

International Migration and Familial Change in Communities of Origin: Transformation and Resistance*

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Keywords

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Abstract

This article reviews recent anthropological and sociological findings and discussions surrounding the possible impacts of international migration on family dynamics in the home—both for rural and indigenous people—in Mexico. Because one of the major changes has to do with the escalation of female migration, as well as the circumstances facing those women who stay behind, this article emphasizes the position of women in the realm of international migration from a gendered perspective.

INTRODUCTION

Starting in the 1990s, social scientists began to pay attention to the possible impacts on family life in Mexican households and communities of origin caused by international migratory flows to the United States (Ariza 2007, Hondagneu-Sotelo 2003, Parrado 2004). This article reviews discussions concerning the transformative (or nontransformative) role that migration plays in family dynamics in the home and in communities of origin in Mexico. Because one of the principal changes has to do with female migration, this article emphasizes the situation of migrants from a gendered perspective (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2003, 2007).

This review is supported by ethnographic and sociological studies based on qualitative information (case studies, interviews, life stories, accounts, field notes) and quantitative information (censuses, large and small surveys). An ethnographic approach is especially suitable for capturing the tensions, conflicts, and negotiations between social actors that are indicative of changes in social relations—an aspect that is not made clear by other methodologies (Ariza 2007, Hondagneu-Sotelo 2007, Wolf 1990). However, the information gathered from case studies is so heterogeneous and diverse that it becomes difficult to compare different situations and identify major trends. And even though quantitative studies bring statistic validity to this information, the results are usually obtained from small data universes that do not allow for comparison, generalization, or disaggregated analysis.

The studies that are reviewed pertain to rural societies. This is important for two reasons. The first is that migration between Mexico and the United States continues to be a predominantly rural phenomenon, in terms of both the

historic and new migratory regions (Durand & Massey 2003). The escalation of indigenous migration to the United States, originating primarily from rural communities in states in the south of Mexico, has once again begun to ruralize migration between Mexico and the United States. At the same time, Mexican labor continues to be indispensable to the agricultural sector of the US economy, which maintains the relevance of rural migration (Durand & Massey 2003). Finally, since the 1990s, there has been an explosion of legal recruitment programs for temporary agricultural and packing workers in the United States and Canada, which have been directed specifically at rural communities (Becerril Quintana 2010, Durand & Massey 2003).

The second reason, very much related to the first, is that despite the increase of urban migration to the United States, there are still no studies documenting the changes this causes in urban households. Indeed, there are studies that have been done on rural migration to cities, but the research is focused on domestic migration (Oehmichen Bazán 2005, Robledo Hernández 2009). Recent studies (Lestage 2011, Rivera Sánchez 2008) have begun to document and analyze another phenomenon: migrants in the United States who, upon returning to Mexico, prefer to live in cities or metropolitan spaces. Some results show differences from what has been found in their communities of origin, which may be explained by the characteristics of the urban context into which migrants insert themselves—where maintaining ethnic unity is crucial for the survival of the group (Lestage 2011).

The changes perceived in families in places of origin cannot be attributed entirely to international migration, but instead must be understood in interaction with three other sets of transformations that have affected the characteristics and the dynamics of families: changes in the migration pattern, the agricultural crisis (both in terms of agricultural activities as well as employment in the field), and sociodemographic evolution.

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Mexican migration, which for almost 100 years was characterized as a circular, temporary, work-related, and masculine migratory phenomenon, has been changing since the 1990s to reflect a family-oriented, prolonged, and indefinite migratory pattern with an increased flow of women (Córdova Plaza et al. 2008, Durand & Massey 2003, Massey et al. 2006, World Bank 2011). This is a change that is as recent as it is accelerated (Durand & Massey 2003, Massey et al. 2006, Sana & Massey 2005).

Thus, the most widespread current trend in Mexico is the migration of families and people, both male and female, who remain indefinitely in their places of destination, wherever those may be (Lacy 2007, Sánchez Gómez 2011). Migrants, especially when they are younger, prolong their stay in their destinations, and many have not returned to their communities of origin since leaving. If they do return, it is only for a few months or to “visit the family” (Pauli 2007). Undocumented migrants from the new migratory regions have sometimes gone more than 15 years without being able to return to their communities (Moctezuma Yano 2002). In this sense, the current migratory pattern is characterized by a noncircular tendency and the escalation of female participation in the migratory processes.

In Mexico, rural employment has decreased and job creation has tended toward positions of unskilled labor, with low wages and no access to social security or retirement pensions (García & de Oliveira 2011). The proportion of agricultural income has decreased in rural family economies, and salaried income and resources stemming from migration have increased—in the form of remittances—as well as public subsidies of programs to combat poverty (Arias 2009, Canabal Cristiani 2011). The National Survey of Rural Households in Mexico (ENHRUM by its Spanish acronym) showed that in 2002 the proportion of net income from agriculture and that from remittances were very similar, at 12.40% and 11.01%, respectively. Wages represented more than half of the income of those households, at 54.15% (Mora-Rivera 2012).

Rural parents have ceased to fill the role of providers so that they can become dependents of their children, especially of those children who are international migrants. In poor households, increasing dependency on remittances has undermined the decision-making power and authority of parents (Córdova Plaza 2007).

Furthermore, agricultural land distribution, a triumph of the Mexican Revolution, had allowed successive generations in rural communities the right to some type of property or usufruct, such as parcels for growing crops, plots of land to build houses, and access to communal resources. With the cancellation of land distribution in 1992 and the individual titling of the plots to private landowners, these communities and families have lost the ability and the power to pass on an important resource to future generations. Since the repeal of land distribution, the proportion of young people who do not and will not have access to property has increased, which has in turn decreased the tendency of migrants to return to their communities of origin. Access to land not only provided motivation to return, but was also an important factor in the persistence of traditional family authority held over successive generations (Arias 2009, Durand 2007b).

Households have also been affected by sociodemographic changes in recent decades, including reductions in family size; increases in life expectancy for men and, to a greater extent, for women; aging of the rural population; moderate increases in marriage age; moderate increases in years of schooling, especially for women; increases in female participation in the labor market; a reduction in the fertility rate that has led to a decrease in the number of children per woman; and an increase in the number of households headed by women (García & de Oliveira 2011, González Montes 2007, Herrera Mosquera 2008, Hirsch 2003). This last trend can be attributed to the increase in consensual unions, the increasing instability of unions, differing mortality rates between men and women, male migration, adolescent pregnancy, and domestic violence that drives women to separate from their partners and form

independent households (García & de Oliveira 2011). The separation of partners, the decreasing duration of unions, and the nonformation of unions are increasing phenomena that can be seen in the most remote and traditional rural communities in Mexico.

The convergence of these three sets of factors has changed the framework of traditional family life that was once standard within the home. For example, households used to have many workers, fathers were the providers and the proprietors of important resources to be passed on to future generations (specifically to male children), and women remained at home to tend to reproductive matters such as the raising of children and the care of the elderly (Trigueros & Rodríguez Piña 1988). Today, those households from which migrants leave have fewer people, their elderly live long lives but in precarious economic and health conditions, the duration of unions has decreased, and men and women often work outside of and far away from their communities of origin. The economic participation of women has increased, and they have integrated themselves into distinct and often distant labor markets. Furthermore, these women are ardent job seekers and creators of self-employment (Arias 1994, Dinerman 1982, González Montes 2007, Mummert 1994).

Finally, it should be noted that the perceived changes, although they may seem minor, correspond primarily to poor families in patriarchal societies based on hierarchical relations. The power dynamics that exist—and that are reinforced—in these relations guarantee imbalance and inequality among household members, impacting women especially (Ariza 2007, Hondagneu-Sotelo 2007, Wolf 1990). The home is a key sphere within which gender dynamics and conflicts that shape migratory patterns are played out (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2003, Wolf 1990). In fact, one important topic of discussion in recent years has been the alleged changes that migration has brought about in household gender relations (Ariza 2007, Hondagneu-Sotelo 2007, Parrado et al. 2005). The results are not conclusive. Furthermore,

these changes, as has been shown, may give rise to new restrictions on women (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2007, Menjívar & Agadjanian 2007). The assumption then must be made that the scope of gender relations extends beyond the confines of partner relations, and that gender relations do not operate in a social vacuum. Rather, they occur in social contexts intertwined with patriarchal family relations laden with norms and standards that are defined by inequality among family members (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2007, Parrado et al. 2005, Sierra 2007).

Thus, migrant households with ever dwindling resources are faced with new circumstances that, promoted by the new pattern of migration, have given rise to divergent interests, differing purposes, and diverse mechanisms in the way men and women make personal decisions regarding their individual paths. Often, these decisions involve leaving their communities even when it goes against the will and the interests of their domestic units. A long tradition in anthropological and sociological studies regarding domestic units is based on the assumption that migration, especially that of young people, had become part of the reproductive strategies of rural and indigenous households (Arizpe 1980, Sana & Massey 2005).

From this perspective, migration was not an individual decision but rather an assignment made by the domestic group, which decided who should migrate for the common good (Wolf 1990). Filial obligations were usually stronger in traditional families (Sana & Massey 2005). The migrants agreed to send remittances to their domestic units for three reasons: They expected to return to their communities of origin; they had hereditary property rights to land, houses, or other items; and they felt a sense of altruism or solidarity, implying a voluntary fulfillment of obligations. Traditionally, rural family solidarity was associated with reciprocity, gratuitousness, and equal access (Warman 1980). Aside from the severe criticism that has been made of the family reproductive strategy perspective (Wolf 1990), revised studies show that there have been drastic changes within families—changes that question this

perspective, as well as those assumptions concerning family reproductive strategies and altruism.

PROLONGED ABSENCE

Prolonged migration has had multiple ripple effects on household organization and dynamics. Research has shown that during the indefinite absence of their spouses, women have assumed new tasks and responsibilities: They are left in charge of farming and the raising of animals, as well as the education of their children, and they have become administrators of family property, investors of remittances, and supervisors of the construction of their homes (Cohen 2010, Dinerman 1982, Menjívar & Agadjanian 2007, Mummert 1994, Rosas 2005).

In those countries with a long tradition of low female participation, recognition, and self-determination, these new responsibilities—while entailing more work and worry—have resulted in an increase in female self-esteem, acknowledgment of women's skills and abilities, freedom of movement, economic autonomy and support, and an expansion of female social networks (Menjívar & Agadjanian 2007, Sánchez Gómez 2011, Rosas 2005). However, studies are needed that analyze what happens to these newfound abilities and resources when migrants return home. Some research shows that when husbands return, the traditional household is reestablished because the women face an adverse domestic and communal situation, which makes them restore the status quo as a means of avoiding marital and familial conflicts (Camus 2008, González Montes & Salles 1995). In truth, however, there is a lack of consistent and, above all, recent evidence regarding this matter.

Studies show another change as well: The prolonged absence of husbands has encouraged female migration. Generally, when circular and return male migration was predominant, wives stayed in their communities of origin waiting for those who had left to return (Massey et al. 1987). Because of the long tradition of migration between the United States and Mexico,

migrants are well aware of the family values and norms as well as the gender relations that prevail to the north, such as smaller family sizes, greater female autonomy, and more equitable relationships between spouses (Lindstrom & Giorguli 2002). In Mexico, as a result, there is a widespread rejection of these norms, which are seen as a threat to traditional male authority in the home (Lindstrom & Giorguli 2002).

Thus, it is not surprising that, historically, Mexican families have been wary of the migration of either married or single women to the United States (D'Aubeterre 2002, Lestage 2009, Marroni 2000). The migrants themselves have avoided reuniting their families in the United States, primarily because of the transformation of gender relations. "In the North, the woman rules" is a widely used expression that summarizes the masculine rejection of the more egalitarian conditions of family life in the United States (Fagetti 2002, Hirsch 2003, Mummert 1994, Trigueros & Rodríguez Piña 1988).

But since the 1990s, as the return of male migrants to their communities of origin has become more uncertain, women have begun to make an argument that is difficult to refute: They were married so that they would be together with their spouses wherever that might be, an indisputable claim that families have had to accept (Arias 2009, Bacon 2006, Chávez Galindo & Landa Guevara 2007, Fagetti 2002). The migration of young people has upset the male-to-female ratio, and young single women know that the possibility of finding a partner is now in the places of destination (Moctezuma Yano 2002). The change in the migration pattern and the need for spouses to be together or for singles to find a partner have promoted female migration, and particularly that of young women. It is, however, a personal decision on the part of the women, whether married or single, based on this new migratory reality.

Recent studies have shown an increase in the separation of migrant spouses or, put another way, a greater social acceptance of the breaking of unions, even in traditional households. For many years, male migration concealed *de facto*

separations, which families tried to deny or hide (Arias 2009). This is not the case anymore. Although there are still no estimations concerning the extent of this phenomenon, case studies in traditional communities have documented how prolonged and indefinite separation of married couples has caused divorce, infidelity, new partnerships, men's subsequent abandonment of obligations to wives and children in their communities of origin, and the disintegration of households in these communities. As a result, women find themselves abandoned, falling into the category of "single" mothers who must raise their children without the support of the other parent (Córdova Plaza et al. 2008, Rosas 2008, Stephen 2007). In 2006, the majority (87%) of the women who were hired by the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (PTAT by its Spanish acronym) to work in Canada were single mothers, widows, divorced, or separated. Only 3% were married and 10% were single, in stark contrast to the men, the majority (94%) of whom were married or in a consensual union (Becerril Quintana 2010). PTAT data also revealed an increase, between 2002 and 2006, of female day laborers who were divorced, single mothers (Becerril Quintana 2010).

The need for women to raise children in depressed, unstable, and low-wage local working environments has become the catalyst of an unprecedented yet increasingly common phenomenon: the migration of single women, a category that includes the abandoned, the divorced, the widowed, those who no longer receive remittances, those who decide to leave relationships marred by domestic violence, and those who seek to form new unions. This is a massive change that is closely associated with an important cultural transformation. Traditionally, women abused by spouses or in-laws stayed in the home of their in-laws, even under extremely vulnerable circumstances. Returning to their domestic units of origin was almost impossible, given that, because of social stigmas and/or economic or moral motivations, parents refused to let these once-married women return home (González Montes 2007, Velasco Ortiz & Contreras 2011).

This reality has changed, however. Facing enormous resistance, the older generation has begun to accept single women back into their households of origin (González Montes 2007, Hirsch 2003). This change is due to at least two factors: First, there is a greater social and familial recognition that abuse exists in relationships and that women have the right to leave violent or misguided marriages. Second, women have become generators of income and not just consumers. This means that they will not be a burden on the economy, but rather important sources of revenue—no small matter for impoverished domestic units (González Montes 2007). Women who do return to their households of origin, however, must work in order to provide for their children. The children are their responsibility; there is neither support from nor solidarity among the parents or domestic units (i.e., the grandparent generation). Upon returning to their households of origin, these women are subjected to the economic and moral control of their family members, causing many of them to migrate in search of better living conditions for themselves and for their children (Arias 2009).

A recent study confirmed that divorced women and widows with small children lived in the most vulnerable conditions in their communities of origin, which has become manifest in the vigilance as well as in the economic and moral control exercised by their own families (Arias 2009, Garay Villegas 2011). The flow of female migration is fed by this new and growing profile of women—women who migrate and leave the children with their grandparents temporarily—a migration that often becomes a permanent move when they are finally able to reunite with their children in their places of destination (Canabal Cristiani 2011, D'Aubeterre & Rivermar Pérez 2008, Marroni 2009, Rosas 2005, Sánchez Gómez 2011, Velasco Ortiz & Contreras 2011). This emergent phenomenon in Mexico has been found in female migration patterns in other Latin American countries as well, such as Bolivia and Ecuador (Camacho 2009, Hinojosa Gordonava 2008).

Studies based on life stories indicate that female migrants who have been abandoned by their spouses usually form new unions, though often short-lived, in their places of destination more so than in their communities of origin (Bacon 2006, Velasco Ortiz & Contreras 2011). It is interesting that despite both the insecurity in which they live and their succession of partners, these women continue to have children in their places of destination, thus increasing the number of households headed by women (Bacon 2006, Velasco Ortiz & Contreras 2011).

One topic that has been mentioned but that has not yet been systematically investigated is the relationship between international migration and a decrease in female fertility. When migration was predominantly male and seasonal, there were no significant changes in female fertility rates (Lindstrom & Giorguli 2002). However, had women also migrated, this would have been different. Upon returning to Mexico, the couples, which would doubtlessly have become familiar with the use of contraceptives in the United States, would have tended to space out their births and have fewer children (Lindstrom & Giorguli 2002). This is similar to what was observed in a rural community in Jalisco with a long migratory tradition, where the women who had formed families in the United States had fewer children and considered delaying their first pregnancy more often than those who had formed families in Mexico. The authors suggest that such differences may be attributed or related to a generational change, and not solely to migration (Hirsch 2003).

In recent years, scholars have discussed the relationship between prolonged separation and partner sexuality. Practically all the studies on this subject have demonstrated an intensification of control over women's bodies and decision making. In communities of origin, accusations and suspicions of infidelity on the part of women have increased, which has led to an unusual escalation of surveillance and control over women not only from their absent spouses but also from their own families

and the families of their husbands (D'Aubeterre 1995, Dinerman 1982, Estrada Iguínez 2007, Rosas 2005). Female behavior, sexually speaking, has become a target of renewed and rigorous scrutiny, surveillance, and control within families (Rosas 2005, 2008).

Recent studies have noticed, for example, pressure placed on women to return to or stay in the homes of the parents of their absent husbands as a means of controlling the sexuality of their daughters-in-law (Estrada Iguínez 2007, Menjívar & Agadjanian 2007, Rosas 2005). Husbands, even from far away, go to incredible lengths to control the sexuality of their wives by attempting to control their movements, regardless of whether they know of any transgression on the part of the woman. To prevent infidelity, husbands prohibit their wives from leaving home, attending parties or celebrations, buying clothes, going to the store, and even visiting relatives (Herrera López 2004, Peña Piña 2004, Sánchez Plata 2004). Finally, situations have been documented in which women who have been abandoned by their spouses return to their households of origin only to have their relationships, movements, and dress rigorously scrutinized or prohibited by fathers and brothers (Arias 2009, Casados González 2004).

Women live in the shadow of impending doom in the form of abandonment, forcing them to live in an extremely cautious, submissive, and prudent manner. Long-distance marital relations thus become tainted by threats from the men and fear from the women. Under these circumstances, women effectively have two options: exaggerate their submissive behavior in an attempt to demonstrate impeccable morality, or remain vulnerable to suspicion, disdain, and aggression (Arias 2009, D'Aubeterre 1995, Mindek 2007, Rosas 2008).

Sexuality, however, is conceptualized and practiced in a much different way between men and women (Menjívar & Agadjanian 2007, Rosas 2008). For men, infidelity and spending money on women in the United States do not carry a moral penalty (Rosas 2008). Such conduct is criticized only if it threatens the sending of remittances to their households in Mexico

(D'Aubeterre 1995, Menjívar & Agadjanian 2007). In fact, any information or gossip about the sexual conduct of migrants is mitigated in the face of the sacrifice they have made to leave and send remittances home (Rosas 2005). Furthermore, when they return home temporarily, the men may express their sexuality openly and engage in high-risk behaviors (such as not using condoms while having sex with prostitutes) even though their wives or girlfriends are not allowed to act in a similar fashion (Córdova Plaza et al. 2008, Hirsch & Meneses Navarro 2009).

Studies have shown a historically traditional association between masculinity and the role of the provider, or the notion that the man is the principal source of the economic resources required by the household to sustain all of its members (Hirsch 2003, Rosas 2008). Córdova Plaza et al. (2008) and Rosas (2008) propose that male sexual freedom is closely linked to the image of the provider. However, the male capacity to provide was called into question by the crisis relating to traditional economic activities and agricultural employment. Men stopped producing food, and local wages were insufficient to sustain a household. In this context, migration and “migradollars,” or the remittances sent home in dollars by migrants (Durand et al. 1996), have allowed men to regain that defining attribute of masculinity: being the family provider which, in turn, allows them to enjoy their traditional sexual freedom. In other words, reclaiming the role of the provider, no matter how capriciously, guarantees marital, familial, and social impunity to men regarding their sexual behavior on either side of the border.

Notably, the escalation of control over women is occurring in an unprecedented context of communication, which has to do with the diffusion of new information technologies that could not have been conceived of years ago (Menjívar & Agadjanian 2007). The Internet and all the services associated with it have allowed migrants to maintain and reproduce relationships despite the long distance. Today, thanks to the Internet, there is daily communication between migrants and their

relatives: frequent telephone calls, communication through Skype and Facebook, and the exchange of photos and videos of parties and celebrations in their communities of origin and destination. Migrants can speak almost daily with their wives, children, mothers, and sisters and thus intervene in the decision-making process. Although this can reinforce mutual bonds, affections, and responsibilities, it can also increase women's dependence on their husbands. The male threat of ceasing to send remittances in response to any female transgression can be found in many situations in which spouses are separated by migration (Ariza 2007, Camus 2008, Menjívar & Agadjanian 2007).

Migration has also affected the formation of unions. Studies have shown that men's prolonged absence and the impossibility of returning temporarily—due in large part to strict border control policies—have affected two traditional values and mechanisms of control that communities impose upon their youth: partner selection and endogamy. For migrant men, the benefit of preserving “family values” or, in other words, unions that perpetuate traditional gender relations, is a motivating factor in finding a Mexican wife (Lindstrom & Giorguli 2002). Therefore, in previous generations migrants would return home to marry a young woman from the community who was usually chosen by his family—a practice that still occurs in many indigenous communities (Canabal Cristiani 2011, Durand 1998, Lestage 2009).

However, the indefinite departure of young men from their home communities has upset the balance between the sexes and reduced the chances that young women have to get married. The possibility of remaining single, or *quedadas* (“left on the shelf”), has persuaded young women to accept spouses for whom they feel little interest or affection, and in some cases to elope with men they barely know (Hirsch 2009). At the same time, migrant men far from their homes have begun to choose partners based more on individual preference and circumstances that arise in their places of destination and less on the interests of their communities of origin, which are strongly influenced by

obligations to parents and relatives (Arias 2009, Córdova Plaza et al. 2008).

Two phenomena have arisen as a result. One is partnership formation in migrants' places of destination, even though both partners may be from the same place of origin. Partnership decisions made by young people outside of their home communities reduce or even eliminate parental intervention in the matter (Córdova Plaza et al. 2008, D'Aubeterre 2003). Even more widespread, however, is the formation of "mixed marriages," or unions in which partners choose each other based on criteria relating to the migrant situation, such as finding partners from different countries and ethnic groups, or through coworkers, schools, labor unions, or by using the institution of marriage as a means of legalizing one's status in the United States (Arias 2009, Córdova Plaza et al. 2008, Durand 1998, Lestage 2009).

This stands in stark contrast to what occurs when migrants return to cities in Mexico. For example, Mixtecs who returned from the United States to live in Tijuana maintained strong marital endogamy, preferring to marry spouses from the same community of origin or microregion of Oaxaca from which they originally came. These marriages still assume a contract between the two families, characteristic of their communities of origin in Oaxaca (Lestage 2011). This could be explained by the urban environment itself, in which migrants seek to preserve customs and conducts that are similar to those of traditional Mixtec culture, the most important of which is marrying someone from the same ethnic group (Lestage 2011).

A phenomenon that has increased in the United States is that of households with "mixed family status," where at least one of the members is an undocumented immigrant and at least one child is a US citizen (Passel & Taylor 2010). In 2009, 37% of adult undocumented immigrants had children who were US citizens (Passel & Taylor 2010). Although the study refers to undocumented immigrants in general, more than half were Mexican (57%), and other Latinos made up another 24% (Passel 2005). Usually, migrant women are more open to

exogamy (meaning marrying someone outside their ethnic group or marrying someone with a different legal status) than are the men (Durand 1998). Migrant women who have legal documents in their places of destination fare better in the marital market in that they are able to marry at an age older than what is traditionally expected from women, and they are able to negotiate more agreements with an undocumented spouse (Arias 2009).

Nevertheless, exogamy, mixed marriages, and households with mixed family status are difficult from the viewpoint of the communities and families of origin. Having an exogamous wife, for example, creates more uncertainty in the return of a migrant husband to his original community and can lead to a decrease in (or cancellation of) remittances and filial obligations on his part (Córdova Plaza et al. 2008). In practice, prolonged spousal absence and exogamy have led to separated domestic units whose members often do not even know one another. There are many cases of grandparents who have never seen their daughters-in-law or grandchildren (Córdova Plaza et al. 2008).

In fact, the indefinite separation, the impossibility of crossing the border, and the legalization of the residence of migrant children in their places of destination, combined with the impoverishment and aging of their parents, have brought about yet another change in Mexican households: the temporary or permanent departure of elderly people to their children's places of destination. In 2003, the average age of the parents of Mexican immigrants in the United States was 63.7 years (Jasso 2012). The visa for parents is the second most applied for by Mexican migrants in the United States. More visas are applied for on behalf of mothers than of fathers (Jasso 2012). As a result of the legal residence of their children, visits from parents, elderly people, and those without work or any source of income can last for months. These visits can often involve caring for small or sick grandchildren, thereby allowing women in the middle generation to find work in their places of destination. This phenomenon has changed the structure and the dynamic of households

in the communities of origin, which are traditionally centered on the presence of the older generation, and the propensity for migrants to return home has decreased to an even greater extent.

As Massey et al. (2006) have shown, the more time a migrant spends in the United States, the stronger his or her social and economic ties will be with that country. Migrants' prolonged absence has given rise to a difficult, yet unstoppable, process of disregard for their communal and familial obligations, which is apparent in the irregularity or outright suspension of remittances, as well as in sparse communication with parents (Arias 2009, Córdova Plaza et al. 2008).

USES OF REMITTANCES

Generally speaking, households that receive remittances have higher incomes than those that do not receive remittances (Durand 2007a, Mora-Rivera 2012). According to the ENHRUM, in 2002 the income received by rural households in the form of remittances was comparable to the wages earned in households that did not receive remittances. However, households with international migrants had significant income from wages as well, meaning that those households received the highest income (Durand 2007a, Mora-Rivera 2012).

The change in migration patterns has helped bring about an important modification regarding the recipients and the uses of remittances. We first consider migrants' personal or conjugal control of remittances. In past decades, migrants, regardless of whether they were married, usually sent remittances to their parents—especially to their mothers—under the condition that the money would be saved, invested, or used to help finance agricultural production and household maintenance (Massey et al. 1987). The patrilocal residence of their wives guaranteed that the remittances sent by migrants would in fact be sent to their parents' households. This is no longer the case. In fact, the principal purpose of remittances has become the construction of independent dwellings (Arias 2009, D'Aubeterre 2002,

Marroni 2009, Pauli 2007, Rivermar Pérez 2008).

Of course, building a home has always been a fundamental use of the remittances sent home by migrants. In Mexico, those who have used their savings for this purpose have mostly been young men with few dependents and nowhere to live (Massey et al. 1987, 2012). However, there has been an important change. In communities that were studied in Puebla, Oaxaca, and Veracruz, young women have assigned to their husbands a direct, marital use for remittances: the construction of independent dwellings in order to reduce the time of the patrilocal residence couples must complete immediately following marriage (Rosas 2005, Sánchez Gómez 2011).

As is already known, in indigenous and rural societies with deep Mesoamerican roots, women lived for long periods in the homes of their in-laws directly following marriage. Here, the women had to work for their in-laws and could be abused and raped while enduring the period of greatest familial and social isolation of their lives (González Montes 2007, Mindek 2007, Oehmichen 2002, Pauli 2007, Robichaux 1997, Sierra 2007). On the basis of the National Survey on Family Planning (ENPF by its Spanish acronym) conducted in 1995, Echarri Cánovas (2004) calculated that half (51%) of the rural women surveyed in nine different states began their marital life in their husbands' household, i.e., in a patrilocal residence. It was also calculated that a couple typically spends a minimum of five years gathering the funds necessary to leave their patrilocal residence (Mulhare 2003).

Young women have discovered that remittances sent to build houses can help them change the postmarriage norm of patrilocal residence (Córdova Plaza et al. 2008, Pauli 2007, Rosas 2008, Sierra 2007). For these women, the construction of a separate home is a step toward gaining independence, and the evidence suggests that they are right.

Neolocal, or separate, residence favors the independence of couples. For instance, parents are unaware of the jobs and the wages

of their children, thus making it easier for the children to retain a greater percentage of their income. Wives are able to work in and for their own households, avoid being watched over by their in-laws, and improve relationships and agreements with their spouses regarding matters such as pregnancy, the intervals between the birth of children, household chores, allowances, and decision making (Echarri Cánovas 2004, Pauli 2007). Neolocal residence increases women's ability to insert themselves into the household decision-making process, something that does not occur when they live within the domestic units of their husbands (Echarri Cánovas 2004).

However, studies have shown that remittances may contribute to the persistence of asymmetrical power dynamics between couples (Rosas 2005, Trigueros & Rodríguez Piña 1988). Ceasing to send remittances, which effectively translates into abandonment, is one of the principal threats used by men to impose their will upon their spouses (Fagetti 2002, Rosas 2005). As is almost the norm in Mexico, the breaking of the marital bond implies economic abandonment of the children on the husband's part, a reality that women with no income cannot face on their own (Mindek 2007). Child support may be the main reason these women willingly accept the conditions forced upon them by their absent husbands. They accept the authority of their spouses so that they can continue receiving the income essential for their survival as well as that of their children (Ariza 2007).

Remittances have changed the traditional household power dynamic between children and their parents, as well as intergenerational obligations. Slowly but surely, the pillars of patriarchal family are weakening. The impoverishment and aging of parents have made them dependent upon the resources sent to them by their migrant sons and daughters. A study done in one rural Mexican community showed that households with the greatest well-being (in terms of standards of living, the security to address problems and to entrust family members with them, and peace of mind

about the future) were those that had at least one son or daughter living in the United States (González-Vázquez et al. 2011).

Members of the older generation have lost the ability to impose their priorities and decisions on their migrant children, especially the men. What remains are moral obligations, those affections that inspire and maintain solidarity. Family and community commitments are decreasing while remittances are becoming more scarce. Remittances arrive only intermittently and in the form of health remittances or care remittances meant to attend specifically to the disease and suffering of parents, not as permanent, general subsidies for their parents to be used in their communities of origin (Arias 2009, Merla 2011). Therefore, although intergenerational solidarity persists between migrant adults—especially migrant adult women—and their elderly parents, there is no evidence indicating the future behavior of these intergenerational commitments between family members in places of origin and destination when the parents die (Ramírez & Román 2007).

Some studies have examined the relationship between remittances and education. In ethnographic terms, migrants always allude to the importance of educating their children. Investment in human capital, it is known, improves living conditions and affords better economic opportunities for the households and children of migrants, as well as for their communities (Giorguli & Serratos López 2009). The assumption is that remittances will help allow young people to stay in school.

However, it is not clear whether this is the case. Generally, studies have shown that in communities and families within which exists a "culture of migration" (dense migratory networks, idealization of life in the United States, pressure on young people to begin the migratory experience, expectations for higher wages and better work options in the United States), as well as in those places of destination where the job market does not value the academic experience of migrants, remittances will not have any positive effect on education, especially in the case of migrant men (Giorguli &

Serratos López 2009, Meza & Pederzini 2009). ENHRUM, conducted in 2002, indicated no difference in the level of education between households with and without international migrants, with an average of 5.46 and 5.45 years, respectively (Mora-Rivera 2012).

The culture of migration puts greater pressure on men to leave school than it does on women (Giorguli & Serratos López 2009). This may lead to an increase in the years of schooling for women compared with those of their migrant parents, suggesting two different processes: a greater allocation of remittances to that end and the possibility of delaying female entry into the workforce (Orrenius et al. 2012). Despite cultural resistance to the distribution of resources to female education, it has been feasible under certain circumstances. The specificity of regional workforce demands may affect that possibility.

In settlements in the state of Guanajuato from which the men have been migrating to the United States since they were very young, the conditions did not exist for investing in agricultural activities. There was, however, a regional demand for skilled feminine labor, and the remittances sent by parents allowed their daughters to receive higher education. This situation had unexpected consequences. The young female professionals had postponed the age of marriage; had chosen spouses who were not local, but rather were professional like them; had established independent homes from the beginning of the marriage; and had left to live outside of their communities of origin (Estrada Iguínez 2007). Thus, the education of women had broken with patrilocal residence, local residence, and endogamy—three fundamental principles of traditional community organization.

WORK AND MIGRATION

Much has been written about the various uses of remittances. For a long time it was shown that they were used for savings and investment, allowing personal and family projects to be undertaken that ultimately encouraged migrant return, such as the construction of homes, the purchase of land and animals, and the creation

of small businesses and other endeavors (Durand 1994, Massey et al. 1987, Sana & Massey 2005). Sana & Massey (2005) indicated that one difference between Mexican migration and Dominican migration, for example, was that in the former, remittances were an integral part of an accumulation strategy aimed at investment, whereas in the latter remittances were sent mainly to cover basic needs. However, this distinction has changed. Remittances now, even in Mexico, are primarily allocated to daily household life (Cohen 2010, Sánchez Gómez 2011).

One reason for this is the well-known fact that the segmented and specialized labor markets for migrants in their places of destination keep them on the fringes of society, working precarious jobs for low wages (Cortes 2011, García & de Oliveira 2011). Furthermore, the employment crisis in countries of destination has affected job availability and decreased migrant wages, which has had repercussions on the amount and regularity of remittances sent to domestic units in their places of origin (Ariza 2007, Hondagneu-Sotelo 2007). Finally—and this today may be the most important factor—the deterioration of living conditions, work conditions, and income in migrants' places of origin has made remittances the principal source of household income (Canabal Cristiani 2011, Sánchez Gómez 2011).

One subject that has gained relevance is that of female labor and its relation to migration. It should be noted that, in patriarchal societies, a woman's right to work has always been an area of arduous negotiation between spouses, as well as between them and their families (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2007, Mindek 2007, Oehmichen 2002, Rosas 2005). Generally, migrants and their families have been opposed to the independent labor activity of women while their husbands are away (Rosas 2005). Nevertheless, the lack or irregularity of remittances, which has become more pronounced due to the employment crisis and the undocumented status of many migrants in their places of destination, has caused women to become either wage workers or self-employed (Aysa & Massey

2004, Dinerman 1982, Mummert 1994, Rosas 2005, Trigueros & Rodríguez Piña 1988).

At least three results of female wage labor outside of the home have been identified: Household economic situations have improved, family life has undergone changes, and gender relations within the home have been affected (Garay Villegas 2011, García & de Oliveira 2011, González Montes & Salles 1995, Hondagneu-Sotelo 2003, Mummert 1994). There have certainly been advances in these areas, but perhaps fewer than expected. The scarcity and deterioration of wages as well as the control over female labor may help explain its relatively low impact.

Multiple studies have shown that the combination of remittances and local female labor does not necessarily guarantee significant economic improvement or more balanced relationships in the home or in communities of origin. First, although demand for female labor has undoubtedly increased and male absence has opened up local labor markets for women, the wages they receive are less than those earned by men, and their jobs are often uncertain and part-time (García & de Oliveira 2011, Mummert 1994). A similar process is occurring in migrant destinations. When women arrive, they find work in segmented and specialized labor markets where the wages they earn are lower than those of migrant men (Cohen 2010). Thus, female participation in the workforce, although widespread, does not guarantee the wages or the work conditions necessary for their autonomy or independence.

Second, there is the matter of male control over money and female labor. Generally, wives do not know how much their husbands earn, and it is the men who decide the amount, the frequency, and the destination of the remittances they send home (Rosas 2008). Often, absent husbands insist that their wives stop working, and have gone so far as to threaten to stop sending remittances if the women work outside the home (Menjívar & Agadjanian 2007, Rosas 2005). In fact, evidence suggests that the households and women that do receive remittances participate to a lesser extent in labor markets

than those that do not (Garay Villegas 2011, Orrenius et al. 2012, Sánchez Gómez 2011).

Despite this trend, there is also evidence that women, especially of the younger generation, want to work and have won the right to do so without gaining permission from their migrant husbands. Although it has not been easy, the separation of spouses means that women are less exposed to the reprimands, violence, and prohibitions of their husbands (Rosas 2005). Even in the face of resistance, young women have begun to make changes in the male division and control of female income. The prolonged absence of their husbands has expanded women's scope of action and has opened the door for negotiation in the realm of decision making between partners without necessarily taking into account the interests of other relatives (Rosas 2008).

In other cases, wives of migrants work secretly or against the wishes and desires of their spouses (Arias 2009, Rosas 2005). In these conditions, women are not able to enter into negotiations or reach agreements regarding investments, rights, or obligations, and they are subjected to new forms of control and oppression at the hands of relatives and employers who take advantage of their vulnerable position.

Nevertheless, one thing has not changed. Although women are working, whether with or without their partners' consent, they are still responsible for their children. Neither work nor female migration has redefined women's domestic rights and duties inside the home, with or without their husbands (Becerril Quintana 2010, García & de Oliveira 2011). Therefore, women outside the home must practice what has been defined as long-distance motherhood (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2003).

When women migrate, they must continue to provide care and support for their children who remain in their places of origin (Arias 2013, Becerril Quintana 2010). This has resulted in an increasing monetization and feminization of child care. Women, using their own income and social networks, must look for, negotiate with, and pay another woman (mother, mother-in-law, sister, sister-in-law, neighbor, godmother, etc.) to care for their children while

they are away (Arias 2013, Becerril Quintana 2010). Caring for children of migrants entails the unavoidable obligation to send money for them on a regular basis. In place of the community solidarity and support once required by women so that they could migrate are commercial agreements between women within the home or in other social relations among relatives or close friends. These agreements are fragile and variable, and even though the father may be present, it is the migrant women who continually negotiate the care of their children from long distances (Becerril Quintana 2010).

This represents an important change from the family situation prevalent when men were the only ones who were migrating. They would leave without any concern for what happened to their children in terms of food, care, education, discipline, or health, leaving such matters in the hands of mothers who were also trying to respect the rights of and obligations to their parents and in-laws (Ariza 2012, Menjívar & Agadjanian 2007). In contrast, prolonged female absence has opened a realm of uncertainty, tension, and new dynamics between mothers and their children, between spouses, and between mothers and those they hire to care for their children (Arias 2009, Ariza 2012).

Studies in the states of Oaxaca and Veracruz have shown that domestic units are more tolerant of men than of women when one or the other stops sending remittances. Furthermore, they are more demanding of women who have migrated and have left their children behind in their places of origin. Migrant women have become the group that is most susceptible to “excessive demands” from their domestic units (Portes 1998). They are not allowed to stop sending remittances and are continually asked for money to cover extra expenses and necessities (Castaldo Cossa 2004, Peña Vázquez 2004). In truth, the remittances that women send are used not only to cover expenses related to their children, but also to help maintain their parents’ households or to support other family members.

MIGRATION AND LIFE CYCLE

Migration has been linked to the notion of the life cycle of domestic units, especially those pertaining to rural and indigenous people. Chayanov (1974) and Fortes (1969), independently from one another, created the concept of the “domestic development cycle.” In this cycle, rural domestic units moved between three principal phases of development: expansion, dispersion/division, and replacement/substitution (Robichaux 2007). In economic terms, domestic migration was associated with the household expansion phase, during which the number of producers was less than the number of consumers, and “the migration of young Mazahuas to Mexico City became an integral part of the work of the domestic group over the course of its cycle” (Arizpe 1980, p. 29). It was assumed that the domestic group had the ability to send some of its members, preferably young single men and women, to cities in order to obtain cash income to add to the income of the family. The decision to migrate was not a personal decision made by migrants, but rather an assignment made by the domestic group, which decided who should migrate for the common good (Arizpe 1980, Wolf 1990).

Later, Massey et al. (1987) discovered that migration to the United States in the early 1980s was also related to the life cycle of rural households. Male migration, which was predominant then, decreased when men got married but increased again after the birth of the first child or during the expansion phase when household needs increased. Male migration decreased again in the replacement/substitution phase to make room for the departure of their children, who were beginning their own life cycles.

The life cycle notion assumes considerable stability not only regarding the economic activities and income of the domestic units, but also regarding household structures and dynamics. However, these assumptions do not hold up well empirically. For example, domestic units today—in contrast to earlier decades—do not obtain their income from agricultural

activities, even though they live in the countryside. Rather, they depend on unpredictable cash income obtained by each individual family member, thereby granting more visibility and importance to work done by young people and women. This includes income generated inside and outside the community. Multiple jobs, various sources of income, and dependence on wages characterize the economy of domestic units in rural societies today (Arias 2009, C de Grammont 2009). However, there is no evidence that these types of income will become part of a unit of production and consumption, like it was thought to be in the economy of the rural domestic groups (Arizpe 1980).

Migration has contributed to the process of income individualization for different family members of domestic units. Of course, migrants still send remittances, but it is impossible for their parents to know the true amount of earnings represented by remittances or to determine the total income of children who do not live with them and have spent years away from the household. Many do not even know where their children work or what they do for a living in the United States. Although they may try, parents can no longer prevent migrant men from sending money directly to their wives or from giving preference to personal or marital investments (Arias 2009, D'Aubeterre 2002, Marroni 2009, Pauli 2007, Rivermar Pérez 2008).

However, the traditional dynamic of the domestic life cycle does not take into account the sociodemographic changes that families have experienced in recent decades—changes that have affected the integration, the dynamic, and the directionality of domestic units. As the life expectancy of parents becomes longer, the indefinite departure of young men and women, their indeterminate period far from their domestic units, their temporary return, the return of women to their domestic units and their subsequent departure, the sending of children to stay with their grandparents in Mexico, and the structure and composition of households have been changing continuously, but not in the unilinear sense assumed by the notion of the domestic development cycle.

Female migration is not associated with the traditional needs of domestic units but rather with new situations that have given rise to the indefinite migration patterns of spouses, such as reunification, separation, abandonment, and the need to provide for children.

In households today, family members of different generations live together under distinct yet variable residential and economic agreements. And although there are tensions, difficulties, and negotiations, these agreements are based on situations that result in personal decisions being made by the family members, whether in a familial, spousal, or filial context—situations that change often to reflect new sets of circumstances.

IN CONCLUSION

The review of recent literature surrounding the relationship between international migration and changes in households and places of origin shows the benefits of, but also the difficulties related to, relying on ethnographic information when making consistent comparisons and generalizations. Ethnographic and microsociological studies—used regularly in small communities—have indeed suggested characteristics, materials, situations, and tendencies that could open new lines of research, but such studies lack the more explicit and controlled methodologies required for sufficiently comparative analyses to identify regularities and major trends.

The impression left by this review is that the changes identified in communities of origin correspond primarily with generational changes. In other words, the most visible and transformative changes are those connected with young people who began migrating in the 1990s and who find themselves trapped in the migratory pattern that has made them indefinite migrants and members of households defined by long-term separation. Under these new circumstances, young men and women—whether migrants or not—have had to create new practices and explanations to adjust themselves to the unexpected situations resulting

from the combination of changes in migratory patterns, economic crises, and sociodemographic changes in their places of origin. This context of crisis and change has led to familial transformations that have begun to affect the traditional values and norms of rural societies from which many migrants come, but to which they are not certain to return.

There are four changes that appear to be especially significant. First, migration has become a personal decision. The ethnographic evidence calls into doubt the notion that the decision to migrate and the selection of the migrants themselves are based on assignments from the domestic group. Studies show that young men and women who leave their households and communities do so for personal reasons, such as to avoid patrilocal residence, one of the pillars of traditional organization in rural societies and consequently one of the clearest examples of why young people are making decisions that go against the wishes of their domestic units. Other personal reasons for which migrants choose to leave include wanting to migrate with their spouses, getting out of dangerous or damaged marital and familial relationships, finding work in order to care for their children, and finding a partner. Although migrants make decisions according to the imperatives of their domestic units, it cannot be said for certain that the domestic unit is responsible for who ends up migrating.

Second, increased female migration has created a new migratory profile: the migration of single women that is closely linked to the breaking of unions, a phenomenon that is more common since the establishment of the new pattern of migration. One of the most consistent trends is the increase in migration of single women, and especially of mothers who, assuming the responsibility of being the sole provider, are forced to leave their communities in order to care for their children in their places of origin or destination. In fact, a new pattern of domestic responsibility seems to be emerging in which women who have established new unions are still entirely responsible for the care of children of previous ones. Single women may

be wage earners, but they are neither independent nor autonomous. They are single mothers who have been abandoned, who have divorced, who have stopped receiving money from their spouses, and to a lesser extent, who are widows left in charge of their children with no means of establishing an independent and autonomous household. Wage instability, combined with the unavoidable obligation of caring for their children, forces these women to reside in—and often return to—their households of origin, where they are subjected to the moral norms and economic demands imposed upon them by fathers and brothers. This drives them to migrate in search of better living conditions for themselves and for their children.

Third, the financial assistance in the home country that is linked to migration has undergone a crucial change: from altruistic to requisite. This transformation manifests in the migration of women who have left their children in the care of relatives in their places of origin. These women cannot stop sending remittances and are constantly subjected to the additional demands of their domestic units. Therefore, such requisite aid calls into question the communal sense of altruism and solidarity in rural domestic units that once led community and family members to migrate. This change in the role of remittances is uncovering a gender bias integrated into the motivations and expectations of women who exercise their right to work or migrate. In other words, a gender relation has emerged that constitutes a new disadvantage for women.

Fourth, certain characteristics of communities, families, and domestic units that once guaranteed hierarchical displays of power and relationship inequality among family members have been lost. Now, families in places of origin are exposed to tensions and changes that have begun to affect their traditional organization, dynamics, and relationships. The changes that have been caused or encouraged by the new patterns of migration have, without doubt, affected the traditional patriarchal family.

However, the migratory dynamic has begun to change once again. Now, aside from the

difficulties involved in crossing the border or being captured while trying to do so, the dynamic also involves the return of migrants who have lived for many years in the United States. The financial crisis that resulted in widespread unemployment in the United States, mortgage problems that led to the losses of homes for many migrants, the end of migratory circularity, and new methods of deportation have caused communities of origin to feel the effects of return migration more strongly.

Changes in the processes of deportation have affected migrant families and domestic units that have lived for many years in the United States with or without legal documentation. Three changes in particular are especially significant. First, since 2003, deportation has increased of undocumented migrants from the interior of the United States and not just from the border (Alarcón & Becerra 2012). This has been facilitated by the ability of local authorities in some parts of the United States to ask for documents from people who are involved in any altercation with the police and even upon routine inspections. If the person in question is found to be undocumented, authorities may begin the process of deportation. For example, the study of the Casa del Migrante in Tijuana showed that, in 2010, most of the men were classified as “removals”—those who had been thrown out under the threat of “administrative or criminal consequences upon subsequent reentry into the United States” (Alarcón & Becerra 2012, p. 127). Of this group, 94% had been residing in the United States for between 6 and 11 years; only 6% had been living there for less than one year (Alarcón & Becerra 2012).

Second, the criminalization of infractions has become a means of justifying migrant deportation (Alarcón & Becerra 2012). In 2010, of the 282,003 migrants removed to Mexico, 127,728 fell into the criminal category (Off. Immigr. Stat. 2011). In the Casa del Migrante study, most of those repatriated to Mexico had been deported owing to traffic violations, alcohol- and drug-related offenses, or domestic violence (Alarcón & Becerra 2012).

Third, the militarization and increased effectiveness of the US border patrol have drastically reduced the possibility that migrants will return to the United States after being deported or removed (Massey et al. 2003). Migrants, especially men, may be sent back to Mexico without any realistic possibility of returning to their families in the United States. Taken together, these changes create the necessary conditions for the long-term separation of domestic units.

In this context, differences in the nature of migrant return to particular regions are to be expected. Mexico’s central-western states make up the country’s historic migratory region (Durand & Massey 2003). Migrants from this region have the highest rates of legalization and naturalization in the United States. Therefore, family members with different migratory statuses—legal resident, citizen, or undocumented migrant—live together today in domestic units that have resided for many years in their respective places of destination. These are men and women from different generations, with diverse interests and obligations regarding their residence in the United States and their return to Mexico. From this historic migratory region, more individuals and couples are legally documented, naturalized, or born in the United States. Nevertheless, a greater number may voluntarily return to their communities of origin, revealing a clear trend: mutually agreed-upon separations, rather than divorce, of long-term couples.

This decision for one or more members of the family to return to Mexico requires at least one of the spouses to have legal residency in the United States, permitting him or her to move freely between the two countries. This phenomenon is creating the “binational family” (Lindstrom & Giorguli 2007), and it requires both spouses (not just the husband) to make the decision whether to remain in the United States or return to Mexico. This decision will depend on the evaluation made by each spouse concerning their mode of residence in the United States, their work, their time of residence, the age of their children and the expectations they have for them, and their social networks. With

the combination of the interests, opportunities, and resources of different members of domestic units in their communities of origin and destination, new methods of living separately will begin to emerge. The most complicated issue seems to be reaching agreement regarding the children. Either way, the aforementioned arrangements are ephemeral, and prolonged separation can prove to be a great risk to the long-term persistence of unions.

In the new migratory regions, such as the states of Oaxaca, Puebla, Tlaxcala, and Veracruz (Durand & Massey 2003), where undocumented residence and instances of forced

return prevail, the situation becomes more complicated but is nevertheless conducive to long-term separation of spouses. Women, especially, appear to be reluctant to return to their communities of origin in Mexico. It is worth remembering that the deportation of spouses is linked to instances of domestic violence. Undocumented migrants from these new migratory regions who have been deported or removed face enormous challenges returning to the United States, which will undoubtedly contribute to a more prolonged, and perhaps more definitive, separation of domestic units than what has been seen in the historic region.

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