

The Mestizo Nation Unbound: Dual citizenship of Euro-Mexicans and US-Mexicans

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1 Introduction

On December 12th 1996, the Mexican Congress approved a constitutional reform know as “non-forfeiture” (*no pérdida*) of Mexican nationality, together with a new nationality law that for the first time allowed dual nationality for native Mexicans. That Congress chose such a symbolic date to pass this legislation, the day of the Virgin of Guadalupe, one of the most important icons of Mexico’s nationalism, is very telling of the intentions behind this reform. This new law did not enter into force until March 20th 1998, the date from which Mexican dual nationality is officially sanctioned. Today, twenty years after this constitutional reform, it is about time to evaluate its effects on both sides of the US-Mexican border and, to a lesser respect, the Atlantic Ocean, against the stated original objectives set by this important policy milestone.

This landmark constitutional reform signaled a dramatic shift in Mexican nationality policy that took place during the 1990s, aimed at engaging with their diaspora in the US. Twenty years on, the total population entitled to dual Mexican citizenship -whether they actually exercise that right or not- is actually the world's largest true multiple citizenship collective, comprised of at least 15 million people, with the right to live and work in various countries, mostly the US and the European Union (EU). Dual Mexican citizens typically fall in one of two major groups. The main one is US-Mexicans, primarily associated with a low socioeconomic and more mixed (mestizo) or indigenous background of rural origins, although there are substantial exceptions of middle and upper class US-Mexicans along the 3000km border region. In contrast, there is a

second, much smaller group comprised of several hundred thousands well-educated, mostly white, Mexican-born with dual EU citizenship. Thanks to their European-born ancestors (2-4 generations ago) this group has recently seized the opportunity given by some European countries to recover the nationality of their grandparents, more precisely European Union (EU) citizenship. Furthermore, other affluent Mexicans have used their migratory experience in Europe to secure EU citizenship through naturalization in any of the 32 countries that form the European Economic Area (EEA) space. EU passports give these Euro-Mexicans enhanced mobility, travel education and business opportunities not only in Europe, but also in the U.S., Canada, Australia and the Western world.

This paper analyses how the new phenomenon of Mexican dual citizenship, across various geographic regions, socioeconomic groups and social practices is starting to reveal the cracks in the Mexican Nation building project, crystalized after the 1910 revolution around a homogenous “*Mestizo Nation*” concept (*metis* or mixed). The expansion of dual citizenship is revealing the stark socio-racial inequalities established during the colonial period and exacerbated after independence by pro-European immigration policies in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Fitzgerald & Cook-Martín, 2014) and the later “age of rural Mexican migration to the US” in the last 30 years. The paper empirical evidence is based on a wider research project that collected the views of individuals and families engaging in these multiple citizenship (*multizens*) practices through 270 in-depth interviews to dual Mexicans in Mexico, the US, the UK and the Netherlands, a range of field observation techniques in Mexico and the US, as well as virtual ethnographic monitoring of internet discussion forums and social media. Only part of this material is used here to support the key arguments held in the paper.

This article attempts to make a contribution to the understanding of dual or multiple nationality in the largest migration corridor in the world, the U.S.-Mexico in contrast with the Euro-Mexican case, a typical Latin-American phenomenon. We find evidence of complex transnational and multiple citizenship practices through which this vast collective of Mexican dual citizens poses a number of contradictions for the future of the Mexican Nation State, with important implications for citizenship policy worldwide.

2 The recent history of Mexican policy developments towards dual citizenship

An interesting proposal by Donner (1994) is that in a world system of nation states, nationality laws are commonly oriented towards other states' claims over "their" populations. This situation applies very well to Mexican dual nationality law, since the aforementioned 1996-98 Nationality Law was shaped precisely by their close relationship with the US.

A history of ambivalent political relationships between Mexico and the US and an official over-zeal in migration and nationality laws towards foreigners and emigrants during a century and a half (Fitzgerald & Cook-Martín, 2014), helps explaining Mexico's historical "abandonment" of its emigrants in that country (Jorge Durand & Massey, n.d.), despite nearly a century of sustained migration from Mexico to the US (Fitzgerald, 2005; Vargas, 1998). It was only in the late 1980s and early 1990s that the Mexican government finally became interested in their citizens residing in the US. This shift in attitudes towards emigrants, from being seen as 'traitors to the nation' to embracing them as a sort of national heroes (Fitzgerald 2009), took place over a short period of time between 1988 and 1996 (A. Escobar, 2015; Vargas, 1998).

According to several authors, the turn of the tide was the electoral mobilization in the US conducted by Cuauhtémoc Cardenas, when he was presidential candidate in the 1988 Mexican federal election (A. Escobar, 2015; Fitzgerald, 2005). Since that controversial election, many federal and state-level initiatives providing support to Mexican migrants abroad were launched, primarily the "Program for Mexican Communities Abroad", later turned into the Institute for Mexicans Abroad (IME). Furthermore, the program "*Bienvenido Paisano*" (Welcome fellow countrymen) was launched in 1989 to improve the reception of Mexican emigrants visiting Mexico (Fitzgerald, 2009; Moctezuma, 2011). By the mid-1990's President Ernesto Zedillo promulgated a program aiming at more profound political changes termed "*Nación Mexicana*" (Mexican Nation), and set within the National Development Plan of 1995-2000. The end result of this last initiative was the aforementioned constitutional reform on Mexican nationality (articles 30, 32 and 37), adopted in December 1996 and regulated by the Nationality Law of 1997 that entered into force in March 1998.

The 1996-98 constitutional reform had two purposes. First, it introduced the principle of "non-forfeiture" (*no pérdida*) of Mexican nationality for any person who acquired it by birth (those born in national territory or their children) regardless of any other nationality adopted.

Consequently, the requirement to renounce Mexican nationality, when voluntarily adopting that of another country, was eliminated, thereby implicitly allowing dual nationality. Second, it established voting rights for citizens residing abroad, which however could not be exercised in practice until the presidential elections of 2006 (Calderon Chelius, 2011).

A combination of factors helps explaining the timing and final content of the Mexican “non-forfeiture” nationality law. They can all be summed up in a wish to provide greater political participation for Mexican emigrants, both abroad and at home, and strengthen Mexico’s geopolitical position towards the US. First, this reform was aligned with a general trend across most of Latin America during the 1990s, a period when similar dual nationality and external voting rights reforms were introduced in many countries in the region (Escobar 2007; Jones-Correa 2001), and this single argument was frequently wielded by several Mexican Congress representatives to justify the law’s approval (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 2009). Second, there was a strong sense that Mexicans residing in the US, even as legal permanent residents, were losing rights in an increasingly hostile immigration policy arena, and that a dual nationality law would encourage them to naturalize in the US (at the time they would have had to renounce Mexican nationality). As US citizens, the argument went, they could vote in US elections and have better means to protect their rights. Third, this desired effect would in turn create stronger Mexican political lobbies in Washington that, over time, would indirectly benefit Mexican foreign policy (Fitzgerald, 2005). Fourth, offering those emigrants a possibility to remain Mexican citizens would be useful, on the one hand, to allow them nurturing their Mexican identity, and, on a more pragmatic one, to promote economic links with Mexico, specially fostering collective remittances and facilitating the management of property and inheritance. Fifth, full Mexican citizenship rights would only come with external voting rights, which this constitutional reform contemplated, in order to encourage participation in the nascent Mexican democracy, rejuvenating a slowly increasingly competitive political system in the mid 1990s.

3 Dual citizenship of Euro-Mexicans

3.1 From historic immigration of Europeans to contemporary intergenerational dual European citizenship

Compared to other American nations formed during the 19th century from a large stock of European settler population, Mexico was never as successful in attracting white immigrants as Argentina, Canada, the US and to a lesser extent Chile and Brazil were. In their excellent historical review of racist immigration policies in the Americas FitzGerald and Cook-Martin (2014) title their chapter on Mexico “Selecting those who never came”, depicting well the failure of an immigration policy designed to “whiten” the population of Mexico and “generate economic and social progress” through European rural colonization (Gleizer & Lopez Caballero, 2015; Pani, 2015).

Despite this historical failure, and the xenophobic roots of the post-revolutionary 1917 Constitution, a considerable amount of European immigrants settled in Mexico in the second half of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century [*Add figures from Delia Salazar book “Las cuentas de los sueños”*]. The period of economic stability and security during the dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz (1876-1911) and his pro-European immigration, colonization and investment laws, attracted a large number of European immigrants. The US-Spanish 1898 war diversified Spanish emigration, away from Cuba and Puerto Rico to Mexico amongst other destinations. The turn of the century opened a period of mass emigration to the Americas from Spain that only ended after the influx of political refugees from the Spanish Civil War and economic migrants in the post-war period in the 1940s and early 1950s. But beyond this wave, the global movements associated with the inter-World Wars period and the mass European rural exodus of the late 19th to early 20th century brought an important collective of Italian, German, French, Greek, Hungarian, British and other European migrants (Palma Mora, 2006; Salazar, 2010, y Rodríguez Chávez, 2010)

Over the last couple of decades, following the expansion of rights and member states in the European Union, many of the descendants of these migrants have discovered that they have the right to a “European passport”, as the interviewees for this project like to refer to when talking about their second citizenship in a European Union member state. The main European countries that allow intergenerational transmission of nationality to grandchildren of nationals born abroad are Italy, Germany, Greece, Ireland and Spain

In 2009, when the Spanish register of citizens residing abroad was first published, there were 69,571 Spaniards residing in Mexico of which 25% were born in Spain and 71.4% in Mexico. In 2015 the total stock of Spaniards had grown to 115,386 (a 66% growth rate in six years), 82% born in Mexico. As a consequence, all of this growth is accounted for by Mexican-born Spaniards that nearly doubled during this period from 49,684 in 2009 to 94,661 in 2015 (see Figure 1). This substantial growth in the number of Spanish citizens born abroad has been experienced across Latin America, but specially in countries that received a large wave of Spanish emigration during the first half of the 20th century (Argentina, Cuba, Venezuela and Mexico) (Mateos, 2015b).

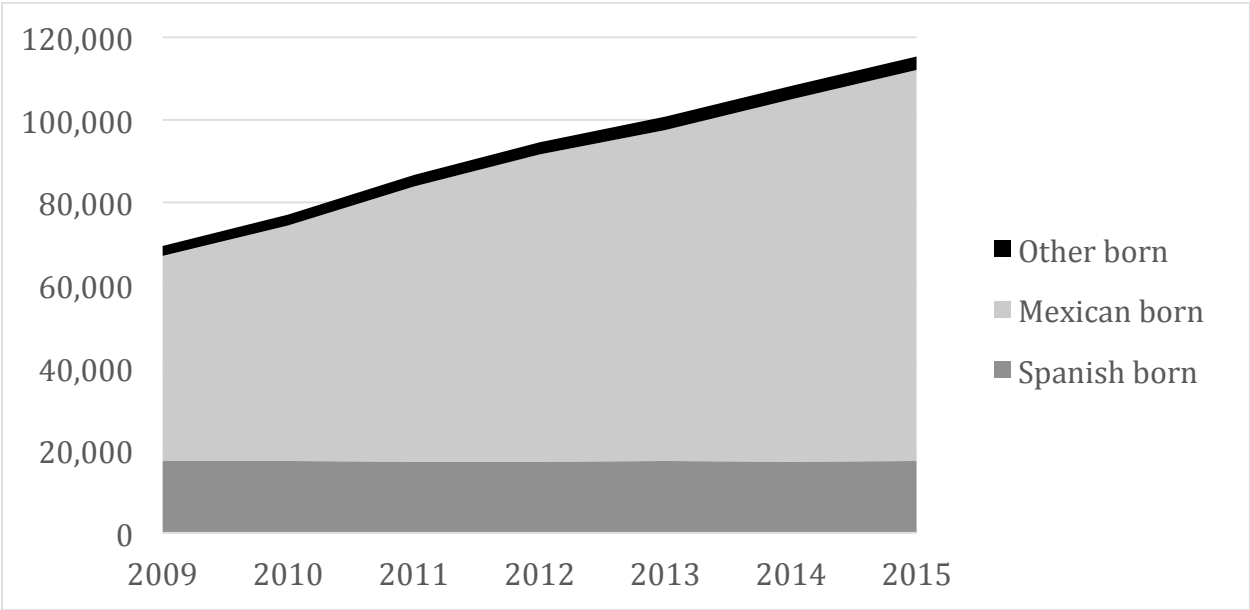


FIGURE 1: STOCK OF SPANISH CITIZENS RESIDING IN MEXICO BY COUNTRY OF BIRTH (2009-2015)

Source: Compiled from the register of Spanish citizens resident abroad (PERE) (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2015) UPDATE TO 2016 FIGURES

Similar figures are unfortunately not easily available for other European countries with growing numbers of citizens in Mexico. However, from the 54 interviews conducted for this project to Mexicans with a European nationality, we can conclude that acquisition of EU citizenship while living in Mexico or a return to Mexico after naturalization in Europe, is a growing phenomena.

The main route to dual Mexican-European citizenship is ancestry, however there are also other Mexicans who access a EU passport after a period of legal residence in a EU country through the process of naturalization. The minimum time of legal residence required for Mexicans in Spain is two years and elsewhere in Europe is typically five to seven years, a period usually reduced for spouses of a national. In fact, for some Latin Americans, acquiring EU citizenship is an objective to achieve before a planned return, in order to capitalize their migratory experience. Felipe, a Mexican living and interviewed in London said “as soon as I get [British] citizenship I’ll go back to Mexico”, a statement in stark contrast with most of the literature on citizenship and migration that only sees citizenship as a tool for permanent settlement and integration.

Out of the vast evidence collected in these 54 in-depth interviews, just a single topic was selected for this paper in order to compare the experiences of these “euro-Mexicans” residing in Mexico with those “Mexican-American” dual citizens: the meaning of an EU passport in Mexico, which is analyzed in the next section.

3.2 The meaning of an EU passport in Mexico

A total of 54 Euro-Mexican dual citizens were interviewed for this project during 2015. The inclusion criteria were that the interviewees had been born and socialized in Mexico, with both parents born in Mexico as well, in order to remove children of immigrants who are expected to have dual citizenship and strong ties to both Mexico and a European country. Of these interviewees, 48 (89%) were residing in Mexico at the time, while the other six were living in the UK and the Netherlands (face-to-face interviews), and in Spain and Canada (interviewed remotely). In terms of their “second” EU citizenship, 46% had Spanish citizenship, while the rest had French (12%), German (12%), Dutch (12%), Italian (5%), Greek (4%), British (4%), Austrian (2%) and Swiss (2%) citizenships. A quarter of the interviewees had never migrated from Mexico (defined as residence longer than three months). Since the interviewees were selected by non-random methods and the sample is very small, no claims to numeric representation of a larger collective are made in this paper, but these percentages are given as to illustrate the key characteristics of the group whose experiences are qualitatively described in the paper.

Amongst the motivations to acquire or recover the citizenship of a EU country the interviewees cited pragmatic, sentimental and security reasons. Amongst the pragmatic reasons, the most coveted value of an EU passport is mobility, seen as visa-free travel around the world and broader migration, business and study opportunities, followed by access to some type of welfare benefits or preferential treatment. Sentimental reasons have to do with an interest in connecting with family roots and European relatives, repair historical wounds from political exile, or increase a sense of belonging to a particular nation or language from ancestors. Finally, security reasons refer to the value of a EU passport to facilitate a quick exit in case of political or economic turmoil, or to receive protection from EU embassies. Because of space restrictions in this article we cannot delve into the nuanced nature of these motivations, but we will highlight the value that Euro-Mexicans place in having EU citizenship while residing in Mexico, in order to establish some lines of comparison with our second case; US-Mexicans also residing in Mexico.

Greater mobility is seen by interviewees in Mexico as a major benefit of EU citizenship, but as we have suggested elsewhere (Mateos, 2015a) its key value while residing in Mexico is increased circulation, rather than its actual migratory potential. *“The first thing I saw [after getting a Greek passport] was Wikipedia and I spent time seeing the borders that the Greek passport opens, compared to the Mexican, and it is very impressive!”* (interviewee 10 Mexican-Greek).

Moreover, several interviewees reflect on how a EU passport might allow you to live and work in any EU country, but competition for qualified jobs is much harder in Europe than in Mexico, since in the latter personal connections and social networks secure good job opportunities for educated Mexicans.

“Having a European passport doesn’t guarantee you a job [...] if I move there I would have to start doing menial jobs [...]. In Europe you have to demonstrate in a much more formal way your skills and here [Guadalajara, Mexico] I know everyone at [a business sector] then, they say ‘I invite you to work with me’, you don’t need to apply to absolutely anything, and there [Europe] for everything you need to apply, I would need to start knocking on doors.” (interviewee 11, Mexican-Spaniard)

A group of interviewees defend their decision to stay in Mexico even when they have the opportunity to live where they please in Europe. Interviewee 10 complains how *“people tell me I should be leaving Mexico and study and work in Europe. They say it perhaps because the economic situation in Mexico is a bit difficult, but I don’t see it so difficult here, I see the Spaniards now much worse. And I don’t see Italy much better, not to mention Greece [...] Here I teach at a university and I have my own business, I am independent, if I were to move to Europe I would have to spend at least two years to validate my architectural qualifications”* (interviewee 10 Mexican-Greek).

Another interviewee, who has a sister in Spain, prefers to come and go between Mexico and Spain pursuing projects and business as he pleases but keeping his base in Mexico. *“The EU passport eases the possibility to go one month and do a job, and I don’t need any documents because I already have the [Spanish] nationality, but, no, I wouldn’t think of moving there permanently”*. (interviewee 27, Mexican-Spaniard). A Mexican-Italian living in London also thinks that the EU citizenship allows you to “rotate” for jobs between Latin-America and Europe (interviewee 56).

Alongside with the increased mobility provided by an EU passport, interviewees mention a series of pragmatic benefits and rights that they might not actually exercise in their lifetime. These benefits are all bundled together in a sort of “life insurance”, or just in case it is needed in the future by the dual citizen or his/her immediate family. As one interviewee puts it; *“it is better to have it and not need it, than to need it and not have it”* (interview 36 Mexican-Spaniard). And in fact, many interviewees mention that they acquired the European citizenship because a relative did all the paperwork for all family members, or because they were interested in transmitting it to their children. Young people went into a lot of details describing how they first had to convince one of their parents to apply for a European citizenship, in order for them, the grandchildren of European emigrants to become eligible. One interview described getting his Greek passport as something that he had on a kind of checklist before settling down, something to do amongst other priorities in early adulthood like study, travel, and so on.

The “life insurance” value of an EU passport in Mexico has partly to do with perceived sense of security it provides in Mexico, in times of a rise in violence levels. Two interviewees mentioned

that, because of their work, a journalist and a social activist with German and Spanish citizenship, they have received violent threats. They mention that their work is uncomfortable to government and power groups and that they have both felt a certain sense of relief after getting the European passports, knowing it would be much easier to escape to another country. They even mention Canada as an option to seek refuge with an EU passport; *“Having the possibility to voluntarily disappear is something positive [...] and I would resort to that part of me, my Spanish part”*. Other interviewees mention that with a European passport you feel much more protected, socially and politically, than with a Mexican one, especially when traveling around.

Having a EU passport in Mexico carries some sort of “higher status” that comes up in various interviews. For some, it is actually uncomfortable to see other people valuing judging them for this quality, since it is an attitude reflecting old stereotypes of colonial privilege and low self-esteem of Mexicans. *“I lived this myself with a recent boyfriend I went out with. He thought it was great that I was Spaniard, but I felt very uncomfortable that he could see this attractive, not because of the possibility of getting a job and moving to Europe, no, simply he saw it as something attractive from a person, because of being European, only for having a nationality from the first-World.”* (interview 11 Spaniard-Mexican). Others reflect that having a European passport in Mexico automatically makes close-by people who do not have one feel inferior, or altering the status relations in a given group. Interviewee 9, who naturalized in Germany after over 10 years of residence and moved back to Mexico, says *“First, my family were a bit worried, because they thought, ‘OK you don’t feel Mexican anymore, you want to be German, you are denying your nationality’ [...], and they thought I was going to think much of myself, that I would not be part of the family anymore, something like this. With time they have realized I am the same person and they are happy I have all these advantages.”* (Interviewee 9, Mexican naturalized German living in northern Mexico). A perception that others might view their dual citizenship as an “act of betrayal” of the Mexican nationality was actually mentioned by several interviewees.

Furthermore, there is another angle to view how these dual Euro-Mexicans are seen in Mexico, from the viewpoint of the historical community of European emigrants and their descendants, who might promote or reject further expansion of the citizenry abroad. The last interviewee mentioned, a naturalized Mexican-German, reflects on how two of her friends who are Mexican-

Germans by ancestry, felt enraged by the fact that she managed to get German citizenship and all accompanying rights without having any blood ties. In another case, by contrast, a German by ancestry reflects that; *“I feel very fortunate, without doubt, because I did nothing to get it [German citizenship], no merit, no? except for being born in the correct family, no?, it is really accidental that I have those rights and many other people don’t”* (interviewee 17, Mexican-German by descent). This statement recalls the view of citizenship as a “birthright lottery” as Sachar (2009) terms this privilege mechanism of assigning rights.

In order to test the value of dual citizenship we asked interviewees if they would have renounced their Mexican nationality in order to acquire the EU citizenship if dual citizenship would not be allowed in Mexico. 60% of respondents said that they would have not renounced, 30% said that they would, and 10% did not know. Another question to test divided loyalties was; “do you consider yourself more Mexican than [the European nationality]?”, to which 85% answered yes, 2% no and 13% both. The answers to both of these questions show that an overwhelming majority values much more their Mexican citizenship, since after all most of these interviewees were living in Mexico.

In terms of other pragmatic benefits, Mexican French all mention that the key value of French citizenship while living in Mexico is to enjoy free school fees for their children at the Lycée Français, paid for by the French government. Furthermore, even Mexicans with other European nationalities other than French enjoy preferential (paid) access to this highly demanded French school in Guadalajara. The director of the pre-school at Lycée Français in Guadalajara in an informal interview said; *“our priority is first French citizens, then children of former Lycée students, and after that, all other European nationals, since these are the type of people we want in our school”*. The fact that a EU passport can help Mexican parents to jump queues in a private school in Mexico is as striking as the attractiveness of “Europeanness” as a personal quality previously mentioned by interviewee 11.

Euro-Mexicans that grew up in European schools, recall their socialization shaped with a close identification with a particular nationality. For example, interviewee 44 who went to school at Colegio Madrid in Mexico City (a school originally founded for children of Spanish civil war refugees) reflected, *“You don’t really understand what you are anymore. In my family and my*

school all people I saw were Spanish, my uncles, my grandparents, my cousins, my friends, it was like a sort of Spain.” Others choose a European school as close as they can find to their values; interviewee 12 a Mexican-Dutch in Guadalajara, explains that she placed her children in the German School *“because it is the available school that is most similar to Holland [...] and it is the language most similar to Dutch”*.

Learning the European language of the country of nationality, or of one of its regions (i.e. Catalan), it is sometimes an objective that starts after acquiring citizenship, or following a trip to visit one’s ancestors’ homeland, which typically opens up renewed interest in re-discovering their roots and identity. Several interviewees recall how their mother or grandparents spoke the European language at home, with varying degrees of success in transmitting it to their descendants. An interviewee who had always spoken Italian, reflects on the kind of status that having Italian nationality and speaking Italian gives to his Curriculum Vitae, even when he does not actually use it at work; *“Socially I have benefited, because everybody says, Italian, ah! how beautiful! and I do not what it is... but it opens me doors in my CV, because it gives me an extra language, even when I have not used it formally”* (interviewee 22). Again, Italian nationality and language seems to confer a sort of social status that allows this person to distinguish himself from the crowd in the job market on the back of her “Italian pedigree”.

4 U.S-Mexican dual citizenship in Mexico: Stateless or dual nationals?

4.1 Recent trends in US Mexican dual citizenship

Over these past two decades four key trends have determined the emergence of a growing group of bi-national citizens of Mexico and the US, and they should be taken together in order to understand this growing phenomenon.

a) Mexican legal reforms: The 1996 Mexican constitutional reform and 1997 nationality law, which forbid the loss of Mexican nationality by birth, through its preservation despite naturalization in another country, and a 1993 legal provision that allowed automatic transmission of Mexican nationality to children born abroad to Mexican-born parent/s

b) Increasing US immigration restrictions: Since the mid-1990's the US has introduced a series of restrictions on non-citizens access to public services, even for immigrants with legal permanent residence status ("Greencard"), along with overall increased harassment of immigrants at the municipal, county and State levels;

c) Increase in US deportations: In the last decade, the US has implemented a massive policy of "apprehensions" and deportations of illegal immigrants. From 2004 to 2013 there were over 7 million US deportations or removal events of Mexican nationals (Department of Homeland Security, 2014). This policy has separated families or sometimes induced the forced "return" of US citizens together with their deported parents or relatives;

d) Socioeconomic and demographic trends: With the outbreak of the US economic crisis in 2008 and the concurrent longest period of demographic and economic stability in Mexico, there has been a substantial decrease in outmigration flows from Mexico to the US and an increase of "voluntary" returns to Mexico, producing a negative net migration flow for the first time in recorded history (Gonzalez-barrera, 2015; Passel, Cohn, & Gonzalez-Barrera, 2012).

The first two trends (a and b) have facilitated an increase in the traditionally very low US naturalization rates of eligible Mexicans with legal permanent resident (LPR) status, commonly known as "Greencard" holders. The second two (c and d), have generated a massive return of Mexican nationals to Mexico, some of them as naturalized US citizens, and many more taking with them their minor children born in the US, and therefore US citizens. For them, claiming also Mexican citizenship, a right recognized by the Mexican Constitution, began to make much more sense than when they were living in the US. However, effective access to this dual citizenship entitlement is not easy for many collectives who lack the right documentation and the necessary social, human and financial capital. These four trends in combination produced – among other consequences – a rapid growth of the population entitled to US-Mexico dual nationality, resident in both countries.

Nearly twenty years after the 1997 Mexican nationality law, it seems that it has partially met its set objectives. Even when the US naturalization rate for Mexicans only rose from 20% to 36% between 1998 and 2013 (SOURCE), the number of naturalizations in absolute terms, has actually rocketed during this period. Furthermore, if the focus of such evaluations is not only placed on

naturalized dual citizens resident in the US, but it is widened to all collectives of dual citizens, the picture changes completely. Elsewhere (Mateos, 2015c) a typology is proposed encompassing US-born persons with Mexican-born parents living in both countries, as well as the three types of dual nationals that reside in Mexico (returned naturalized, U.S.-born and children of US citizens). Including these four collectives, the population entitled to dual US-Mexico nationality expands from the 2.4 million Mexicans naturalized in the US over the last 26 years, to more than 15 million persons across the two countries.

In this paper we focus on the case of Mexican "returnees" and their children and relatives born in the US, many of which hold dual citizenship either by birth or naturalization and who either reside permanently or spend long periods of time in Mexico. This a collective that has unfortunately received little attention by the Mexican-US migration literature, at least from the perspective of their formal citizenship status. Besides the residents of border areas and US citizens naturalized in Mexico — both with long transnational traditions — we here refer to Mexican returnees and their descendants who live in other areas of the country.

More than half a million children under age 18 (0.57 million) born in the U.S., lived in Mexico in 2010 (INEGI, 2011), all of them bearers of a US passport and the immense majority of them entitled to dual citizenship. An additional 100,000 children born in the US between 2010 and 2014 have also “migrated” to Mexico since (Gonzalez-barrera, 2015). As shown in Figure 2 the immense majority of the 0.74 million US-born persons (77%) living in Mexico in 2010 were actually minors, pointing towards the future population size and age-structure of this bi-national population who is also entitled to pass dual nationality to their children.

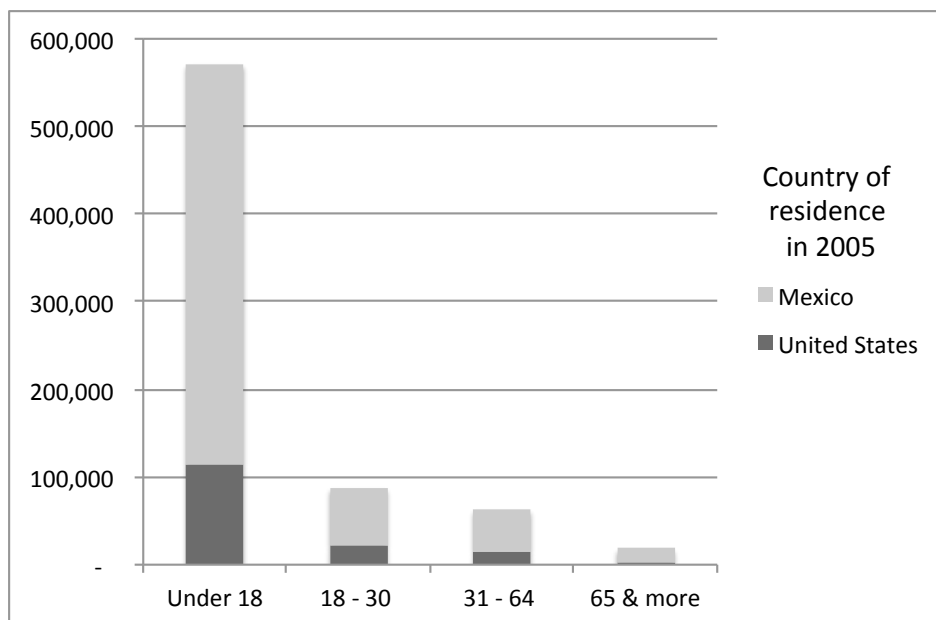


FIGURE 2: AGE STRUCTURE OF THE U.S.-BORN POPULATION LIVING IN MEXICO IN 2010 BY COUNTRY OF PREVIOUS RESIDENCE IN 2005

Source: Prepared by the author based on the Mexican Census of population 2010, long form microdata (INEGI, 2011)

This population is not evenly distributed across space. As shown in the map on **Error! Reference source not found.**, the US-born population in Mexico tends to concentrate in the municipalities along the border with the US as well as in the traditional emigrant region in the Centre-West of the country (J Durand, 1998)

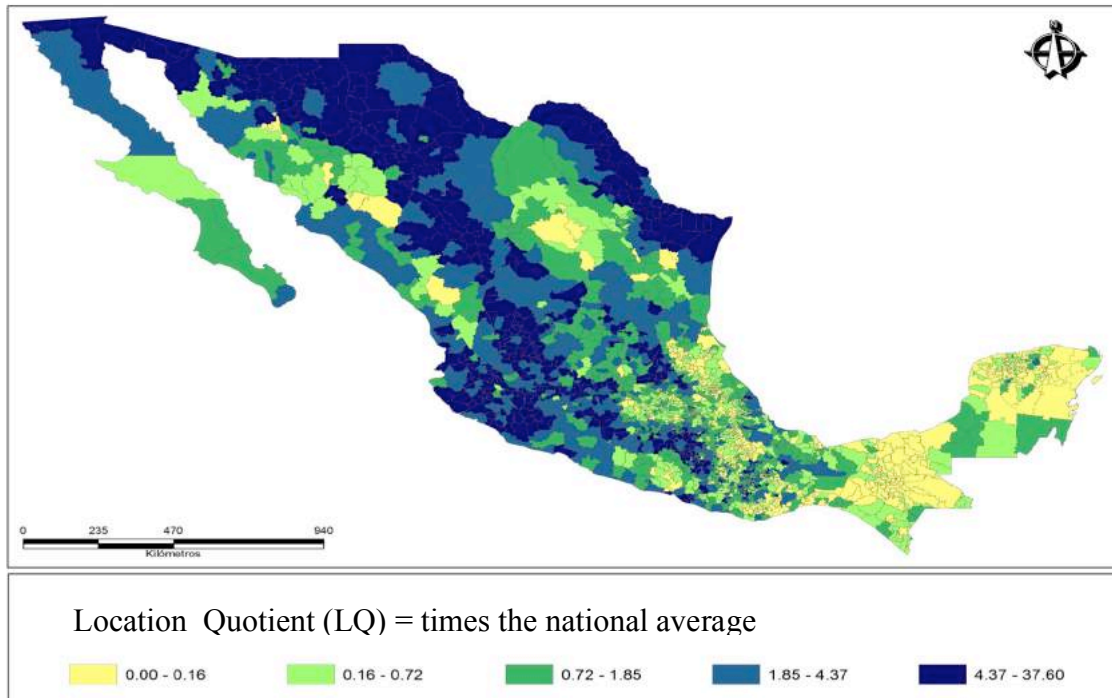


FIGURE 3: MAP OF CONCENTRATION OF US-BORN POPULATION BY MEXICAN MUNICIPALITY (2010)

The map depicts the share of a municipality's population born in the US. Such share is expressed as a location quotient (LQ), or ratio, in relation to the national average of such share. As such, a municipality with a Location Quotient of 1, has the same share of U.S.-born population as the national average, those with LQs above 1 lie X times above the national average and conversely, those with LQs under 1 lie X times below the average.

Source: Prepared by the author based on the Mexican Census of population 2010, long form microdata (INEGI, 2011)

4.2 Statelessness *de facto* in Mexico

The main finding of this early research into U.S.-born dual nationals living in Mexico is that actually the majority of them lack basic Mexican identity documents; a Mexican birth certificate, a Mexican population registration number (CURP), a Mexican ID card (“*cedula de identidad para menores*”), or a Mexican passport. A total of 243 interviews with US-Mexican dual nationals were conducted in the US (California, Illinois, Texas and New York), the border region

(Baja California-California, Chihuahua-Texas and Nuevo Leon-Texas), and Mexican states of Guanajuato, Michoacan and Jalisco, forming a vast empirical material that is still being analyzed but whose preliminary results are partly used for this paper.

The main reason reported by interviewees for lacking Mexican documents is that most parents do not register the US birth of their children in Mexican consulates, a procedure that is much simpler if fulfilled through the consular system than if conducted later in Mexico. Once in Mexico, this birth registration as a Mexican national involves a complicated and expensive international administrative process. The child foreign (US) birth certificate needs to be legalized at the US State Department in the State where the child was born (through the "*apostille*" seal), and translated by an official translator in the Mexican State where registration is intended. If the names of the parents or grandparents in the US birth certificate do not coincide with those in the Mexican birth certificates of both parents, the original US birth certificate needs to be amended by the US county where it was issued. This process requires professional intermediaries to locate the necessary documents, ship them, and accomplish the legalization and translation processes. The average cost of these procedures, including courier services, and administrative costs is around 4,000 Mexican pesos per child (approximately \$236 USD) (Jacobo Suárez & Landa, 2015). Most poor returnee families (some of them deported) cannot afford such services, or these are simply not accessible from the remote villages to where they might have returned. The problem becomes even more exacerbated for many families with several children under this situation.

The consequence of a lack of Mexican documents is that, despite their theoretical status as dual citizens, many of these children become *de facto* stateless in the country of their parents (A. Escobar, 2015; Mateos, 2014). This in turn brings severe limitations in their right to access public services and overall integration in Mexico, especially their exclusion or marginalization from the education system (Jacobo Suárez, 2015; Valdez-Gardea, 2012). They are either denied enrollment because of lack of identification documents, or if they do attend school, they cannot get their certificate or formal degree in elementary, middle and high school. This situation pushes many families, teachers and staff to manipulate civil registration documents and to work out illegal ways to solve a purely administrative shortcoming. Such exclusion from the education system is of course not only constrained to formal requirements, but also involve a wide range of

discrimination practices. For example, school headmasters or administrators take bribes disguised as fees for “foreign students”, as exposed by one of the interviewees in a village in the State of Jalisco. Teachers and other children often bully US-born pupils because of their low level of Spanish language or different behavior in school (A. Escobar, 2015; Valdez-Gardea, 2012; Zúñiga & Hamann, 2008). These types of discrimination practices are beyond the scope of this paper, but they clearly go hand in hand with a bureaucratic system designed to exclude foreigners, indigenous persons and the rural dispossessed, which now ends up trapping returned dual nationals.

This group of “undocumented” bi-national children and young people is vulnerable in situations of international custody disputes, because of divorce, abandonment or death of one or both parents on both sides of the border, or deportation proceedings of their parents. All these situations are further complicated if the parents are not married or their names do not appear in the birth certificates of their children, or they present anomalies (correct spelling and order of long names are a big issue in Mexican bureaucracy). This legal and documentary vulnerability sometimes also affects their ability to prove US citizenship, with some migrants falling victims of a general lack of documentation and information. Mexican and the US governments have surprisingly ignored the needs of this growing bi-national group for a number of years, treating them as second class citizens until NGOs and public institutions at local levels have recently started to take the matter into their own hands. Recent evidence from US consulates in Mexico suggests that they have now started to be preoccupied with the protection of their minor nationals in Mexico. Several information campaigns have been launched in Baja California and Oaxaca and Consuls are even crossing into the US to campaign in San Diego area for proper registration of dual national children under the two nationalities before moving to Mexico (El Sol de Tijuana, 2015; Mercado, 2015; Tavera, 2015). Photographic evidence of these information campaigns by the US Consulate Generate in Tijuana is provided in Photo 1 and an extensive discussion of this case is available in Mateos (2017).



PHOTO 1: PUBLICITY MATERIALS FROM THE US CONSULATE IN TIJUANA PROMOTING DUAL CITIZENSHIP ON BOTH SIDES OF THE BORDER

Source: Top image: US Consulate General in Tijuana Facebook page (published Sept 28th 2015)

<https://www.facebook.com/ConsuladoEstadosUnidosTijuana/photos/p.10153771869644714/10153771869644714>

Bottom image: US Consulate General in Tijuana Video published in Youtube Nov 3rd 2014

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5J9kSkBa6U4>

These bi-national populations are very common in Mexico's border States with the US. The municipality of Tijuana, in Baja California, has since 2014 launched summer campaigns in various communication media to promote the registration of dual nationals born in the US, offering a 50% discount in registration fees for a month (see **Error! Reference source not found.**). Registrations of births abroad (known locally as "dual nationality registrations") have soared from 700 people a year to over 2000 in this single municipality (reported in an interview with Tijuana's head of the municipal Civil Registry). This procedure allows U.S.-born Mexicans

to “align” their Mexican documents with their US birth certificate, cancelling previous fake birth registrations as born in Mexico that were very common before dual citizenship was permitted in 1998. In an interview with Tijuana’s head of the municipal Civil Registry she stated:

“It was a taboo, no? I was born in the US but my parents registered me in Mexico as born in Mexico [...] I have lived my whole life with that fake birth certificate, I went to school, I even got married with it. But then, I went to a lot of media; TV, radio, press and told them; ‘do not be afraid to cancel that fake birth certificate, don’t carry on with a lie’ [...] Even our major was born in the U.S! [...] we need to regularize this situation, put right our paperwork”

She reflected on how she built a very “nationalistic” campaign to promote dual citizenship registration, so that nobody would question her “Mexicanness” (*mexicanidad*). The campaign poster depicted the Mexican and US flags behind a father and child with symbols of both countries (**Error! Reference source not found.**Photo 2) and she presided the press conference wearing a T-shirt of the Mexican national football team (Agencia Fronteriza de Noticias, 2014). She said that other municipalities had not openly promoted dual citizenship because it is still kind of taboo to have had faked birth certificates in the past (Mexico-born) in order to enjoy dual nationality when it was forbidden, but also to disclose that your parents chose to strategically give birth in the US when you have lived in Mexico for your whole life. All these practices have traditionally gone against Mexican entrenched nationalism, and even 20 years on since dual citizenship was allowed, even today it is still difficult to talk openly about dual citizenship from an institutional standpoint. Not in vain, Tijuana’s municipal motto, presiding the façade of the Town Hall where I conducted my interview with the Civil Registry, is “Here starts the homeland” (*Aquí empieza la patria*), signaling the territorial limit that defines and defends Mexico’s nationalism in stark opposition to the US.



PHOTO 2: PROMOTIONAL POSTER OF A DUAL CITIZENSHIP REGISTRATION CAMPAIGN IN TIJUANA

Note: Text of poster (from top to bottom); “Become a Mexican! Register your dual nationality. Campaign of registration of births outside of Mexico. Reception of documents from July 1 to July 31 2014. For more information, visit City Hall or your closest municipal office. Requirements at tijuana.gob.mx/dobleciudadania”

Source: Photo by Pablo Mateos in an interview in March 2015 during the Civil Registry of the City of Tijuana

ADD MORE ETHNOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE ON DOCUMENTATION STRATEGIES FROM US-MEX INTERVIEWS

5 Comparing two modes of Mexican dual citizenship

It is not easy to compare the characteristics, motivations and issues raised by these two very different types of Mexicans with dual citizenship; Euro-Mexicans and US-Mexicans. In the previous two sections the paper has concentrated in two major issues; perceptions of the value of a EU citizenship while residing in Mexico and the problems associated with undocumented status of US-born dual nationals living in Mexico.

US-Mexicans have mostly accessed US citizenship by birth on US territory and to a lesser extent through naturalization. Amongst our interviewees, young people tend to have used the former while older people the latter. Only a very small proportion has accessed this status through one of their parents being US citizen. This contrasts the situation of Euro-Mexicans who have mostly accessed dual citizenship through their ancestors, most of the times later in life and not necessarily at birth. A small proportion accessed dual citizenship through naturalization and none of them by birth in Europe, since automatic *ius soli* does not exist in any EU country.

This stark contrast in the modes of incorporation of their external citizens between the US and the European countries here analyzed, reflect well the disparities in their models of access to citizenship (Weil, 2001). The US creates external citizens through its generous automatic *ius soli* principle, that in this case benefits the 12 millions of Mexicans residing in the US, half of them undocumented but whose children born in the territory automatically become US citizens. Mass return to Mexico in the last decade, combined with a traditional practice of US births to Mexican mothers resident alongside the U.S.-Mexican border (Harpaz 2015, (Ojeda, 2009), have created a large collective of dual U.S.- Mexican nationals now living in Mexico. However, the US restricts the expansion of the citizenry abroad by placing important limitations on the *ius sanguinis* transmission of citizenship to children born abroad (mainly a parental minimum US residence period during infancy). In contrast, the European model of citizenship seems totally the reverse. Generous *ius sanguinis* provisions allow the transmission of citizenship to descendants of native-born emigrants for several generations after emigration from many EU countries. The denial of automatic birth citizenship rights in Europe and the important barriers placed on naturalization by residence, birth or marriage (except in Spain for Latin Americans), lays bare the highly racialized nature of European citizenship models (Dumbrava & Bauböck, 2015).

These two models of citizenship acquisition and transmission; European blood and US territory, comprise the two dimensions that together conjure to create a large and growing population of Mexican dual citizens. Both models, apply here to the recent history of part of the Mexican population, on the one hand to descendants of historical European emigrants and, on the other, of contemporary Mexican emigrants to the US or families alongside its long and highly populated common border. The interesting current phenomenon is that an important part of this growing population of Mexican dual citizens, are now residing permanently in Mexico.

The argument that predominates in the citizenship literature is that dual or multiple citizenship is a form of capital that can be turned into mobility capital (Urry, 2007), general upward social mobility and access to resources through wider opportunities for employment, travel, education, business, welfare entitlements, and political power (Faist & Kivisto, 2007). However, as seen in the US-Mexican case, compared to the Euro-Mexican one, such benefits are often only available for those with the sufficient human, social and financial capital to seize the opportunities provided by dual citizenship. Such capital is required to mobilize information and social networks in order to overcome the rigid bureaucratic obstacles to obtain identity documents, which in turn provide effective access to their multiple citizenship rights.

People without these types of capital, as we have seen with a large part of the US-Mexican collective, will not benefit in practice from their legal status of dual citizens. The consequences in many cases is systematic discrimination in their civil, political and social (re)integration in Mexico, becoming *de-facto* stateless persons (A. Escobar, 2015). Today, very little is known about the circumstances and needs of this group, especially the most vulnerable among them, the children and youth. Do they have better or equal rights against the "mono-nationals" in both the US and Mexico?.

Another element of comparison is how dual national Mexicans see the value of their second citizenship while living in Mexico. For some U.S.-Mexicans and the majority of Euro-Mexicans, having dual citizenship while living in Mexico is a sort of an insurance policy, a resource they can tap in, in case they need to quickly leave Mexico and find a job or study elsewhere or escape from violent threats or insecurity. As such, it is also a form of "family capital" that is treasured and can be transmitted to children, just as families build their family assets through generations.

The contrast between the external perceptions of dual citizenship in the two collectives is rather interesting. Having a European passport is generally seen as a symbol of higher status, since white Mexicans (*criollos*) with close European ancestors, are still associated with a higher social class. On the contrary, being born in the US was something that traditionally had to be hidden, something to lie about in one's birth certificate for decades, since dual citizenship was forbidden until 1998. But also, it was a status that might be either associated with a family past as economic rural emigrants (i.e. less white and of lower class), or with a voluntary preference for the neighboring nation that embodied all the stereotypes of the foreign menace constructed by Mexican nationalism against the US. These Europhilic and Americanophobic sentiments embodied in disparate attitudes towards multiple citizenship in Mexico, comprise an interesting aspect for future research in this area. However, in this paper we can conclude that, through their exercising their rights to another nation's citizenship, the vast collective of dual Mexican citizens are somehow starting to challenge the model of the modern concept of a Mexican State built upon an ideal of a homogenous Mestizo Nation (Basave Benítez, 1992). Despite prevailing for the last 100 years, and thus is still deeply entrenched in the country's imaginary, this model is starting to be eroded by the undeniable reality of the growth in Mexican dual nationality and the underlying racial unbundling of the Mestizo Nation into neo-criollos, neo-Americans and the rest of the population, each collective with a different package of rights and with well known positions in the country's socio-racial hierarchy.

6 Conclusion

Mexico is a nation with a growing share of its large population gaining dual citizenship from the US or some European countries since the late 1990s. While much of the literature on multiple citizenship and migration tend to focus on residents in the countries of immigration, dual citizenship status for Mexicans residing in Mexico comprise a major research and policy issue that has not been properly diagnosed. This paper has characterized the clearly distinct collectives of Euro-Mexican and US-Mexican dual nationals living in Mexico and established some elements of comparison that could guide future investigations into this growing phenomena.

We have argued that the current circumstances and motivations of the collective eligible for dual US-Mexican citizenship are largely unknown, as well as their ability to access, exercise or avoid double citizenship, and the opportunities and challenges of this legal status while in Mexico or abroad. A good part of the over half a million US-born children living in Mexico have found to be *de facto* stateless in the country of their parents. The paper has also pointed out at the consequences of the European model of *ius sanguinis* transmission of citizenship to descendants of emigrants born in Mexico, which poses the danger of reopening colonial wounds in a country with stark socio-racial inequalities. Understanding the characteristics of these two collectives require further in-depth analysis focusing on differential pathways to dual citizenship and the heterogeneous conditions of dual nationals and mono-nationals, according to socioeconomic profiles and life geographies. Taken together, the US and European models of access to citizenship, but seen from the Mexican population residing in Mexico, lays bare the contradictions and challenges that the growing phenomenon of multiple citizenship poses to the Westphalian notion of the Nation State and its territorial sovereignty over a fixed population.

We hope to have made a contribution towards understanding the success or failure factors behind the new opportunity structures created by and for Mexican dual citizens as well as serious challenges for all countries involved. Understanding the phenomenon of Mexican dual citizenship, a nation at the crossroads of important historic and contemporary migration corridors, is of utmost relevance for other world regions and bi-national collectives.

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