

**Goshen College**  
**Center for Intercultural Teaching & Learning (CITL)**

**Research Note: Migration In/Out of Indiana**

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Beginning in the 1990s, Elkhart and Noble Counties in north-eastern Indiana experienced rapid growth among the Latino population. By 2006, Indiana was ranked 10<sup>th</sup> in the United States as having the fastest growing immigrant population (Migration Policy Institute, 2008). Some school districts illustrate the concentration of Latino students: in 2008, almost 40% of students in the Goshen Community Schools (Indiana Accountability System for Academic Progress, 2009) were identified as Hispanic. In all, this tremendous growth of the Latino, primarily Mexican, population occurred as the local economy was booming.

The summer and fall of 2008 brought devastation to the area as the global economic crisis was experienced locally by the collapse of the Recreational Vehicle (RV) industry. Unemployment in the county increased from 4.7% in Dec 2007 to 16.0% in December of 2008, and has continued to rise to between 17% and 19% in the first half of 2009 (Hoosier Data, 2009). Elkhart County garnered a position as one of the areas in the United States most severely affected by the economic crisis, and was the location for President Obama's speech in February, 2009, to unveil his new administration's economic stimulus plan.

In the fall of 2008 this study began as a study of Mexican transnational immigrants to Elkhart County, Indiana and how the interplay of decisions about migration and decisions about educational outcomes for children in transnational families. As the economic crisis hit, and continued to worsen in its local impact, during the course of the study, it became imperative to examine the possibility of out migration away from the county. Our experience in one community in Indiana suggests that migration is not only motivated by economic factors in a uni-dimensional sense. Instead, multiple factors including educational involvement and progress of children, family size, and connections in the community are utilized in decision-making about migration.

In January of 2009, The Learning Generation Institute (LGI) of northern Indiana made available to the Center for Intercultural Teaching and Learning data from a November, 2008 survey. CITL staff entered and analyzed these data, and then organized a second wave of survey data collection in March of 2009. The hope is that future waves of data collection can take place to develop a time series dataset. Survey participants were Mexican nationals living in northern Indiana with appointments at Mexican Mobile Consulate events organized in cooperation with LGI in South Bend (November) and Shipshewana (March), Indiana. All people who appeared for appointments with the Consulate were given the opportunity to participate in the brief survey (encuesta). Respondents provided their consent to participate by completing the survey. A total of 376 people completed the survey in November of 2008, while 543 people completed the survey in March of 2009<sup>1</sup>. A few changes were made to the survey from November to March. While these changes were primarily editorial in nature, two were significant. Due to the lack of variation in response to the November question about annual family income (see Table 3 below), the lower category (less than \$45,000 per year) was split using federal poverty guidelines into two categories: less than \$25,000 (poverty for a family of 4) and \$25,000 to \$44,999. Finally the addition of a question asking respondents to identify the primary reason for living somewhere other than Indiana in the next year, or considering moving away, allowed for some information about the motivation for out-migration to be collected.

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<sup>1</sup> Both the November and March survey instruments are attached as Appendix A and B, respectively.

The data discussed below originate from convenience sample of people who were waiting for documents to be processed by Mexican Consulate officials. As such, the sample is not representative of the Mexican immigrant population in Indiana and we have no way of determining how this sample is different from the larger population of Mexican immigrants living in the area. Despite these concerns, the data does provide a picture of the current population of Mexican immigrants living in northern Indiana. Mexican immigrants in Indiana, as in other areas, are comprised of legal residents, persons without legal status, and families that are of mixed status. In 2000, the US Census Bureau reported serious problems across with country with a Latino undercount due to fear of deportation among immigrants who were asked to complete the Census (Clay, 2007; Census, 2003). While estimates of the Hispanic population in northern Indiana have been calculated using data from the 2000 Census, the next opportunity to have a more complete picture of the Mexican immigrant population will not come until 2010<sup>2</sup>. Thus, while the data discussed below suffer from unidentifiable bias and lack of representation, these data are valuable nonetheless as there is no other source of such information available.

### *Background Demographic Information*

Survey respondents in both November and March were primarily male, between the ages of 25 and 44, and earning less than the median income in the United States. Tables 1-3 describe the sample population from both waves of data collection. Some respondents did not answer the demographic questions, but the percentages reported below are of valid responses to each question.

Table 1 Gender (Género)

<b>Gender (November)</b>		<b>Gender (March)</b>	
Masculino	57.8% (212)	Masculino	61.0% (315)
Feminino	42.2% (146)	Feminino	38.8% (200)
(N = 367; Missing = 9)		(N = 516; Missing = 27)	

Table 2 Age (Edad)

<b>Age (November)</b>		<b>Age (March)</b>	
Less than 18	0.5% (2)	Less than 18	0.0% (0)
18-24	20.2% (74)	18-24	23.6% (125)
25-44	65.4% (240)	25-44	62.5% (331)
45-64	13.9% (51)	45-64	13.0% (69)
65 o mas	0.0% (0)	65 o mas	0.9% (5)
(N = 367; Missing = 9)		(N = 530; Missing = 13)	

Table 3 Income per year (Ingreso familiar (por año))

<b>Income (November)</b>		<b>Income (March)</b>	
Menos de \$45000	92.0% (286)	Menos de \$25000	67.0% (325)
Mas de \$45000	8.0% (25)	\$25000 a \$44999	29.1% (141)
		Mas de \$45000	3.7% (18)
(N = 311; Missing = 65)		(N = 534; Missing = 9)	

<sup>2</sup> Concern is being raised about an even greater undercount of Hispanics in 2010 Census compared to 1990 or 2000. Recent discussions (e.g. Radelet, 2009) suggest the economic crisis and its resulting dislocation as a reason for this concern.

Due to the relative status and organization in Elkhart County of Mexican nationals from the certain Mexican states, the prevailing perception among many in the county is that Mexican immigrants have come primarily from the state of Hidalgo (particularly the city of Apan), and the state of Aguascalientes. What is most surprising from these data is the large number of states that send immigrants to northern Indiana. Table 4 lists the most frequently reported Mexican states of origin among respondents in November and March. Figures 1 and 2 graphically illustrate the wide variety of sending communities. The November respondents noted Jalisco, Michoacan, Puebla, Mexico, and Aguascalientes as the most frequent State of origin, while March respondents identified Aguascalientes, Michoacan, Puebla, Hidalgo, and Mexico as origin states.

Table 4 State of Origin in Mexico (estado mexicano nació)

<b>Mexican State of Origin (November)</b>		<b>Mexican State of Origin (March)</b>	
Jalisco	12.6% (46)	Aguascalientes	21.3% (111)
Michoacan	12.3% (45)	Michoacan	12.7% (66)
Puebla	10.4% (38)	Puebla	9.4% (49)
Mexico	9.6% (35)	Hidalgo	7.3% (38)
Aguascalientes	8.5% (31)	Mexico	6.9% (36)
19 other states represented		22 other states represented	
(N = 365; Missing = 11)		(N = 521; Missing = 22)	

Figure 1: Mexican State of Origin, November

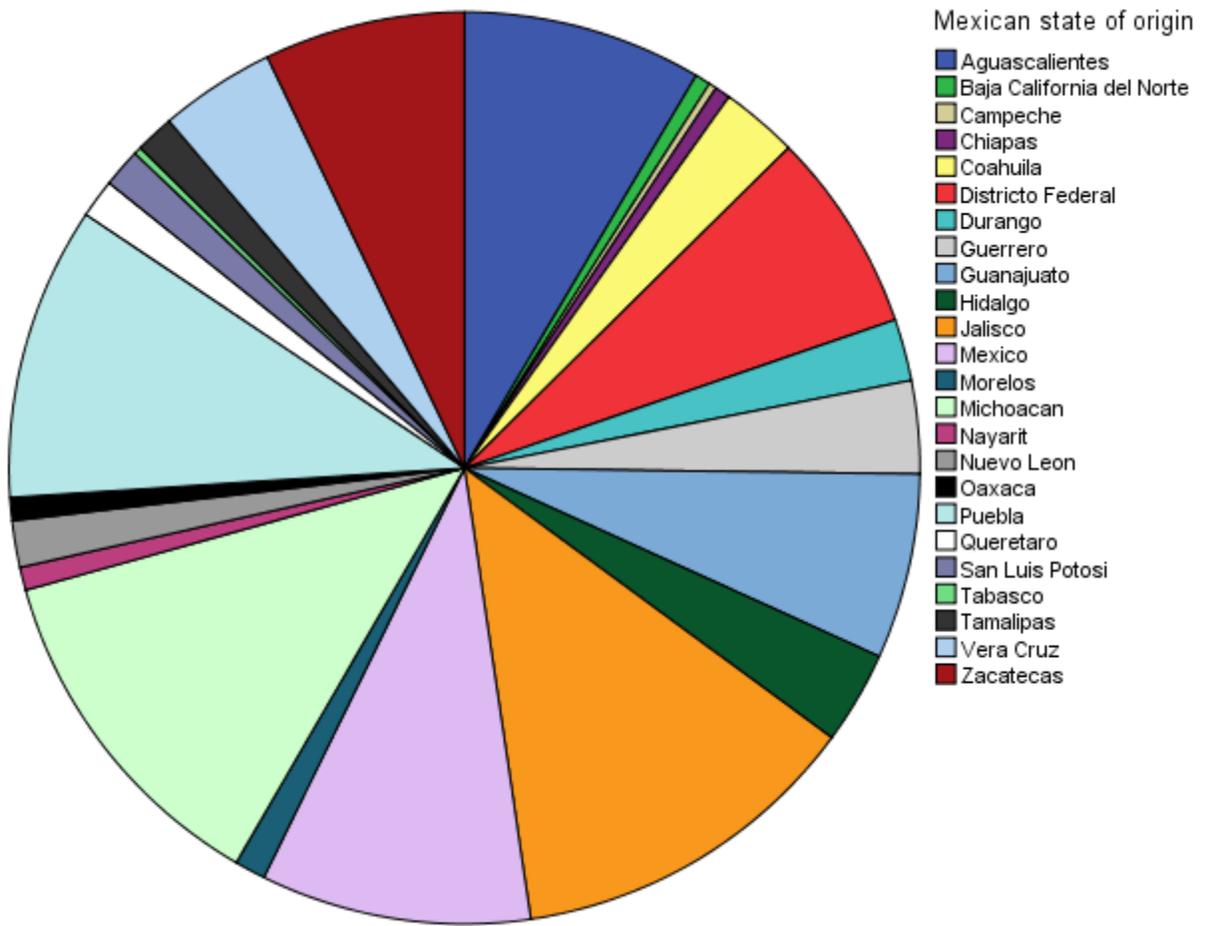
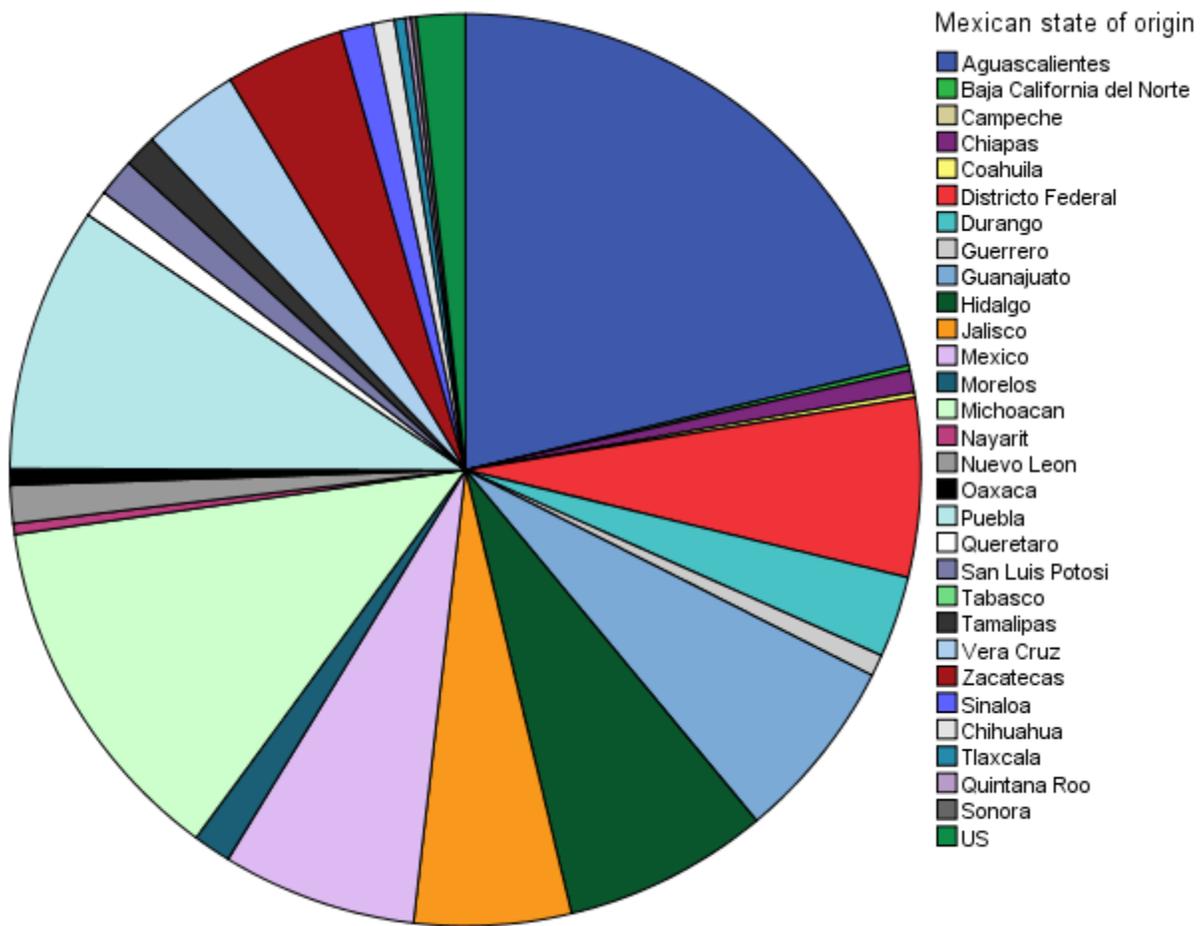


Figure 2: Mexican State of Origin, March



*Work and Residential Stability*

Data presented in Table 5 illustrate the worsening of the economic situation of Mexican immigrants. The majority (about 64 percent) of November respondents reported they were currently working. But March the majority (53 percent) were not working.

Table 5 Work Status (¿Tiene trabajo actualmente?)

Currently Working (November)		Currently Working (March)	
Yes	63.6% (234)	Yes	47.2% (252)
No	36.4% (134)	No	52.8% (282)
(N = 368; Missing = 8)		(N = 534; Missing = 9)	

Mexican immigrants have deep roots in northern Indiana. Many immigrants came to the area for the booming manufacturing economy of the 1990s and have stayed for many years. The largest percent of respondents to the survey in both November and March reported more than 10 years of living a city in northern Indiana (see Table 6). The commitment that many immigrants have made to making cities such as Mishawaka, Elkhart, Goshen, Middlebury, and Lagrange feel like home contributes to the struggles about out-migration decisions.

Table 6 How long in Indiana City (Hace cuántos años que vive en su ciudad)

Time in City (November)	Time in City (March)
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0-4 years	25.3% (95)	0-4 years	19.1% (101)
5-9 years	34.7% (130)	5-9 years	31.3% (166)
> 10 years	36.5% (137)	> 10 years	47.0% (249)
Don't Know	3.5% (13)	Don't Know	2.6% (14)
(N = 375; Missing = 1)		(N = 530; Missing = 13)	

Finally, the survey asked respondents to indicate where they expect to be living within the next year. Responses are listed in Table 7. About half of all respondents (52% in November, 47% in March) reported that they expected to be living in the same place (here/Indiana) in the next year. Approximately 1 out of every 7 respondents indicated they would be living in Mexico. Respondents in November were more likely to report the likelihood of living in another state in the US (10%) or other location (5%) than respondents were in March (5% in another US state). March respondents were expressing much uncertainty about where they would be, as 35 percent said they did not know (no se) where they would be living in a year.

Table 7: Where will you live next year? (¿Dónde cree usted que va a vivir en los próximos años?)

Where live next year (November)		Where live next year (March)	
aquí/Indiana	51.7% (186)	aquí/Indiana	46.8% (252)
otro estado in EEUU	10.3% (37)	otro estado in EEUU	4.5% (24)
Mexico	14.7% (53)	Mexico	14.1% (76)
no se	17.6% (66)	no se	34.6% (186)
otro	5.0% (18)		
(N = 360; Missing = 16)		(N = 538; Missing = 5)	

Despite so many people reporting that they would be staying where they are, when given the chance to indicate why they were or were considering leaving, 490 respondents did so on the March survey. The majority of respondents (64 percent) indicated their primary reason for leaving would be not having work. More than 20 percent of the March respondents reported that being with their family is a primary reason to leave. Family disruption created by Mexican immigration to the United States is well documented (e.g. Falicov (2007), Massey and Akresh (2006), Ream (2005), Durand & Massey (2004), Cabassa (2003), Reese (2002)) and clearly has undesirable consequences.

Table 8 Why Leaving or Considering Leaving – March only (... cual es la razón principal para irse?)

No tiene trabajo (no work)	64.3% (315)
Para estar con la familia (to be with my family)	21.4% (105)
Mala salud (poor health)	1.0% (5)
Discriminación (discrimination)	3.7% (18)
Otro motivo (some other reason)	9.6% (47)
(N = 490; Missing = 53)	

For immigrants who choose to stay in northern Indiana challenges lie ahead. In addition to continued economic stress due to lack of income and employment, discrimination by other members of the broader community is of concern. In addition to 18 respondents selecting discrimination as the primary reason for leaving the community, twenty-eight (28) respondents in an open-ended question about other factors that contribute to their departure or consideration thereof identified discrimination. Ten people added that the lack of documents or driver's license as well as concern about deportation were additional factors beyond the primary reason selected.

Are Mexican immigrants leaving the area? If so, where are they going? Data from survey respondents suggest that as the economic crisis has worsened, the complexity of responses to this question has

increased. While some people have left the community, many report intention to stay in Indiana during the coming year. Yet, many others are uncertain about what the future will bring. It is our hope that data will continue to be collected in order to facilitate regional and municipal discussions about the implications (educational<sup>3</sup>, financial, etc) of the out-migration of members of the Mexican immigration community in northern Indiana.

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<http://nidataplus.com/lfeel1.htm>

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<sup>3</sup> For a taste of the educational impact, see an article about the nearby community of Ligonier, Indiana in *The Goshen News*, [http://www.goshennews.com/local/local\\_story\\_082103237.html](http://www.goshennews.com/local/local_story_082103237.html)

## ENCUESTA

Ciudad \_\_\_\_\_ Código Postal \_\_\_\_\_ ¿Tiene trabajo actualmente?  Si  No

Hace cuánto tiempo que vive en su ciudad \_\_\_\_\_ en Indiana \_\_\_\_\_ en este país \_\_\_\_\_

En qué estado mexicano nació \_\_\_\_\_ Género:  Masculino  Femenino

Señale el rango de su edad  18-24  25-44  45-64  65 años o más

Ingreso familiar  Menos de \$45.000  Más de \$45.000

Dónde cree usted que va a vivir en los próximos años: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## ENCUESTA

Ciudad donde vive \_\_\_\_\_ Código Postal \_\_\_\_\_ ¿Tiene trabajo actualmente?  Si  No

Hace cuántos años que vive en este país \_\_\_\_\_ en Indiana \_\_\_\_\_ en su ciudad \_\_\_\_\_

En qué estado mexicano nació \_\_\_\_\_ Género:  Masculino  Femenino

Señale el rango de su edad  18-24  25-44  45-64  65 años o más

Señale el rango de su ingreso familiar (por año)  Menos de \$25.000  \$25.000-\$44.999  Más de \$45.000

Dónde cree usted que va a vivir en los próximos años:

aquí (en Indiana)  en otro estado de este país  en Mexico  no se

¿Si usted se va de Indiana, cual es la razón principal para irse?

no tiene trabajo  para estar con mi familia  mala salud  discriminación

otro motivo \_\_\_\_\_

**Esta información es Confidencial. Por favor no escriba su nombre.**