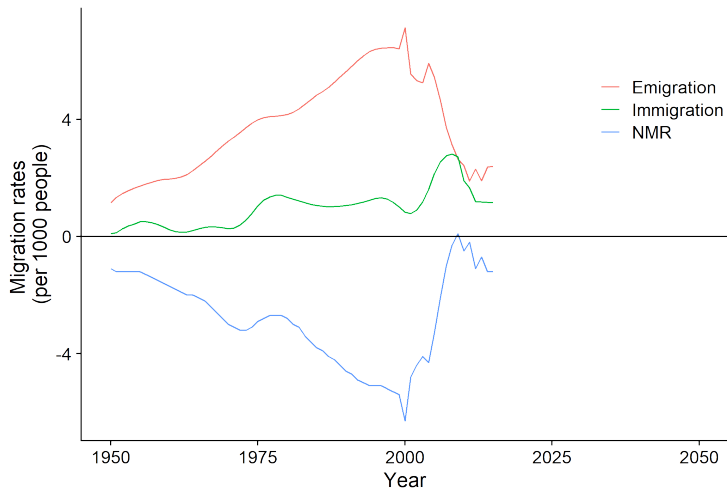# Gender, selection and changing composition of Mexican emigration in the 21st century

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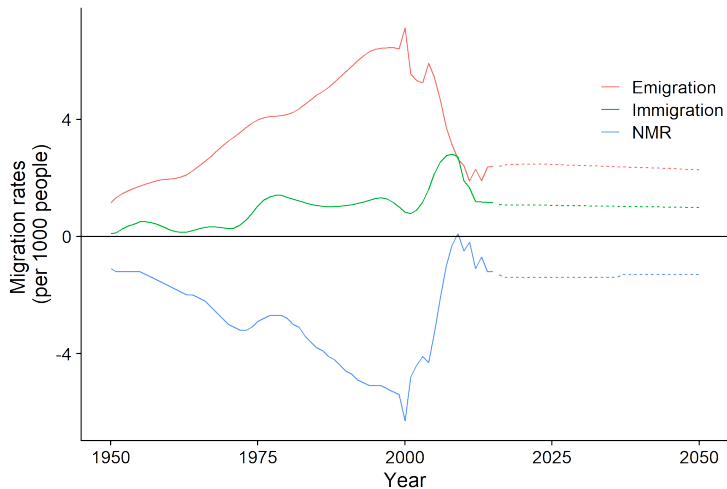
Sociology of Population Section Roundtable (ASA 2023)
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Migration from Mexico over time

Source: 2018 Demographic Conciliation and Projections by CONAPO

Migration from Mexico over time

Dashed line comes from the 2016-2050 Population Projection of Mexico by CONAPO.

What do we know about Mexican migration?

- ▶ Rich qualitative and quantitative studies (90s, early 2000s)
- ▶ Male migration persists following historic patterns
- ▶ Limited female migration
- ▶ Theory is not explicit about how sex is a determinant for migration

Overall, there is a gap (or a necessary update) to our understanding of selection into migration in Mexico, how that has changed **over time** and the extent that **gender** plays a role in it.

Research objectives

Who compose the decreasing migrant flows?

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Research questions

- ▶ How has selection into migration from Mexico changed over time and between men and women?
- ▶ Does population composition explain the change in emigrant flows from Mexico during the 21st century?

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Several comparisons:

- Migrant vs non-migrant
- Female vs Male
- Between periods

Data

1. Mexican Census (2000, 2010, 2020)
   - Extended questionnaire given to about a 1% of the total population, includes a migration module
   - List of migrants from a household within the last 5 years
2. *Encuesta Nacional de Dinámicas Demográficas* (ENADID)
   - Nationally representative household survey for demographic characteristics
   - 1997, 2009, 2014, 2018
   - List of migrants from a household within the last 5 years
3. *Encuesta Nacional de Ocupación y Empleo* (ENOE)
   - Nationally representative household survey to obtain employment estimates
   - Rotating panel (households are up to 5 consecutive waves)
   - 2006-2019
   - Migrants identified by comparing household rosters between quarters

Results preview

- Male emigration from Mexico has decreased substantively, while female emigration has kept steady levels. Slight feminization of emigration.
- Migrants are younger, spatially select and have migrant connections
- Female migrants are more educated than male migrants
- Gendered patterns to being a spouse given sex of the household head
- Stark break in 2008 migrant selection patterns
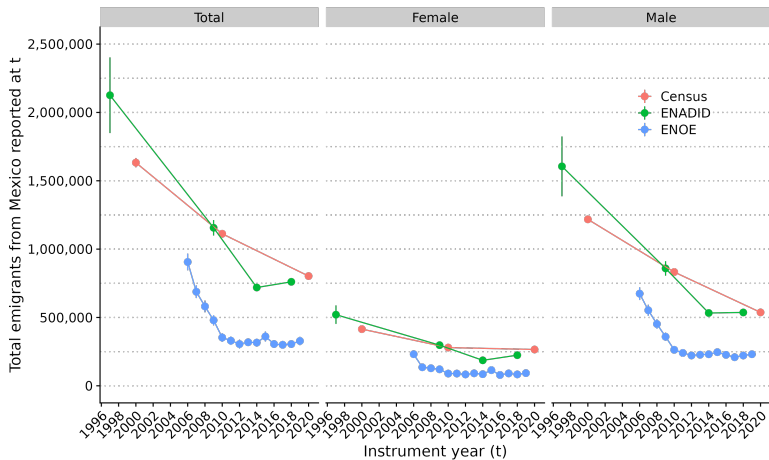
Emigration trends

Figure: Emigrant counts from Mexico by sex and year of instrument
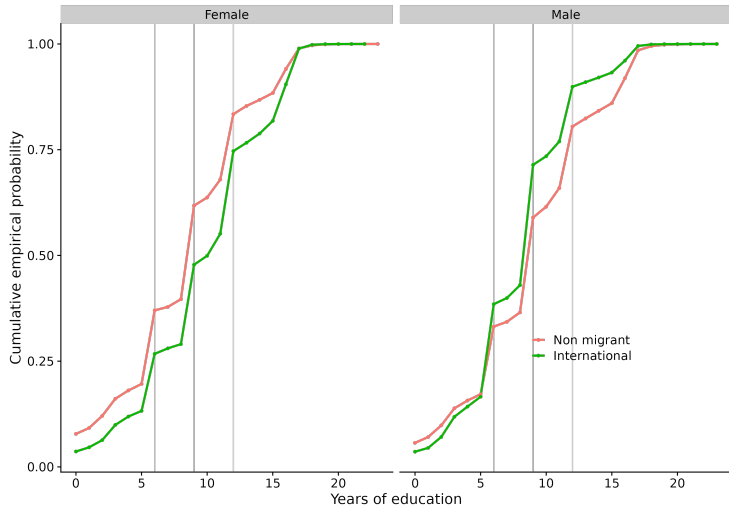
Emigrant selection: education

Figure: Cumulative years of education of international emigrants and non-emigrants from Mexico aged 18 and older (ENOE 2006-2019).

General selection patterns

$$Pr(\text{international migrant} = 1) = \beta_0 + \gamma_t + \alpha_r + \eta_i + \epsilon_i$$

- ▶ Comparison between migrants and non-migrants
- ▶ More likely to be a migrant if:
    - ▶ Younger (21-30)
    - ▶ Have ties to migration (living in historically migrant state, household and state remittances)
    - ▶ Being unemployed
    - ▶ Larger wage differential, closer to US border
    - ▶ Middle school education
    - ▶ Not the head of the household

Sex-specific selection patterns

- Male associations are larger
- Similar patterns except for:
  - Women are more likely to be migrants if they have a high school education, while men are more likely to be migrants if they have an elementary or middle school education
  - Women who are spouses (or partners) of the household head are less likely to be a migrant than female household heads. However, male spouses (or partners) of the household head are more likely to be a migrant than male household heads

Period and sex-specific selection patterns

Estimate OLS regression by sex and different periods: pre-financial crisis (2006-2008), post-financial crisis (2009-2012), transition into PRI (2012-2015) and a period of fluctuations in the exchange rate (2016-2019).

- ▶ Mostly the same patterns but smaller associations over time
- ▶ Associations are before the financial crisis have not been reached

Oaxaca-Blinder decompositions: most of the difference in share of migrants that are female or male comes from model differences rather than composition.

Discussion and next steps

- ▶ OLS results suggest that **who** migrates has remained steady over time
- ▶ But OB decomposition highlight that current model is not capturing most of the differences over time.
- ▶ Push factors are too limited to macroeconomic and individual characteristics
- ▶ Incorporate variables that have changed over time: US immigration policy, violence, and climate change.
- ▶ Promising data and granularity to understand more specific patterns across Mexico.

Thank you!

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