

Transitions to Adulthood: A Comparative Analysis of Mexican-Origin Populations in the United States and Mexico

We use the fifth wave (2016-2018) of the Add Health survey and the Mexican Retrospective Demographic Survey (referred to by its Spanish acronym EDER) conducted in 2017 to examine the similarities and differences in the transition to adulthood of the Mexican-origin population in the United States and Mexico. The availability of the EDER data represents an excellent opportunity to examine how the United States experience shapes the timing and sequence of school-work-marriage-parenthood transitions and the influence of early socioeconomic conditions on these transition patterns.

The comparison of the Add-Health and EDER surveys is pertinent for three fundamental reasons. First, the EDER collected retrospective histories of major life course events, such as migration, schooling, employment, marriage, and fertility, from independent samples of men and women 20 to 54 years of age in 2017. An EDER sub-sample of 5,206 cases matches the Add-Health data's birth cohort. Second, the Mexican American population of the Add-Health survey has been shaped by a large influx of immigration from Mexico: about half of them were either born in Mexico (19%) or born in the US to immigrant parents (32%). Third, the comparative perspective allows us to examine the adaptation process of acculturation regarding family transitions of the Mexican American population by simultaneously comparing transition patterns with the non-Hispanic white population in the United States and the population in Mexico.

Our research will try to answer the following questions:

1. How do the timing and sequence of school-work-marriage-parenthood transitions differ between Mexican-origin individuals in the United States and Mexico, as observed through the Add Health and EDER surveys?
2. To what extent do early socioeconomic conditions in both countries differentially influence the timing and sequence of life transitions among the Mexican-origin population in the United States and Mexico?
3. How do immigrant status and gender influence the life course trajectories among Mexican-origin individuals in the United States, as compared to those in Mexico, based on the Add Health and EDER data?

The Add-Health and EDER surveys allow us to examine family transitions up to age 35 of the population born from 1976 to 1982. The surveys show that Mexican American participants in the Wave V survey were slightly younger on average (37.4 years old) than those in the EDER survey (38.9 years old). It's also worth noting that there is more male representation in the Add-Health survey (51.5%) compared to the EDER survey (43.6%), which can be partly explained by the significant outflow of Mexican men from this cohort to the United States.

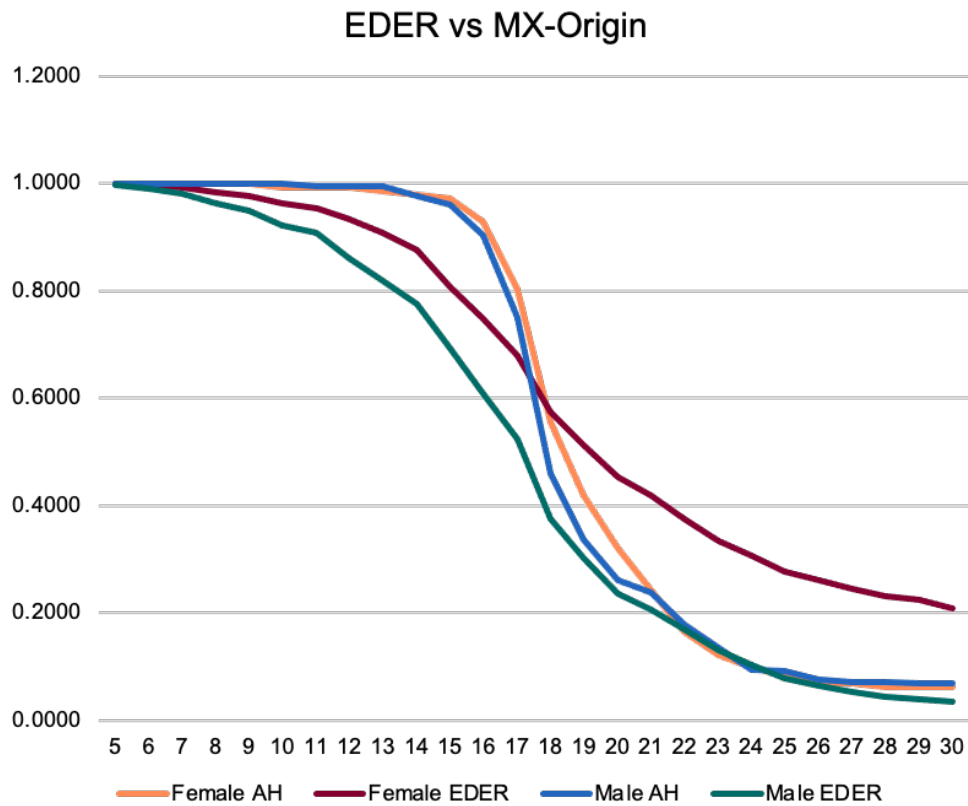
The remarkable differences in the access to education between the Mexican-origin population in the United States and those in México are relevant to our life course approach. About six in ten Mexicans never attended high school (61.8%), compared with 10.3% of Mexican Americans in the U.S. The Mexican-origin population in the U.S. is four times more likely to have finished high school than those in Mexico—89.7% vs. 20.4%, respectively.

Data on fertility shows a mean number of children ever-born of the Mexican-origin population in the Add-Health survey of 1.6 children compared to an average of 2.2 in the same population cohort in Mexico.

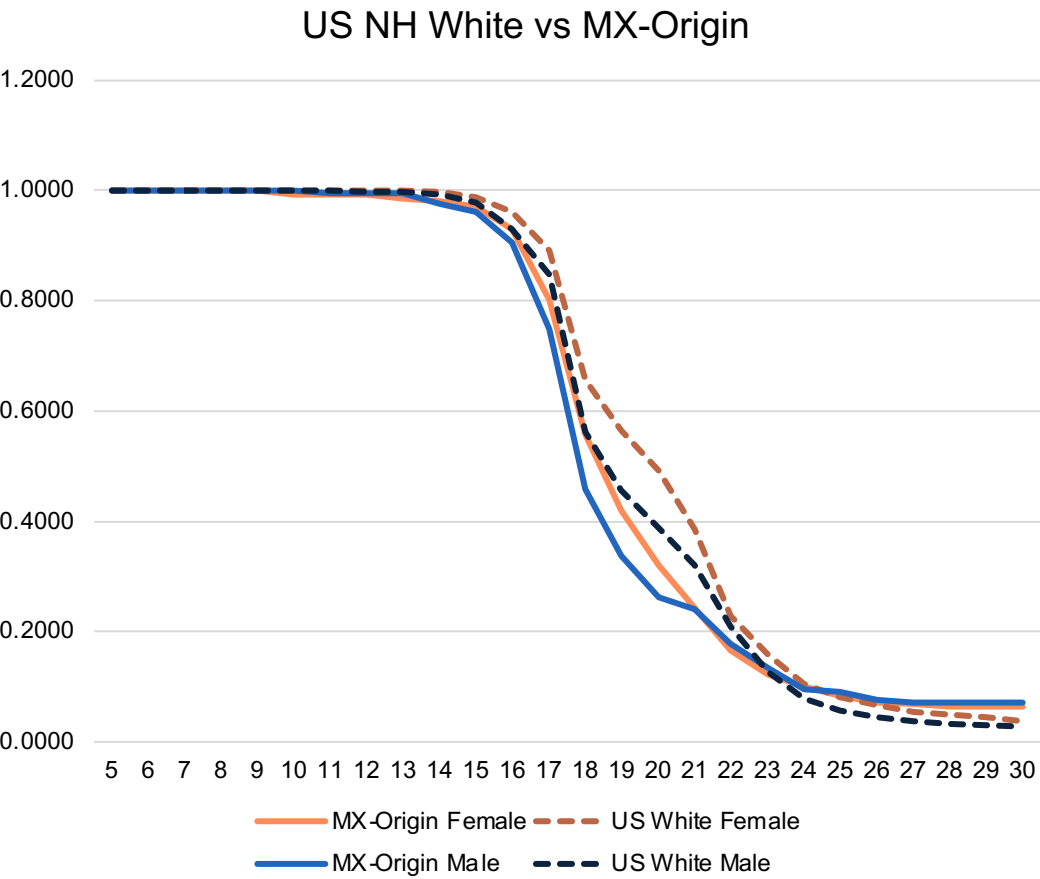
We will estimate separate discrete-time event-history models for men and women's transitions from school to first-time full employment, marriage, and parenthood.

	Add Health W5 Mexican-Origin Sample (N = 931)	EDER-2017 Subsample (N = 5,206)
% Male	51.4	43.8
Mean Age	37.4	38.9
Education		
% Never completed high school	10.3	61.8
% Finished high school	89.7	20.4
% Never Married	28.8	12.7
Mean No. of Children	1.6	2.2
% No children	31.0	
% At least 1+ child	68.9	
Generation Status		
First Generation	20.6	-
Second Generation	34.5	-
Third-Plus Generation	45.0	-

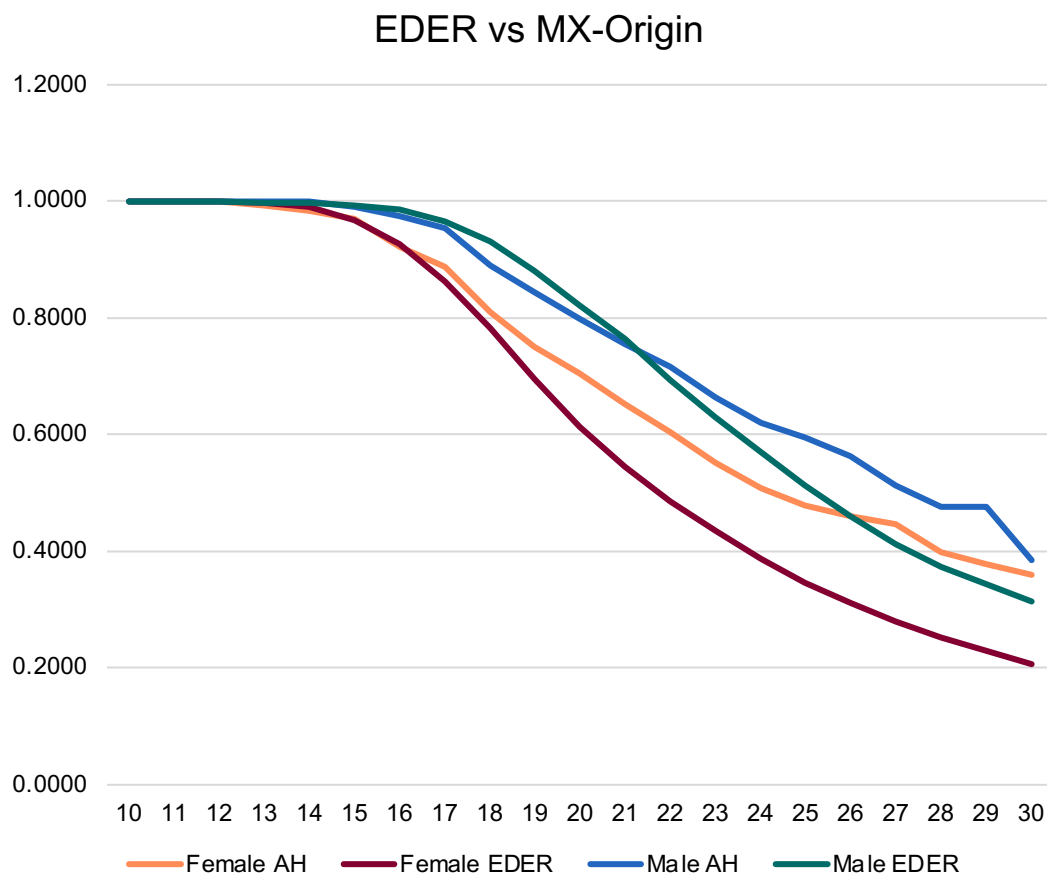
The Transition to First Job Mexican-Origin in Mexico (EDER) and in the United States (Add-Health)



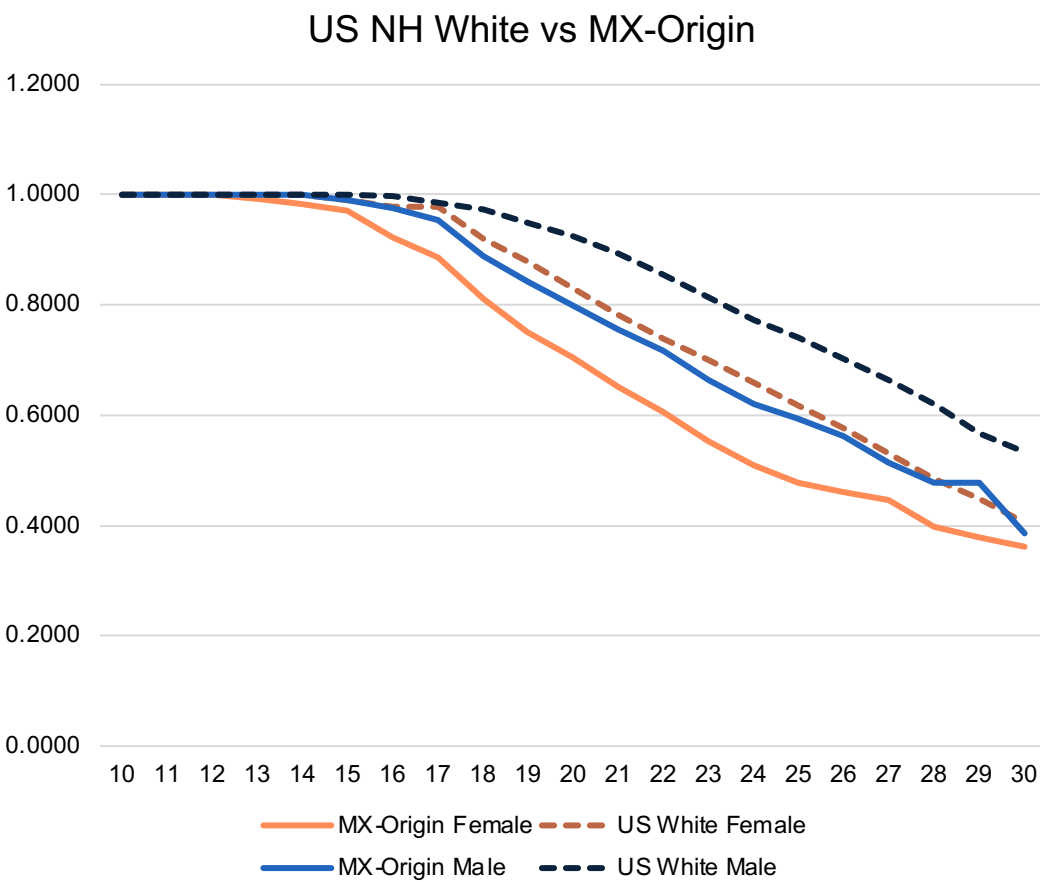
The Transition to First Job Mexican-Origin in the United States and US Non-Hispanic Whites



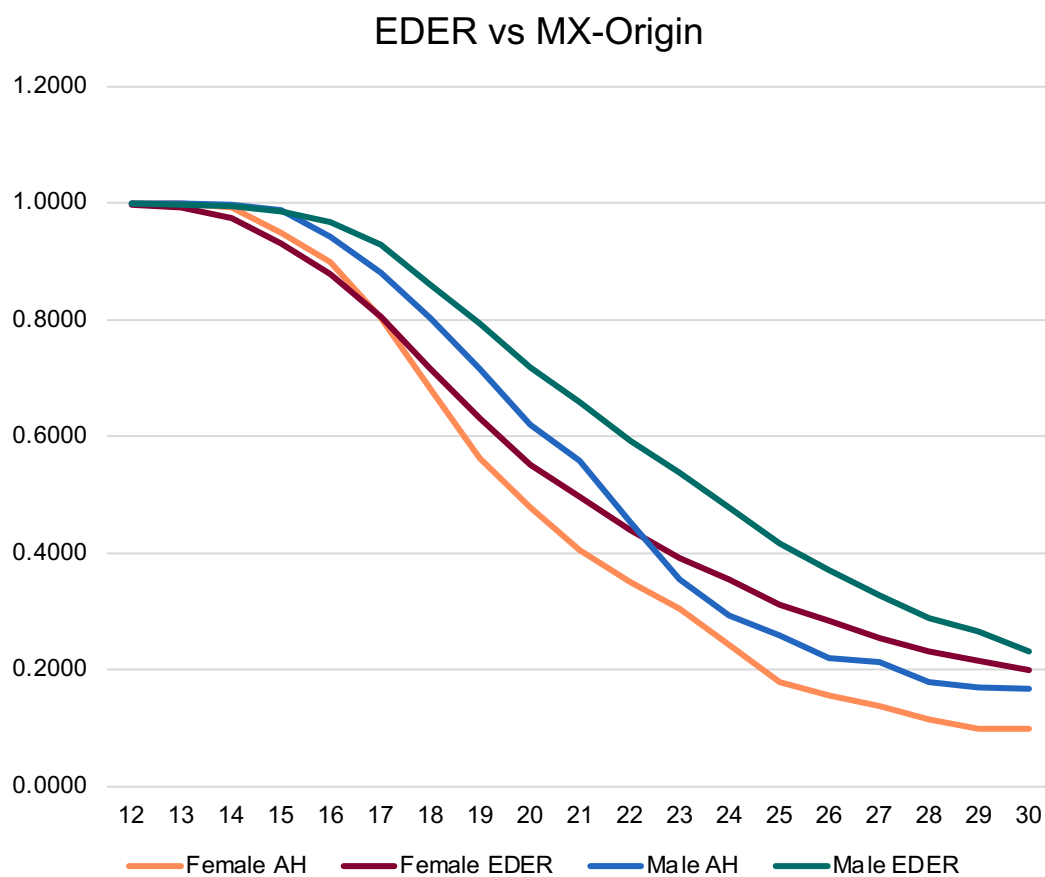
The Transition to First Child Mexican-Origin in Mexico (EDER) and in the United States (Add-Health)



The Transition to First Birth Mexican-Origin in the United States and US Non-Hispanic Whites



The Transition to First Union Mexican-Origin in Mexico (EDER) and in the United States (Add-Health)



The Transition to First Union Mexican-Origin in the United States and US Non-Hispanic Whites

