

Labor Force patterns of Mexican women in Mexico and United States. What changes and what remains?

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The current study explores the factors affecting the economic participation of Mexican women in two contexts: Mexico and U.S. using the 2000 Public-Use Microdata Sample (IPUMS), the 2000 Sample of Census of Mexico and logistic regression models. The main purpose is to show how different are the labor force patterns of Mexican immigrant women (first and 1.5 generations) in U.S compared to Mexican and American mainstream. Two dimensional issues were taken into account: the individual and household characteristics including human capital; and the labor market and place of residence. In the same way, this study explains those differences between profiles using the perspective of selective assimilation. We expect to find evidence supporting the idea that 1.5 of labor force profile is completely different to Non-Hispanic-White and Mexican women, but very similar to the first generation.

One of the most surprising changes in the last century has been the increase of the labor force participation rates of the women throughout the world. However, these rates still remain below the rates in men. Differences can be referred to the normative household responsibilities, such as housework and child care. Moreover, scholars focusing on the labor force participation of women indicate serious differences in the labor force participation rates between countries or even inside the same country or an ethnic group (Greenlees and Saenz, 1999; Stier and Tienda, 1992; Read, 2004).

Although women recently have a lot of strategies to conciliate or combine their housework and child care role with their labor force status, there are some differences (*i.e.* across women in different countries) can be explained by means of many factors. One of them can be the traditional behavior, which plays an important role in women lives in the Third world countries (*i.e.* Mexico and Latin America). This is in turn completely different in Developed Countries, such as United States (U.S.).

The employment status of women becomes more complex by adding the migrant status. From this perspective, the studies have showed some differences

related to the labor force participation between immigrants, expressed in dissimilarities of human capital, individual and family characteristics, labor markets and local characteristics of the communities where they live. All these effects are a direct function of the time spent in the residence place and, in the specific female case, the traditional roles of homework and child care.

In the view that since the twentieth century Mexicans have represented the most significant immigrant flow going to U.S. (currently around 10% of total Mexico's population), one of the most relevant question in the field of immigration is how rapidly the immigrants become part of the American mainstream. Considering that employment is one of the key components for the immigrant integration, and that research of labor force participation of immigrant has been traditionally lesser for women than male, this study explores the process of Mexican immigrant women incorporation¹ and integration to their host society (U.S.) by means of the labor force participation.

Therefore, one of the aims in this paper is to know how different are the labor force patterns of Mexican immigrant women in U.S. compared not only to American mainstream but also with Mexican women. We think the Mexican group living in Mexico can be a reference group to evaluate how deeply the labor force patterns of women in Mexico have changed when they move to U.S.

Time spent in the U.S. is a factor that describes the differences in economic participation across immigrant women. The longer women lives in US, the more and better opportunities to obtain a job (Chiswick, 1979; Borjas, 1983, 2001; Greenlee sans Saenz, 1999). Particularly, in the case of Mexican women, Allensworth (1999) points out that there are disparities in the age of arrival to U.S. of Mexican people. Those who arrived to U.S. being a child receives increased incomes compared to a similar group who arrived to U.S being an adult. These results can also be a sign of differences among labor force. In this sense, Allensworth mentions the first generation women have a closer relationship with

¹ Beans & Stevens (2003) denote the term of incorporation like "the broader process by which the new groups establish relationships with host societies. Assimilation is one type of incorporation process".

traditional roles compared to the Mexican women born in U.S.; this reason makes clear these income dissimilarities.

In order to assess the above mentioned patterns, the Mexican immigrant group living in U.S. was broken down into two groups: women born in Mexico who arrived to U.S being children (aged 15 and less), which is denoted *1.5 generation*; and women born in Mexico who moved to the U.S. being adults (aged 16 year-old and over), which are named *first generation*. The control group refers to the Mexican mainstream and contains women born and living in Mexico; called *working Mexican women*. Finally, due to a great interest to explore the incorporation process of Mexican immigrant women to the US, this study used the *White* not Hispanic group, called *Non-Hispanic White Women*, as a representative group of the American mainstream; it includes white American native women who are not immigrants or Hispanics.

The principal aim in this work is to observe how the labor force participation is changing the profile of Mexican women living in Mexico and U.S. In other words, we expect to know which and how deep are the differences in the labor force participation pattern of Mexican women living in U.S compared to their referents (principal mainstream) in Mexico and U.S.

Thus, the objectives of this study are the following:

1. To examine the economic participation of the Mexican immigrant women in U.S. to compare it to the one observed in Mexican and Non-Hispanic White women living in Mexico and U.S.
2. To explore the type of factors supporting or limiting the Mexican female economic participation.
3. To obtain distinct patterns of labor force participation for Mexican women living in Mexico, Mexican immigrants in U.S. and White non-Hispanic women.

In general, the structure of this paper is as follows: Initially, it gives a brief overview of previous research on the employment incorporation of immigrant women and the determinants that allow and regulate the women employment, followed by a theoretical perspective, which helps us support our arguments. After that we

present the data, methods and models used in this study. Finally, we attempt to summarize the results obtaining the labor force patterns of women.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

As Bevelander (2005) points out that research about the labor force participation of immigrant women has played a minor role compared to those studies focusing on immigrant males. The main factors identified by the researchers about this topic include the transferability from country of original skills to the new country, household circumstances, the “cultural” factors as well as the demographic, human and place of residence characteristics. Those factors exert a considerable influence on the levels of economic participation between natives and immigrants (Bevelander, 2005). In this section, we will discuss some theoretical approaches on immigration integration divided into four sections: integration or assimilation way; human capital; household characteristics and structural factors of labor market.

Immigrant integration or assimilation?

The assimilation theory was the first that explained the immigrant integration and upward mobility. It assumed that when the immigrants move to other country, slightly and over time, they became “americanized” and discarded their original language, traditions, and values in order to be integrated into the American mainstream (Beans y Stevens, 2003; Powers y Seltzer, 1998, Lindstrom and Giorguli, 2002).

The assimilation theory and its modifications established the new immigrants start out at a disadvantage due to lack of education, English language deficient skills and the little knowledge of the host society. Meanwhile, time is going on, they gain experience in the host society, become more acculturated and integrated, and adopt the values, norms and attitudes toward the work of host society (Borjas, 1983, Chiswick, 1979). However, this perspective received a lot of criticism because it does not explain the behavior of ethnic and racial minorities, such as black minority. Therefore, new perspectives have appeared. Cultural

pluralism suggests that immigrants will not move unilaterally from original culture to “American” culture (Powers y Seltzer, 1998). The differences between assimilationists and pluralists created the actual controversy about the immigration in the US and its costs and benefits on the host society. In this work we adopted a new perspective: the “selective assimilation” or “accomodation without assimilation”. Bean and Stevens (2003) point out under this perspective that immigrants adopt strategies to achieve their economic success and to promote certain grade of cultural integration by means of fulfilling the host society requirements but maintaining their ethnic identity.

According with this perspective, empirical studies indicate that women who have had greater exposure to U.S. cultural values have higher work rates than those who keep ties with their sending countries, where traditional norms are more related to women’s traditional domestic roles. The nativity status, adscription to ethnic origin and duration of US residence are often used as proxies for integration because immigrants typically maintain stronger ties from origin costumes and weaker ties with American costumes (Hazuda et al, 1988; Stier y Tienda,1992; Stier y Tienda, 1996). However, it does not always mean that women lost at all their cultural origin’s values. In the case of Mexican women adopting the American behavior to labor force participation is a strategy to achieve the economic but not the sociocultural integration. The latest statement can be a response (but it is not the only one) to the different labor force participation rates across Mexican generations.

Human capital

In the economic literature, the human capital theory points out that immigrants with greater human capital (or work-related skills) are more successful than those with less human capital. Variables such as educational attainment, English proficiency, time of residence, age and work experience or work-related skills have been explored as factors influencing the women’s labor force participation.

The importance of educational attainment in determining the labor force participation is well documented and it needs little elaboration (Borjas, 1983;

Mincer, 1967; Greenlees and Sáenz, 1999; Stier and Tienda, 1992). Women with higher educational attainment will be more competitive for employment than those with low educational attainment. Empirical results indicate that Mexican women in U.S. have lower levels of education compared not only to native American women but to other ethnic and racial minorities (Levine, 1997).

The time of residence in the U.S. has great influence on the women labor force participation (Borjas, 1983; Chiswick, 1979; Allensworth, 1997; Greenlees and Sáenz, 1999; Stier and Tienda, 1992; Powers y Seltzer, 1998). Its effect on employment was pointed out in the prior section.

Age is a variable that affects the likelihood to enter in the laboral market. Research in U.S. and Mexico identified the transition point (marriage, children) that occurs in an individual trajectory, has different consequences, depending on where it occurred during the individual life-course. Marriage and children have direct effects and it would be predicted that the lowest labor force's rates would belong to married women who still have children at home (Moen, 1991, Oliveira and Ariza, 1999, Garcia and Oliveira, 1994). These results can be expanded to Mexican immigrant women. However, the human capital explanations cannot completely explain the labor force participation outcome yet. Thus, we explore the characteristic of household composition and the "cultural behavior" about the motherhood and the children upbringing.

Household associated characteristics

A sizeable body of research have focused its attention on effects of household characteristics on ethnic and generational women's employment. Reimers (1985) suggests that immigrant ethnic groups have different positions about male and female roles in the household, wives and mother working outside the home, the value placed on children, family size, household composition and the education of women. All of these factors affect the time allocation to home and market work by women with the same education, labor market experience, number of children, etc. The factors above mentioned joined to the economic resources as

well as the demand-supply of women labor in the place of residence, could lead the behavior to the employment status.

Bevelander (2005) cited MacPherson and Stewart (1989) to indicate that getting married prior to migration is negatively correlated to the labor force participation of women from various countries living in U.S. The household composition plays an interesting role in the female economic activity. Immigrants from less-developed countries, having young children are less likely to participate than people born in the host society (Pessar, 1999). Age and number of children at home have different effects on the women's work opportunities as much as child care availability does. Younger children can constraint their mothers opportunities to get into the labor market. Inversely, older children affect positively the laboral mothers opportunities because they assist with the domestic responsibilities (Stier y Tienda, 1992). Traditionally, the marriage status, as well as the presence and age of children play a major role in the women's labor force participation, but still no offer the complete explanation to female labor force participation. We need to explore the effects of the labor force markets.

Labor market structural factors

One of the explanations to female labor force participation focuses on the employment on ethnic groups in metropolitan labor markets. Green and Saenz (1999) stress that the immigrants in U.S. who decided to enter the labor market, do that in larger urban areas where the employment opportunities are greater. The occupation in urban or metropolitan areas was caused by the increase of the service sector. Services occupation offered hard conditions and low wages, but there are great options to laborer, particularly to younger immigrants or women (Sassen, 2003). Consequently, we expected that Mexican immigrant women will have more employment opportunities in regions with a service sector well-developed, specifically located in urban or metropolitan areas.

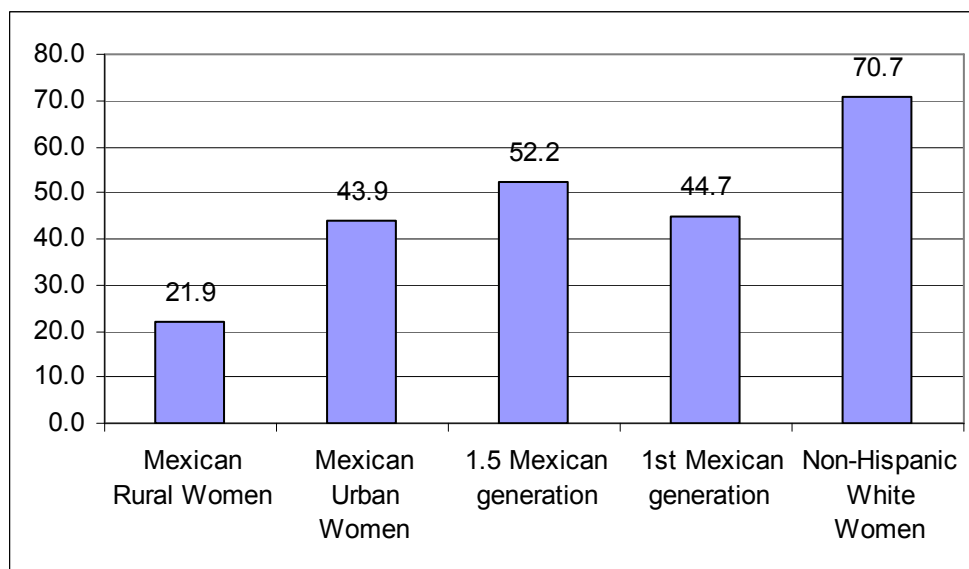
Summarizing the discussion, we expected that the differences in labor force participation of Mexican women living in U.S. are mainly due to differences in

transferability of human capital and cultural differences regarding market work and child rearing.

Research context

The situation of the immigrant women entering a labor market is complex and not very successful compared to native-born people. As we know, the skills and knowledge about the labor market are not perfectly transferable between countries and the behavior associated to the normative rules about motherhood and child rearing affect the labor force participation rates of immigrants. The next figure illustrates the differences in economic participation among women in Mexico and U.S.

Figure 1. Women's labor force participation rates aged 16-64 year-old in Mexico² and U.S., 2000

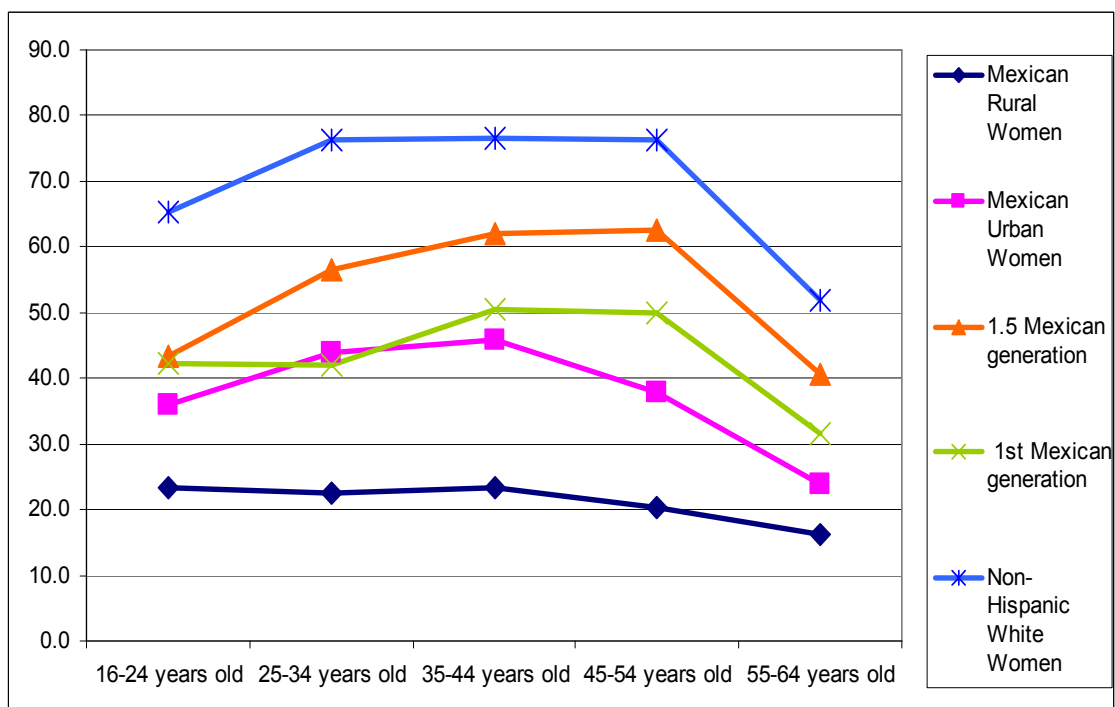


Sources: Own calculus based on US: 5 percent Integrated Public Use Microdata Samples, 2000 U.S. Bureau of the Census; México: 10 percent sample 2000 México Census of Population and Housing.

² We chose breaking down Mexican women living in Mexico in Mexican Rural Women and Mexican Urban women because their patterns of labor economic activity are completely different. Rural women are more associated with a strong normative cultural behavior that restraints their economic activity. This situation is not frequently observed in urban women. The idea of splitting these groups is identify what pattern is similar to the Mexican women living in United States. It is important to notice that this way of splitting is used exclusively in the research context, and is not used in logistic models.

The figure above shows the differentials on labor force rates for all groups in this study. The Non-Hispanic White labor participation rate is higher than the Mexican group (as well the group living in Mexico and U.S.). Notice that the Mexican group settled in Mexico (rural and urban areas) has lesser labor participation rates than the Mexican group living in U.S. The figure also illustrates the employment rate of rural women, which is dramatically lesser (by 50 points) than the American mainstream and the remainder Mexican groups. We observed that the Urban and 1st generation labor force rates are similar but 1.5 generation labor force rate is higher than all Mexican groups. Therefore, 1.5 generation could have a different labor force participation pattern than the remaining Mexican women staying in Mexico and U.S. However, the labor force participation rates are not concluded because they can be affected by the age structure. For this reason, we examined the specific age labor force rates; those are included in the figure below.

Figure 2. Specific labor force participation rates for women aged 16-64 year-old in Mexico and U.S.. 2000.



Sources: Own calculus based on:

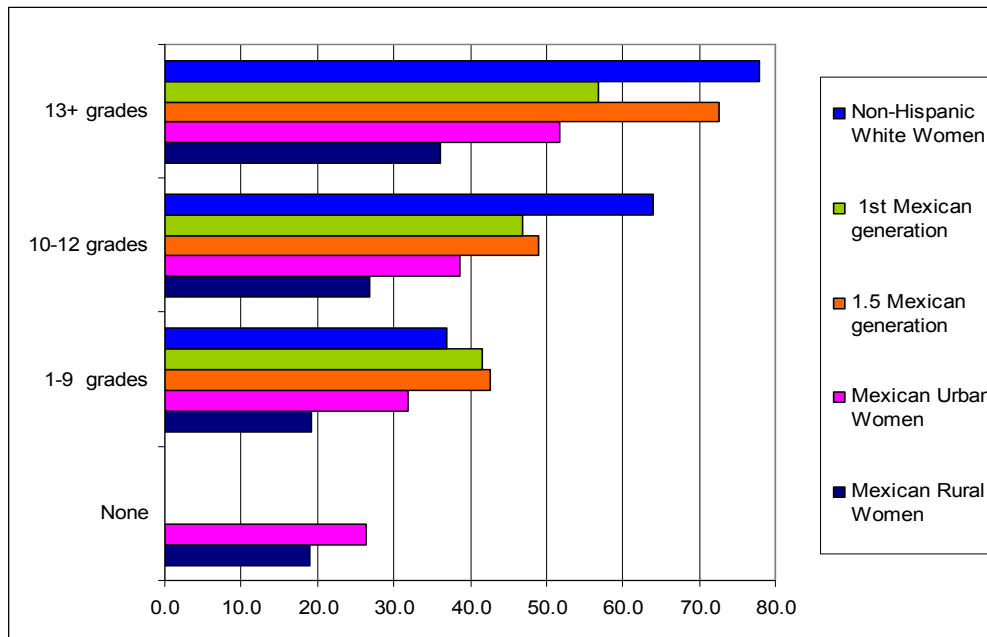
US: 5 percent Integrated Public Use Microdata Samples, 2000 U.S. Bureau of the Census;
 México: 10 percent sample 2000 México Census of Population and Housing.

In figure 2 we identify that all curves are different for our five groups. In one side, the Non-Hispanic White labor participation curve draws a trajectory which starts and increases from 16 to 24 year-old, but is constant from 25 to 54 year-old (the age that most of women get married and have children) and starts their decrement over 55 year-old. These results support the idea that female American mainstream within the labor force do not leave the employment status even by marriage or motherhood. The result is similar but not the same when we observe the Mexican rural women, who start at 16 year-old and their labor path is constant as long as their active life, remarking that their labor force rates are considerably lesser than the American mainstream. It can be the case where once women get the labor force, they do not interrupt their labor status by nothing. It can be explained by the poverty conditions predominant in the Mexican rural places compelling women to enter to work. The 1.5 Mexican generation curve shows a continuous labor pattern entering from 16 to 54 year-old, when it declines. This pattern is not similar to 1st Mexican generation because it exhibits a stagnation from 16 to 34 year-old (which suggests a process of acclimatization to the host society). They are inserted to the labor market until 44 year-old, after, the curve is constant and starts decreasing from 55 to 64 year-old. Finally, the Urban Mexican women display a trend agree with the traditional role of motherhood and child rearing: they starting to work from 16 to 24 year-old (probably when the majority of people never have been married), it increases but slightly from 25 to 34 year-old (at this moment they get married and have children), and decreases from 45 year-old. Thus, with these results, what would explain these disparities?

Research about the determinants of female labor force participation assigns a very strong role to the schooling. As Bevelander (1995) points out, it is expected that immigrants, during the first period in a new country, are less productive, experience higher labor market turnover, and have relatively lower employment rates and/or lower wages than one would expect considering a formal education. Following the assimilation guide, the lower levels of country-specific skills (e.g., language, experience of various conditions of the host country) and human capital explain the disadvantages that immigrants experience in economic migration. Over the time,

however, we can expect that immigrants will adjust to the new labor market and society. It does not always occurs, specially in the Mexican migration case, which is explored in the next figure.

Figure 3. Labor force participation rates for women aged 16-64 year-old in Mexico and U.S. by grades of schooling, 2000.



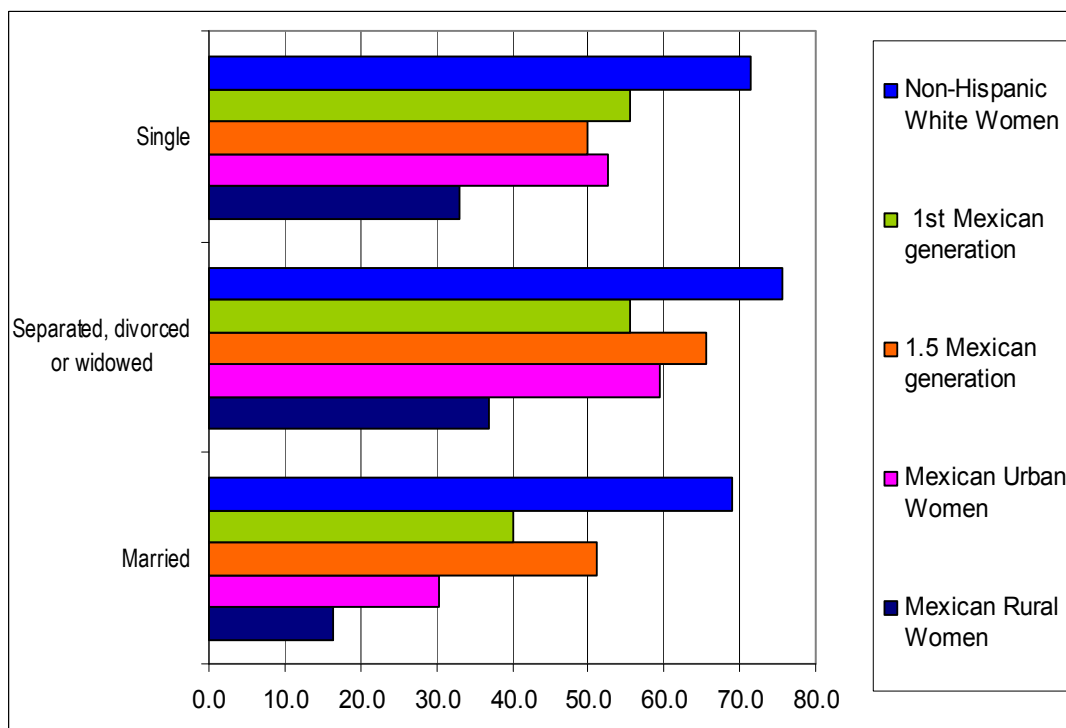
Sources: Own calculus based on:
 US: 5 percent Integrated Public Use Microdata Samples, 2000 U.S. Bureau of the Census;
 México: 10 percent sample 2000 México Census of Population and Housing.

The outcomes derived from examining the figure 4 supports the statement that more education is directly correlated with more levels or economic participation. Notice that the Non-Hispanic White and 1.5 generation women have the higher and similar rates specifically correspondent to the 13 and upper grades of schooling. The same figure reveals although 1st Mexican generation increased their economic levels compared with the other female groups in Mexico. They are still lower compared to 1.5 generation and Non/Hispanic White women staying in the U.S. It is important become aware of the Non-Hispanic group with less education (1 to 9 grades) has low labor participation rates compared to the Mexican immigrant group. It can be explained because, as Sassen (2003) indicates, in the U.S., the employment supply associated to the low education levels is regularly household work or low-paid services consequently related to low wages or salaries. Most of

the time, immigrant workers, especially women and young people, are the major component of this low-wage employment supply. The American mainstream decided not to participate in those employments that offer few advancement possibilities to moving upward. Reviewing the case of Mexicans living in Mexico, it is possible to see that urban women work without any schooling grades in a larger proportion than rural women³. Unfortunately, we cannot compare these levels with their similar groups in the U.S.

In the literature about the determinants of women labor force activity frequently appears the marital status (married) as a restrictive factor in their participation. Thus, next figure illustrates this condition for all the five groups:

Figure 4. Labor force participation rates for women aged 16-64 year-old in Mexico and U.S. by marital status. 2000.



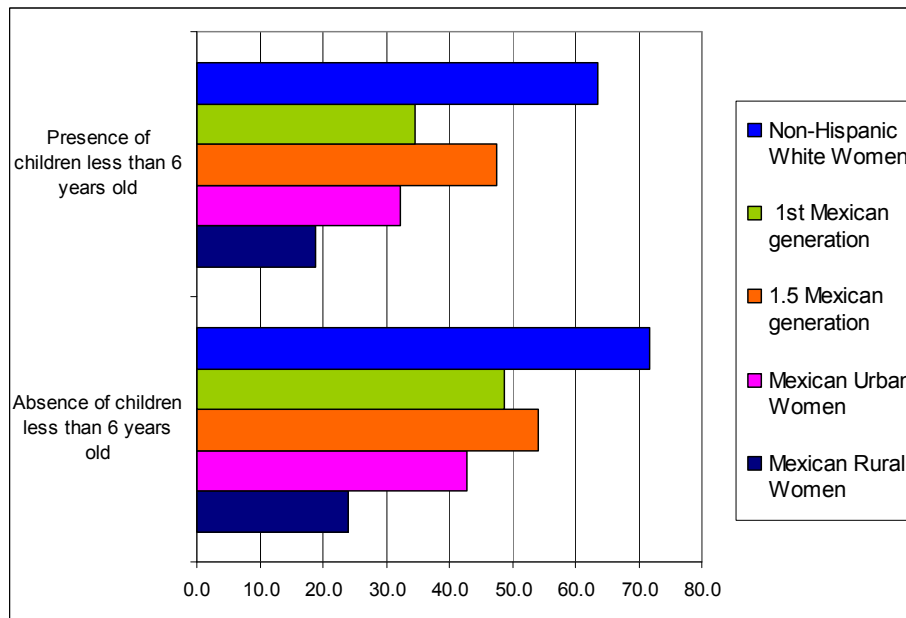
Sources: Own calculus based on:
 US: 5 percent Integrated Public Use Microdata Samples, 2000 U.S. Bureau of the Census;
 México: 10 percent sample 2000 México Census of Population and Housing.

³ We did not get this information from the United States Census for this year.

Examining exclusively the married women case, which is showed in the figure 4, the Non-Hispanic White group exhibits the higher rates than the remainder groups for each category. Specifically, being married is not a strong restrictor to enter in the labor force activity for this group. For all the Mexican groups, is very clear that having a marital status is a restriction factor to participate in the labor market. Although the 1.5 Mexican generation has higher married rates compared to the equivalent native people, it is not the same as the American mainstream labor force participation rate. Moreover, the levels of Mexican rural and urban women are lower than the 1st Mexican generation. In this manner, we cannot recognize a similar pattern among these groups considering the marital status.

Finally, the presence of children aged less than 6 year-old in the household exerts a strong restriction to participate in the labor market to both the Mexican women in Mexico and to the 1st Mexican generation settled in U.S. This constriction presented a reduction for 1.5 Mexican generation but it is not as restraint to the Non-Hispanic White women group. These outcomes can be seen in figure 5, as showed below.

Figure 5. Labor force participation rates for women aged 16-64 year-old in Mexico and United States by presence of children less than six year-old. 2000.



Sources: Own calculus based on:
 US: 5 percent Integrated Public Use Microdata Samples, 2000 U.S. Bureau of the Census;
 México: 10 percent sample 2000 México Census of Population and Housing.

EMPIRICAL QUESTIONS

The Figure 1 shows the differences across generations for women's labor force participation of Mexican women and Non-Hispanic White's (NHW) women in U.S. and Mexico. These differences are the base of the proposal of this study aims. Thus, we suppose in this study that the 1.5 Mexican generation women who have lived longer in the U.S. (long arrival) will show more probabilities to participate in the labor force than those who have stayed less time (first Mexican generation). It occurs because the 1.5 group has more human capital, more experience in the labor market and they also know the host society more than the 1st generation women. It is supposed that the 1st Mexican generation group will have fewer probabilities to get a job than the 1.5 generation because being directly in touch with the values and behaviors related to the female work in Mexico. We do not know the situation of 1.5 Mexican generation women, but probably they are more integrated to the American system of values and behaviors referred to the women work.

The questions to solve in this work point out two dimension sets of factors influencing the labor force participation of Mexican-origin women by generation. Firstly, the human capital and individual characteristics that encourage or discourage employment out of home as well as the household issues that can constraint or enhance women toward home production. Secondly, the workplace and the community characteristics where those women live as a proxy variable to determine the labor market structure. These set of factors will account for some, but not for all the differences. The effects of the time spent in US will have influence on labor force participation of each generation. Therefore, these questions are proposed:

1. After controlling for human capital and individual, household and community characteristics, are there differences across labor force participation of Mexican women and non-Hispanic White women?. We suppose the likelihood of labor force participation by Mexican generations will be lower than Non-Hispanic White women, but higher than Mexican women in Mexico.

2. Having under control the human capital, individual and household, and community characteristics along the Mexican women groups in the U.S., are there differences in the likelihood of employment for each group? The likelihood of first generation will be significantly lower than 1.5 generation but it will be higher than other Mexican- women in Mexico.
3. What are the effects of the human capital and individual, household and community characteristics on the likelihood of female labor force participation of 1st and 1.5 generation groups compared to Mexican group in Mexico? We expected that the influence of these issues characteristics on the likelihood of female labor force participation could differ across generations. It could be explained by the distinct profiles of women of each generation.

DATA AND METHODS

Data

We using Data for this study from two sources: The U.S. Census data from 2000 5% Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) and data from the 2000 10% sample México Census of Population and Housing. One of the most important reasons to use the IPUMS sample is that it allows building the two Mexican generations (first and 1.5 generation). In addition, it contains socio-demographic aspects of the population in the USA (included the Mexican group) in the individual-level records. It also allows the aggregation of the data for developing structural variables reflecting the community characteristics. The Census of Mexico is used to built the female Mexican labor force profile who living in Mexico. Similarly to U.S. Census, it allowed building the structural variables referred to community characteristics. The universe of this study are women (Mexican, Mexican immigrants and Non-Hispanic White) between 16 and 64 year who lived in

metropolitan areas⁴ in Mexico and U.S. in 2000. We excluded people who were in the ARMY in this year in the U.S.

The composition of the American sample consisted of 1,619,863 cases, from which 82,160 were born in Mexico, and 1,537,703 were Non-Hispanic White women. For the case of Mexico, this group consisted of 2, 967,880. Table 1 shows the samples composition.

Table 1. Mexican and Non-Hispanic Whites aged 16 to 64 year-old residents in Mexico and United States. (2000)

	Frequency	Percent
United States¹		
1.5 Mexican generation	23,559	1.5
1st Mexican generation	58,601	3.6
Non Hispanic White	1,537,703	94.9
Total	1,619,863	100.0
México²		
Mexican Women	2,967,880	100.0

Sources: ¹ 5 percent Integrated Public Use Microdata Samples, 2000 U.S. Bureau of the Census

² 10 percent sample 2000 México Census of Population and Housing. Built

The dependent variable is the condition of activity (either employed or not) and the independent variables are grouped into two dimensions: individual and human capital characteristics (age, grades of school, and generational status); and household characteristics (marital status and presence/ absence of children less than six year-old in the household). The characteristics of the place where they lived in 2000 (percentage of service workers in the place, and residence in the Metropolitan zone) were taken into account. The statistical method used was the logistic regression in order to determine the degree of influence of the two dimension factors above mentioned on the labor force participation of Mexican women.

The statistical treatment of information was divided into two phases. First of all, it was determined which and how deep were the differences in the labor force

⁴ In order to make comparable the structural variable of Metropolitan Area from México and U.S., we built the 55 metropolitan zones in Mexico using a methodology proposed by CONAPO(2004).

patterns of Mexican, 1.5 and first mexican generation and Non-Hispanic White by one side, and the Mexican women by the other considering the differentials of human capital, socio-demographic characteristics and the access to the labor market. In this phase we used a logistic regression and we confirmed how different is the 1.5 mexican generation compared to the other groups in U.S. and Mexico. In the second phase four models of female labor force participation were taken into account to obtain the distinct patterns of the Mexican and Non-Hispanic White labor force participation. The table 2 provides detailed information about the variables used in the analysis.

Table 2. Operacionalization of variables used in the analysis

Variable	Operational description
Dependent Variable:	
Labor force participation	1 = Employed in 2000, 0 = Not employed in 2000
Independent Variables	
Individual and Human capital characteristics	
Generational status⁵ 1.5 Mexican generation 1st Mexican generation Non-Hispanic White	Coded 1 if in category, 0 if not Coded 1 if in category, 0 if not Reference category
Mexican generational status⁶ Mexican women generation	
Age 16-24 years 25-34 years 35-44 years 45-54 years 55-64 years	Coded 1 if in category, 0 if not Coded 1 if in category, 0 if not Coded 1 if in category, 0 if not Coded 1 if in category, 0 if not Reference category
Educational attainment 1 to 9 grades 10 to 12 grades 13 and more grades	Reference category Coded 1 if in category, 0 if not Coded 1 if in category, 0 if not
Household characteristics	
Marital Status Married Divorced, separated or widow	Reference category Coded 1 if in category, 0 if not

⁵ Only for the case of United States.

⁶ Only for the case of Mexico.

Variable	Operational description
Never married (single)	Coded 1 if in category, 0 if not
Children aged less than 6 year-old in home Absence of children aged less than 6 year-old Presence of children aged less than 6 year-old	Coded 1 if in category, 0 if not
Community characteristics	
Residence in a Metropolitan Area Residence in metropolitan area Residence in not metropolitan area	Coded 1 if in category, 0 if not
Women Employment in the sector services Percent of women working in the service sector in the community	

Variables

- *Dependent variable.*

Labor Force Participation, is dichotomous: (1) Employed (woman who worked at any time in 2000), (2) Woman not employed anytime in 2000.

- *Independent variables.*

There are four variables inside the individual and human capital characteristics:

Generational status. It has three categories for the case of United States: (1) 1.5 Mexican generation; (2) First Mexican generation; (3) Non-Hispanic White. The last category is control variable to account the probability of employment between two groups with different ethnic origins: the Mexican-origin group and Non-Hispanic White women.

Mexican generational status. It is the complete population in the sample. This is a control variable to assess the probability of employment across Mexican living in Mexico.

Age. It consist of five categories: (1) 16-24 years; (2) 25-34 years; (3) 35-44 years; (4) 45-54; years; (5) 55-64 years; (6) 65 and older. These categories explore the distinct intervals of age across generations.

Educational attainment. It has three categories: (1) 1 to 9 grades; (2) 10 to 12 grades; (3) 13 and more grades. Education measures the women human capital and its influence on labor force participation.

The home characteristics involve the following two variables:

Marital status. It is a recoded variable from original that consist of three categories: (1) Married; (2) divorced, separated or widow; (3) never married (single). We included this variable to assess the effects of married women on the employment and to identify the adscription to traditional roles of spouse and mother.

Presence of Children aged less than 6 year-old old in home. It's a dichotomous variable: (0) No children younger than 6; (1) Presence of children. This variable explores the negative/positive effect on labor force participation across generation.

The community characteristics include two variables.

Percent of women working in the service sector in the community. This is a continuous variable which measures the effect of services workers on the immigrant female labor force participation in the community

Residence in a Metropolitan area. It is a dichotomous variable. (1)Residence in a metropolitan area; (2) Residence in a non metropolitan area. It's a dichotomous variable this is a proxy variable to measure the effects of metropolitan area on labor force participation across generations.

ANALYSIS

Before the description of the models, we will describe the social and demographic characteristics of the sample used for this study (see Tables 3 and 4).

Descriptive Results

The main purpose in this study was generate different profiles of labor force participation among Mexican immigrant women living in U.S., identifying their similarities and differences compared to the Mexican and American mainstream labor force patterns in Mexico and U.S. respectively.

We found differences in the socio-demographic profiles in the women from our sample. For example, the table 3 indicates that 1st Mexican generation living in U.S. has the same distribution of working-women as Mexican women in México

(around 39% inside the labor force). The 1.5 Mexican generation exhibit other working-women distribution (it has a high percent of 46% of employment status). But is not analogous to the distribution of Non-Hispanic White women, where 7 from each ten women are in the labor market. The table 3 makes us suspect that 1.5 Mexican generation is changing their labor force profile because it is higher than Mexicans living in Mexico, but lower in American mainstream.

Table 3. Mexican and Non-Hispanic Whites aged 16 to 64 year-old old residents in Mexico and U.S.. (2000)

	Mexican Women*	1.5 Mexican generation**	1st Mexican generation**	Non-Hispanic White Women**
Employed	39.5%	45.7%	38.4%	67.7%
Not employed	60.5%	54.3%	61.6%	32.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	2,967,880	23,559	58,601	1,537,703

Sources: Own calculus

*Based on 10 percent sample 2000 México Census of Population and Housing

** Based on 5 percent Integrated Public Use Microdata Samples, 2000 U.S. Bureau of the Census;

The table 4 shows the distribution of the samples by characteristics chosen.

Table 4. Percentual distribution of variables among Non-Hispanic White and Mexican-origin women (by generation)

		Mexican Women*	1.5 Mexican generation**	1st Mexican generation**	Non-Hispanic White Women**
Individual and Human capital characteristics					
Age					
	16-24 years	29.1%	40.6%	13.0%	16.6%
	25-34 years	28.9%	33.2%	33.2%	19.4%
	35-44 years	21.0%	17.1%	27.5%	25.2%
	45-54 years	13.1%	6.7%	16.8%	22.9%
	55-64 years	7.9%	2.5%	9.4%	15.9%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

		Mexican Women*	1.5 Mexican generation**	1st Mexican generation**	Non-Hispanic White Women**
Educational attainment					
	1 to 9 grades	38.3%	48.6%	66.5%	11.8%
	10 to 12 grades	24.9%	29.8%	22.1%	31.7%
	13 and more grades	36.8%	21.7%	11.4%	56.5%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Household characteristics					
Marital Status					
	Married	60.9%	53.3%	70.0%	60.4%
	Divorced, separated or widow	10.3%	10.3%	13.6%	17.1%
	Never married	28.8%	36.4%	16.5%	22.5%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Children aged less than 6 year-old in home					
	Absence of children	68.8%	70.8%	71.6%	86.5%
	Presence of children	31.2%	29.2%	28.4%	13.5%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Community characteristics					
Residence in a Metropolitan Area					
	Residence in metropolitan area	-----	78.6%	95.4%	90.8%
	Residence in non metropolitan area	-----	21.4%	4.6%	9.2%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	N	2,967,880	23,559	58,601	1,537,703

Sources: Own calculus based on:

** 5 percent Integrated Public Use Microdata Samples, 2000 U.S. Bureau of the Census;

* 10 percent sample 2000 México Census of Population and Housing.

Looking at the age composition, Mexican women are younger (in their general age structure) than Non-Hispanic White women (NHW). In addition both are more diversified because there are not important population concentrations in each specific age group. The differences in the aged structure can be observed in the 1.5 Mexican generation. This is younger than the 1st Mexican generation, because they concentrate only 40% of their contingent from 16 to 24 year-old; adding the 25-34 age-group, it reaches 74% of the whole sample. The 1st generation concentrates more than 50% of the interval- age from 25 to 44 year-old.

In the case of education, Mexican women living in Mexico have the same levels of low and high educational attainment (38% and 37% respectively). However, it is very clear that the Mexican immigrant women have low education levels. 1.5 exhibited an intermediate level of schooling compared to 1st generation and the NHW group, which have percentages over 50% or more than 13% including higher scholar degrees.

The predominant marital status is married for all groups, but the distribution percentage is different among Mexican generations living in Mexico and U.S. because of the age structure. The first women generation had the highest percentages for married women compared to the other generations and the NHW group. Conversely, 1.5 Mexican generations had the highest never married percentages of the whole sample.

Turning to the presence of children younger than 6 year-old, there were not sharp differences between Mexican in Mexico, 1.5 and 1st generations (31,2%, 29.2% and 28.4% respectively). The NHW group exhibited the more pronounced differences in this category: 13.5% have little children.

Looking at residence in a Metropolitan area, the Table 4 shows pronounced differences between 1.5 Mexican people and 1st Mexican generation. 21% of 1.5 Mexican group are concentrated in locations labeled as non metropolitan areas, whereas the 1st generation only computed 4.6% in this category. The NHW group was a similar case, presenting 9.2% in non metropolitan areas.

Table 5. Effects of the human capital and individual's, household's and community's characteristics on female labor force participation. Non-Hispanic White and Mexican women (by generation) living in U.S, and Mexican women living in Mexico. 2000.

	General ¹		1.5 Mexican		1st Mexican		Non-Hispanic White *		Mexican women **	
	Beta	Odds	Beta	Odds	Beta	Odds	Beta	Odds	Beta	Odds
Generational Status										
	-0.437 ^a	0.646								
	-0.592 ^a	0.553								
Age										
16 – 24 years	0.585 ^a	1.795	0.095 ^a	1.099	0.484 ^a	1.622	0.603 ^a	1.827	0.231 ^a	1.260
25 – 34 years	1.132 ^a	3.103	0.629 ^a	1.876	0.941 ^a	1.898	1.166 ^a	3.210	1.031 ^a	2.804
35 – 44 years	1.050 ^a	2.858	0.767 ^a	2.153	0.881 ^a	2.413	1.052 ^a	2.863	1.188 ^a	3.281
45 – 54 years	0.951 ^a	2.588	0.772 ^a	2.163	0.795 ^a	2.215	0.950 ^a	2.587	0.791 ^a	2.205
55 – 64 years										
Educational attainment										
1 to 9 grades										
10 to 12 grades	0.876 ^a	2.401	0.645 ^a	1.906	0.307 ^a	1.359	0.959 ^a	2.608	0.336 ^a	1.399
13 and more grades	1.396 ^a	4.040	1.320 ^a	3.744	0.704 ^a	2.022	1.469 ^a	4.346	0.782 ^a	2.187
Marital Status										
Married										
Divorced, separated or	0.389 ^a	1.476	0.398 ^a	1.489	0.524 ^a	1.689	0.384 ^a	1.468	1.398 ^a	4.046
Never married (single)	0.279 ^a	1.321	0.126 ^a	1.134	0.446 ^a	1.562	0.277 ^a	1.319	1.154 ^a	3.170
Children age less than 6 years old at home										
Absence	0.708 ^a	2.029	0.313 ^a	1.368	0.540 ^a	1.716	0.733 ^a	2.081	0.218 ^a	1.244
Presence										

* Using the IPUMS census of United States.

	General ¹		1.5 Mexican		1st Mexican		Non-Hispanic White *		Mexican women **	
	Beta	Odds	Beta	Odds	Beta	Odds	Beta	Odds	Beta	Odds
Percent of women working in the service sector within the Metropolitan Area	-0.003 ^a	0.997	-0.016 ^a	0.984	-0.005 ^a	0.995	0.002 ^a	1.002	-0.004 ^a	0.996
Residence in a non metropolitan area	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Residence in a metropolitan area	.068 ^a	1.070	-.041	.960	.150 ^a	1.860	.125 ^a	1.134	.410 ^a	1.664
% Correct Pred	-1.616	70.10 %	0.243	64.50 %	-1.207	63.5 %	-2.217	70.50 %	-1.771	69.70 %

Note:

----- Denotes the reference categories.

^a p ≤ 0.01

Multivariate Results and discussion

The logistic regression coefficients and odd ratios for the effects of the three dimensions on labor force participation are presented as following. We included the variables: Age, Educational attainment, Marital Status, Children less than 6 years old at home, the Percent of women working in the service sector within the community in all the models (see Table 4).

The *General Model* examines the effects of generational status of Mexican women (1.5 and 1st generations) and Non-Hispanic Whites women (NHW) on the labor force participation. Model 2 examines only the case of 1.5 Mexican generation. Model 3 analyze the first generation and its economic participation on the status employment. Model 4 explores the effects of all variables in labor force participation using Non-Hispanic White women's population. The Model 5 examines the effects of the labor force participation on the Mexican women living in Mexico.

Results in the *General Model* (Mexican women and NHW women) taking into account the generational status indicate that, by controlling the three-dimension issues, the 1st and 1.5 generation were significant, which had considerably less likelihood than Non-Hispanic Whites women to participate in the labor force. One response to explain these differentials lies down the discrimination by ethnic or nativity status. Although the statistical evidence in this model is not strong enough to confirm the economic integration to the host society, it is valid to explore the Mexican labor force participation rates, and their demographical characteristics as a hint to presume that a longer period of residence in the U.S. implies some advantage for women who arrived very young to the country.

Results in the *1.5 Mexican generation* model indicates that working women in their working-age years (35 to 44) were more likely to be employed than the younger group (16-24 years old) and the older women (ages 55 and more). About human capital resources, it is clear that more education enhance women's likelihood of labor force participation. But in this case, women who have coursed 10 to 12 grades of schooling increased 1.9 times the likelihood to participate in

labor force, meanwhile the category 13 grades and more increased the possibility 3.7 times in opposite to approve 1 o 9 grades of schooling. Married women have limitations to enter in the labor force activity. Separated, divorced or widowed women and never-married women were 1.4 and 1.1 times respectively more likely to be employed than the reference group. The absence of less-than-6-year-old children is a factor that increases 1.3 times the labor force activity of this women group. The percentage of women employed in the sector services within the community had a negative influence on the likelihood to enter the labor force. Finally, living in a metropolitan area was not significant for this group.

.The *1st Mexican Generation Model*. In this model, the likelihood to be employed was higher for the 35 to 44 years old group (2.4 times compared with the 55-64 years old category). It exhibits a displacement in the age interval compared to 1.5 Mexican generation. The results in the table 5 also pointed out women who had completed the 13 grade or over of education had the higher likelihood to join to the labor force than women with less educational levels. The 1st generation women who were divorced, separated or widow increased 1.6 times their likelihood of employment compared to married women. The results also pointed out that women who were never married had more likelihood to work than married women, but lower probability than those with a more educational level (13th grade and more). The absence of less-than-6-year-old children increased the women's probability to work (1.7 times compared to the reference category). The percentage of working-services women in the community had a negative effect in the probability to get a job. Increasing proportions of women working in the services sector resulted in the decreasing of employment levels of women. Finally, residence in a metropolitan area increases 1.8 times the options to participate in the labor force.

The Non-Hispanic White model is described as follows. This demonstrated the importance of belonging to the working-age interval (25-54 years old) to increment women's employment compared to younger and older women. Women who reached the 13th grade or more of education were more likely to participate in the labor force than their lower-educated peers (notice that their odd ratios

increased considerably the likelihood of work 4.3 times). The variable marital status revealed that the 1st-generation women's likelihood increased almost 1.4 times more than reference category if the woman were divorced, separated or widow. The never-married category reveals its importance as a category that promotes the economic activity in women. The absence of children at pre-schooling ages multiplies 2 times the positive effect on women's opportunities to enter the labor force. Contrasting with the 1.5 generation, a great amount of women working in the service sector implies a positive effect on the economic participation work for this group. Similarly, 1st Mexican generation living in a metropolitan area increased the women's labor force participation of this group.

The Model that explores the effects of all variables on labor force participation of Mexican women in Mexico is *The Mexican Women Model*. The results of this model reported that the age group with higher likelihood to participate in the labor force was the 35-to-44-year-old group (3.2 times more probable than the reference category). However the 25-to-34 year-old group and the 45-to-54-year-old group raises their likelihood to work 2.8 and 2.2 times respectively. The model found also that Mexican women who were more educated had 2.1 times more probabilities to work compared with their lesser-educated peers to participate in the labor force. The marital status remarks that being married was a restriction for working for this generation. Divorced, separated or widowed women and never married women expanded their possibilities to work 4 and 3.1 times than married women. Just as 1.5 and 1st generation, the working-services women in the community played a negative effect to explain labor force participation of this group. As a final point, another result of this model was the negative effect on women's economic activity when the residence in a metropolitan area was considered.

The general results obtained with this empirical essay shows that: regarding the variable Age, women from generations 1 and 1.5 and between 35 and 54 years, presented a clear advantage compared to women of older age. Nevertheless, the advantage is observed in the 25-34-year group and in the Mexican women of 35-44-year group. Have the absence of children at home some

relationship in this scheme? When there are no children younger than 6 years old at home, Non-Hispanic White Women have greater possibilities of labor insertion, (the same is true for Mexican women of models 1 and 1.5 and those in Mexico). Nevertheless, the advantage is clearer in white women. It can happen that when these women delay the possibility of having children, they can be inserted in labor market when they are young, and later leave that market when they become older and have children younger than 6 years old. On the other hand, Mexican women who have their children in their youth can be inserted in the labor market when they had grown. This Non-Hispanic White women thesis requires a more detailed analysis.

About education, it is clear the similitude we encountered between Non-Hispanic White women and Mexican women from generation 1.5. In all of the models we found that greater education represents greater possibilities of labor insertion; this advantage is more evident in these two groups than in those of Mexican women of generation 1 and those who live in México.

Finally, about Marital Status, we observed that being not married is advantageous for all groups of women. For U.S. residents, there is not a big difference in their labor insertion if they are either single or divorced (separated or widow). This is not the same for Mexican women residents in Mexico. For them, being divorced (separated or widow) implies a greater possibility of labor insertion and it is noticeable a greater advantage of this group versus the group of singles or married women. In Mexico, there is a greater probability that a non-married woman would not work.

In sum, our empirical results allowed to build four different patterns of labor force participation depending on the place of birth.

The **1.5 Mexican generation** with high probability to be employed in 2000 in United States can be described as follows: in the 35-to-54-year-old group, with 13th grade or over reached, divorced, separated or widow, without children less than 6 years old, settling in a community where the concentration of women working in the service sector is low.

Being divorced, separated or widow, in the age group of 35 to 44 years old, with educational level higher than 13th grade, without children over 6 years old, and staying in a place of residence with a few women working in the service sector group and metropolitan area were the characteristics that describe the labor force participation pattern of **1st Mexican generation** women with the most highest probabilities to participate in the labor force.

The pattern of the highest likelihood to be employed, the **Non-Hispanic White group** met the next statements: being in the 25-34-year-old group, more than the 13th grade of education completed, single, without older-than-6-year children, neither staying in non metropolitan areas nor places with high concentration of working-services women.

Finally, **the Mexican women group** who exhibit the highest probability to be employed in 2000 were distinguished by: being in the 35-to-44-year-old group, having more than 13th grade of school education completed, being divorced, separated or widowed, having their residence in a metropolitan area with a few women working in the service sector .

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