

Section IV
*A Binational Look at Household Composition,
Gender and Age Distribution, and Educational Experiences*

Executive Summary:

- The indigenous are younger and more recently arrived than mestizos. This explains in part why they are poorer and have fewer assets.
- If we count all the residents at the rural California addresses (residences) where the indigenous immigrants are living, we find that two thirds are adults and 60% of these adults are men. Only one third are children under 18. A surprisingly high 39% of the occupants of the housing are subleasing residents not well known to the principal residents.
- The survey found that within nuclear families it is extremely common to have some members living in Mexico while others live in the United States. Summing across all members of the nuclear families in the survey irrespective of place of residence, we find that two thirds live north of the border and one third live in Mexico. The majority of those living in Mexico were women and the majority of those living in the United States were men.
- Within these binational families there are more children between the ages of 0 to 5 resident in the United States, while more of the children of the respondents aged 6 to 14 are resident in Mexico. This implies that some people are leaving older children in Mexico with grandparents or relatives, and continuing to have children after coming to California. A small number also send their U.S.-born children to Mexico to be cared for by relatives.
- The nuclear family members outside the household are mostly wives and minor children in Mexico. However, some husbands and adult children live away from the household in the United States probably due to seasonal labor migration.
- Younger farmworkers have on average more education than older ones. However, the average educational level of Mexicans in California agriculture is not increasing. Perhaps, the source regions of the newer more recent waves of immigrants have lower educational levels than the veteran immigrant sending areas.
- Children that come to California before age 12 have a better chance of getting education and of not working in the fields than those that come at 12 or older.

IV-1 Introduction:

The history and network structure of indigenous farmworker immigrant communities discussed above has created a distinct household organization with important branches in both countries. Although similar to households in other Mexican farmworker immigrant communities, indigenous households have some unique qualities.¹ First, we will show based on the National Agricultural Workers Survey (the NAWS) that indigenous in

¹ For further discussion of comparison between mestizo and indigenous networks see Bade, 1994 (Sweatbaths, Sacrifice and Surgery)

California have more ‘disadvantages’ than other Mexican immigrant farmworkers. Then, by using our recently completed survey (the Indigenous Community Survey-ICS), conducted only among the indigenous, we will describe in detail how the family members are distributed between the two countries and how the educational opportunities differ for different immigrant groups.

IV-2 The disadvantages faced by indigenous Mexican farmworkers:

The indigenous farmworkers are a younger and poorer population than other Mexican immigrants. They have fewer assets, less education and speak less English (and Spanish) than other Mexicans. They are also a more “newcomer” group. These disadvantages that shape the lives of the indigenous are difficult but important to demonstrate.

The only source of data useable for comparing traits of different kinds of Mexican farmworkers is the National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS). Unfortunately, in order to make comparisons between the indigenous and other Mexican farmworker immigrants in the NAWS, we still have to designate a group that stands in for indigenous because we cannot identify them with sufficient precision as yet in the NAWS. We call this group a proxy for the indigenous.² We have chosen people who originate in a few southern states to represent the indigenous farmworker population because we know that a large proportion of these southerners are indigenous while the vast majority of people from the rest of Mexico are not indigenous but rather mestizo (non-indigenous) people.³ We recognize that the comparisons that we give below are an attenuated version of difficult-to-capture contrasts between the indigenous and others. Although the South may be mostly indigenous and the rest of Mexico has only a small minority of indigenous, the comparison is diluted by the fact that neither geographically-defined group is either purely indigenous or purely mestizo. Therefore, as you look over the comparisons in the next few of pages, remember that though the findings demonstrate the disadvantages faced by indigenous people, they actually understate these differences with the mestizos.

IV-3 The younger and more recently-arrived indigenous are poorer than other Mexicans:

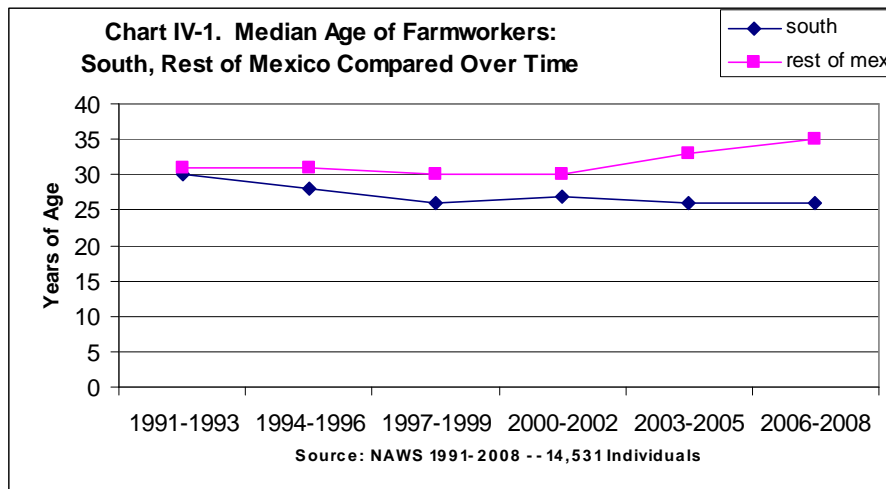
As described in the Introduction and in Section II, the population of southerners has been expanding quickly over the years.⁴ Interestingly, at the same time that the age of the

² The NAWS survey has for some years worked diligently to create ways to distinguish accurately the indigenous population among its interviewees. It is currently experimenting with new questions to accurately identify this group that is reluctant to self identify. For details see Gabbard, Kissam, Glassnapp et al., 2008

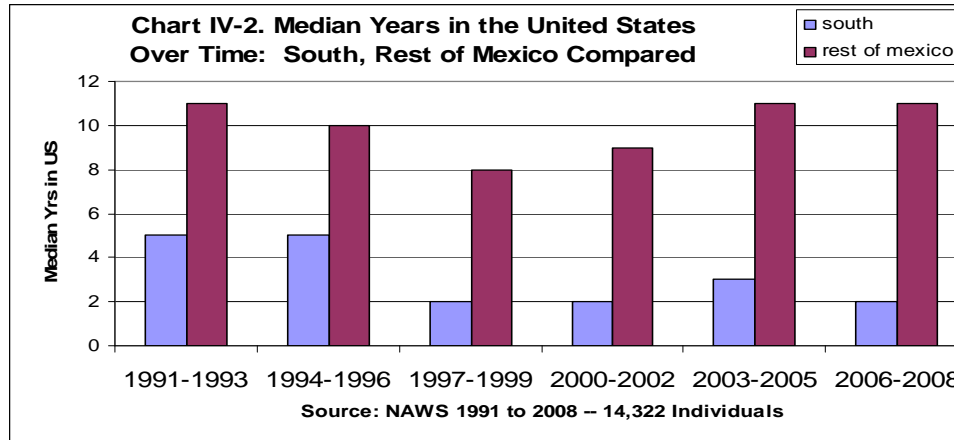
³ Again, the southern states are: Campeche, Chiapas, Guerrero, Oaxaca, Puebla, Tabasco, Veracruz, Yucatan; all others are considered the Rest of Mexico.

⁴ Recall that the proportion of southerners (among all Mexican farmworkers) increased from 7% to 29% when comparing 1991-93 with 2006-2008. The NAWS interviewed about 12,800 Mexican farmworkers from 1991 to 2008 in California.

typical farmworker from elsewhere in Mexico is increasing (somewhat) over these years, the age of the typical southerner is not (see Chart IV-1, below). The average age of a southerner in recent years has been about 25; while for those from elsewhere in Mexico, the average is closer to 35. And, this is true despite the median age of entry for the two groups being nearly the same (20 years old). This remarkably lower average age demonstrates a unique pattern for the indigenous. Although we cannot know for certain what explains this difference, the relatively recent entry of the indigenous hometowns into the international migration stream is clearly one main contributor.⁵ As can be seen in Chart IV-2, the median years in the United States for a southerner is far less than for a farmworker from elsewhere in Mexico and this difference has expanded over time. In the 2006 to 2008 period for example, the median years in the United States for a southerner is only two years while for a Mexican farmworker from elsewhere it is 11 years (Chart IV-2). It is clear that the villages of origin of the indigenous (at least for those working in California agriculture) are on average much newer to the international migrant stream and therefore are still composed of young new arrivals while the mestizo hometowns are on average more settled networks composed of a large proportion of settled veterans in the United States. Namely, though there are plenty of newcomers continuously arriving from elsewhere in Mexico, the proportion of newcomers is much higher among the southerners than among those California farmworkers from elsewhere in Mexico.



⁵ Another contributing factor may be that recent mestizo immigrants no longer enter agriculture as a first job at the same rate as recent indigenous immigrants.



This more recent arrival explains, in part, why the southerners are much poorer. For example, the median family income in the 2006 to 2008 period was \$13,750 for a southerner and \$22,500 for a California farmworker from elsewhere in Mexico. It also means that southerners have many fewer assets. For example, among married men accompanied by their families, only 13 percent of southerners own their dwelling while 29 percent of those from the rest of Mexico do. Comparing this same group for ownership of vehicles, 61% of the southerners and 77% of those from the rest of Mexico own cars or trucks. This same disadvantage also applies to education and the ability to speak English. The NAWS shows fewer years of school completed in Mexico for young southerners than for young people from the rest of Mexico.⁶ It is also likely that the quality of education is lower in indigenous areas.⁷ This lack of educational opportunity coupled with their lower level of Spanish language skills means that indigenous face more obstacles in learning English than other Mexicans.

Finally, the NAWS shows us how the southerners are much more likely to suffer from the ‘disadvantage’ of family separation from their nuclear family back home than other Mexican immigrants. Among NAWS respondents, 64% of the married southerners versus 51% of the married farmworkers from the rest of Mexico have their spouses back home in Mexico.

IV-4 The binational household composition from the Indigenous Community Survey-the methods:

We can rely on the NAWS and previous ethnographic research to demonstrate that the indigenous population is different from other Mexican farmworkers. But, to describe the intricate binational household structure of these inward-looking indigenous communities from our own work, we turn to the Indigenous Community Survey (ICS). Below, we use

⁶ For people 18 to 25 years old, southerners average 6.5 years of school compared to 7.3 years for those from the rest of Mexico (NAWS 1991 to 2008).

⁷ See Skoufias, Lunde, Patrinos, et al, 2007

the ICS to explain how various closely-connected households double up together at the same address. Moreover, the Indigenous Community Survey describes in some detail the important presence of renters from outside the immediate social circle of the principal residents at the address. Further, the ICS details the exact age and gender distribution of the principal residents at the interviewed site and it details the distribution of close relatives of the nuclear families of these residents who live in Mexico or elsewhere in the United States. The makeup of the households provides insight into the needs and behaviors of the indigenous farmworker population.

Beyond information about the 400 representative respondents in the Indigenous Community Survey, we collected information from the respondent about hundreds of others who were either resident in the household or members of the nuclear families of the residents but living elsewhere. In this way, we have been able to build a number-based portrait of how a large proportion of people related to the respondent are distributed.

The 400 interviews were done at 345 distinct addresses because many of the interviewees lived at the same address as another interviewee from the same Mexican town network.⁸ In effect, we have information on 400 distinct households living at 345 separate residences. This doubling (or tripling) up of households at one dwelling in order to save rent money is quite common.⁹ We collected information about people who had three different types of relationships to the respondent. One group included the respondent and those in his dwelling that are well known to the respondent (Known Residents); almost this entire group is relatives of the interviewee but it includes a few friends. We were able to collect detailed demographic information about 1,628 of these Known Residents. Another group (the Unknown Residents) was composed of 1,029 people living at the residences (usually renters), who were not close friends or relatives of the interviewee, although they usually speak the same indigenous language. For this group, the only information we have is their gender and whether or not they are children (under 18) or adults. We also gathered information on a third group of people (Out-of-Home Relatives) made up of the respondents' nuclear family members living outside the household, mostly in the home communities in Mexico.¹⁰ We were able to collect complete information on these 860 out-of-home individuals since they are well known to the respondent.

IV-5 The binational household composition—the total population at the residences:

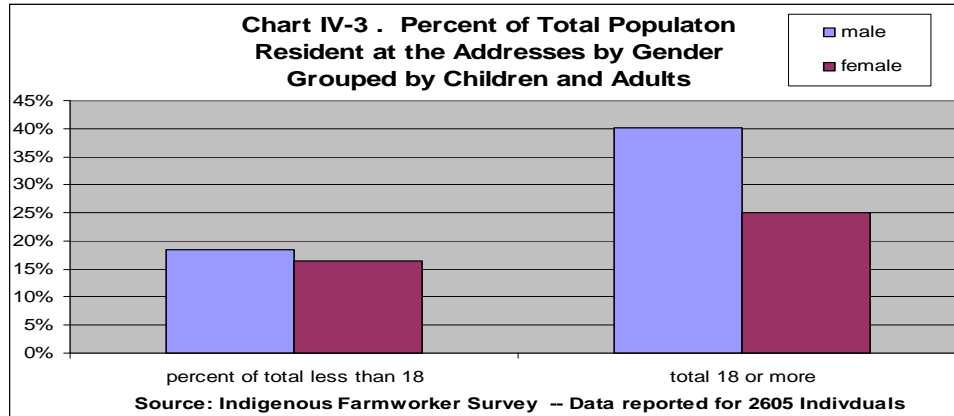
Before turning to the more complete data on the Known Residents, we point out two interesting findings about the total population of residents living together. First, of the more than 2,600 people (Known and Unknown Residents) living at these 345 residences,

⁸ A small proportion was living in outdoor encampments and had no dwelling.

⁹ We paid careful attention to each individual in the population to avoid any double counting of people who may have been reported by more than one respondent.

¹⁰ For married people we asked about spouse and children, for unmarried about parents and siblings.

a surprisingly high proportion (39%) are Unknown Residents. Also, since the total population of residents is made up of 40% adult males and 25% adult females, that means that only a third (35%) of all residents are children (see Chart IV-3, below). The population is two-thirds (nearly all) working adults.



IV-6 The Binational household composition—the cohabitation of close relatives:

A look at the data from the Known Residents makes it clear how closely many of the households are knit together by nuclear family. At the 345 addresses, fully 52 residences included married children living in the dwelling with one or both of their parents. In many cases, there is more than one married child at these cross-generational family residences. In addition, there are 24 households at these 345 addresses that have married siblings living at the same address as the interviewee. Again, there are cases where several married siblings live together. In sum, it is quite common for these addresses to have multiple households from the same natal or nuclear family. When we factor in that six of the households have both married children and married siblings living together, we are left with 70 out of 345 addresses (20%) which have either cohabitating married siblings, or a parent living with a married child.

IV-7 The binational household composition—the distribution of the binational nuclear families:

For the purpose of estimating the binational population distribution, we limited our analysis of the Known Residents and Out-of-Home Relatives just to nuclear family relatives of the respondent (i.e., children, parents and siblings, plus a few grandparents and grandchildren). For all these ‘known’ nuclear family relatives, we had age and gender information. Most (83%) of the Out-of-Home Relatives were back home in Mexico.

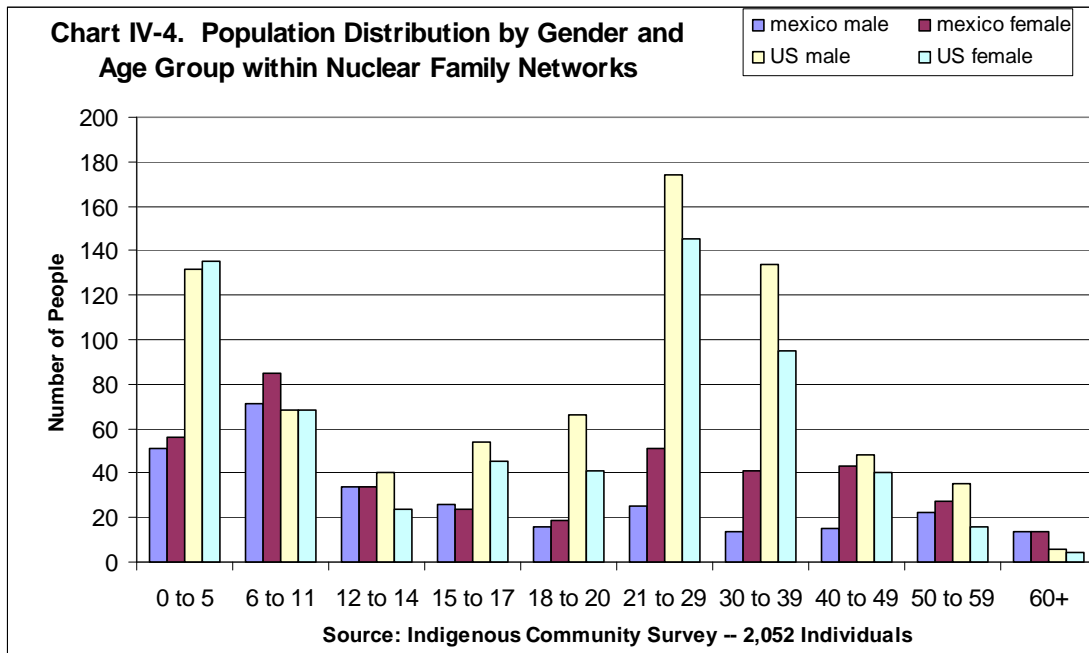
These combined data allow us to construct an approximate picture of the total nuclear family network of the respondents wherever they might be in the two countries. This picture provides insights about how the population is distributed between Mexico and the United States in total numbers and with respect to age and gender. Overall, we show that within the nuclear family networks most people reside north of the border. However, in

Mexico most members of the networks are female and in the United States most members are male. Next, we detail that there are more very young children in the United States than in Mexico but for children in the middle age range there are more in Mexico than the United States. Finally, we describe the nuclear family members that are located in Mexico outside the hometowns and in the United States outside the interviewee's residence.

In total, we have gender, age and location information on almost 2,200 members of the nuclear families of the respondents. We notice immediately that there are more people in the networks in the United States (69%) than in Mexico (31%). International migration, despite its short history for some communities, has meant the transfer of a large majority of nuclear family members to the United States for those households with migrants. Secondly, we observe that among those of all ages in the United States, most are men (56%), and among those in Mexico most are women (58%). This gender pattern applies to the children as well as the adults. For those under 18, in Mexico 52% of the children are females, while in the United States 52% are males.

Taking a closer look at this population by age group and gender in the two countries provides useful insights about how this transnational community is distributed. Before reading on, take a moment to look at Chart IV-4 below and familiarize yourself with the four categories displayed in the chart: Mexican resident males (blue bar), Mexican resident females (red bar), U.S. resident males (yellow bar), U.S. resident females (green bar). Notice that the Mexican-resident bars (red and blue) appear to the left of the U.S.-resident bars (yellow and green).

The Chart shows that for most age categories there are more males and more females in the United States than in Mexico. In fact, from ages 0 to 5 and from 15 to 39, there are more of both males and females in California than in Mexico. Moreover, for all age ranges from 12 to 59, there are more males in California than in Mexico. Nevertheless, there are important examples when there are more males or females of a given age range in Mexico than in the United States. First, for all women above 40, there are more females in these U.S.-oriented nuclear families in Mexico than in the United States. For men this is true only for men 60 or more. In the case of men, this phenomenon reflects the location of the fathers of the California-based respondents; in the case of women, the pattern reflects the location of wives as well as mothers.



Another important exception is the female children from 6 to 14 and the male children from 6 to 11.¹¹ In these cases, there are more of these relatively ‘older’ children in Mexico than there are in the United States. Recall that we discovered that many families leave their first born (relatively older) children in Mexico to be raised by grandparents and migrate as a couple to California where they continue to produce more (the last born) offspring north of the border.¹² The married young male indigenous farmworker immigrants in California often decide to be joined by their wife in California and leave (some or all of) their children in the hometown because it makes sense to them economically.¹³ First, the costs of raising children in California are high, including food, clothes and child care while the parents are working. Second, it is difficult to safely pass young children across the border. Third, the young immigrants believe that they can feel sure that the remittances to their parents will be used in a productive manner if the expressed destination of the money is for the sustenance of both their parents and their children.¹⁴

¹¹ Young teenage boys may come to (or stay in) the United States in preference to girls due to their greater wage-earning capacity as farmworkers.

¹² There are many couples living here in the newer networks who have all their children abroad. But in addition, four of the nine communities interviewed by the ICS have families with children living in both places. It should be pointed out that some families return their U.S.-born children to Mexico to be cared for by relatives while they remain in the United States. A discussion of indigenous grandparents taking care of children is found in Navarette Linares, 2008, p. 126

¹³ In the ICS, we had data on the years in the United States for 159 men and on their resident wives. The average time since arrival in the U.S. for men is 13.8 years and for the women it is 8 years. Therefore, on average, men come 5.8 years before their wives to the United States.

¹⁴ One of our Mixteco-speaking interviewers, Jorge Sanjuan from Teposcolula, Oaxaca, is the source of this insight. Some parents may decide to send their children back to Mexico due to the fear of raising children in what is perceived as a dangerous environment.

It is not surprising that there are more young children 0-5 and young adults 18 to 39 north of the border since the United States attracts young workers of reproductive age. However, it is critical to remember that in the age range of 18 to 39, a large proportion of the immigrant households are not families living together but are solo workers (especially men) without children accompanying them in the US.

Most of the nuclear family relatives living away from the respondent are spouses and children residing in Mexico. The 65 spouses (almost all women) resident in Mexico have a lot of minor children (279) living with them. The few (7) spouses living away from their interviewee partners but residing elsewhere in the U.S. are almost all men with few minor children living with them. Almost all the relatives living away from the interviewee in the United States are adults (most are siblings and children of the respondent). The majority of relatives living in Mexico are children. Overall 82% of all the Out-of-Home Relatives are residing in Mexico.

The location of the family in Mexico is surprisingly concentrated in the home regions. Among the spouses living in Mexico, 92% live in the home states of Oaxaca and Guerrero. Among the children, 93% live in the home state. Those relatively few not in the home states are predominantly found in Sonora and Baja California. The migration from the border to California seems less important than it once was, at least for members of these California-based nuclear family networks. The vast majority of the migrants in these networks are coming directly to the United States from their home states now. The ones who lived for a time in the border areas in large measure have moved their families to the United States.¹⁵

IV-8 A contradiction between improving education across Mexican generations coupled with educational stagnation among California farmworkers:

First, it is clear for the indigenous sampled by the Indigenous Community Survey that school attendance has been improving over time. Namely, the younger the age cohort the higher the level of education.¹⁶ However, the average is still between 7 and 8 years of school for the cohort from 18 to 20 at the time of the interview (see chart IV-5, below). For the older cohorts, it is obvious that in previous times access to education was more difficult. The oldest cohorts hardly attended school at all.

Ironically, this relatively better education for the young compared to their fathers has not meant an improving level of average education levels for Mexicans in California agriculture over time. According to the NAWS, the average years of school for farmworkers interviewed in the 1990s is no lower than those interviewed in the 2000 to 2008 period.¹⁷ In our Indigenous Community Survey sample, the level of education declines according to how difficult road access is to major cities (see Table IV-1, below).

¹⁵ There continues to be heavy migration to the Mexican border states from indigenous areas but not from these family networks with roots in California.

¹⁶ The older cohorts in the NAWS show much lower levels of education than for younger cohorts. This is true for the south and for the rest of Mexico.

¹⁷ This is true for both the South and the rest of Mexico.

It is known that in the migratory source regions of Mexico, more remote areas (many of them indigenous) with fewer political assets and poorer roads receive fewer educational resources. Since California agriculture is being continuously replenished by new waves of immigrants while the older cohorts leave, it may be that the average educational level of farmworkers is not improving because the source of immigrants is continuously shifting to more remote areas with low levels of education.

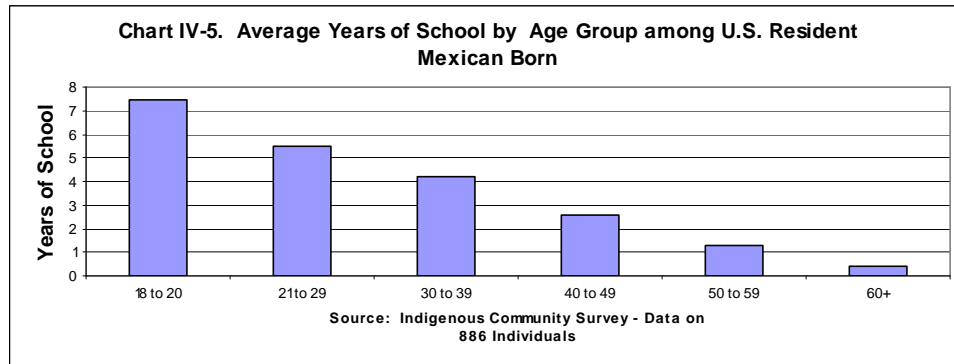
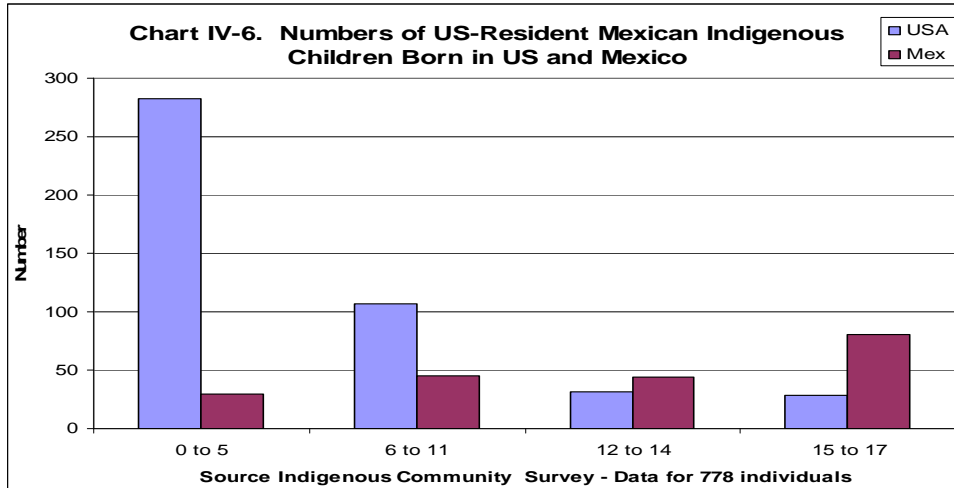


Table IV-1. Mean Years of School by Remoteness of the Town to Major Cities in Mexico (18 to 25 years old only)

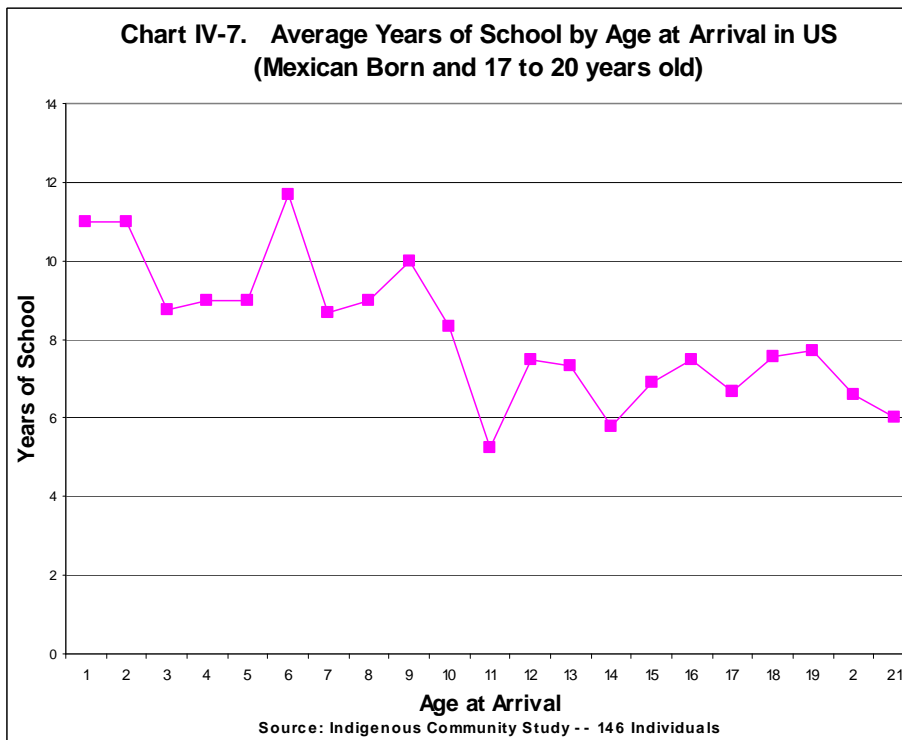
town	mean years of school	state of road
tepos	9.8	paved road to big town-near tlaxiaco
cuevas	7.8	paved road to big town near juxtlahuaca
candelaria	7.7	45 minutes. from chalcatongo by gravel
cerro	7.1	45 minutes from santos reyes nopola by gravel
venado	6.7	1 hr, dirt from Putla Villa de Guerrero
loxicha	6.5	1.5 hrs. gravel and dirt to Main road
piñas	6.2	1.25 hrs, gravel to Juxtlahuaca
peras	4.4	1.25 hrs, gravel to Juxtlahuaca
jicayan	4	3 hrs, gravel & dirt to Juxtlahuaca

IV-9 Analysis of education and labor force participation in the United States:

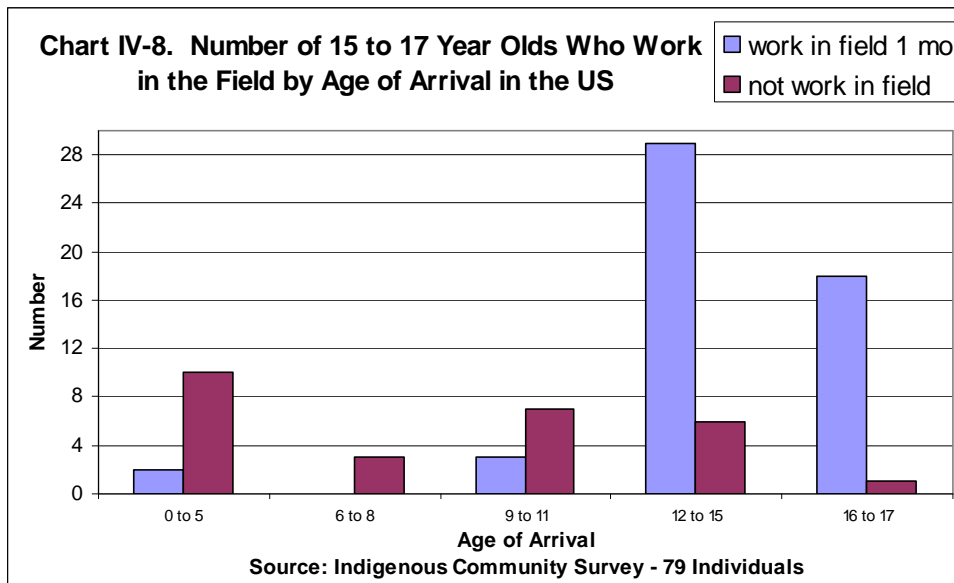
Most children living in the Indigenous Community Survey households were born in the United States. Almost half of the children residents (49%) in these households are less than six. Taken overall, 70% of the U.S. residents less than 18 were born north of the border. However, as is evident in Chart IV-6, the older the child, the greater the likelihood of being born in Mexico. For those less than six, 90% were born in the United States while for those 15 to 17, 75% were born in Mexico. As we will see below, place of birth and age of arrival have impacts on education and labor force participation.



For the group of young Mexican-born indigenous immigrants, the age of arrival in the United States makes a big difference in how many years of school they are able to achieve. We have information for 146 young Mexican-born immigrants resident in the United States who were aged 17 to 20 at the time of the survey. Those that came before age 12 had a median of 10 years of school while those who came at 12 or older had a median of 7 years of school. In Chart IV-7, one can observe a watershed point at approximately 10 or 11 years old of age at arrival. After this point, educational achievement (above the eighth grade) becomes less likely. Age of arrival is crucial for education. Among the U.S.-born 17 to 20 year old group (there are only 20), the achievement is even higher. The median years of school for these U.S. citizens is 11.5 years.



These young people who arrive after 11 years old don't go to school, in part, because they work in the fields. Among the 79 Mexican-born children from 15 to 17 found in the survey, most (68%) arrived when they were at least 12 years old. And, it is clear that age of arrival, like for educational level, determines whether one works in the field. As shown in Chart IV-8, the vast majority of those who arrived at 12 years or older work a month or more per year in the fields while the majority of those 15 to 17 year olds who came earlier in their life do not work in agriculture.¹⁸ This is typical of the community in general since 93% of the men and 88% of the women over 18 work a month or more in the agricultural fields. Almost all in the community, even young mothers, are available for work when they can find it.



¹⁸ There are only twenty-eight 15 to 17 year old U.S.-born children in these households. Slightly over half of these (16 of them) work in the fields.