Continuities in Transnational Migration: An Analysis of Nineteen Mexican Communities

(Massey et al., 1994)

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Author Introduction

Doug Massey

Henry G. Bryant Professor of Sociology and Public Affairs, with a joint appointment in the Princeton School of Public and International Affairs.

Focus areas: International migration, race and housing, discrimination, education, urban poverty, stratification, and Latin America, especially Mexico.

Summary

This paper aims to explain the findings of some seemingly contradictory studies of Mexican migration since the 1980s by proposing a framework for a cumulative theory of migration.

I think his greatest contribution is the introduction of a temporal dimension and the discussion of the stages into which migration can be divided. He proposes roughly, I think, four stages in the theoretical section and five in the quantitative operation.

But all in all, following a typological division of migration history, we can understand that there are indeed some essential common processes in migration.

Outline

1. Background
2. A Cumulative Theory of Migration
3. Data
4. The Prevalence of Migration (Variable)
5. Commonalities in Transnational Migration (Analysis)
6. Conclusion

1. Background

The Paradox of Mexican Community Studies

- 1970s Joshua Reichert(1979, 1981, 1982), Richard Mines (1981, 1984) and Doug Massey (1985) and others.

"The earliest emigrants from a community were almost always males of working age…… Typically they came from the middle of the local hierarchy."

- 1980s Cornelius (1976), Stuart & Kearney (1981) and Lopez (1986) and others.

"Whereas some studies found that migrants were primarily land- less, others concluded that they were mainly landowners."

1. Background

Aim

- Comparisons must take into account prior migration histories.
- Introduce a new analytical tool: the migration prevalence ratio.
- Describe the demographic, social, economic, and geographic character of international migration as communities go from low to high prevalence.
- Put it forward as a general conceptual model (pp. 1496)…… Massey (1990) has labeled this self-generating process "the cumulative causation of migration," following Myrdal (1957). Reichert (1981) calls it the "migrant syndrome" and Alarcon (1988, 1992) refers to it as "northernization." (pp. 1501-1502)

2. A Cumulative Theory of Migration

- Early Stage Migrants see themselves as members of their home communities…… as more people are drawn into the process, some migrants inevitably seek out better opportunities in new places and occupations. In this way the diversity of foreign destinations, jobs, and strategies increases.
- Mid-stage The migration stream begins to focus more narrowly and the diversity of jobs, destinations, and strategies begins to constrict, a process Jones (1982a, 1982b, 1984) has called "channelization."
- Mid-late stage As families settle around specific places of employment, branch com- munities of long-term and permanent out-migrants begin to form……Increasingly, migration is channeled to these communities and the diversity of destinations associated with a place of origin is further reduced.
- Late stage The prevalence of migration and the stock of migrant experience then approach an upper asymptote.

3. Data

- Time 1982~1983, 1987~1991

  Interviewed during the winter and supplementary interviews were done during the summer.

- Places Mexican 19 communities

  By three Scales: Small cities, towns and ranchos.

- Obs. Num. 3, 400 households (236, 000 people)

  3030 households in Mexican and 370 households in U.S.

TABLE 1

CHARACTERISTICS OF 19 MEXICAN COMMUNITIES SAMPLED FOR A STUDY OF MIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES

Community	State	1990 Population	Year of Survey	Households on Sampling Frame	Size of Sample	Sampling Fraction	Refusal Rate	Size of U.S. Sample
Small cities:								
San Francisco del Rincón	Guanajuato	52,291	1987	780*	200	.256	.034	20
Los Reyes	Michoacán	32,474	1989	6,776	200	.029	.037	20
Ameca	Jalisco	30,882	1991	1,776	200	.113	.044	20
San Felipe Torres Mochas	Guanajuato	20,614	1990	3,771	200	.053	.047	20
Ixtlán del Rio	Nayarit	19,645	1990	4,472	200	.045	.029	20
Romita	Guanajuato	16,535	1988	2,723	200	.073	.057	20
El Salto	Jalisco	11,546	1982	1,903	200	.105	.038	20
Las Varas	Nayarit	11,541	1990	2,693	200	.074	.010	20
Towns:								
Chavinda	Michoacán	7,437	1982	1,925	200	.104	.015	20
Nahuatzen	Michoacán	7,025	1990	1,441	200	.139	.057	20
Ario de Rayón	Michoacán	6,429	1989	1,395	200	.143	.050	20
Unión de San Antonio	Jalisco	4,760	1988	799	200	.250	.115	20
San Diego de Alejandría	Jalisco	3,516	1988	510	200	.392	.038	20
Amacueca	Jalisco	2,685	1982	579	106	.183	.038	20
Ranchos:								
Santa María del Valle	Jalisco	2,321	1988	534	200	.375	.010	20
La Yerbabuena	Michoacán	2,240	1989	448	150	.335	.152	20
Tepec	Jalisco	1,573	1982	438	94	.215	.037	0
Mineral de Pozos	Guanajuato	1,737	1988	248	150	.605	.085	10
La Soledad	Guanajuato	1,080	1991	143	100	.699	.029	20
Total		236,331		33,354	3,400	.102	.048	350

* Sampling frame constructed for a neighborhood within the city; all other frames cover the entire community.

4. The Prevalence of Migration (Variable)

- Defination For any community in any year, the prevalence ratio is defined as the number of people with international migratory experience divided by the total number of people alive. (pp. 1495)
- Disadvantages of the technique (potential bias):
  - (a) Dehistoricize migration.
  - (b) Based on retrospective data, it assumes that migrants and nonmigrants experienced similar rates of mortality and internal out-migration in the past.
  - (c) Somehow omit the internal migration effect and out-migration effect.

- Describe

TABLE 2

PREVALENCE OF INTERNAL AND INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

Community	Year of Earliest U.S. Migration	Prevalence of U.S. Migration in Survey Year (%)	Year of Earliest Mexican Migration	Prevalence of Mexican Migration in Survey Year (%)	% of Population 15 and Older Born in Municipio
Small cities:					
El Salto	1923	21	1936	14	62
San Francisco del Rincón	1920	21	1918	5	84
Romita	1940	17	1933	8	78
Los Reyes	1943	30	1923	21	57
San Felipe Torres Mochas	1940	30	1921	21	78
Ixtlán del Rio	1941	27	1928	16	45
Ameca	1942	31	1936	18	76
Las Varas	1943	29	1944	11	55
Towns:					
Chavinda	1914	34	1930	9	79
Amacueca	1920	34	1927	17	82
San Diego de Alejandría	1919	43	1926	23	78
Unión de San Antonio	1925	23	1926	23	83
Ario de Rayón	1935	39	1949	11	76
Nahuatzen	1940	18	1936	28	95
Ranchos:					
Tepec	1940	18	1915	16	85
Santa María del Valle	1923	25	1928	13	78
Mineral de Pozos	1949	9	1937	23	87
La Yerbabuena	1923	60	1928	10	83
La Soledad	1939	28	1932	6	95
Average	1932	28	1930	15	77

NOTE.—Prevalence ratios are calculated for migrants 15 years old and older whose first trip was for two months or longer, for trips made in the period 1940–89.

4. The Prevalence of Migration (Variable)

- 6 cases

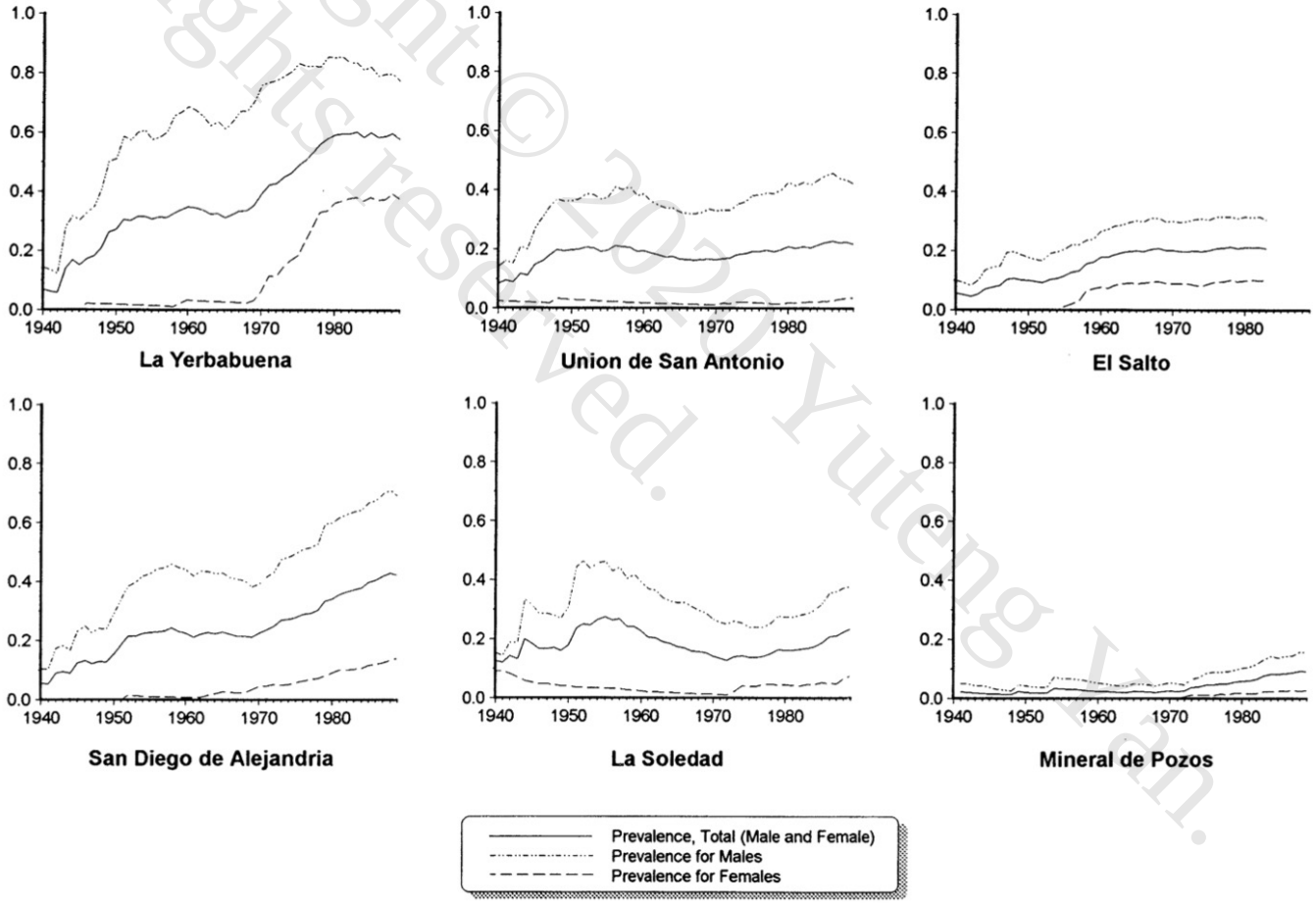

Fig. 1.—Trends in the prevalence of U.S. migration in six Mexican communities, 1940–89

5. Commonalities in Transnational Migration

Stages divided by data

- The first stage occurs when under 10% of adult community members have been to the United States.
- The next stage occurs when 10%-19% of all community members have acquired experience abroad.
- The third stage is reached when the overall prevalence ratio varies between 20% and 29%.
- The fourth stage occurs when prevalence varies between 30% and 39%.
- The fifth stage constitutes a situation of mass migration, with overall prevalence ratios above 40.

TABLE 3

PREVALENCE RATIO, RATE OF CHANGE IN PREVALENCE, AND CUMULATIVE U.S. EXPERIENCE IN COMMUNITY

CHARACTERISTIC	PREVALENCE OF MIGRATION IN COMMUNITY				
	0%–9%	10%–19%	20%–29%	30%–39%	≥40%
Prevalence ratio (%):*					
Males	14.3	27.8	41.6	58.7	80.8
Females	.9	5.1	11.3	12.5	29.8
All	7.6	15.7	25.4	33.7	54.9
Change in prevalence ratio (mean absolute % change [t to t + 1]):*					
Males	1.5	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.4
Females	.3	.6	.6	1.0	2.0
All	.7	.8	.8	1.1	1.4
Cumulative stock of U.S. experience (mean years per person):**					
Males	.1	1.1	3.6	2.7	7.3
Females	.0	.7	1.3	1.8	3.7
All	.1	1.1	3.5	2.6	7.1
Kinship links to U.S. migrants:**					
% with migrant parent	13.8	27.7	41.6	60.5	75.4
% with migrant grandparent	1.8	4.7	10.3	19.3	40.1
% with migrant sibling	22.6	38.6	59.0	62.7	77.8
% with no migrant relatives	65.6	45.2	25.3	10.3	7.8
Community-years (N)	228	384	234	56	23
No. of communities	19	18	15	8	2

* Estimated from the sample of all household members in 19 communities.
** Estimated from the sample of all household heads in all 19 communities.

The Accumulation of Social Capital

- As Reichert (1979), Mines (1981), and others noted, transnational migration begins among men but ultimately incorporates women as well.
- Thus, transnational migration appears to spread among men at a fairly constant rate irrespective of the degree of migratory preva- lence that has been achieved, but the spread of migratory behavior accelerates rapidly among women as prevalence rises
- At the highest prevalence level the typical household head has accumulated an average of seven years of experience in the United States, 75% have a parent who has been to the United States.

TABLE 4

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF MIGRANTS ON THEIR FIRST U.S. TRIP

CHARACTERISTIC	PREVALENCE OF MIGRATION IN COMMUNITY				
	0%–9%	10%–19%	20%–29%	30%–39%	≥40%
Sex:					
Female (%)	6.7	25.6	32.6	27.5	44.3
Age of male migrants (years):					
0–14 (%)	10.3	13.9	19.5	27.8	42.6
15–19 (%)	20.7	23.2	29.8	33.7	39.8
20–34 (%)	57.6	53.7	44.2	40.6	13.6
≥35 (%)	11.4	9.2	6.6	8.0	4.0
Mean age	23.7	21.8	19.4	19.9	14.5
Diversity (above groups, $n = 4$)	57	74	83	83	78
Diversity (5-year groups, $n = 11$)	52	67	68	64	51
Age of female migrants (years):					
0–14 (%)	54.4	43.9	42.7	39.6	33.8
15–19 (%)	2.9	13.0	16.5	14.5	24.8
20–34 (%)	27.9	32.2	27.0	32.2	24.3
≥35 (%)	14.8	10.9	13.8	13.6	17.1
Mean age	13.7	16.4	16.3	17.7	20.1
Diversity (above groups, $n = 4$)	20	69	83	81	87
Diversity (5-year groups, $n = 11$)	16	50	63	66	72
Household position:					
Head (%)	86.0	59.7	43.3	41.5	19.2
Spouse (%)	3.4	15.2	12.4	10.6	23.2
Son (%)	7.3	15.1	25.7	30.7	38.5
Daughter (%)	3.0	8.6	16.6	14.1	18.7
Other (%)	.3	1.4	1.9	3.1	.5
Diversity ($n = 5$)	18	53	71	66	78
No. of migrants (unweighted)	227	1,148	1,480	635	343

Increasing Demographic Diversity

- The share of women rises as migration moves from being a rare to a mass phenomenon.
- The mean age correspondingly drops from 23.7 years to 15 years, yielding a progressive "greening" of the male migration flow.....Transnational migration begins among males in their peak labor force years and spreads progressively to other age groups.
- In the case of women, developmental trends in diversity roughly parallel those of men, moving toward steadily greater heterogeneity with respect to age. However, the trend continues unabated through the mass migration category.
- As a community moves from a state of low to intermediate to mass prevalence levels, the share of household heads among migrants progressively falls while the proportion of sons, spouses, and daughters rises.

Rising and Falling Diversity of Trip Characteristics

TABLE 5

CHARACTERISTICS OF FIRST U.S. TRIP

CHARACTERISTIC	PREVALENCE OF MIGRATION IN COMMUNITY				
	0%–9%	10%–19%	20%–29%	30%–39%	≥40%
U.S. destination:					
California:					
Southern California (%)	24.0	55.6	52.4	44.1	42.4
Los Angeles County (%)	15.1	43.8	36.2	22.1	3.9
Orange County (%)	5.9	3.0	4.8	5.2	3.9
Riverside County (%)	.5	.5	1.3	1.8	.7
San Diego County (%)	.4	3.6	3.0	2.4	.2
Ventura County (%)	2.1	4.7	7.1	12.6	33.7
San Francisco Bay area (%)	8.4	7.1	7.6	10.8	1.3
Inland valleys (%)	27.3	14.5	13.2	28.9	5.3
Salinas Valley (%)	6.7	1.7	3.0	6.9	.9
Other California (%)	5.4	2.4	2.7	2.7	1.3
Texas (%)	11.8	8.7	10.9	.5	.5
Illinois (%)	.6	2.3	1.8	2.0	.2
Other (%)	15.9	7.9	8.2	4.0	48.0
Diversity (above groups, $n = 12$)	46	57	56	63	63
Diversity (original groups, $n = 67$)	35	46	43	44	46
Trip duration:					
1–2 months (%)	14.2	11.1	7.7	8.2	6.0
3–5 months (%)	20.9	14.9	11.7	14.1	11.4
6–11 months (%)	19.2	17.9	20.0	24.8	31.9
1–2 years (%)	18.3	19.0	20.3	20.8	19.3
3–5 years (%)	7.3	7.3	12.8	11.7	7.4
>5 years (%)	20.0	29.9	27.5	20.5	24.1
Mean trip length (years)	3.4	4.6	3.5	2.4	1.9
Diversity (above groups, $n = 6$)	71	87	91	90	87

NOTE.—The diversity figures for "original groups" are based on a breakdown of the data into smaller, more specific categories not reported in this article.

There is a pattern of rising, falling, and then rising diversity within communities.

Rising and Falling Diversity of Trip Characteristics

TABLE 5

CHARACTERISTICS OF FIRST U.S. TRIP

CHARACTERISTIC	PREVALENCE OF MIGRATION IN COMMUNITY				
	0%–9%	10%–19%	20%–29%	30%–39%	≥40%
Legal status:					
Bracero (%)	37.8	15.1	3.9	8.3	.0
Undocumented (%)	45.7	55.8	63.6	61.8	36.0
Documented (%)	16.5	29.1	32.5	29.9	64.0
Green card (%)	7.3	8.8	6.3	9.6	39.0
Legalization or amnesty (%)	.5	.6	2.1	.8	1.6
Citizen (%)	6.5	12.7	19.0	16.3	22.2
Tourist (%)	2.2	7.0	5.1	3.1	1.2
Diversity (above groups, $n = 6$)	43	57	56	47	54
Strategy:					
New	.9	1.5	2.8	5.3	1.0
Temporary	14.2	15.4	12.2	11.0	5.5
Recurrent	50.4	38.2	44.8	49.5	73.4
Settled	34.5	44.9	40.3	34.3	20.1
Diversity (above groups, $n = 4$)	46	59	67	73	61
U.S. occupation:					
Agriculture (%)	83.3	52.1	41.5	71.1	84.1
Nonagriculture (%)	16.7	47.9	58.5	28.9	15.9
Skilled manual (%)	2.0	5.6	7.9	1.9	.2
Unskilled manual (%)	11.1	27.3	27.3	17.8	10.0
Services (%)	2.9	10.7	17.8	7.1	4.4
Other (%)	.6	4.4	5.6	2.2	1.3
Diversity (above groups, $n = 5$)	24	60	71	51	57
Diversity (original groups, $n = 55$)	15	34	45	27	33
Diversity (males, original groups, $n = 48$)	24	30	39	39	41
Diversity (females, original groups, $n = 41$)	16	37	50	34	38
No. of migrants (unweighted)	227	1,148	1,480	635	343

NOTE.—The diversity figures for "original groups" are based on a breakdown of the data into smaller, more specific categories not reported in this article.

There is a pattern of rising, falling, and then rising diversity within communities.

TABLE 6

SOCIOECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF MIGRANT HOUSEHOLD HEADS PRIOR TO LEAVING ON THEIR FIRST U.S. TRIP

CHARACTERISTIC	PREVALENCE OF MIGRATION IN COMMUNITY				
	0%–9%	10%–19%	20%–29%	30%–39%	≥40%
Education:					
None (%)	23.2	23.5	16.4	21.6	6.4
1–5 years (%)	54.5	36.8	29.9	50.0	65.3
6+ years (%)	22.4	39.7	53.7	28.4	28.3
Mean years of schooling	2.7	3.7	5.2	2.9	4.3
Diversity (n = 20)	36	53	55	51	63
Land ownership:					
Landowners (%)	6.1	8.1	4.9	5.1	.5
Business ownership:					
Business owners (%)	9.3	5.8	7.4	3.9	8.1
Mexican occupation:					
Agriculture (%)	61.2	48.7	38.0	70.0	57.5
Nonagriculture (%)*	29.4	38.7	46.9	15.5	10.8
Professional-manager-owner (%)	.0	1.0	3.2	.0	.0
Technical-sales-clerical (%)	5.8	7.2	6.0	3.0	2.0
Skilled manual (%)	7.2	12.8	18.1	6.5	6.2
Unskilled manual (%)	9.6	11.3	10.7	2.8	2.0
Services (%)	6.9	6.5	8.8	3.2	.8
Not in workforce (%)	9.4	12.6	15.1	14.5	31.7
Diversity (above groups, n = 7)	32	50	59	47	41
Diversity (original groups, n = 64)	27	45	48	48	38
No. migrant household heads	172	670	674	190	57

NOTE.—The diversity figures for "original groups" are based on a breakdown of the Mexican occupations into 64 categories more specific than the seven general categories reported in this article.

* Categories of nonagricultural employment may not sum to nonagricultural total due to rounding error.

Increasing Socioeconomic Heterogeneity of Migration

- In general, both educational levels and diversity increase as migration becomes more prevalent, indicating that the educational selectivity of migration decreases.
- Distributions of property ownership also suggest that migration becomes less socioeconomically selective as migration spreads throughout the communit.
- The broadening of socioeconomic representation is suggested by the Mexican occupational data. At the lowest level of prevalence, migrants are drawn largely from agricultural.....As migration proceeds through the third prevalence category, however, there is a clear shift of migrants' origins to include a higher proportion of nonagricultural backgrounds.

Discussion

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