

# POLICY BRIEF

## The Decline in Mexican Migration to the U.S.: Why is Texas different?

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### STATEMENT OF ISSUE

This publication is the first to study Mexican net immigration in Texas, as previous attempts have focused on declines in immigration on a national level, rather than a state-by-state basis. We present an empirical model that studies net Mexican migration by state and includes different push and pull factors that have been established in the literature of internal migration in the U.S. We found that growth in net Mexican migration towards Texas is not due to recent migrants; instead Mexico born individuals arrive in Texas more than five years after originally immigrating to other locations in the U.S., which explains the growing trend. Trends vary by demographic groups defined by age, gender, education and time of arrival to the U.S.

### KEY FINDINGS

- Texas is the U.S. state with the largest absolute Mexican population increase between 2010-2015, reportedly adding almost 92 thousand Mexican residents.
- Unlike in other states, the immigration of Mexican men and women in Texas has shown increasing trends since the turn of the century.
- Gender parity has been basically achieved among Mexicans in Texas, contrary to the pattern of male-led Mexican U.S. immigration. Demographically, this is a new trend, and is not observed on average for the entire U.S.
- Similar trends to those seen at the national level for Mexican minors and elder populations are observed in Texas: Mexican young and minors' migration is on a clear declining trend, while older age adult Mexicans' net migration is on a rising trend.
- Relative costs of fuel, water, electricity and rent are growing at a slower pace in Texas than the average U.S. state, which is a possible incentive for migrants to relocate in Texas.
- Three sectors of occupation for Texas (manufacturing, education and health, other services) grew faster than the average U.S. level and one sector declined less than the rest of the U.S. (public administration), which could act as a draw for Mexican immigrants.
- In the case of specific effects related to migrant networks, a positive effect is found among the prime age individuals related to the migration of older age adults, suggesting that migrant networks in Texas are stronger than in other states and help attract Mexican immigration (in accordance with Migrant Social Network Theory).

### CONCLUSIONS

- The national declining trend for Mexican immigration is not found in all demographic sub-groups.
- The increase of Mexican population in Texas can be explained by migrants who first came to other U.S. states and later relocated to Texas.
- A specific Texas effect is found only for some demographic groups and for certain control variables: A positive effect is found in strong migrant networks and Texan house values, while a negative effect is shown for electricity costs, the retail trade industry decline, and surprisingly in the manufacturing sector (even as the growth of the sector in Texas outpaced that of other states).
- Models predict that under current conditions Texas will more likely turn to follow the U.S. trend of a decline in the number of Mexican residents in the medium term. The speed at which this decline will occur may depend on how much time passes before the differences in living costs between Texas and other states such as California begin to shrink.

### SOURCES AND FULL PAPER



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