



**Fluctuation of Mexican Immigrants in the US:  
The Application of Intervening Opportunities Model**

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**Abstract:**

In recent years, immigration policy has been a burning issue in the United States, which has served as a critical destination for migrants worldwide. The most significant group of migrants in the United States is Mexicans. They came to improve their worse living conditions, but faced many problems instead of leading a better life. While immigration streams have slowed down in recent years, Mexican Immigration to the United States remains significant, and the topic remains relevant for policymakers, academics, and the public. They are also considered burden to the U.S. economy, thus, the U.S. has not taken any positive step regarding this. Following this, they leave the U.S. by going back to their state for several reasons. This research analyzes the failure of the U.S. to accommodate Mexican Migrants compelled them to go back to their state. Methodologically, the idea of the paper is based on the analytical view of the reasons for declining, focusing on the qualitative nature of data, whereas theoretically, it is encouraged by the model of "Intervening Opportunities". Mexican migration has a complex legal and political context in the United States. Throughout the twentieth century, immigration legislation has shifted back and forth, at times welcoming Mexican migrants and slamming the door hard in their faces.

**Keywords:** Immigration, refugees, great recession, resources, intervening opportunities, socioeconomic crisis

**INTRODUCTION**

The term Immigration is known for a movement of people internationally into a new living place or country. This new place is not their birthplace, but they come to visit and become permanent inhabitants or naturalized citizens, or to look for a job as a migrant worker or temporarily as a foreign worker. On the other hand, a refugee is someone who has been compelled to escape their country due to persecution, conflict, or the fear of violence. He is terrified of being victimized because of his ethnicity, religion, nationality, political opinions, or membership in a specific social or political group or public opinion.

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Mexican Immigration to the United States has increased dramatically in the past decades. Since 1980, Mexican immigrants in the U.S. have quadrupled, from 2.2 million to 11.6 million in 2015. More than a quarter of the foreign-born population in the United States is Mexican. They came to improve their worse living conditions with more opportunities to integrate into the U.S. as they believed life is better in the U.S., but they faced many problems here instead of leading a better life. Being uneducated, poor, and large in number, it became difficult for them to assimilate into the communities thus, becoming a drain to the U.S. economy and deprived many American locals of their rights. As young people are leaving Mexico, no skilled and trained workforce is left there to strengthen its economy.

Since the U.S. has not played any positive role according to the U.N. charter towards them, it leads to violations of their rights. The government had to steal lands from them and consider them a burden to the U.S. economy, which led to the decline in their number in the U.S. According to a Pew Research Center report, an estimated 870,000 Mexicans arrived in the United States between 2009 and 2014, with 1 million returning home. The reasons cited include the Great Recession in the United States, making it more difficult for refugees to find work, Mexico's strengthening economy, and more robust border security. According to some, Mexican migration appears to be coming to an end.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Most of the literature focuses on the reasons behind Mexican Immigration to the U.S. Mexican Immigration is a centuries-old phenomenon that started in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and is still going on. Though the ratio of incoming immigrants might vary from time to time, the fact remains that this Immigration has never stopped. Apart from that, the literature also talks about Mexican's burdens to the U.S. citizens and the economy. Rare literature has been found on the reasons behind the failure of U.S. authorities to manage these immigrants in the state which ultimately compelled them to leave the U.S. and go back to their state. The process of this Immigration evolved for nearly one and a half-century. Though the reasons might not have varied at extreme, new reasons have been added, including the role of U.S. foreign policy in this Immigration that at times favored this Immigration while sometimes conducted forced repatriation to force them back to Mexico. Mexico is renowned not just for its elevated degrees of movement to the United States but also for its verifiable and tenaciously formal degrees of imbalance. The massive flood of Mexican migrants in the United States has animated banter about its suggestion for relocation and imbalance approaches. From one perspective, many Mexicans have relocated to places in the United States with better expectations for everyday comforts to conquer the monetary and social drawbacks of their homes of beginning (Zenteno 2019).

Whether legal or illegal, Mexican immigrants arrive on the U.S. border, which made U.S. authorities take significant measures to deal with the situation to control the massive influx of these immigrants. But are those measures legal under the UNHCR declaration? This raises certain questions about the legality of actions taken by U.S. authorities that might be declared illegal under international law. US have taken many measures to stop these migrants from entering the U.S. They used a strategy known as "prevention via deterrence," which required a massive concentration of law execution on the people and resources along the border and at entry points. The question that arises here is whether these policies proved to be a success or a failure? This is explained by a

number of undocumented immigrants in the United States which has tripled from 3.5 million in 1990 to 11.7 million in 2012. This population growth reflects the fact that many of these immigrants can enter the country with legitimate visas and remain in the country even after their visas have expired. Border enforcement, in their opinion, is not a disincentive to entering the United States (Rosenblum & Meissner, 2014).

This failure to manage them has led to a decline in their number in the U.S. Between 2009 and 2014, an estimated 870,000 Mexicans entered the U.S., with 1 million returning home. The recovery of the United States from the Great Recession and their desire to re-join with their family have been mentioned as a factor in decline of immigrants. However, this historic transition occurs at a time when Immigration has become a divisive issue in the 2016 presidential campaign, with Republicans and Democrats arguing about the best way to modernize the country's immigration system. Donald Trump has made illegal Immigration a big campaign issue by promising to build a wall along the US-Mexico border to keep unauthorized Mexican workers out (Chalfin 2015).

### **AUGMENTATION OF SCENARIO FROM "THEORY OF INTERVENING OPPORTUNITIES"**

A number of variables are discussed by theorists on why people migrate towards other states and the reasons behind the migration. For environmental causes, peaceful location, qualitative facilities, and good education, people leave their motherland. According to Stouffer's "theory of intervening opportunities," the volume of movement between the two places is connected to perceived opportunities in those two places and between them, not the distance or population size. S.A. Stouffer, an American sociologist, provided one such change in the gravity model. In 1940, Stouffer devised his intervening opportunity model, ensuring no critical linkage between portability and distance. With all other factors being equal, the observed drop" in the volume of relocation is due to an increase in the number of intervening changes as the distance between them grows. According to Stouffer's model, the number of migrants from a starting point to an endpoint is directly proportional to the number of opportunities at that destination, and vice versa, the number of intervening opportunities between the" guest and host regions (Faridi, 2019).

Examining the Public survey in 1970, the idea of intervening opportunities does not handle all sorts of migration streams. More migrants in the later stages of the foundation combination are impacted by the spatial dispersion of opportunities, attracted by the dense supply of possibilities (Freymeyer & Ritchey, 1985). This theory is the most appropriate for this research as Mexican migrants came to the U.S. for better living conditions because of closer distance but faced many socioeconomic problems in return. Many migrants are now reviewing their decisions to migrate to the U.S. and going back to their own state.

### **THE MIGRATION OF MEXICAN REFUGEES TO THE USA**

For a long time, the U.S. government has been unable to "control" the border. These factors are referred to as 'push' and 'pull' forces in migration studies. They force migrants to migrate from one country to the next. Currently, nations sending the most migrants to the US-Mexico border, mainly Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador in Central America, are experiencing several push factors, including poverty, political instability, inequality, and violence. The current situation may be unique, but it is also rooted in history. The leading cause of the recent migratory wave in Mexico Immigration to the United States is a result of Mexico's rapid economic development, which has

displaced a significant number of rural workers. Furthermore, the key financial markets in Mexico are undeveloped (Wilson M. C., 2020).

Furthermore, climate change has brought drought and large storms in recent years, forcing the rural poor to flee the land. Political instability is another significant and long-term problem throughout Central America. There was a constant struggle between conservative elites and liberals that, in return, caused violent conflicts. Such a political uprising seems to threaten the country's business interests and national security. It also gave rise to various movements that challenged hierarchies and ruling classes. As a result, many civil wars and human rights violations established the migration patterns that persist today. Given the challenging and underground reasons for migration, policymakers cannot simply pour money and resources into ever-more militarized border theatre to control or solve the ongoing situation at the border. It is no surprise that decades of such initiatives have had little impact on the underlying dynamics (FELSENTHAL, 2020).

### **Socioeconomic Impacts of Mexican Refugees on the USA**

The effects of Immigration on the U.S. economy are small but widespread. The distributional impacts, on the other hand, are not negligible. The financial costs of Immigration are typically high. The financial costs of Immigration vary greatly between cities and states in the United States. The job markets for low-skilled workers are also severely impacted. According to the "Economic and Fiscal Consequences of Immigration report, Immigration has a relatively minimal long-term influence on native-born workers' income and employment. Prior immigrants or high school dropouts born in the United States are more likely to suffer negative repercussions" (Wilson M. C., 2020). "Second-generation immigrants are among the most substantial fiscal and economic contributors in the United States. However, first-generation immigrants cost governments more than native-born Americans". According to the study findings, Immigration has an optimistic impact on long-term economic growth in the United States. Many Americans see Immigration as a serious policy issue confronting the country. Immigration affects not just the environment in which everyone lives, learns and works but also virtually every policy area of importance, such as jobs, the economy, education, and health care, as well as federal, state, and local government budgets (Consensus Study Report, 2017).

The media and entertainment sectors are other cultural areas that Mexican Immigration to the United States has influenced. A considerable population of Spanish speakers has generated a market for Spanish-language media sources both internationally and locally. Mexican ancestors in America have retained their cultural identity thanks to the existence of Spanish-language commercial broadcasting networks for local radio stations. In addition, Mexican Americans have brought a new gastronomic culture to the United States. Some of the recipes are more traditional Mexican fare, while others are Mexican-inspired dishes with an American twist. It's not uncommon to have a supermarket section dedicated to Mexican or Latinx foods (Greene, n.d.).

### **Problems Faced by Mexican Migrants in the US**

Mexican immigrants continue to be the most numerous" in the United States, accounting for more than 24% of the almost 45 million foreign-born residents. In 2019, there were around 10.9 million Mexican-born residents in the United States (Cabot 2014). Between 2010 and 2019, its population fell by over 780,000 persons, or seven%, due in part to greater immigration enforcement and in

part to a better Mexican ". "Measuring migration patterns between Mexico and the United States is challenging because there are no official counts of how many Mexican immigrants enter and depart the country each year." To estimate the magnitude of these movements, this research analyses the best available government statistics from both countries. "In the five years leading up to each survey or census date, a national household survey and two national censuses in Mexico asked similar questions about household members' migration to and from Mexico. Furthermore, estimates of Mexican migration to the U.S. are based on U.S. Census Bureau statistics on the number of Mexican immigrants living" in the U.S., which has been adjusted for undercount (Blau & Mackie,, 2016).

Several factors have contributed to the decrease "in the flow of Mexican immigrants to the United States (Passel, 2012). The delayed recovery of the U.S. economy during the Great Recession may have made the U.S. less appealing to potential Mexican migrants, and "when the U.S. job market deteriorated, some Mexican immigrants may have been pushed away. Furthermore, stricter enforcement of U.S. "immigration laws, notably at the US-Mexico border, may have contributed to the recent decrease of Mexican immigrants entering the" US. According to one statistic, the number of Mexicans apprehended at the U.S. border has dropped dramatically, "to just 230,000 in the fiscal year 2014, the lowest level since 1971 (Krogstad and Passel, 2014). At the same time, increasing enforcement in the United States is taking place. According to the Mexican government's ENADID survey data, most of the 1 million people who left the United States for Mexico between 2009 and 2014 did so. In comparison, 14 percent of Mexico's return migrants" cited deportation from the United States as the reason for their return. The reduction in the number of Mexican immigrants in the United States is primarily due to a drop of more than 1 million undocumented Mexican immigrants, from 6.9 million in 2007 to an estimated 5.6 million in 2014 (Gonzalez-Barrera, 2013).

Many factors appear to be at play, including weakened job and housing construction markets in the United States, increased border enforcement, an increase in deportations, the growing dangers associated with illegal border crossings, Mexico's long-term birth rate decline, and broader economic conditions in the country (Passel, 2019). Apprehensions of Mexicans attempting to cross the border illegally have fallen in recent years, decreasing from almost 1 million in 2005 to 286,000 in 2011, showing that fewer undocumented migrants are attempting to do so. The number of undocumented immigrants apprehended by the Border Patrol has dropped to its lowest level since 1971. Deportations of undocumented Mexican immigrants, some of whom were arrested at work sites or after being arrested for various crimes, have reached new highs, while border apprehensions have decreased. In 2010, the U.S. deported 282,000 undocumented Mexican immigrants through deportation or the accelerated removal process. The most significant demographic change in Mexico, among the vast range of variables with possible impact on the decision to move, is dropping fertility: In 2009, it was estimated that a typical Mexican woman would have 2.4 children in her lifetime, compared to 7.3 for her 1960 equivalent. Mexican-born immigrants are younger, poorer, and less educated than other immigrants to the United States. They are also less likely to be fluent in English and naturalized citizens (Passel, Cohn, & Barrera, 2012).

### **Efforts of Mexican Immigrants to Attain Legal Status**

Astonishingly, the unapproved immigrants have started stating their political office coordinated. With securitization enactment progressively utilized to screen worker developments and power their extradition on the stratagem that they were possible psychological oppressors, an assortment of supportive outsider associations looked for administrative alleviation to forestall the evacuation of children they had brought to the United States. On August 1, 2001, they were joined by Senators Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Orrin Hatch (R-UT) in proposing the DREAM Act (Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors), which had been attacked by Congress multiple times but had not yet been passed. Coordinators organized a large group of favourable migrant exhibits to point out the situation of Dreamers and the conditions in which their unapproved guardians work. The Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride, a group of eighteen sanctioned modes of transport carrying rebels from across the country that met in Washington, DC, on October 2, 2003, was one of the first. The coordinators purposely recalled memories of the 1961 African American occasion rides to integrate public transportation in the American South while visiting more than a hundred metropolitan areas. African Americans battled against their inferior citizenship in 1961.

USA has been a hub of immigrant protests many times. On March 10, 2006, a large portion of 1,000,000 individuals fought the "Sensenbrenner Bill in Chicago, trailed by 1,000,000 in Los Angeles on March 25, with numerous others mobilizing in urban areas of the country over requesting legitimate securities for unapproved foreigners who had become a piece of America's most minimal average workers, working without insurance. These occasions blended foreigner and work associations, strict and social equality pioneers, and legitimate guide advocates into an outsider rights development that immediately became noticeable and obnoxiously articulated in their interest for freedoms. The development's beginning was established in the increase of worker limitations, the speeding up speed of Mexican repatriations, and the sanctioning of the unfair neighbourhood and state laws focusing on migrants, denying them lodging, clinical consideration, and government-funded schooling. Government courts generally struck down these nearby laws as unlawful, as infringements on bureaucratic purview over movement; however, the continuous ethnic broadcasting and neighbourhood policing that went with them were incredibly terrifying to Mexican settlers and residents (Library of Congress, n.d.).

These were the occasions that birthed an immigrant rights development that had been quite a while taking shape. Together they coordinated "The National Day of Action for Immigrant Social Justice" on April 10, 2006, with significant walks and energized in more than sixty urban areas. The notices the nonconformists conveyed read: "No Human Being Is Illegal," "We Are Not Criminals", "The 9/11 Hijackers Did Not Speak Spanish. Next, they coordinated a one-day general strike hung on May 1, 2006, called "A Day Without an Immigrant," revitalizing huge groups for outsider privileges, exhibiting the effect crafted by workers had on the American economy. President Bush reacted by calling for "thorough movement change," code words for more extreme line authorization, combined with recommendations for the formation of another visitor labourer program much the same as the profoundly shady 1942-1964 Bracero Program, which furnished American businesses with modest, subservient, and effectively deportable work.

The criminal justice system has gradually altered the fate of Mexican immigrants in the United States since the adoption of the Hart-Celler Act in 1965. However, the DHS articulates that it

essentially upholds migration laws; this manner of speaking standardizes and dehistoricizes what have for quite some time been racially spurred, hostile to Mexican laws; laws that are specifically and occasionally disregarded to draw in condemned work, then, at that point, to cruelly oust the people who won't be subservient, who request compassionate treatment, reasonable wages, and ways to citizenship for their long periods of work and charges (Gutiérrez, 2019).

### **Administrative Policies To Deal The Mexican Refugees**

In 2017 and 2018, President Donald Trump's administration implemented immigration policies that harmed thousands of people, disregarded and violated U.S. and international law, and appeared to be geared at completely dismantling the U.S. asylum system."

The following policies and practices have been implemented:

- (1) At the U.S.–Mexico border, many asylum claimants are being turned away illegally.
- (2) Thousands of illegal family separations, in which the Trump administration has knowingly and deliberately caused great misery to families, including torture in some cases."
- (3) Detention without parole of asylum seekers is becoming increasingly arbitrary and indefinite," constituting cruel, barbaric, or degrading treatment or punishment (ill-treatment), which is expressly prohibited under international law."

According to public remarks by U.S. government officials, those laws and practices are clearly designed to dissuade "asylum seekers from seeking safety in the U.S., as well as to punish and compel those who did seek refuge to withdraw their claim" (Martin & Lowell , 2013).

These aren't the only things that have happened. "These tactics have been implemented in lockstep by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS): closing the borders to asylum seekers and sending them to danger, and making life in immigration detention facilities so inadequate that asylum seekers would reconsider seeking safety in the U.S. President Trump and his cabinet members have repeatedly referred to asylum seekers as "criminals" and denounced international refugee standards as legal "loopholes" and "magic words" that the administration has stated its intention to close, infusing these cruel policies with discriminatory and demonizing rhetoric." The Trump administration is deliberately violating asylum seekers' human rights to send a message to the rest of the world that the US is "no longer welcomes refugees. Simultaneously, the Trump administration is working, in violation of international law, to undermine the U.S. asylum system, particularly by limiting who is eligible for refuge. The U.S. government's violations of international human rights and refugee law are eroding the international framework for refugee protection, severely breaching the right to seek asylum" and encouraging other countries to follow suit, setting a dangerous precedent.

### **Illegal Push Backs**

Despite historic laws for the number of people seeking to enter the U.S. without legal status, including asylum-seekers, the DHS border agency Customs and Border Protection (CBP) implemented an illegal de facto policy of asylum-seeker pushbacks at official U.S. border crossings (called "ports-of-entry") along the entire U.S.–Mexico border in 2017 and 2018. Asylum-seeker imprisonment is illegal under U.S. law and a violation of the U.S.'s international refugee laws (Ted,

2014). By turning asylum seekers away at U.S. ports of entry, the U.S. has violated their right to seek asylum from persecution, resulting in an emergency at the U.S.–Mexico border. Thousands of asylum seekers have been forced to queue on the Mexican side of the border, placing them at risk of "Mexican immigration officials imprisoning and deporting them and criminal exploitation. CBP officials have routinely turned away Mexican people seeking asylum in the United States, including unaccompanied youngsters. CBP's mass border crossings of asylum seekers are blatantly illegal. They violate one of international refugee law's most basic tenets: the prohibition on refoulement (forcing people to return to a country where they may face serious human rights violations) (BARRERA & KROGSTAD, 2019).

Parallel to its systematic campaign of unlawful pushbacks along the U.S.–Mexico border, the U.S. administration has attempted to establish a "safe third country arrangement" with Mexico. Except for that fleeing persecution in Mexico, the U.S. would recognize Mexico as a safe destination country for all asylum seekers, and the U.S. would stop accepting asylum petitions at the U.S.–Mexico border. However, because Mexico is not a uniformly safe place for all asylum applicants, the U.S. cannot legitimately adopt a "safe third country agreement" under both U.S. and international law. According to Amnesty International, Mexican immigration officers systematically return asylum seekers to their countries of origin, violating Mexican and international law. As a result, DHS officials must continue to receive and offer individualized and fair assessments of all asylum-seeker requests at U.S. borders and on U.S. territory, as required by U.S. law (Isacson 2021).

### **Family Separations**

President Trump's government began splitting thousands of asylum-seeking families forcibly in 2018 to deter and punish those who enter the country illegally. As a result of the U.S. government's "zero-tolerance" policy, which comprises prosecuting all asylum seekers and those who cross the U.S.–Mexico border illegally, family separations are unavoidable, according to the U.S. government. Despite continuing to deny and conceal the practice, U.S. authorities separated countless asylum-seekers who were not submitted for criminal prosecution – even those who sought shelter at official border crossings. The total number of families forcefully separated by the U.S. government in 2017 and 2018 is around 8000 (O'Neil 2020). Researchers from Amnesty International saw the mental suffering that family separation causes and cases where family separation was utilized to force a family to withdraw their asylum claim. The destructive practice of family separations met torture standards under the U.S. and international law in several cases documented by Amnesty International (Sarria, 2018).

### **Arbitrary and Indefinite Detention**

In 2017 and 2018, the U.S. government made involuntary and indefinite detention of asylum seekers without parole for their asylum applications an official policy. Arbitrary detention, which is unconstitutional under U.S. and international law, is the policy and practice of keeping asylum applicants indefinitely based solely on their immigration status. Indefinite incarceration without charge is prohibited by the United Nations Convention against Torture, which the United States has ratified and incorporated into U.S. law. The U.S. government increased the use of indefinite detention of asylum-seekers to deter and punish those who seek protection at the U.S.–Mexico border, both through blanket denials of asylum-seeker parole requests in some regions, which a



U.S. federal court found likely to be arbitrary and illegal in July 2018 and through its family separations policy, which separated parents and children (Dumitrache, 2015).

The agony of prolonged detention has been used by U.S. authorities to persuade asylum-seekers to "voluntarily" give up their claims and accept deportation back to their countries of origin, where they had escaped persecution. Family separations and detention conditions, including consistently poor health treatment, have further increased the deaths of asylum seekers (Congressional Research Service, 2021).

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

In recent years, the percentage of migration between Mexico and the United States has plummeted. Mexican men's yearly overseas migration rate fell from 25 per thousand in 2005 to 7 per thousand in 2012. If the low migration rate continues, it will significantly impact the ethnic and national origin composition of the U.S. population. Since 1850, Mexico has only been the fourth country in American history to be the most prevalent country of origin for Americans. For the first time since the Great Recession and likely for the first time in decades during an economic expansion, the immigrant shares of the U.S. population did not increase at all from 2017 to 2019. America's Mexican immigrant population has begun to shrink significantly, dropping roughly 642,000 from 2016 to 2019, one of the main reasons for the standstill. The decrease in the number of Mexicans is not solely due to increased deportations. ICE deportations to Mexico have decreased marginally under Trump's presidency. The more valid reason is that fewer Mexicans want to immigrate to the United States and that more are returning.

Unlike the immigrant population's standstill during the Great Recession, the striking aspect is that this fall occurred amid an almost unprecedented period of economic expansion in the United States, while Mexico's GDP deteriorated in 2019. The president's anti-Mexican statements may influence Mexicans' behaviour. As previously stated, American authorities have always been ineffectual in dealing with the issue of Immigration. If Americans are serious about addressing the border issue, we must address the factors that encourage migration from Central America. Accepting the realities of the American economy and attempting to build new legal frameworks that reflect it is necessary (The Heritage Foundation, 2016).

Instead of reducing foreign aid, as the Trump administration has done, we should provide financial and logistical support to Central American countries to encourage them to address the poverty and inequality that fuel migration. We must do everything possible to stop the widespread gang violence that has driven so many migrants from their homes. Direct services, such as education or intervention, are another option to solve immigrant and migrant challenges.

On the other hand, the United States "should allow for a flexible quota system that is sensitive to labour market fluctuations, deemphasize the family reunification aspect of immigration policy and redress occupational qualifications as important criteria for U.S. entry, examine the unique characteristics of various migrant groups and determine social needs accordingly, and address social welfare" issues.

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Date of Publication	June 25, 2021
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