

## Immigrants Who Leave: The Impact of Immigrant Population Overturn on Illinois Communities

Summary: Emigration is problematic for state and local policymakers because it can destabilize communities. This destabilization may increase if Congress creates a temporary worker program. This paper examines emigration among Mexican immigrants and finds that about 8 percent of Mexican immigrants leave Illinois after five years. Among Mexican-born children however, *more than one-third* leave the state within five years.

Illinois is home to large numbers of immigrants, and state and local policymakers are concerned about the positive and negative impacts of immigration. These policymakers are charged with providing services to immigrants such as education, police and health care, and with maximizing immigrant contributions such as tax payments, business development and new homeownership.

As state and local policymakers contend with integrating immigrant populations, national lawmakers have opened a debate on creating a temporary immigrant worker program. The U.S. Senate passed a bill to establish such a program in 2006 and President George W. Bush has supported the idea. It is unknown what the prospects of temporary worker legislation are in the U.S. Congress, but the possibility of such a program is sufficient to raise questions of how it might affect Illinois.

Temporary immigration is important to state and local policymakers because it implies not only increased immigration but also increased emigration. Debates about the impact of immigrants usually focus on how many immigrants are coming to an area. But the question of how many immigrants leave an area may be equally important.

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Local institutions have a powerful interest in the question of temporary immigration because they bear the brunt of its potentially negative effects. Schools can build on students' skills only if those students remain with them from year to year. Police and fire departments are able to do their job better when they know members of the community. City planning departments have to be able to assume that the community is not in a state of constant population overturn. These jobs are made harder if community members are constantly coming and going.

### **Beginning to Understand Emigration in Illinois**

A preliminary step toward understanding the potential impact of turnover due to temporary immigration is to assess the extent of current emigration, particularly where it takes place and who it involves. Does emigration affect some communities more than others? Does it involve all types of immigrants – permanent, temporary, undocumented? And which levels of government – federal, state or local – are most affected by emigration when it does take place?

In this paper I use new data from the American Community Survey of 2005, combined with data from the 2000 census and the National Center for Health Statistics, to estimate the extent of Mexican immigrant emigration from the state of Illinois. I focus on the state of Illinois in this report because emigration and its impact has not been sufficiently examined at the state level. State governments provide important human services to children, the sick and to the elderly, and these governments have an interest in knowing what kind of emigration and population overturn is taking place. A state analysis also brings us closer to examining the impact of emigration on local towns and cities.

Most of the data tables and analysis in this report concern persons born in Mexico. I focus on Mexican immigrants because they are the focus of the national policy debate on the impact of immigration. Mexicans are also the majority of new immigrants coming to Illinois. The large number of Mexicans in the census and American Community Survey also provide a robust sample for analysis.

### **A Method for Measuring Emigration**

In this analysis I use the 2000 Census, the 2005 American Community Survey, and data from the National Center for Health Statistics. I use the 2000 census for baseline estimates of the population, broken down by age categories. The census and the ACS are sources of information on the total population of foreign-born persons, the year in which immigrants arrived in the U.S., and the extent of migration between states. The National Center for Health Statistics is the source of deaths among immigrants; this is used to factor out deaths in order to know how many persons who have left the population have departed to another state or country.

In my estimates I examine age categories because the implications of emigration are different in the case of children versus adults, and in the case of working-age adults versus the elderly. The loss of children, for example, affects school districts, while the loss of workers implies overturn in the workplace and possibly a loss of tax dollars that have to be made up. In the case of the elderly, emigration may actually relieve the state of expensive eldercare costs.

I begin with 2000 data on age cohorts and then “forward” these age cohorts to 2005 by examining them in the 2005 ACS. Here is an example of how the age cohorts are forwarded

- Step 1: begin with the number of immigrants aged 0-9 in the year 2000
- Step 2: determine the number of immigrants aged 5-14 in the year 2005 who arrived in the U.S. no later than 2000

This gives us an artificial cohort to examine.

### Initial Indications of Emigration

In Illinois, the number of immigrants grew by 185,000 between 2000 and 2005. Yet the number of immigrants who report arriving between 2000 and 2005 is 351,000. For this to be possible, some of the immigrants who had arrived prior to 2000 must have died or moved out of the state. So the question is how many of the immigrants present in 2000 died, how many moved to another state in the U.S., and how many left the U.S. altogether.

## Basic Population Change Suggests Emigration

### Intimations of Emigration: Illinois

	2000	2005	# Change 2000-2005	Entered 2000- 2005
Mexico	610,725	708,126	97,401	154,252
Other Latin America	117,148	124,972	7,824	24,635
India	82,344	108,777	26,433	24,035
Philippines	66,024	83,010	16,986	14,091
China/Taiwan/Hong Kong	49,471	60,751	11,280	13,832
Korea	40,722	51,655	10,933	10,219
Middle East/Northern Africa	46,509	53,866	7,357	10,635
Other Asia	69,242	64,616	(4,626)	13,906
Poland	140,472	144,348	3,876	29,385
Former USSR exc. Baltic Republics	45,233	43,144	(2,089)	9,387
Other Europe	206,191	209,164	2,973	32,542
Rest of world	44,419	51,119	6,700	14,300
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,518,500</b>	<b>1,703,548</b>	<b>185,048</b>	<b>351,219</b>

The population growth is **smaller** than the number of persons who report arriving here.

Using Mexican immigrants, and breaking down the population into age cohorts, the initial finding shows that all age cohorts show a decline in population between 2000 and 2005. The highest levels of population decline are among the youngest and the oldest persons.

This population decline can be due to one of two causes: mortality among the population or outmigration, either to another state or out of the country. With children, we would expect little population loss due to mortality, while we would expect greater mortality among the oldest persons.

We do not have reliable data on the number of immigrants who migrate out of the state of Illinois. But we do have good information on the number of immigrants who die, as the National Center for Health Statistics compiles statistics on the number of deaths by state, and breaks down the deaths by age of the deceased and by certain countries of origin including Mexico. These data were available for a five year period, 1998-2003. We use the number of deaths in this period and apply them to the 2000 population to estimate how many of the persons in 2000 are likely to be alive in 2005.

## Emigration from Illinois

The table below shows the effect of subtracting out the deaths of persons between 2000 and 2005. After subtracting deaths, the decline in population can be attributed to outmigration.

Using children as an example, in 2000 there were 30,097 Mexican immigrants in Illinois who were between the ages of 0 and 9. According to our cohort tracking method, this population fell by 2005. After subtracting out the number of persons who died, we are left with an estimate of 11,060 Mexican outmigrants in that age cohort. This suggests that 36.7 percent of the Mexican population aged 0-9 years in 2000 left Illinois.

**Role of Mortality in Population Change: Mexican Immigrants in Illinois**

Age Cohort	2000 Population	2005 Population	# Change	Deaths	Population Change Net of Mortality = <b>Net Migration</b>	Net Migrants as a Percent of 2000
0-9 in 2000; 5-14 in 2005	30,097	19,005	-11,092	-32	-11,060	36.75%
10-19 in 2000; 15-24 in 2005	70,582	66,128	-4,454	-450	-4,004	5.67%
20-29 in 2000; 25-34 in 2005	176,549	161,603	-14,946	-649	-14,297	8.10%
30-39 in 2000; 35-44 in 2005	160,125	142,605	-17,520	-667	-16,853	10.52%
40-49 in 2000; 45-54 in 2005	94,843	92,931	-1,912	-790	-1,122	1.18%
50-59 in 2000; 55-64 in 2005	45,929	45,683	-246	-881	635	1.38%
60-69 in 2000; 65-74 in 2005	20,283	17,240	-3,043	-1,058	-1,985	9.79%
70-79 in 2000; 75-84 in 2005	9,106	6,282	-2,824	-965	-1,859	20.42%
80+ in 2000; 85+ in 2005	3,211	2,397	-814	-711	-103	3.21%
<b>Total born in Mexico</b>	<b>610,725</b>	<b>553,874</b>	<b>-56,851</b>	<b>-6,203</b>	<b>-50,648</b>	<b>8.29%</b>

Older age cohorts exhibit net migration also, but not as much as among children. Of people in their prime working years, such as those who were in their thirties in the year 2000, only about one in ten migrates away from Illinois. Among the elderly, there is substantial population decline between 2000 and 2005 but, not surprisingly, much of the change is explained by mortality.

### Where Do Mexicans Migrate to?

Having established that there is substantial outmigration among Mexican children, the next question is whether they migrate to other parts of the U.S.

## Emigration from Illinois

or whether they leave the country entirely, presumably to return to Mexico. My analysis strongly suggests that nearly all of the Mexican children who leave go back to their country of birth. Among persons who were under 20 years of age and who departed the state, about 59 percent appear to have returned to Mexico. Less than half of adults who left Illinois, however, seem to have returned to Mexico, meaning they would have migrated elsewhere in the U.S. (see table below).

The census and the American Community Survey do not provide complete estimates about where immigrants go when they leave a state. The ACS reports on where a person lived 12 months prior to that survey. We can multiply this one-year estimate by five to have a sense of how many immigrants left Illinois for other states in the union over the five-year period 2000-2005.

Once we have an estimate for how many immigrants have gone to other states, we can compare this against our number of how many immigrants have outmigrated from Illinois. The difference between the outmigration estimate and the number of immigrants who went to other states represents the number of immigrants who went back to their home country, in this case Mexico.

The table below shows the net migration estimates, the number of in-migrants and the number of outmigrants. The outmigrants are further broken down into domestic and foreign based on the methodology described above.

Age Cohort	Components of Migration: Born in Mexico (Selected Age Cohorts)						
	Net Migration	In-Migrants	Out-Migrants				Foreign Percent of Out-Migration
			Total Out-Migrants	Domestic	Foreign		
0-9 in 2000; 5-14 in 2005	-11,060	0	-11,060	-275	-10,785		97.5%
10-19 in 2000; 15-24 in 2005	-4,004	3,440	-7,444	-3,025	-4,419		59.4%
20-29 in 2000; 25-34 in 2005	-14,297	4,495	-18,792	-11,515	-7,277		38.7%
30-39 in 2000; 35-44 in 2005	-16,853	1,385	-18,238	-10,735	-7,503		41.1%
Total born in Mexico	-50,648	10,490	-61,138	-30,935	-30,203		49.4%

Thus we have a net outmigration from Illinois of 11,060 Mexican-born children aged 0-9 years and living in Illinois at the time of the 2000 census. Of these children, we estimate zero in-migrants from other states as of 2005. However, we find that 275 have left Illinois for other states, and 10,875 have returned to Mexico. The number going back to Mexico represents 97.5

percent of all out-migrants. In other words, when Mexican-born children leave Illinois, it is nearly always to return to Mexico.

### Conclusion

This paper began by attempting to quantify and analyze at least part of the question of how many immigrants leave the state of Illinois. I focused on Mexicans because they are a very large population and they are perhaps the largest question left unresolved in American immigration policy, i.e., how does the U.S. accommodate itself to its need for Mexican labor, to the proximity of Mexican labor, and to the fact that today's immigration system provides extremely few legal opportunities for Mexicans to immigrate to work here.

The popular image of a Mexican immigrant coming to Illinois to work and then leaving to go back to Mexico involves an adult of working age. However, my estimates of which Mexican age groups are most likely to depart finds that the highest rate of emigration is among the youngest Mexican children, those aged 0-9 years. When Mexican children depart the state, it is almost always to return to Mexico.

The first and most obvious implication of this finding is for the school system in the state of Illinois. Further research is needed on whether teachers and school administrators experience the kind of Mexican outmigration suggested by the numbers examined here. Secondly, a related question is whether U.S.-born Mexican youth leave the country. Their departure is potentially more troubling because they are likely to return to the U.S. at a later date, without the benefit of an American education.

Although the percentage of Mexico-born children who leave Illinois to go back to Mexico appears to be high, it is important to note that the total number, some 11,000, is itself not terribly high and is unlikely to destabilize school districts, given that the 11,000 are probably spread across many districts.

Finally, Illinois policymakers need to give consideration to the question of whether rapid rates of outmigration are desirable. This in turn should inform the state's response to federal proposals that would increase temporary immigration among working-age persons and thereby raise outmigration rates even further.