

Mexican Mobile Consulate Survey
Kenner, Louisiana
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Mexicans are reported to be the largest immigrant group that arrived in New Orleans seeking employment in clean-up and rebuilding after Hurricane Katrina struck on August 29, 2005. However, little is known about them since most were not present before Katrina, and they are highly mobile and often take measures to avoid detection by authorities. The May 18-19, 2007 visit of the mobile Mexican consulate to Kenner, a suburb of New Orleans, was an excellent opportunity to survey Mexican nationals, especially recent arrivals, in the New Orleans area. The consulate issued *matriculas consulares* and passports on the day of their visit. These secure identity documents are especially useful for undocumented migrants, since they are accepted as a form of identification by financial institutions and some local police forces. Other Mexicans may have visited the consulate to renew expired passports or take out a passport allowing them to return to Mexico. The consular visit is an opportunity to efficiently survey Mexican migrants in an environment where they will feel comfortable to answer questions about their work and migration experiences. The sample is likely to have more recent arrivals and more undocumented migrants than would be found in a random sample of Mexican migrants in the area. The Mexican consulate in Houston has sponsored quarterly visits of their mobile consulate in New Orleans. These visits typically attract about 700-800 migrants.

The questionnaire is a modified version of the National Day Labor Survey and the Mexican Migration Project Survey. A team of 9 bi-lingual interviewers carried out the survey. Team members approached visitors to the consulate at random. Each respondent was informed that the interview was anonymous and their answers would be confidential. They were offered phone cards worth \$10 as an incentive for their participation. Respondents were informed that they could refuse to answer any question or terminate the interview at any time. In general, respondents felt comfortable answering the interview questions which took place inside the building where the Mexican consulate services were being offered or in the yard immediately outside the building. Most respondents were happy to participate. The Mexican consulate reported that 398 documents were issued at the consulate visit, 49% were *matriculas consulares*, and the remainder were either 1 or 5 year passports (22% and 29%, respectively). These were the only kinds of documents issued at this visit of the consulate.

The following report demonstrates how the Mexican population in New Orleans increased after Hurricane Katrina as new demand for construction workers surged and wages were comparatively high. The survey shows that the majority of Mexicans in the New Orleans area and the region are unaccompanied men, many having wives and children in Mexico. Most migrants came to New Orleans from other parts of the U.S. in search of work, and found work through their connections with friends, *paisanos*, and family members. Most Mexicans (71.6%) arrived in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, with a median duration in the U.S. of less than 3 years. Few expressed intentions to stay in New Orleans permanently; most intended to stay less than 2 years or they didn't know. This underlines their tenuous legal status in the U.S.: 88.5% reported that they were unauthorized migrants. These workers are particularly vulnerable to abuse by employers, police and are often crime victims. Furthermore, many work in dangerous jobs and 1 in 5

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reported experiencing an injury on the job. The report gives a sense of the scale of the change in the Mexican population after Katrina and their living and working conditions.

I. Migrant's demographic and family characteristics

Newcomer migrants in the areas affected by Hurricane Katrina are often assumed to be unaccompanied young men who are willing to live in non-family, often cramped living arrangements in order to earn and save as much as possible. This stereotype holds for the majority, but the results of the survey show that there is important variation. Most of our sample is made up of men (77.2%), but nearly a quarter is women. The sample includes only working age respondents: the average age for the sample is 32.9, ranging from age 18 to 62. The majority of respondents reported being married or in a common-law union (61.2%), though far more are single (34.4%) than would be expected in Mexico for a group with a similar age distribution. The majority of the sample report having children (70.1%), of whom nearly 90% is under the age of 18. However, only 37.0% of those who are married or have children live with their families in New Orleans or elsewhere in the region. Although the majority of Mexican migrants are unaccompanied working-age men, there are a significant number of women and children here as well. Nearly all the visitors to the mobile consulate are residing in the New Orleans metropolitan area, although some made the trip from elsewhere in Louisiana or even from neighboring states.

Table 1. Demographic and family characteristics

Variable	N	% or mean and standard deviation
Sex		
Female	35	22.3 %
Male	122	77.7 %
Age	N=156	32.9 (10.0)
Marital Status		
Single	54	34.4 %
Married or common-law	96	61.2 %
Divorced, separated or widowed	7	4.5 %
Parental Status		
Percentage with children (parents)	110	70.1 %
% parents of minor children (N=110)	98	89.1 %
Number of children	110	2.5 (1.5)
Current residence of respondents (N=154)		
New Orleans metro area	148	94.3 %
Elsewhere in Louisiana	3	1.9 %
Not in Louisiana	3	1.9 %
Location of families (N=108)		
With respondent	40	37.0 %
Mexico	56	51.9 %
Elsewhere in U.S. (not with respondent)	1	0.9 %
Only spouse with respondent	5	4.6 %
Only children with respondent	1	0.9 %
Some Mexico and some with respondent	4	3.7 %
Don't know	1	0.9 %
No spouse or children	49	Not counted

Note: The number in the column labeled N is the number with a specific characteristic (the numerator). The base number (denominator) is 157 unless otherwise specified by a note saying (n=xxx).

II. Education:

Most respondents report that they have a primary or secondary education in Mexico (67.6%). This is more than the Mexican population as a whole, in which 58.0 % have some primary or secondary education². Other studies of Mexican migrants in the U.S. also find that migrants are drawn from those with either a primary or secondary education³. However, most migrants do not have a strong command of English. Respondents are most likely to speak ‘a little’ English (48.4%), while a fair number say they speak it somewhat or well (29.3%). Less than a quarter says they don’t speak at all (22.3%). Respondents are less likely to read or write in English: 31.9% say they don’t read it at all and 51.6% say they don’t write it at all. Since most have acquired their English language skills “on the job” and they have very short durations in the U.S., it is not surprising that they report so little English language ability.

Table 2. Education and language ability

Variable	N	% distribution
Educational attainment		
No education	2	1.3 %
Some or complete primary school	37	23.6 %
Some or complete lower secondary school	69	44.0 %
Some or complete preparatory school	33	21.0 %
Some or complete university	16	10.2 %
Speaks English:		
Not at all	35	22.3 %
A little	76	48.4 %
Somewhat or well	46	29.3 %
Reads English:		
Not at all	50	31.9 %
A little	67	42.7 %
Somewhat or well	50	25.5 %
Writes English:		
Not at all	82	51.6 %
A little	45	28.7 %
Somewhat or well	31	19.8 %
Total	157	

Note: The number in the column labeled N is the number with a specific characteristic (the numerator). The base number (denominator) is 157 unless otherwise specified by a note saying (n=xxx).

² In 2005, 58.0% of the Mexican population aged 15 and older had at least some primary or secondary education or the equivalent. Source: Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía y Informática. [II Conteo de Población y Vivienda 2005](http://www.inegi.gob.mx/). <http://www.inegi.gob.mx/>

³ Fussell, Elizabeth, and Douglas S. Massey. “Limits to the Cumulative Causation of Migration: International Migration from Urban Mexico.” *Demography* 41(1): 151-171; Massey, Douglas S., and Kristin Espinosa. 1997. “What’s Driving Mexico-US Migration?: A Theoretical, Empirical and Policy Analysis.” *American Journal of Sociology* 102:939-99.

III. Migratory Patterns

Although Mexicans have a long history of migration to the U.S. and make up the largest foreign-born population, the migrants in our sample had not been in the U.S. for very long⁴. For the whole sample, which includes those who currently reside in the New Orleans area and those who traveled to attend the mobile consulate, the median duration in the U.S. is 2.9 years. Of those who currently reside in New Orleans the median duration in New Orleans or the nearby region is 1.5 years⁵ and 28.4% had been in New Orleans before Hurricane Katrina struck.

Most migrants were on their first trip in the U.S. (65.0%). They usually came to New Orleans or Louisiana from somewhere else in the U.S. (65.8%), while the remaining third came directly from Mexico (34.2). The largest group already in the U.S. had been in Texas (27.1%) and many others were in other Southern states (21.3%). It is likely that migrants who came to New Orleans after Katrina were those who were least settled in other places in the U.S. and came seeking the high wages and employment opportunities in the post-Katrina economy.

Table 3a. Migratory patterns

Variable	Frequency	Median	Mean	S.D.
Duration of most recent U.S. trip (years)	156	2.9	4.5	4.9
Duration of current stay in New Orleans area (years) (of those currently residing there)	144	1.3	2.2	2.7
Number of U.S. trips	157	1.0	2.2	4.1
Number of U.S. destinations on current trip	157	2.0	2.0	1.1

Table 3b. Migratory patterns

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
% currently residing in New Orleans	148	94.3%
% in New Orleans before September 2005 (of those currently in New Orleans) N=144	41	28.4%
Number of U.S. trips		
First U.S. trip	102	65.0 %
Second U.S. trip	29	18.5 %
Third or higher order U.S. trip	26	16.5 %
Previous place lived/worked (N=155)		
Mexico	53	34.2 %
Texas	42	27.1 %
Florida, Georgia, other Southern states	33	21.3 %
Western states	12	7.7 %
Mid-Western states	9	5.8 %
Northeastern states	6	3.9 %
Total	157	

Note: The number in the column labeled N is the number with a specific characteristic (the numerator). The base number (denominator) is 157 unless otherwise specified by a note saying (n=xxx).

⁴ Grieco, Elizabeth. 2003. The Foreign Born from Mexico in the United States, Migration Information Source, Migration Policy Institute. October 1, 2003. Accessed October 26, 2006: <http://migrationinformation.org>; Passel, Jeffrey S. 2004. Mexican Immigration to the U.S.: The Latest Estimates, Migration Information Source, Migration Policy Institute. March 1, 2004. Accessed October 26, 2006: <http://migrationinformation.org>; Pew Hispanic Center. 2006a. A Statistical Portrait of Hispanics at Mid-Decade. Table 11. Change in Foreign-born Population by State: 2000 and 2005. Accessed October 18, 2006: <http://pewhispanic.org/docs>

⁵ The median measures the middle of the distribution of scores. It is a preferable statistics to the mean or average since it is not as affected by extreme cases, such as migrants who have permanently settled and have long durations of residence.

Migrants gave multiple reasons for coming to the area. The most common reasons were that they had friends and family here (38.2%), had heard about better jobs here (33.1%), and knew New Orleans needed workers (27.4%). Migrants usually find out about new opportunities through the networks of friends, families and acquaintances who are also migrants and who are able to connect them with employment opportunities⁶. However, just as they were drawn to New Orleans by economic opportunities, they are likely to move on as well. Almost half (41.7%) report that they are only likely to stay less than 2 years or until the work ends. Another 35% are uncommitted and don't know how long they will stay. Only 18.5% say they will stay permanently. This mobility is strongly related to their legal status: 88.5% do not have legal permission to live or work in the U.S.

Table 3b. Migratory Patterns

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Reasons for coming to the area ⁷		
Friends and family are here	60	38.2
Heard about better jobs here	52	33.1
Employer connections	9	5.7
Knew there were immigrants here	1	0.6
New Orleans needed workers	43	27.4
Coyote brought here	2	1.3
Plans to stay (n=151)		
Less than 6 months	10	6.6
Between 6 and 12 months	24	15.9
Between 1 and 2 years	24	15.9
More than 2 years	7	4.6
Until work ends	5	3.3
Permanently	28	18.5
Don't know	53	35.1
Legal status (N=152)		
U.S. citizen	3	2.0 %
Permission to work and live in U.S.	9	5.9 %
Undocumented	139	88.5 %
Total	157	

Note: The number in the column labeled N is the number with a specific characteristic (the numerator). The base number (denominator) is 157 unless otherwise specified by a note saying (n=xxx).

⁶ Fussell, Elizabeth, and Douglas S. Massey. "Limits to the Cumulative Causation of Migration: International Migration from Urban Mexico." *Demography* 41(1): 151-171; Massey, Douglas S., and Kristin Espinosa. 1997. "What's Driving Mexico-US Migration?: A Theoretical, Empirical and Policy Analysis." *American Journal of Sociology* 102:939-99.

⁷ Respondents were able to give more than one response so the reasons for coming to New Orleans do not sum to 100%.

IV. Employment Patterns

Migrants were drawn to the areas affected by hurricane Katrina, but especially New Orleans where the failure of the levees caused 80% of buildings in the city to be flooded. Since men and women concentrate in different sectors of the labor market, I distinguish men's and women's occupations. Among men, the vast majority (87.7%) reported being employed in construction or manufacturing work. The remainder was distributed among the other occupations with only 1 reporting not to be currently in the labor force. Most women were either not in the labor force (40.6%) or in personal services or domestic labor (37.5%). However, a surprisingly large percentage (18.8%) was employed in construction given that this is not a traditionally female occupation. Construction employment is clearly the magnet for most of these migrants.

Table 4a. Employment Characteristics of Mexicans in New Orleans

Variable	Frequency	% distribution
Men's current occupation in New Orleans (N=114)		
Agricultural worker	1	0.9 %
Manufacturing or construction	100	87.7 %
Transportation	2	0.9 %
Services	0	0.0 %
Personal services/domestic labor	7	6.1 %
Other	3	2.6 %
Not in labor force	1	0.9 %
Women's current occupation in New Orleans (N=32)		
Agricultural worker	0	0.0 %
Manufacturing or construction	6	18.8 %
Transportation	0	0.0 %
Services	1	3.1 %
Personal services/domestic labor	12	37.5 %
Other	0	0.0 %
Not in labor force	13	40.6 %

Note: The number in the column labeled N is the number with a specific characteristic (the numerator). The base number (denominator) is 157 unless otherwise specified by a note saying (n=xxx).

Although day laborers who wait for work at informally established street-corners are a highly visible, post-Katrina phenomenon in New Orleans, this is not the most common way that newcomer Latinos find employment. Even in other cities where Latino migrants concentrate, it is not the most common or the most desirable method for seeking employment⁸. During the interviews many responded to the question about ever looking for work on a street corner by saying, “No, gracias a Dios” [No, thank God]. Only 15.4% of the sample responded that they had ever looked for work this way in New Orleans, although it was more common among post-Katrina Latinos than pre-Katrina residents. Of those who had ever looked for work at day labor pick-up sites, fewer than half usually seek work this way.

Migrant’s social networks draw members to new destinations with the lure of employment. Typically an employed migrant lets network members know that his or her employer is seeking laborers, and often employers ask their current employees to recruit new workers. The majority of migrants say that they found their current job through a friend or *paisano* (52.5%) or a family member (23.7%). Only 3.6% say they found their current job at a street corner pick-up site. Recruiters and advertisements are infrequent sources of employment as well. This underscores the power of migrant’s social networks to generate a rapid response labor force after a disaster.

Table 4b. Methods of seeking employment

Variable	Frequency	% distribution
Ever looked for work on street corner? (N=157)	24 (N=155)	15.4 %
% of pre-Katrina Mexicans	(N=43)	7.0%
% of post-Katrina Mexicans	(N=98)	18.4% ⁹
Normally seek work on street corner? (N=157)	11 (N=24)	45.8 %
How did you find out about your current job? (N=139)		
Through family members	33	23.7 %
Through friends and paisanos (those from Mexico)	73	52.5 %
Through a neighbor or acquaintance	3	2.2 %
Through a migrant club	0	0.0 %
Through an employment center	0	0.0 %
Through a temporary work center	1	0.7 %
Through a recruiter	8	5.8 %
At a street corner pick-up site	5	3.6 %
An advertisement (TV, radio, internet, newspapers)	6	4.3 %
Other	10	7.2 %
Total	157	

Note: The number in the column labeled N is the number with a specific characteristic (the numerator). The base number (denominator) is 145 for the total employed unless otherwise specified by a note saying (n=xxx).

⁸ Valenzuela, Abel, Nik Theodore, Edwin Meléndez, and Ana Luz Gonzalez. 2006. On the Corner: Day Labor in the United States. Accessed January 2006: <http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/issr/csup/index.php>

⁹ The difference between pre-Katrina and post-Katrina migrants in their likelihood of ever having worked as day laborers is statistically significant at the p=.08 level. There is no statistically significant difference between pre-Katrina and post-Katrina migrants with respect to whether they usually seek work on the street corner.

Latinos were rapidly drawn into the post-Katrina labor force because they are concentrated in construction work throughout the country¹⁰. Furthermore, New Orleans employers offered comparatively higher wages than those in other cities. The mean hourly wage reported by Mexicans in New Orleans is \$15.41, though it is apparent from the percentile distributions that the mean is skewed by a few high earning Mexicans. The median hourly wage is \$12.25. Those who worked in jobs elsewhere in the U.S. before coming to New Orleans reported earning a mean hourly wage of only \$10.43 per hour. This mean is also skewed by high earners, and the median hourly wage is \$8.50. In spite of the fact that Mexicans in New Orleans reported working fewer hours per week than those who worked elsewhere in the U.S. before coming to New Orleans (47.4 vs. 50.7 hours on average), they earn higher average weekly wages (\$707.52 vs. \$511.52) because of the large difference in hourly wages¹¹. This demonstrates that immigrants are very sensitive to the differences in wages between places and they are willing to move to seek higher wages. Thus, it may be the case that when wages in New Orleans fall, the migrants will also move on to find more profitable employment¹².

Table 4c. Wages and hours

	Frequency	Mean	25 th Percentile	50 th percentile	75 th Percentile
Wages and hours in New Orleans job (N=138)					
Hourly wage in current job (\$)	138	15.41	10.0	12.25	15.00
Number of hours worked per day	138	8.8	8.0	8.0	10.0
Number of days worked per week	137	5.3	5.0	5.0	6.0
Weekly wages	136	707.52	400.0	600.00	786.00
Number of hours worked per week	136	47.4	40.0	48.0	56.0
Wages and hours in previous U.S. job (N=91)					
Hourly wage (\$)	91	10.34	7.0	8.5	10.0
Number of hours worked per day	91	9.1	8.0	9.0	10.0
Number of days worked per week	91	5.5	5.0	6.0	6.0
Weekly wages	89	511.52	320.00	408.00	600.00
Number of hours worked per week	89	50.7	40.0	48.0	60.0
Total	145				

Note: The number in the column labeled N is the number with a specific characteristic (the numerator). The base number (denominator) is 145 for the total employed unless otherwise specified by a note saying (n=xxx).

¹⁰ Pew Hispanic Center, 2007. "Construction Jobs Expand for Latinos Despite Slump in Housing Market," <http://pewhispanic.org/files/factsheets/28.pdf>

¹¹ The Ns for wages and hours in previous job are lower than for those currently in New Orleans or Louisiana because some immigrants came directly from Mexico. Presumably their wages in Mexico were even lower than they would have been anywhere in the U.S.

¹² Jenalia Moreno, 2006. "As more immigrants go to New Orleans to help rebuild the city, laborers say they're making less; Cleanup work draws a crowd." The Houston Chronicle, October 29, 2006.

V. Living arrangements

The temporary nature of most respondents' stay in New Orleans or the region is apparent from their living arrangements. In most cases (81%) their housing is rented, with 10% responding that their employer covers their living accommodations. Most live in either an apartment (43.0%) or a house (50.0%). In post-Katrina New Orleans housing is at a premium, since so much of the housing stock was damaged. Immediately after the hurricane many migrants were reported to be living in parks, cars, abandoned houses, or at their worksites, but nearly two years later it appears that most migrants have found more healthful and stable arrangements.

Nevertheless, they often economize by sharing a single housing unit among many people. On average, respondents reported having 4.6 people living in their household. This is exceptionally high given that most do not have their spouses or children with them: the average number of adults (over age 16) in a household is 3.7. This considerably reduces the average cost of housing. The average housing unit costs \$770.85 per month, but each adult pays about \$300.30 in housing costs per month. Economizing on housing allows many migrants to save and remit large sums from their earnings.

Table 5. Living arrangements

Variable	Frequency	% or mean and S.D.	
Type of housing			
Apartment	67	42.7 %	
House	79	50.3 %	
Mobile home	10	6.4 %	
Hotel	1	0.6 %	
Housing payment (n=155)			
Own	14	9.0 %	
Rent	125	80.7 %	
Employer pays	16	10.3 %	
Residents in housing unit	157	4.6	1.8
Adults in housing unit	157	3.7	2.0
Cost of paid housing unit ¹³ (\$)	132	770.85	360.40
Cost per adult resident in housing unit (\$)	132	300.30	251.31
Total	157		

Note: The number in the column labeled N is the number with a specific characteristic (the numerator). The base number (denominator) is 157 unless otherwise specified by a note saying (n=xxx).

¹³ Respondents whose employers paid for their housing were not included. In addition, some data is missing for the cost of housing.

VI.a Employer abuse of Mexican workers in New Orleans

There have been several highly visible legal cases brought against large employers on behalf of migrants who have not been paid. Many cases have been settled out of court, while even larger numbers of cases have probably gone unreported¹⁴. The respondents in this survey substantiate this impression: 24% report that they have experienced non-payment by an employer, and of those who reported this happening, most said it had happened to them on average 2.3 times. Similarly, 16% report being paid less than agreed and nearly 7% report being made to work more hours than agreed. Of those reporting these abuses, they say that it has happened multiple times.

Other abuses on the part of the employer are not be related to earnings, but are simply mistreatment of workers. Being abandoned at the work site, denied breaks or water, insulted, threatened or even experiencing violence are not uncommon complaints. It is likely that this mistreatment is concentrated among certain types of workers and certain employers. It isn't clear from this survey whether these abuses are more common in New Orleans than elsewhere, but no such abuse should be tolerated anywhere.

Table 6a. Employer abuse

Variable	Frequency	Percentage	Mean # incidents
Employer abuse			
Employer didn't pay	35	24.1 %	2.3
Employer paid less than agreed	23	15.9 %	2.7
Employer made workers work more hours	10	6.9 %	4.2
Employer abandoned workers at worksite	8	5.5 %	3.1
Employer didn't give breaks or water	9	6.2 %	3.7
Employer was violent	6	4.1 %	2.2
Employer insulted or threatened workers	11	7.6 %	2.3
Ever experienced any of above abuses	46	29.3 %	2.0 ¹⁵
Total	145		

Note: The number in the column labeled N is the number with a specific characteristic (the numerator). The base number (denominator) is the total number employed in New Orleans, N=145.

¹⁴ Sam Quiñones. 2006. "Many of Katrina's Workers Go Unpaid; With oversight lacking, layers of subcontractors take advantage of a cash-based economy and those hired to help in the reconstruction." Los Angeles Times, September 11, 2006; Gwen Filosa. 2006. "Builder to pay for lost wages: It settles migrant laborers' suit." The Times-Picayune (New Orleans). September 9, 2006; Gerard Shields. 2007. "House probes N.O. labor: Accusations fly of abuse, sloth." The Advocate (Baton Rouge), Capital City Press. June 27, 2007.

¹⁵ This statistic is the mean number of types of abuse experienced, not the mean number of any incidents. It shows that most respondents reporting abuses have experienced at least 2 types of abuse.

VI.b Police treatment of Mexicans in New Orleans and crimes against Mexicans

Since many Mexicans are undocumented migrants, they are wary of the police or any other U.S. legal authority. In New Orleans, the police have been unfamiliar with their role in enforcing migration law and so migrants are more likely to avoid them. This makes migrants targets for criminals who know they often carry cash and will not go to the police. The survey found that significant, though small, percentages of Mexicans had had negative interactions with the police. The most common experience was that they were fined for driving without identification (12.7%). Nearly 10% of the sample had been arrested. Although we did not ask about the crime they had been arrested for, many volunteered that they had been arrested while driving without identification. Nearly 10% had been asked about their legal status. Some (5.1%) had had their legal papers confiscated, though it isn't clear if those papers were genuine or not. We did not inquire heavily into the nature of these interactions since they were often a sensitive subject for the migrants. The results demonstrate, however, that the migrants have cause to avoid the police. This makes them vulnerable to becoming crime victims since criminals believe they will not report crimes to the police.

The most common crimes against the respondents were robbery (6.4%) and assault (5.7%). It is likely that crimes against migrants were not more widespread because migrants take measures to protect themselves. For example, it is common to see groups of 3 to 8 Latino men walking together in the evenings. This is not only because they are socializing and having fun, but because they are safer in groups than they are traveling alone. The migrants may also minimize their exposure to crime and police interaction by working long hours and spending their leisure time relaxing at home. Only in the past year have more restaurants, clubs, and other social gathering spaces have opened up that cater to the working class Latino population. As the migrants become more settled measures should be taken to create an atmosphere of safety and trust between the police and Latino migrants to ensure that they do not remain easy targets for criminals in a city that is already overwhelmed by crime.

Table 6b. Police treatment and crimes against Mexicans

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Mean # incidents
Police treatment			
Insulted or harassed	10	8.3 %	3.4
Arrested	12	9.6 %	1.3
Fined	17	12.7 %	1.5
Legal papers confiscated	5	5.1 %	1.0
Asked about legal status	12	9.6 %	2.3
Ever experienced any of above treatments	28	17.8 %	2.2 ¹⁶
Victim of crime?			
Robbery	7	6.4 %	1.1
Attack	1	2.5 %	1.0
Assault	6	5.7 %	1.1
Battery	1	2.5 %	1.0
Sexual abuse/rape	1	2.5 %	1.0
Ever experienced any of above crimes	15	9.6 %	1.2 ¹⁷
Total	157		

Note: The number in the column labeled N is the number with a specific characteristic (the numerator). The base number (denominator) is 157 unless otherwise specified by a note saying (n=xxx).

¹⁶ This statistic is the mean number of experiences of these treatments by police, not the mean number of any incidents. It shows that most respondents reporting experiences of such treatment by police have experienced at least two of these types of treatment.

¹⁷ This statistic is the mean number of crimes experienced, not the mean number of any incidents. It shows that most respondents reporting crime have experienced only one crime.

VII. Health and health care

Migrants must be healthy enough to make the trip to the U.S. and therefore it is not surprising that most classify themselves as being in excellent, very good, or good health. The jobs that they engage, however, pose serious risks to their good health. Nearly half (44.8%) reported that their job is dangerous. They listed risks such as working on roofs or in contaminated buildings without protection, lifting and unloading heavy objects, and the danger of injury from construction equipment. More than one in five (21.4%) workers reported having been injured or become ill on the job at least once. The health problems were typically minor physical injuries such as cuts, puncture wounds from nails, falling or having something fall on them (56.7%). Another common problem was respiratory illness or infection (23.3%). Many workers do not understand the danger of exposure to dust, asbestos, and mold, and do not take proper precautions at work¹⁸. The survey did not ask about their knowledge of these hazards or whether their employers gave them protective equipment.

Table 7a. Health and on-the-job injuries

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Recent health (N=153)		
Excellent	41	26.8 %
Very good	26	17.0 %
Good	56	36.6 %
Regular	28	18.3 %
Bad	2	1.3 %
Is your job dangerous? (N=143)		
Yes	64	44.8 %
No	79	55.2 %
Ever experienced on-the-job injury (N=145)		21.4 %
Type of injury or illness (N=30)		
Minor physical injury (cuts, falls, etc...)	17	56.7 %
Broken bones	5	16.7 %
Infections/respiratory illness	7	23.3 %
Other	1	3.3 %
Total	153	

¹⁸ Tomas Aguilar and Laura Podolsky. 2006. Risk amid Recovery: Occupational Health and Safety of Latino Immigrant Workers in the Aftermath of the Gulf Coast Hurricanes. UCLA Labor and Occupational Safety and Health Program (LOSH) and the National Day Laborers Organizing Network (NDLON). http://www.colectivoflatlander.org/Site/English_files/risk_amid_recovery-1.pdf

Of those who were injured about half (48.4%) sought medical care. Those who sought such care typically received it (93.3%). The largest percentage of injured workers sought free treatment (31.3%), followed by a quarter whose treatment was paid for by their employer. A few (12.5%) had their own health insurance, while another few (12.5%) simply couldn't pay for the treatment they received. None had medical insurance through an employer. Of those who did not seek or receive medical care, the most common reason was that they couldn't pay for the treatment (42.9%). Another large group (28.6%) simply didn't know where to go. Lack of insurance and lack of knowledge about health care are important barriers to obtaining health care among these respondents.

Table 7b. Medical care

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Sought medical care? (N=31)	15	48.4%
Received medical care? (N=15)	14	93.3%
How did you pay for medical care? (N=16)		
Medical insurance through employer	0	0.0%
My own health insurance	2	12.5%
Paid for it myself	1	6.3%
Paid by my employer	4	25.0%
Free treatment	5	31.3%
I couldn't pay	2	12.5%
Other	1	6.3%
Why didn't receive medical care? (n=7)		
Could not pay	3	42.9 %
Didn't know where to go	2	28.6 %
Doesn't have medical insurance	1	14.3 %
Few medical options	1	14.3 %
Total	31	