Migration from Rural Mexico to Rural America

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Immigration Reform: Implications for Farmers, Farm Workers, and Communities, Washington DC, June 13-14, 2007
New Perspectives on Migration from Rural Mexico

- Information has been scarce: From a few villages, at best
- The Mexico National Rural Household Survey: Filling the void
  – with retrospective migration “life histories.”
- Close to representative of all living people born in rural Mexico
Goals of this Talk

- Present patterns of migration from rural Mexico, 1980-2002
- Ask how they were affected by border enforcement, IRCA and NAFTA
- Draw conclusions, with eye towards present policy debate
Mexico National Rural Household Survey of 2003 (ENHRUM*)

- UC Davis and El Colegio de Mexico
- 14 Mexican universities, 100 university students
- Sample designed with INEGI
- 2 visits: Community (Summer 2002) and Household (January-February 2003) Surveys
- 1760 households, 80 villages

* Encuesta Nacional a Hogares Rurales de Mexico

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Migration and work histories covering 1980-2002 for:
- All household members
- Sons and daughters who were living outside the household in 2002
||| 2.16 El migrante ha trabajado en otros países en México: ||| 2.17 El migrante ha trabajado en los Estados Unidos: |||
|---|---|---|---|
| ¿Qué años trabajó en otra parte de México desde 1980? ¿En qué estado? Por su salario y por cuenta propia. | ¿Qué años trabajó en los EE.UU. desde 1980? ¿En qué estado? Por su salario y por cuenta propia. |

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Regional Distribution of ENHRUM Communities

ENCUESTA NACIONAL A HOGARES RURALES DE MÉXICO (ENHRUM), 2003
REGIONES Y DISTRIBUCIÓN GEOGRÁFICA DE COMUNIDADES ENCUESTADAS

SIMBOLOGÍA
- Región Noreste
- Región Noroeste
- Región Centro - Occidente
- Región Centro
- Región Sur - Sureste
- Comunidades encuestadas

Migration is Changing the Demographics of Rural Mexico

Share of Mexico's Rural Population that Had Migrated by Year, 1980-2002

- 12.6% in 1980
- 29.3% in 2002

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Most Migrate Internally, but International Migration Is Closing the Gap

Internal and U.S. Shares of Rural Out Migration in Mexico, 1980-2002

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Most Who Go North Migrate to Nonfarm Jobs

Percentage of Rural Mexicans Going to U.S. Ag and Non-Ag Jobs

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Some Lessons from ENHRUM

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1. Trade Integration Will Not Necessarily Reduce Migration

- Trade integration may reduce out-migration pressures in long run.
- ...but may intensify pressures in short run
  - Transition, importables to exportables
  - Hard to teach an old maize farmer new tricks
  - Income growth and mobility
2. Effects of Immigration Policies Are Also Contradictory

- IRCA employer sanctions vs. amnesty
- Border enforcement: barricade or sea wall?
  - Crossing vs. staying
Trend in US Farm Labor Supply from Rural Mexico is Downward, but Effects of Policies are Positive

Source: Analysis of 2003 Mexico National Rural Household Survey data
3. Leaky Fences

- Increased expenditures in U.S. border enforcement did not have a significant effect on migration from rural Mexico to the U.S.

- By gender: enforcement decreased migration by women (a little)
  - …but not by men
  - Exchange rates vs. enforcement
4. The Alternative of Not Migrating Abroad Is to Go Somewhere Else
5. Don’t Think Income Growth Will Keep People at Home

- As incomes rise, people become more mobile, not less
- They move out of rural areas and farm jobs
  - …to cities
  - …and abroad
- The question is “Where?”
6. Migration Transforms Household Economies in Mexico

Changing Composition of Average Household Income in a Michoacán Village

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Fletcher, 1999
…But Many of Migration’s Impacts Are Not found in the Migrant Households

❖ Each additional dollar remitted increases Mexico’s GDP by $2.69 to $3.17 (depending on who in Mexico receives it)
7. Migration Is Driven By Networks

![Graph showing the percentage effect on log-odds of new migration by gender and destination of network.]

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8. Poverty Effects Depend on How Extensive Networks Are

In short…

- Migration is increasing, driven by networks (and policies have unexpected effects)
- Remittances are increasing faster
- The impacts in Mexico are pervasive and bigger than the remittances, themselves

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