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New Immigrant Destinations and Their Pioneers

In the past ten to fifteen years, the United States has experienced substantial transformations in which migrant populations have settled in atypical areas throughout the South and the Heartland of the US (Singer 2004, Pitts 2003).

Focusing on migration from Mexico to the United States, the following paper uses Mexican Migration Project data to investigate two hypotheses with regard to these new phenomenon: 1) that, compared to migrants from historic sending regions, migrants heading from newer sending regions in Mexico are more likely to go to newer destinations in the United States; and 2) within these new destinations, the first migrants, or 'pioneers', differ in measurable ways from those who follow them, specifically that they are more likely to be young males, who are not the poorest in their community, as measured by occupation or educational status. This idea builds on the work of Massey, Goldring, and Durand 1994 who examine pioneers as the first individuals to leave a community.

The majority of the current research on new destinations examines changes in the labor market in the United States as a cause of migrants moving to new places, while this paper examines the changing origins of Mexican migrants as a potential engine of change. The one study to examine the 'pioneers' to these destinations, Leach and Bean 2006, uses data from the US Census and thus does not provide any information on the origin communities in Mexico. The following study uses data from the Mexican Migration Project (MMP) that has information both on community of origin in Mexico and of community of destination in the United States. Massey, Goldring & Durand's 1994 study provides a starting point for the following analysis as it also uses MMP data to investigate the pioneers, yet it looks at the pioneers in historical perspective. This analysis differs in that it uses data collected contemporaneously with the rise of these new destinations and that it investigates not just the origin side, but also the destination side. Additionally in the twelve years since this paper was written, the MMP has expanded from having conducted surveys in only 7 states in Mexico, to having conducted surveys

in 19 states for a total of 107 communities, which allows for an examination of region of origin within Mexico.

Using expanded coverage data from the Mexican Migration Project (MMP), I analyze two questions: 1) do the migrant populations heading to new and traditional destinations differ from each other, and do they differ by time period? and 2) within new destinations, do early migrants (e.g. ‘pioneers’) differ in measurable ways from their followers?

For the first question, I analyze whether an individual traveled to a new destination using logistic regression models to examine differences between the populations attracted to new and traditional destinations. Traditional destinations include California, Texas, Illinois, New Mexico, and Arizona, and new destinations include all other states. This series of regressions is divided into two time-periods 1965-1989 and 1990-2004 and covers three population subgroups: 1) males on first trips, 2) females on first trips, and 3) males on second or later trips. The first time period starts with the onset of modern immigration law, and the second period covers the period with the most rapid growth in these destinations. The model separates female migration to investigate whether it represents a more settled form of migration that comes later in the migration process.

The separation of male migrants making an initial trip or making a second or later trip allows for an analysis of whether: 1) migrants with previous trips have acquired certain human capital skills necessary to work in the US, such as language ability, and feel they can move out of ethnic enclaves and navigate the labor market in new parts of the country or if 2) new destination migrants come on a first trip from communities without a long history of migration and are more receptive to new opportunities in new places because they do not have the social network ties to the traditional destinations.

The independent variables in this model include: region of origin in Mexico based on Jorge Durand’s 2005 classification of the traditional and newer sending regions; the model modifies several regional groups slightly to coincide with the MMP data. Other variables include: rural or urban origins, year of trip, age, education, occupation in Mexico (agriculture, skilled or unskilled) and a number of social capital variables: whether an individual’s parent had migrated or whether their sibling had migrated and a

variable for migration prevalence in one's community of origin in 1980, a quadratic term for the same term. I include the prevalence in 1980 as a mark of whether a community was a traditional sending region as several studies note that the newer origins developed after the wave of privatization following the debt crisis in 1982 (e.g. Fussell 2004).

The next section delves into whether the 'pioneers' differ from the migrants who follow them to these new destinations. Within new destinations, the study uses two distinct models: 1) it considers migrants by place of destination, thus defining pioneers as the earliest migrants to a particular destination 2) it considers migration chains by linking individuals who head from roughly the same origins and arrive in roughly the same destinations. For each of the two models, the analysis uses a multinomial regression to compare migrants in: 1) the first 20% of all arrivals, 2) those who arrive in the middle 20%-80% of all arrivals and 3) the most recent 20%.

The first model simply examines the first arrivals to a particular state, for example it examines how the first 20% of arrivals to the state of North Carolina differ from those who were in the middle 20%-80% of all arrivals to North Carolina and to those who arrived most recent 20%. The second model more fully utilizes the structure of the data, by linking migration origins with migration destinations, and thereby approximating migration chains. I define migration chains by linking individuals who travel from the same state of origin and arrive in the same state of destination. The model aims to eventually look at the community level, but the states-level data provides a large enough sample size to estimate differences between early and more recent migrants. This model builds on the premise that to be a pioneer, an individual must not only go first into new territory, but must also be followed. The migration chains vary in size from 10 individuals to 267 individuals, for a total of 84 such clusters.

Preliminary results support the hypothesis that migrants from newer sending regions in Mexico are more likely to head to newer destinations in the United States than migrants from the traditional sending regions. Migrants from the southern states of Oaxaca and Guerrero serve as a notable exception as were more likely to head to one of the traditional receiving states (California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas or Illinois). In the 1990-2004 period, migrants from Veracruz, surveyed near the city of Veracruz, were approximately twice as likely to head to a new destinations as migrants from the

traditional origin communities; migrants from the sending states of Puebla, Tlaxcala and Hidalgo were approximately ten times more likely. Additionally, the variable for migration prevalence in the community in 1980 fits a curvilinear relationship, indicating that it is not the newest communities that are most likely to head to these destinations, but rather there is some optimal middle range. I posit that this finding relates to the role of social capital; new migrants from communities with a long migration history have strong social network ties to traditional destinations, and thus head to Los Angeles or El Paso to join their uncles, cousins or fellow community members. On the opposite end of the spectrum, a migrant from a community with almost no history of migration may head to these traditional destinations to form social ties with existing communities, yet these ties would be more easily broken. A migrant from an origin community with enough ties to the U.S. to be aware of knowledge of new opportunities in new places - but without too strong a network of previous migration to traditional destinations - would be the most likely to head to a new destination. And as a few migrants head to a new destination with new opportunities, their fellow community members develop social ties to the new location thus forming a new migration stream.

Tests of the second hypothesis 'that the pioneers differ in measurable ways from those who follow them' yield more mixed results. There is no evidence to support the notion that men migrated earlier than women, when either by looking at the destination only model or when looking at the migration chain model. Early migrants do appear to be slightly more educated than later migrants, particularly within migration chains. Yet, the most startling results relate to region of origin in which early migrants came from communities that were new to the migration process. This finding is measured both by the region of origin and by the migration prevalence in a migrant's community in 1980. Additionally early migrants were more likely to have a sibling with migration experience than later migrants, and were more likely come on a first trip. While these results are preliminary they suggest that the pioneer migrants may have traveled on a first trip to these destinations with other family members, possibly women, while migrants with more migration experience from communities with a long migration history are the most recent arrivals to these destinations.

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