1}$$

where n is the number of categories (e.g., states) and p_i is the proportion of people in category i (e.g., state i). The index varies between 0 and 100. Minimum diversity occurs when all people are concentrated in one category and maximum diversity occurs when each category contains exactly the same number of people (see White, 1986).

Immigration in the Classic Era

Table 1 presents the distribution of foreign-born Mexicans by state of residence in two historical epochs: the classic era of open immigration (based on the censuses of 1910 and 1920) and the subsequent Bracero era of U.S.-sponsored labor migration (drawing on the censuses of 1940, 1950, and 1960).

The top panel shows the distribution of immigrants among gateway states. As can be seen, during the classic era about half of all Mexican immigrants were in Texas, with the percentage falling slightly between 1910 and 1920 (going from 55% to 50%). The next closest state is California, which increased from 17% to 22% over the decade, followed by Arizona, which stayed relatively stable between the two census dates (increasing just two points, from 12% to 14%). A small but declining number of Mexican immigrants resided in New Mexico (making up just 3% of the total in 1920). Illinois had not yet emerged as a significant destination for Mexican immigration, accounting for less than 1% of all Mexican immigrants at both points in time.

During the classic era, therefore, Mexican immigrants flowed primarily to Texas, California, and Arizona. Together, these states absorbed roughly 85% of all Mexico-U.S. migrants, with just 11% going to nongateway states. The distribution of immigrants among the six categories clearly moved toward greater diversity between 1910 and 1920, however, as relative numbers in Texas dropped while those in Arizona and California increased, yielding a more even distribution and a slight increase in the diversity index from 72 to 75.

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Mexico experienced a period of political peace and sustained economic expansion under

TABLE 1
Distribution of Mexican Immigrants by State of Residence: 1910–1960

| State | Classic Era | | Bracero Era | | |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | 1910 (%) | 1920 (%) | 1940 (%) | 1950 (%) | 1960 (%) |
| All Immigrants | | | | | |
| Gateway states | | | | | |
| Arizona | 11.8 | 14.1 | 7.2 | 6.7 | 6.3 |
| California | 16.9 | 21.6 | 35.6 | 34.0 | 41.9 |
| Illinois | 0.3 | 0.8 | 2.5 | 2.6 | 4.8 |
| New Mexico | 4.5 | 3.2 | 4.2 | 2.1 | 1.8 |
| Texas | 55.2 | 49.9 | 39.5 | 44.5 | 35.9 |
| Other States | 11.2 | 10.5 | 11.1 | 10.2 | 9.4 |
| Diversity index | 71.6 | 74.8 | 77.8 | 73.5 | 75.2 |
| Sample <i>n</i> | 947 | 2,380 | 4,178 | 6,818 | 5,838 |
| Immigrants in Nongateway States | | | | | |
| Colorado | 9.4 | 29.2 | 15.8 | 11.2 | 11.2 |
| Florida | 5.7 | 0.4 | 0.4 | 2.0 | 2.0 |
| Georgia | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.4 | 0.0 | 0.2 |
| Idaho | 0.0 | 0.8 | 1.1 | 1.2 | 0.9 |
| Indiana | 0.0 | 0.0 | 4.5 | 6.5 | 8.8 |
| Iowa | 1.9 | 2.0 | 3.9 | 4.6 | 2.0 |
| Kansas | 63.2 | 24.4 | 18.6 | 12.0 | 5.7 |
| Michigan | 0.0 | 0.8 | 6.3 | 14.4 | 10.3 |
| Minnesota | 0.0 | 1.6 | 3.2 | 1.9 | 1.5 |
| Missouri | 6.6 | 2.4 | 3.0 | 2.3 | 3.9 |
| Nevada | 0.9 | 2.4 | 1.3 | 1.3 | 1.8 |
| New Jersey | 0.9 | 0.4 | 0.9 | 1.3 | 1.5 |
| New York | 2.8 | 8.0 | 9.1 | 5.8 | 13.0 |
| North Carolina | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.4 | 0.0 | 0.4 |
| Oklahoma | 4.7 | 5.6 | 2.2 | 1.9 | 1.7 |
| Oregon | 1.9 | 1.2 | 1.5 | 0.7 | 0.9 |
| Pennsylvania | 0.0 | 1.6 | 1.7 | 3.2 | 2.9 |
| Utah | 0.0 | 5.2 | 3.2 | 3.6 | 2.8 |
| Washington | 0.0 | 2.4 | 0.4 | 3.2 | 11.5 |
| Other | 2.0 | 11.6 | 22.1 | 22.9 | 17.0 |
| Diversity index | 47.1 | 70.9 | 79.3 | 82.0 | 84.9 |
| Sample <i>n</i> | 106 | 250 | 463 | 694 | 546 |

SOURCE: 1910–1960 Integrated Public Use Microdata Samples.

President Porfirio Díaz (1876–1910). Under his firm rule, Mexico acquired a nationwide rail system, a nascent industrial base, growing urban centers, and a new economic structure based on export agriculture and extraction, financed mainly by foreign interests (see Hart, 1987; Haber, 1989). The Porfirian boom was accompanied by the consolidation of rural landhold-

ing, the substitution of cash for staple crops, and the widespread implementation of capital-intensive agriculture. These developments produced massive labor displacements and strong pressure for emigration from rural areas, forces that were exacerbated by the collapse of the Porfirian regime in 1910 and the inauguration of ten years of civil war (Cardoso, 1980; Hart, 1987).

In the western United States, meanwhile, the arrival of the railroads connected agricultural and mining areas in the Southwest to booming industrial cities in the Northeast and Midwest, yielding sustained economic growth and a rapid expansion in labor demand. As the demand for workers grew, traditional sources were progressively closed off, first by the Chinese Exclusion Acts of the 1880s and then by the Gentlemen's Agreement with Japan in 1907 (Keely, 1979). In response, U.S. railroads, agricultural growers, and mining companies began recruiting Mexican workers.

The integration of the Mexican and U.S. rail systems (financed by the same American interests) provided the link to connect labor supply with demand, and recruiters followed the tracks into Mexico to initiate the first waves of migration to the United States (Cardoso, 1980). By the 1920s, the flows became a "flood tide" as first World War I, then the creation of the Soviet Union, and finally the imposition of restrictive quotas cut industrialists off from traditional European labor sources (Massey, 1996).

The effects of these macrolevel forces are evident in the shifting distribution of Mexican immigrants between 1910 and 1920. Texas was the state most closely tied to Porfirian economic development (Hart, 1987); but by 1920, California had emerged as the new economic power in the West, and Los Angeles, rather than San Antonio, had become the principal center of Mexican settlement north of the border. Thus, we observe an increasing percentage of immigrants located in California accompanied by a decreasing percentage in Texas between 1910 and 1920.

Although small sample sizes in nongateway states caution against drawing strong conclusions, we see that other salient destinations early in the century were Colorado and Kansas, both containing important rail junctions and industrial centers (Kansas City and Denver), reflecting the growing importance of Mexicans as rail and factory workers (Cardoso, 1980).

The Geography of Bracero Migration

The last three columns of Table 1 show the geographic distribution of Mexicans at points before, during, and just after the peak of the Bracero Program in the 1950s. Following the surge of Mexican immigration during the 1920s, the onset of the Great Depression triggered a wave of mass deportations and the population of foreign-born Mexicans actually fell

during the 1930s (Hoffman, 1974). By 1942, however, tight wartime labor markets had replaced the joblessness of the late Depression and the United States once again turned to Mexico for workers, negotiating an agreement known as the Bracero Accords to arrange the annual importation of Mexican farmworkers under supervision of the U.S. government (Craig, 1971). Although enacted as a "temporary" wartime measure, it was successively renewed and expanded for twenty-two years before finally being terminated in 1964 (Calavita, 1992).

The Bracero years coincided with an unprecedented boom in California that dramatically increased labor demand in all economic sectors. Within Mexico, meanwhile, post-Revolutionary governments distributed millions of hectares of land to peasants but failed to provide sufficient capital to allow them to begin producing, generating intense needs for cash among rural dwellers (Massey et al., 1987). The Mexican policy of Import Substitution Industrialization yielded high rates of industrial growth in urban areas, but failed to provide enough jobs for the rising tide of rural in-migrants. With pressures for out-migration building and a program in place to connect the burgeoning supply with rising demand, Mexicans quickly came to dominate farm labor within California and made significant inroads into manufacturing and service industries as well.

The geographic distribution of Mexican immigrants in 1940 illustrates the effect of forces in play ten years earlier, at the onset of the Great Depression. Given the emigration of Mexicans during the 1930s and the absence of new arrivals in the interim, the geographic distribution prevailing in the late 1920s was essentially frozen in time. Although California represented a major locus of settlement on the eve of the Bracero Program, containing just over a third of all Mexican immigrants in 1940, it was still second to Texas, which contained 40%. But during the 1920s and 1930s, Illinois had also emerged as a gateway state, although still containing only a small share of all Mexican immigrants (2.5%). Compared with 1920, Arizona declined substantially in importance (to 7%) while New Mexico and the "other" category stayed roughly the same. Given the increase in the share of Mexicans in California and the decrease in Texas, the diversity index rose to nearly 78.

The geographic profile of Mexican immigration changed little between 1940 and 1950. Texas briefly reasserted its dominance as an immigrant destination, increasing its share from 40% to 45% and lowering the diversity index to 74. California remained roughly constant at 34%, and the share attributable to Arizona, Illinois, and other states stabilized. The real change is observed between 1950 and 1960, dates which bracket the largest expansion of the Bracero Program. As late as 1950, only 67,000 braceros were imported into the United States, but during the late 1950s the number never fell below 400,000 (Calavita, 1992). A disproportionate

share of these migrants were sent to growers in California, and by 1960 that state had surpassed Texas as home to the largest concentration of Mexican immigrants. Between 1950 to 1960, while the percentage of Mexicans in Texas fell sharply from 45% to 36%, the relative number in California rose from 34% to 42%. At the same time, the percentage located in Arizona, New Mexico, and other states declined. The era of Californian dominance had begun.

Besides California, only Illinois grew as a destination for Mexican immigrants during the 1950s, and by 1960 roughly 5% of all Mexican immigrants were located in that state. Nearly all of these migrants went to Chicago, but figures for Illinois alone understate this urban area's importance as an immigrant destination. As the bottom panel of Table 1 shows, over the period 1940 to 1960, Indiana also increased its salience among nongateway states. The vast majority of these immigrants settled in Chicago suburbs such as East Chicago, Hammond, and Gary, where they worked in the steel mills and factories (see Taylor, 1932). When Mexican immigrants to Indiana are added to those in Illinois, the total reaches about 6% in 1960.

From 1940 to 1960, the states of Colorado and Kansas, which had been of some importance for Mexican immigrants in the classic era, faded into obscurity as points of destination. At the same time, Mexican immigration to industrialized states such as Michigan and New York rose, as did the relative importance of Washington, where Mexicans constituted the backbone of its fruit-picking workforce. Among nongateway states, the long-term trend since 1910 has been one of increasing diversity, with the index rising from 47 in 1910 to 85 in 1960. Against this backdrop of diversification among secondary destinations, however, the lasting legacy of the Bracero era was a growing concentration of Mexican immigrants in California.

Immigration during the Undocumented Era

The first two columns of Table 2 show the geographic distribution of Mexican immigrants in the years immediately following the Bracero Program, a period characterized by rapid expansion in Mexican immigration through both legal and illegal channels, but especially the latter (illegal migrants are, of course, undercounted in the census figures we employ). Although the U.S. economy faltered during the 1970s, the demand for unskilled labor continued unabated, and Mexicans expanded their presence in economic niches where they had already established themselves during the Bracero era. In Mexico, the discovery of vast oil reserves set off an economic boom that intensified the desire for income, capital, and security available through U.S. migration.

TABLE 2

Distribution of Mexican Immigrants by State of Residence: 1970–1996

| State | Pre-IRCA Era | | Post-IRCA Era | |
|--|--------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|
| | 1970 (%) | 1980 (%) | 1990 (%) | 1996 (%) |
| All Immigrants | | | | |
| Gateway States | | | | |
| Arizona | 4.5 | 3.3 | 3.4 | 4.9 |
| California | 52.7 | 57.0 | 57.8 | 46.6 |
| Illinois | 6.2 | 7.7 | 5.2 | 6.6 |
| New Mexico | 0.8 | 0.8 | 1.9 | 4.1 |
| Texas | 26.5 | 22.6 | 22.1 | 16.7 |
| Other States | 9.4 | 8.5 | 10.3 | 21.0 |
| Diversity index | 70.5 | 67.8 | 68.6 | 80.4 |
| Sample <i>n</i> | 33,757 | 22,492 | 43,116 | 4,293 |
| Immigrants in Nongateway States | | | | |
| Colorado | 6.1 | 7.9 | 8.5 | 6.4 |
| Florida | 3.8 | 7.6 | 14.7 | 10.4 |
| Georgia | 0.6 | 0.4 | 4.4 | 2.7 |
| Idaho | 1.1 | 4.0 | 3.2 | 7.6 |
| Indiana | 6.9 | 6.0 | 1.3 | 0.7 |
| Iowa | 1.2 | 0.9 | 0.5 | 1.2 |
| Kansas | 4.1 | 3.0 | 3.0 | 1.4 |
| Michigan | 10.5 | 4.9 | 2.7 | 1.3 |
| Minnesota | 1.2 | 1.0 | 0.6 | 2.5 |
| Missouri | 2.4 | 0.9 | 1.0 | 0.7 |
| Nevada | 2.0 | 5.1 | 8.3 | 12.8 |
| New Jersey | 1.6 | 1.3 | 2.3 | 3.8 |
| New York | 7.3 | 6.3 | 8.1 | 9.0 |
| North Carolina | 0.5 | 0.6 | 1.7 | 3.3 |
| Oklahoma | 1.6 | 3.7 | 3.3 | 2.0 |
| Oregon | 2.2 | 5.5 | 7.6 | 6.9 |
| Pennsylvania | 2.1 | 1.6 | 1.0 | 0.3 |
| Utah | 2.4 | 2.4 | 2.8 | 8.1 |
| Washington | 3.0 | 8.9 | 11.0 | 4.3 |
| Other | 39.4 | 28.0 | 14.0 | 14.6 |
| Diversity index | 76.0 | 84.2 | 88.8 | 88.5 |
| Sample <i>n</i> | 3,156 | 1,916 | 4,425 | 905 |

SOURCE: 1910–1960 Integrated Public Use Microdata Samples.

From 1970 to 1980, California continued to grow in importance as a destination for Mexican immigration. By 1970, a clear majority (53%) of foreign-born Mexicans were located in this state, and by 1980 the total reached 57%. With the exception of Illinois, which rose from 6% to 8%, the percentage of Mexican immigrants in all other states fell, with Texas

leading the way. As a result of California's growing dominance, the index of diversity among gateway states fell from 75 in 1960 to 71 in 1970 and reached 67 in 1980. At the same time, the percentage of Mexican immigrants in nongateway states fell, although the variety of destinations grew, with the diversity index climbing from 76 in 1970 to 84 in 1980.

Geographic Changes in the Wake of IRCA

During the era of undocumented migration that prevailed before the passage of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, the clear trend in Mexican immigration was one of growing concentration in California, accompanied by a progressive diversification of immigrant destinations among all other states. Although IRCA passed in late 1986, its various programs and provisions were gradually implemented in the period 1987 through 1989, so trends through the 1980s primarily reflect the pre-IRCA pattern of growing concentration in California and increasing diversification everywhere else. The percentage of foreign-born Mexicans in California peaked at 58% in 1990, while the share in Texas bottomed out at 22%; the share in other states rose very slightly (see the third column of Table 2). Among nongateway states, the diversity index reached a high of 89 in 1990.

The full effects of the new regime of immigration were not felt until after 1990, when IRCA's legalization program was completed and its employer sanctions fully implemented. As a result of IRCA's general amnesty and a special legalization program enacted for farmworkers, some 2.3 million Mexicans acquired legal documents between 1987 and 1990 (U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, 1991). Roughly 55% of those legalized lived in California, and 40% were in the southern portion of the state (in Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, or San Diego counties).

This massive legalization had two immediate consequences for Mexican immigrants in California: first, it flooded local labor markets (particularly those around Los Angeles) with newly legalized immigrants; and second, it gave the latter new freedom to move. Whereas illegal migrants generally seek to find and hold a steady job, avoiding mobility to minimize the risk of detection, newly legalized immigrants suddenly had full U.S. labor rights and lost their fear of arrest. Not only did they have the freedom to move, other changes provided them with strong incentives to do so, for the legalization occurred against a backdrop of new employer sanctions, deteriorating economic conditions, and growing hostility toward immigrants in California.

IRCA for the first time made it illegal for employers to hire undocumented workers, imposing both civil and criminal penalties against those who did. In response, employers shifted to labor subcontractors to satisfy their needs (Martin and Taylor, 1991). Subcontractors are typically

citizens or legal immigrants who sign a contract with an employer to provide a specific number of workers, for a specified period of time, to engage in a particular task, at a set fee per worker. By working through a subcontractor, employers avoid the risk of prosecution under IRCA and escape the law's burdensome paperwork requirements. In return for absorbing these risks and burdens, the subcontractors keep a share of the migrants' earnings, thus lowering the wages of the immigrants themselves (Phillips and Massey, 1999). Since enforcement was targeted to sectors known to employ undocumented migrants, the effects of restructuring were naturally greatest in California.

IRCA also increased the budget of the U.S. Border Patrol, which in response launched a series of repressive crackdowns at the nation's two busiest sectors—San Diego and El Paso (Dunn, 1996; Andreas, 1998). As a result, flows of undocumented migrants arriving at the Mexico-U.S. border were diverted away from California and Texas toward less intensively patrolled regions in Arizona and New Mexico.

Just as employer sanctions were putting downward pressure on wages in California's labor markets, moreover, that state experienced a severe economic recession as a result of cutbacks in defense industries stemming from the end of the Cold War. As unemployment rose and wages stagnated, public sentiment turned sharply against immigrants. The anti-immigrant movement culminated in 1994 with the passage of Proposition 187. Passed with massive support from alienated natives, the referendum sought to bar undocumented migrants from receiving publicly provided health, education, and welfare services.

Thus the early 1990s witnessed an unusual coincidence of conditions in California: an IRCA-induced restructuring of immigrant employment toward subcontracting, declining net wages for immigrants, a severe recession and high unemployment, growing native hostility, and greater wage competition triggered by a flood of newly legalized immigrants entering local labor markets. All of these changes occurred precisely at a point in time when vast numbers of former undocumented migrants had acquired new geographic mobility thanks to the IRCA-authorized legalization.

On the heels of these changed circumstances north of the border, Mexico entered a profound economic crisis in December 1994, when a bungled peso devaluation led to a recession that not only created a need for greater income among poor families in traditional immigrant-sending states, but also fostered new needs for capital, credit, and security among middle-class households in states that heretofore had not sent many migrants to the United States. As new migrants entered the binational labor market, they naturally sought to avoid the difficult and radically changed circumstances in California.

The end result was a rapid shift of Mexican immigrants away from California toward nontraditional destinations. The changed geography is

clearly observed between 1990 and 1996. In just six short years, the percentage of Mexican immigrants located in California dropped 11 percentage points—from 58% to 47%. At the same time, the percentage in Texas continued to fall, reaching an all-time low of 17% in 1996. In contrast, the relative number of Mexicans rose in virtually all other states. The percentage of Mexicans in Arizona rose from 3% to 5%; in Illinois, from 5% to 7%; in New Mexico, from 2% to 4%.

Most important, the share located in nongateway states more than doubled over the period, reaching the highest percentage in the history of Mexico-U.S. migration: 21%. After three decades of declining diversity, the variety of destinations increased dramatically in the early 1990s, with the diversity index going from 69 to 80 in just a few years. Looking at long-term increases among nongateway states since 1970, it is clear that new centers of attraction are emerging in Florida, Idaho, Nevada, New York–New Jersey, Utah, and elsewhere.

Because the geographic distribution of immigrants at any point in time is heavily conditioned by where earlier cohorts of immigrants decided to settle, Table 3 replicates the geographic analysis of Table 2, selecting only Mexican immigrants who arrived in the United States over the prior five years. This table accentuates all of the trends observed earlier and underscores the recency of the geographic transformation. Whereas the large majority (63%) of Mexicans who arrived between 1985 and 1990 went to California, among those who arrived in the 1990s, the percentage dropped dramatically to just 40%. As a consequence, the diversity index increased from 64 to 81.

At the same time, the percentage of immigrants going to nongateway states rises from 13% to 31%, a radical shift unprecedented in the history of Mexico-U.S. migration. By the mid-1990s, nearly one-third of all Mexicans were settling somewhere other than gateway states. Trends since 1950 once again suggest the emergence of Florida, Idaho, Nevada, New York–New Jersey, and Utah as destinations, but also hint at the emergence of Georgia, Minnesota, North Carolina, and Oregon as poles of attraction, in addition to the reemergence of Colorado as a significant receptor. As a result, immigrant destinations are now more diverse than ever.

Table 4 further documents this fact by showing the metropolitan area of residence for Mexican immigrants who arrived in the last half of the 1980s and the first part of the 1990s. Whereas the share going to Los Angeles, San Francisco, and San Diego all fell between the two periods, the relative number going to nearly all other places increased. Thus, the percentage of Mexicans going to Los Angeles fell from 33% to 28%; but the percentage going to Chicago grew from 4% to 6%; to Houston, from 3% to 5%; and to Phoenix, from 2% to 4%. New York stayed roughly constant at 5%. Although Los Angeles continues to dominate as a pole of attraction for Mexican immigrants, its importance appears to be slipping and newer

TABLE 3

Distribution of Recent Immigrants (Those Arriving in Previous Five Years) among Nongateway States: 1970–1996

| State | Pre-IRCA Period | | Post-IRCA Period | |
|---|-----------------|----------|------------------|----------|
| | 1970 (%) | 1980 (%) | 1990 (%) | 1996 (%) |
| All Recent Immigrants | | | | |
| Gateway States | | | | |
| Arizona | 4.4 | 2.6 | 3.7 | 5.2 |
| California | 59.0 | 58.7 | 62.9 | 39.5 |
| Illinois | 8.2 | 8.7 | 4.9 | 6.0 |
| New Mexico | 0.5 | 0.6 | 0.9 | 3.4 |
| Texas | 20.7 | 20.6 | 14.9 | 15.1 |
| Other States | 7.4 | 8.7 | 12.8 | 30.9 |
| Diversity index | 66.9 | 66.3 | 64.2 | 81.1 |
| Sample <i>n</i> | 4,042 | 7,173 | 12,795 | 1,183 |
| Recent Immigrants in Nongateway States | | | | |
| Colorado | 4.0 | 9.3 | 6.5 | 8.2 |
| Florida | 8.4 | 8.8 | 15.7 | 10.4 |
| Georgia | 0.3 | 0.0 | 7.0 | 2.2 |
| Idaho | 0.3 | 5.9 | 3.3 | 5.8 |
| Indiana | 8.4 | 3.4 | 0.6 | 0.0 |
| Iowa | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.1 | 1.4 |
| Kansas | 0.3 | 3.5 | 1.9 | 1.6 |
| Michigan | 5.7 | 2.9 | 1.3 | 0.8 |
| Minnesota | 0.3 | 1.9 | 0.8 | 3.3 |
| Missouri | 0.3 | 0.5 | 1.0 | 0.0 |
| Nevada | 3.0 | 6.5 | 6.6 | 9.0 |
| New Jersey | 3.7 | 1.3 | 3.8 | 1.6 |
| New York | 8.4 | 7.5 | 10.9 | 14.5 |
| North Carolina | 0.7 | 0.5 | 2.4 | 3.3 |
| Oklahoma | 0.3 | 3.8 | 3.0 | 1.6 |
| Oregon | 1.4 | 5.1 | 9.0 | 7.8 |
| Pennsylvania | 2.4 | 2.4 | 1.2 | 0.3 |
| Utah | 1.4 | 2.1 | 2.7 | 8.8 |
| Washington | 1.7 | 10.5 | 10.7 | 4.9 |
| Other | 48.7 | 23.8 | 11.5 | 14.5 |
| Diversity index | 64.4 | 84.6 | 87.3 | 85.7 |
| Sample <i>n</i> | 297 | 627 | 1,643 | 365 |

SOURCES: 1970–1990 Integrated Public Use Microdata Samples; 1996 Current Population Survey.

metropolitan areas are coming to the fore. Although space limitations preclude us from presenting the data, our tabulations (sent upon request) suggest that this shift away from traditional destinations was not led by a random cross section of Mexican immigrants, but by a particular subset of migrants composed predominantly of working-age men working dispro-

TABLE 4

Distribution of Recent Mexican Immigrants (Those Arriving in Previous Five Years) by Metropolitan Area of Residence: 1990 and 1996

| Metropolitan Area | Recent Mexican Immigrants | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------|
| | 1990 (%) | 1996 (%) |
| Los Angeles–Riverside–Orange County | 32.9 | 27.9 |
| Chicago–Gary–Kenosha | 4.3 | 6.0 |
| New York–Northern New Jersey | 4.9 | 5.3 |
| Houston–Galveston | 3.2 | 4.6 |
| Phoenix | 2.0 | 4.3 |
| Dallas–Fort Worth | 1.6 | 2.5 |
| Las Vegas | 0.5 | 2.4 |
| Denver–Boulder–Golden | 0.5 | 1.8 |
| McAllen–Edinburg | 1.3 | 1.8 |
| Salinas–Seaside–Monterrey | 0.8 | 1.8 |
| Fresno | 1.4 | 1.7 |
| Albuquerque | 0.2 | 1.7 |
| San Diego | 4.4 | 1.7 |
| San Francisco–Oakland–San Jose | 3.0 | 1.5 |
| Brownsville–Harlingen | 1.0 | 1.5 |
| Bakersfield | 0.9 | 1.4 |
| El Paso | 1.8 | 1.3 |
| Minneapolis | 0.1 | 1.0 |
| Visalia–Tulare | 1.1 | 1.4 |
| Other metro area | 23.2 | 17.6 |
| Diversity index | 63.8 | 74.0 |
| Non-metro area | 10.9 | 10.8 |

SOURCES: 1990 Integrated Public Use Microdata Samples; 1996 Current Population Survey.

portionately in agriculture, who by 1996 were already shifting rapidly into urban jobs where they were joined by growing numbers of women and children.

Conclusions

Our analysis of changing geographic patterns of Mexican immigration from 1910 to 1996 suggests several long-run trends linked to developments in the binational political economy. Early in the century, Mexican immigration was strongly oriented toward Texas, which had stronger financial and material interests in Porfirian Mexico than did other U.S. states. As late as 1920, half of all Mexicans living in the United States were in Texas. The unraveling of the Porfirian regime after 1910 coincided with a heightened demand for Mexican workers elsewhere in the United States, and as Mexican immigration surged, destinations shifted, with California and, to a lesser extent, Chicago, emerging as alternative poles of attraction.

This epoch came to an abrupt end in 1929 with the onset of the Great Depression.

The creation of the Bracero Program in 1942 and its massive expansion during the 1950s dramatically altered the geographic profile of immigration to the United States. As Texas faded in relative importance, California moved ahead to become the preeminent destination. By 1960, 42% of all Mexican immigrants lived in California, 36% were in Texas, and 6% were in Illinois or northwest Indiana. The termination of the Bracero Program in 1964 ushered in an era of extensive undocumented migration, during which time California increasingly came to dominate among U.S. destinations. By 1990, California alone housed 57% of all Mexican immigrants, whereas Texas contained only 23% and Illinois around 8% (10% including migrants in northwestern Indiana). By the end of the 1980s, therefore, the diversity of Mexican immigrants' destinations reached an all-time low.

The Immigration Reform and Control Act broke with the past to establish a new regime of binational migration. The implementation of the act's tough new enforcement provisions coincided with a severe recession in California, and the net result was an unprecedented deflection of Mexican immigration away from that state toward new destinations that heretofore had received few Mexicans. Among those arriving over the five years prior to 1990 and 1996, the percentage going to California fell from 63% to 40%.

The new states of destination include Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Minnesota, Nevada, New York, New Jersey, North Carolina, Oregon, and Utah. The movement of Mexicans away from California and Texas was led by young single men of labor-force age who worked in agriculture, but by the mid-1990s they had already begun moving into urban employment where they were joined by growing numbers of women. While the percentage of Mexican immigrants going to large metropolitan areas in California (Los Angeles, San Diego, and San Francisco) fell during the early 1990s, the number going to New York, Houston, Phoenix, Dallas, Las Vegas, and Minneapolis rose and the diversity of immigrant destinations reached new highs. Thus, in a few short years Mexican immigration has been transformed from a narrowly focused process affecting just three states into a nationwide movement with diffuse effects spread throughout the country.

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