



***MEXICAN CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN
THE BORDER
SONORA-ARIZONA***

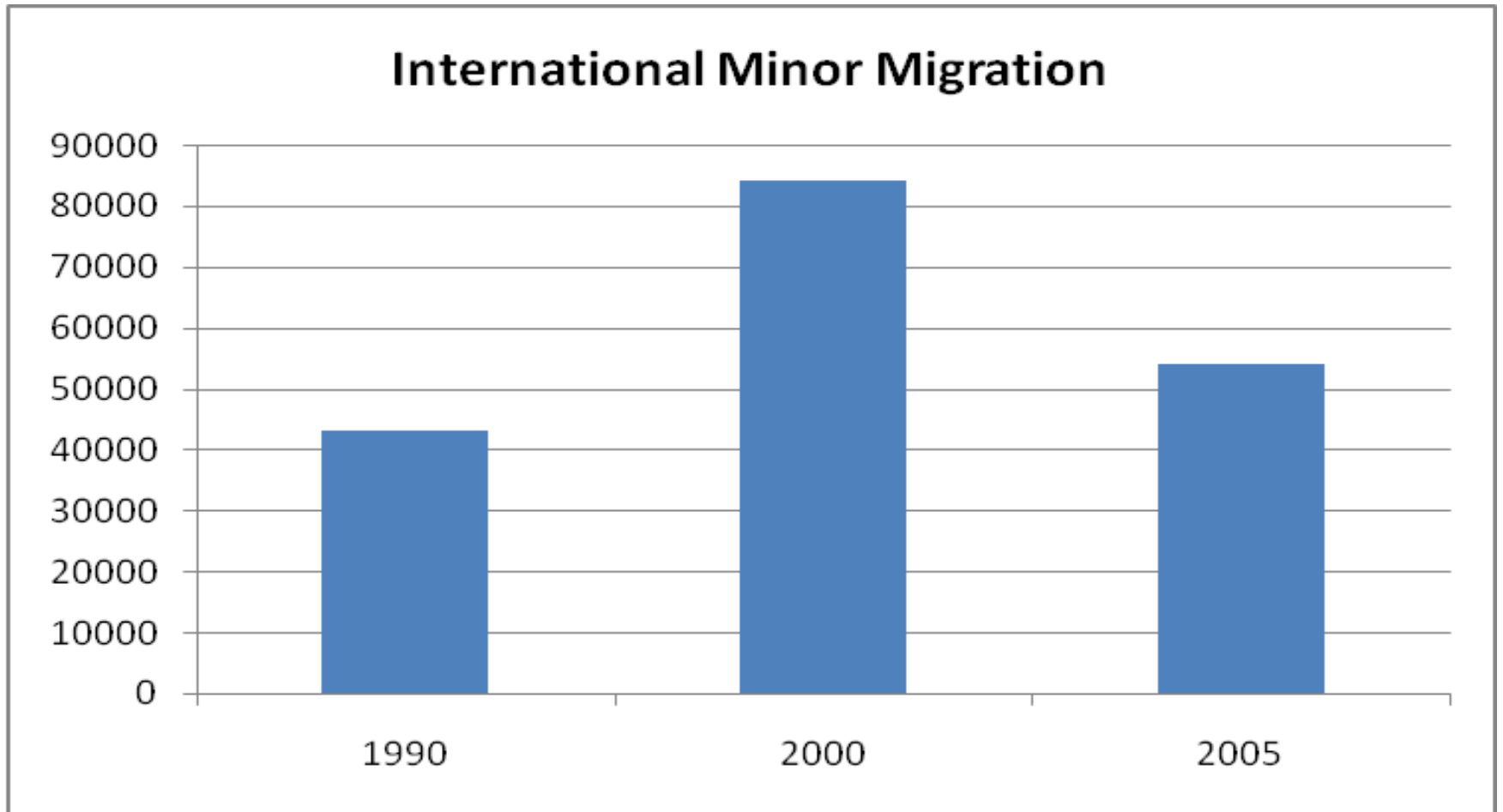


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Statistical Data

- The presence of children and youth in the international migration between México and the United States reached its highest visibility during the decade of 1990.
- Two trends of minor international migration for the period between 1990 to 2005, an increase of almost two-times its size from 1990 to 2000, and a subsequent decrease in 2005.

Highest point



Down trend

U.S to Mexico Sent Back Events from 2003 to 2006

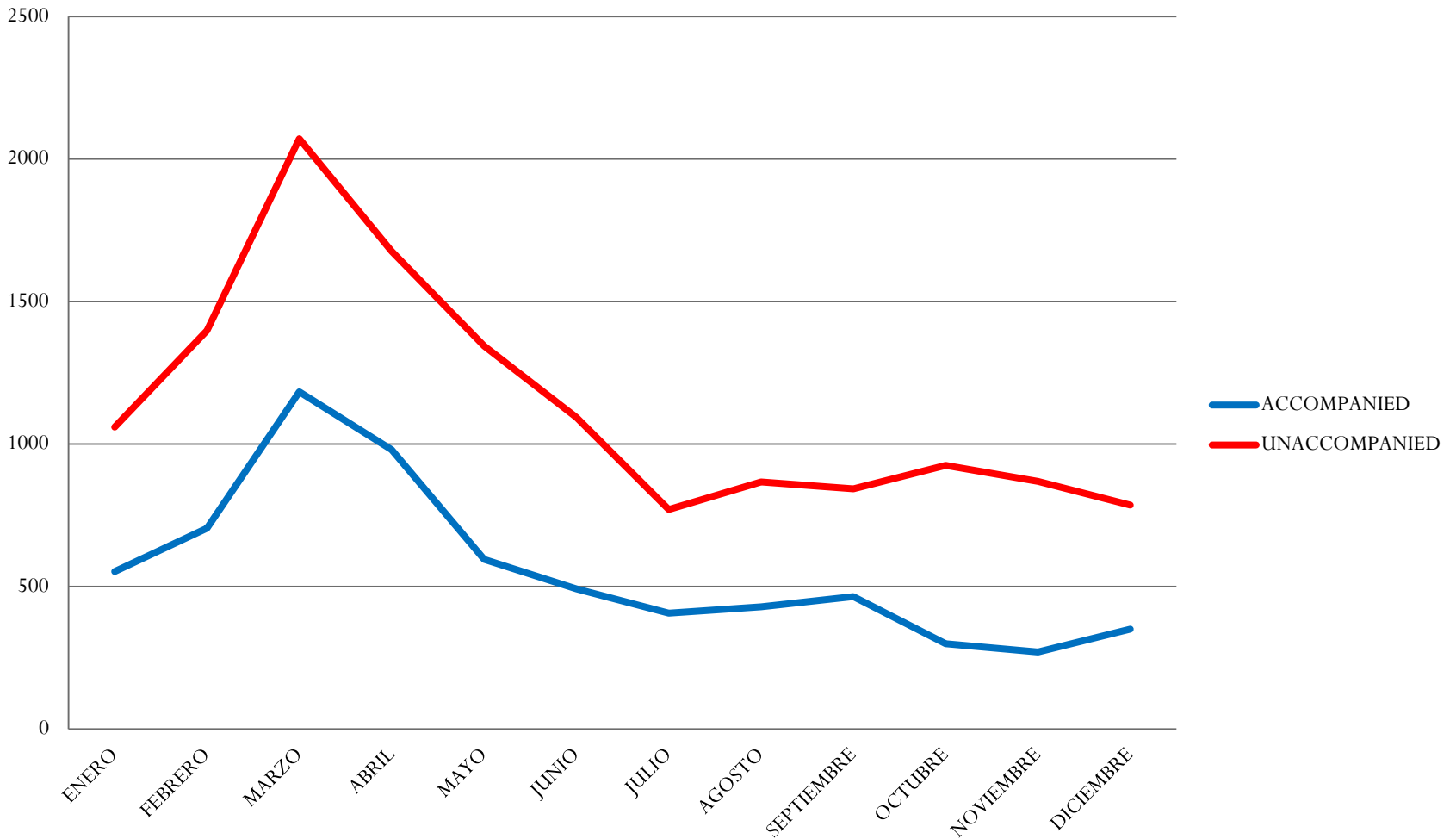
Year	<u>Sent Back Events</u>		Adults/ Minors Ratio	Minors Men/women Ratio	Adults Men/women Ratio
	<u>Minors</u>	<u>Adults</u>			
	Total	Total			
	146 604	1 883 909	7.2	1.8	7.4
2003	52 535	507 414	9.4	1.8	5.5
2004	39 690	475 254	7.7	2.6	5.8
2005	44 727	497 338	8.3	2.6	5.5
2006	37 599	477 180	7.3	2.9	5.5

Minors' Down trend

- This down trend has kept constant until today with a report in 2010 of a total of 20,438 events (INM, SEGOB, pp. 206)
- Despite, it is still important to look carefully at minors in the borders.
- An implication is minor safety as a relevant number of these minors travel unaccompanied.

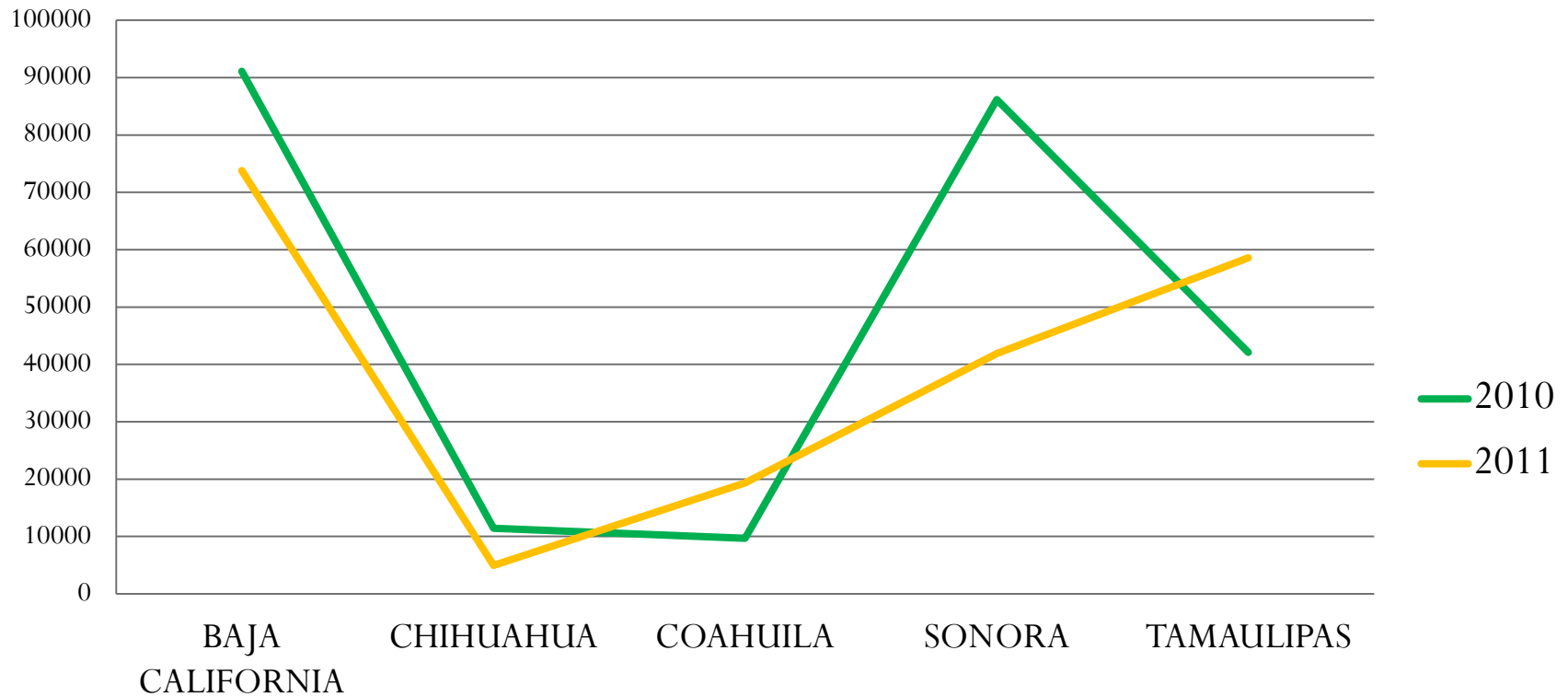
Unaccompanied Minors

MINOR SENT BACK EVENTS DURING 2010 BY TRAVEL CONDITION



The effect of SB1070

SENT BACK EVENTS BY PLACE OF ENTRY FROM JANUARY TO MAY



Response to Border Emergency

- In mid 1990's UNICEF, México and U.S. Immigration, Consulates, and ONG's stated the first actions to protect minors:
- Safe Minor Sent-Back Home Protocol
- 2004 Official first shelter is created to protect the minors during their time in the borders.
- Sonora shelters: Nogales, A.Prieta, San Luis.

First actions

UNICEF Convention and Children Rights:

- To protect minor migrants regardless their migration statuses as well as that of their parents.
- To protect vulnerable children against the risky environment of the borders and crossing experiences (i.e. human rights violations, polleros, drug-dealers, etc.)

But, who are these minors?

- Beyond statistics and emergency intervention, we do not know who are these minors, what are their needs and motivations, neither we know how their family context and development has been.
- Extraordinary life experiences might accompany undocumented migration for these young people long before they reach the border line.

Previous studies

- Although literature on Latino immigrants, ethnic minorities, and resident of border cities youth mental health is relatively available, previous studies on this group are scarce (Cauce et al., 2002; Flores & Kaplan, 2009; Marin et al., 1991; Sabogal et al., 1987) .
- Some records say the first most important minors' reason for crossing is searching for job and better life opportunities; the second is to reunite with their families (Valdez-Gardea, 2007).

Illegal Migration and Family Processes

Mummert (2009) reported sibling's experiences as risk factors for psychological well-being:

- One left in Mexico waiting for reunification
- One born in U.S. growing with their parents
- May never meet but still in daily contact (phone, etc.)

McGuire & Martin (2007) have explored how parents keep their parental roles through the distance by means of available technology and wondering about the quality of such rearing over children outcomes.

Children psychological well-being

- Sanchez and cols.(n.d.) found low levels of life satisfaction and depression feelings due to failed crossing attempt in a group of sheltered minors in Nogales.
- Nevertheless, there were some positive aspects in minor mental health such as high self-esteem and social competence as coping resources.
- This is consistent with similar populations: Guatemalan refugee children (Miller, 1996), and children from migrant families working in agricultural fields in Sonora (Vera y cols. 2010).

Objectives of the Study

- To explore how relevant social actors perceive the needs and motivations of illegal migrant minors.
- To explore minors' psycho-emotional and familial experiences associated with their parents' migration to identify potential protective factors.
- Overall, we want to contribute with knowledge that inform policy makers and to guide intervention efforts addressing the well-being of these young people.

METHOD

First phase: Qualitative approach

Participants: 8 informants (i.e. the principal of each shelter, an employee from the Mexican Consulate, a member of BETA Immigrant Protection Force, a social researcher, and a couple of ONG s volunteers. Also, 3 minors ranging from 9 to 17 years old were interviewed in the shelters.

Second phase: Quantitative approach

Based on the findings from the first phase, we piloted a questionnaire including measures of the protective factors revealed a in the open-ended interviews.

Participants: 53 youths from 12 to 17 years old.

Key Informant' views

Who are these minors?

- *Local (Nogales resident) and foreigner (out-of-state) minors.*
- *Foreigner minors are perceived as good behaved, quiet, sometimes showing signs of emotional distress from the crossing experience. Most come from rural towns from south areas of Mexico, they exhibit low academic achievement, and overall poor socio-economic status.*

What do they need or what s their motivations?

- *They crosses looking for job opportunities or seeking to reunite with their families already in U.S.*
- *They are not delinquents neither exhibit signs of mental health issues.*
- *Also, there are some local minors identified as involved in delinquency networks (i.e. “coyotes” or drug-carriers), they may exhibit anti-social, aggressive behavior and drug use.*

Key Informant' views

What is the official response to minor migration?

- *There is poor programmatic and policy efforts truly working on this issue.*
- *Illegal crossing prevention done in the borders is not as successful as it could be: When the person reached the border, there is nothing to stop him.*
- *Official double speech: Underlying the open rejection, the true interest is not losing the important money that enters Mexico as remesas from those who succeeded in their attempt and work in U.S.*
- *Extended practice of blame the victim; in this case minors' parents.*

What should be done?

- *Investing in more school, career and job opportunities for youth and their families in their own towns.*
- *Improve family life conditions in border cities to prevent children and youth involvement in delinquency networks.*

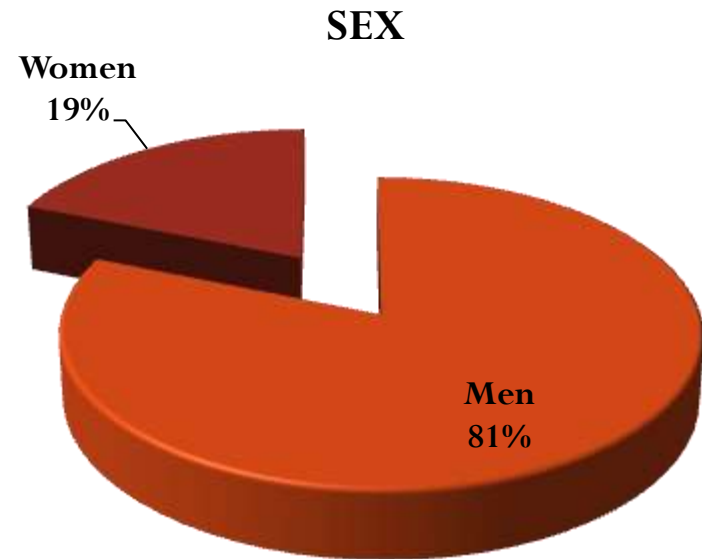
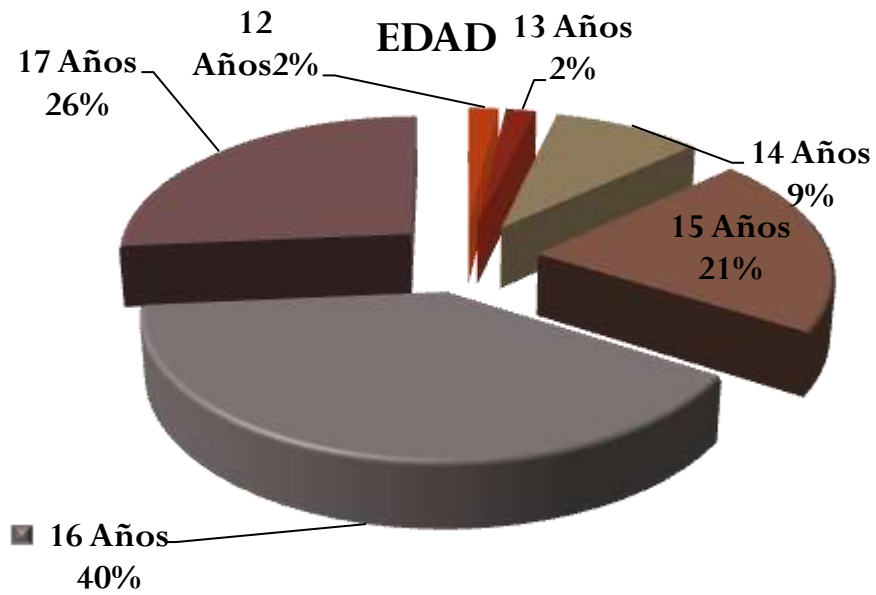
Minors' experiences

Do you remember how you used to live and feel before your parents went to US? / How`s now? What do you do when you feel sad or alone?

- *Mom figure: warmth, nurturing, disciplinarian.*
- *Loss and grieve*
- *If lucky, somebody was there and new ties emerged*
- *Home routines fostering belongingness*
- *The presence of peers at school and neighborhood*
- *Social networks: church*

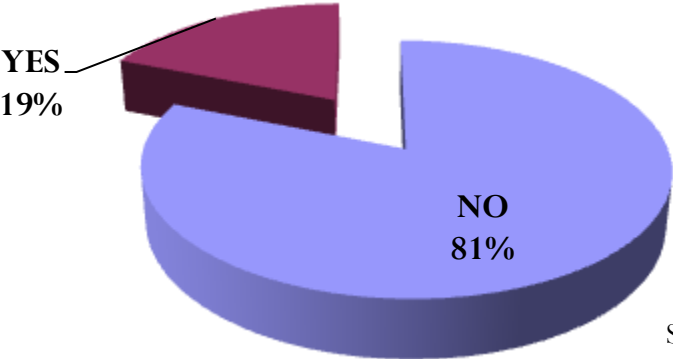
- In summary, minors' account of their family experiences provided some support to the idea that *attachment and resilience* were useful constructs in identifying protective factors.

Pilot phase: Demographics

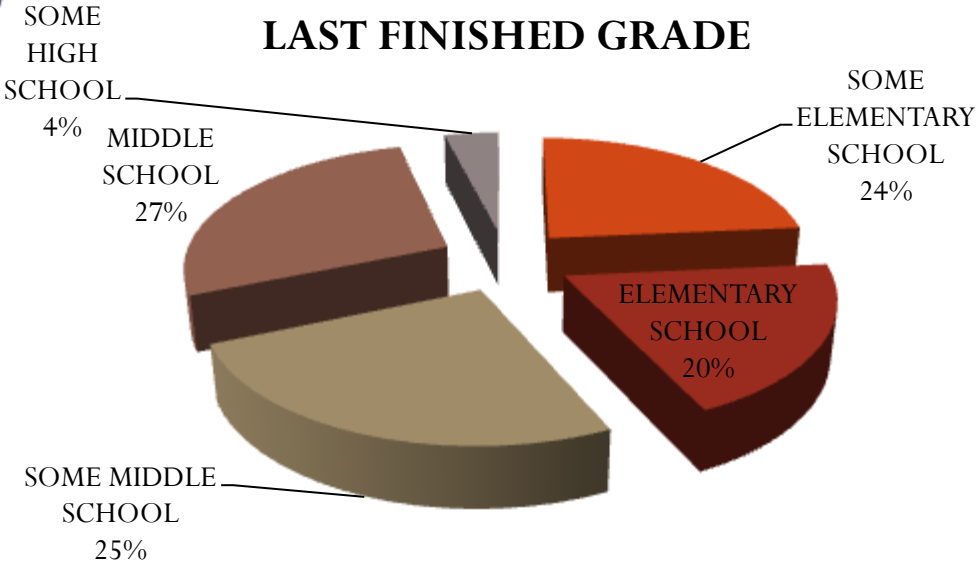


Education background

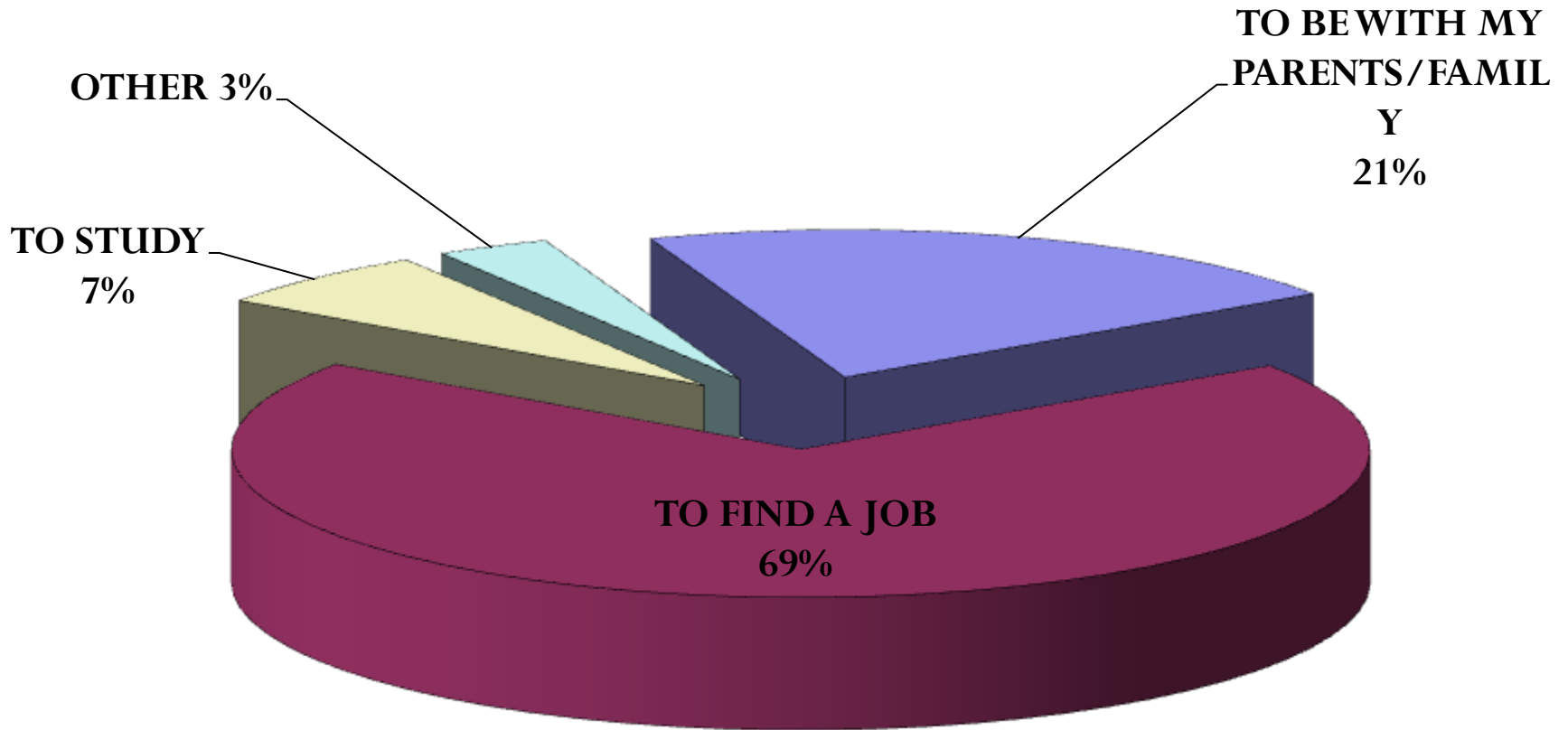
SCHOOL ATENDENCE



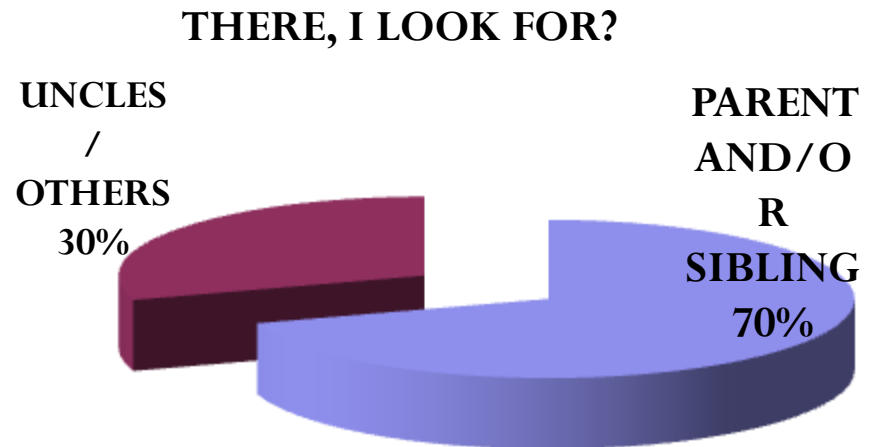
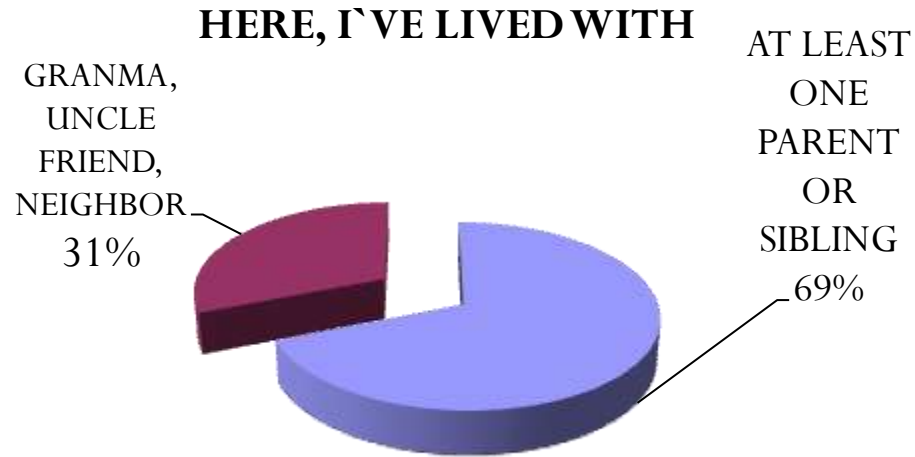
LAST FINISHED GRADE



Why did you cross?

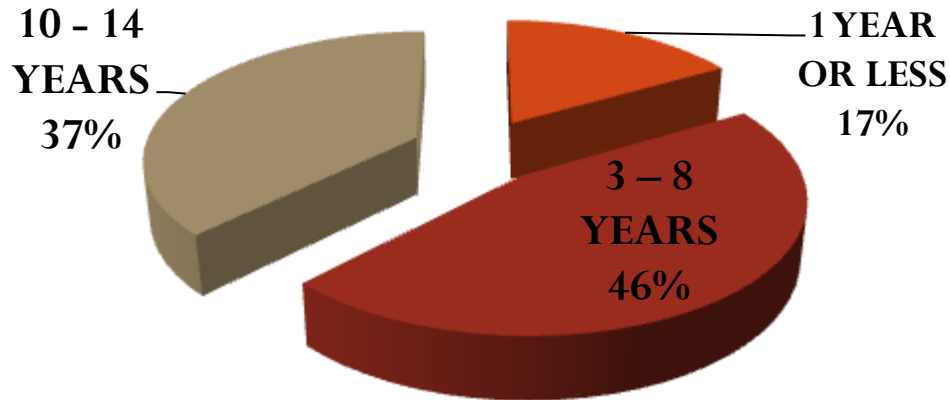


Family in México and U.S?

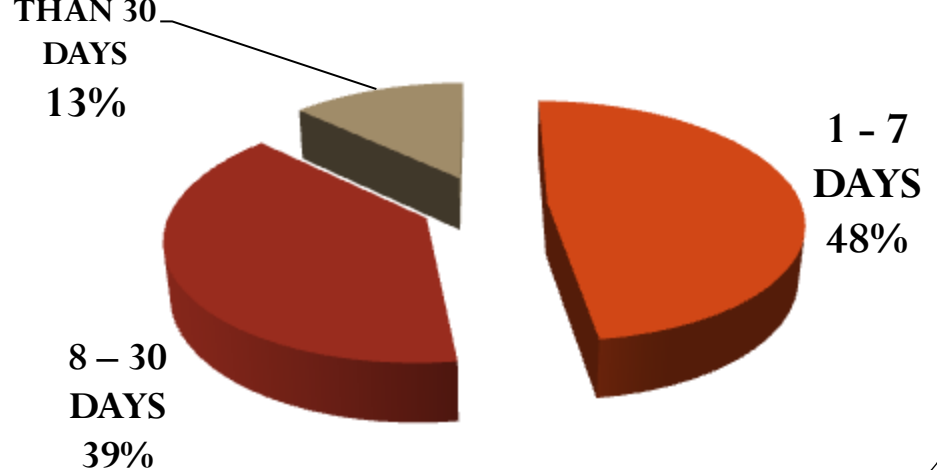


Family Contact

HOW LONG SINCE YOUR FAMILY MOVED?

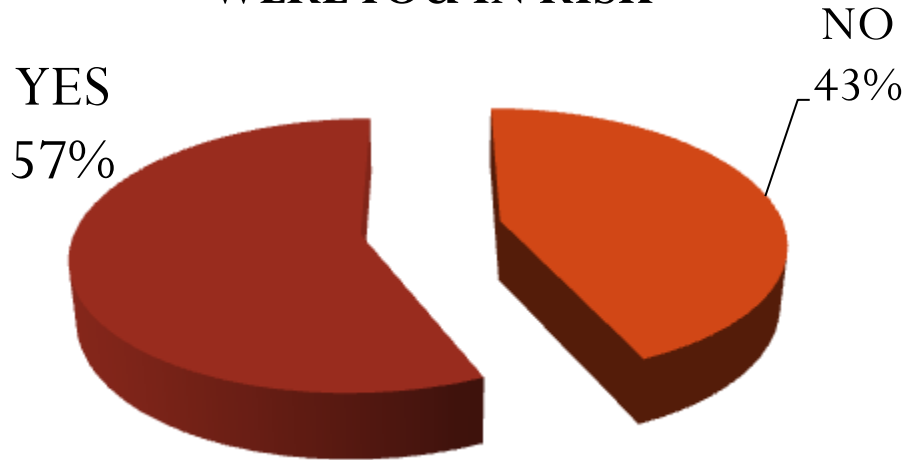


TIME SINCE LAST CONTACT?

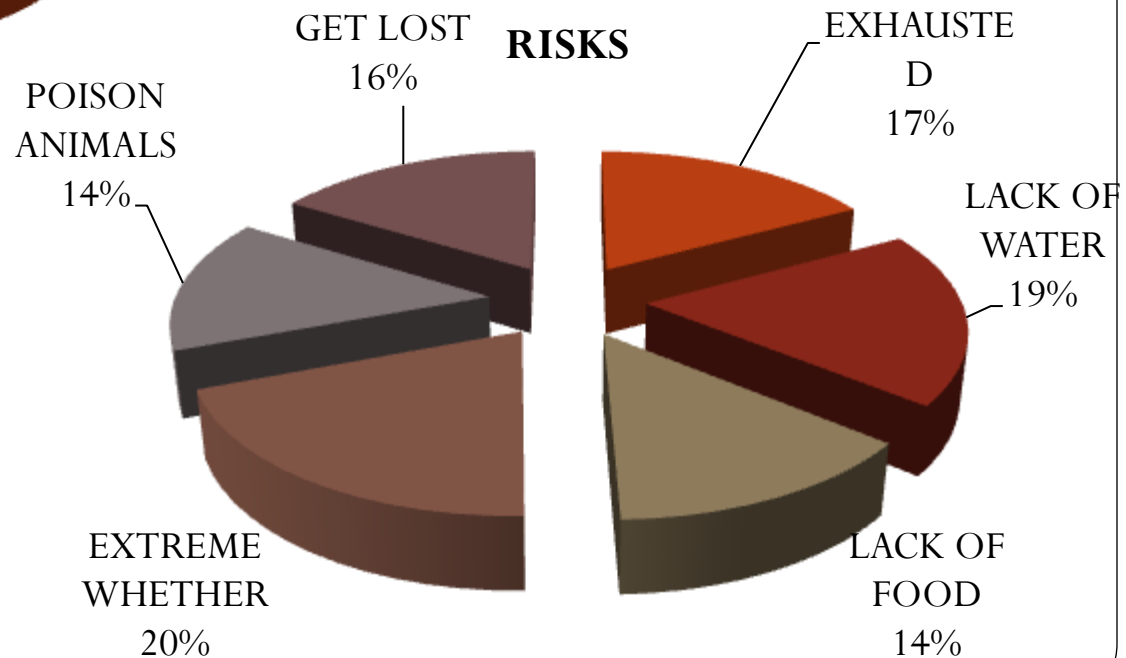


Crossing Experience

WERE YOU IN RISK

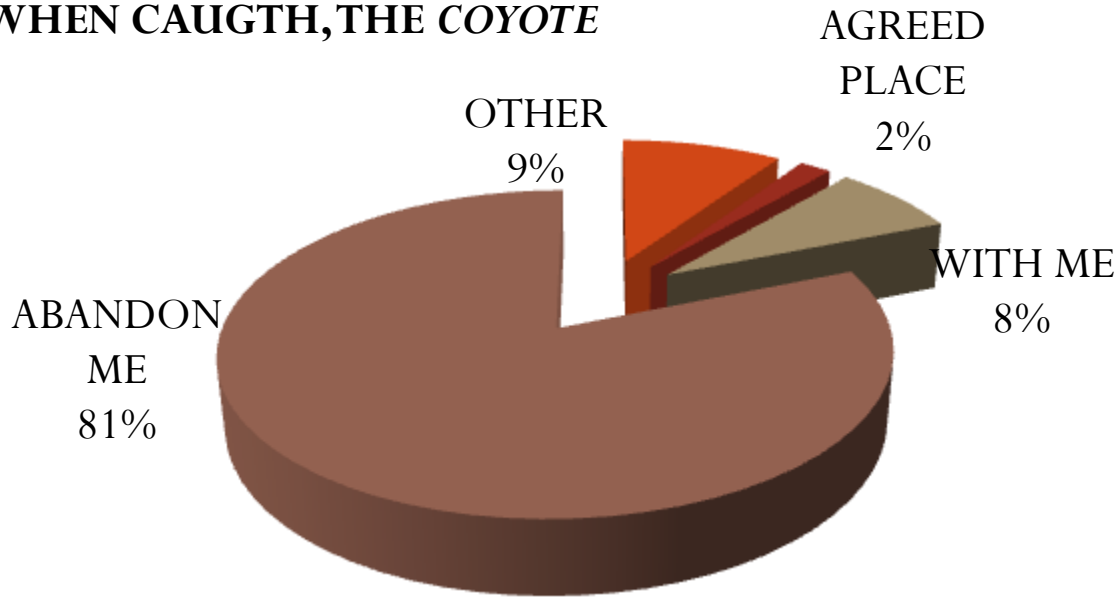


RISKS

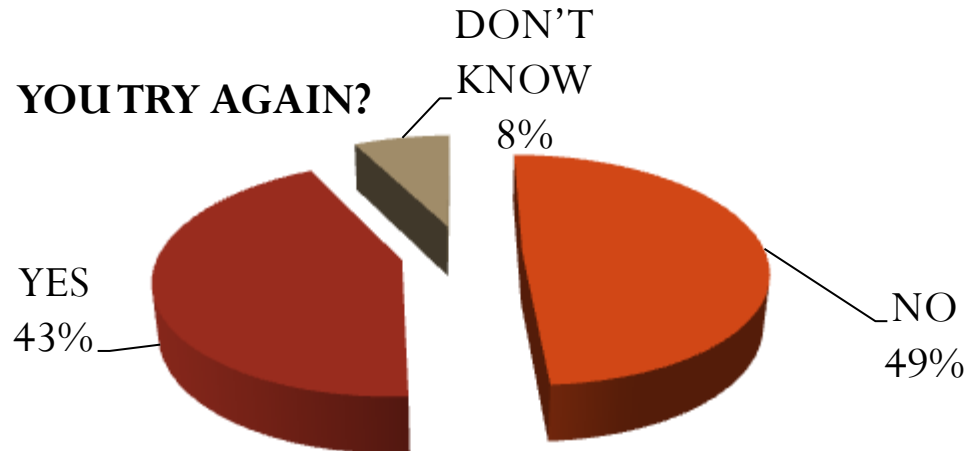


Crossing Experience

WHEN CAUGHT, THE *COYOTE*

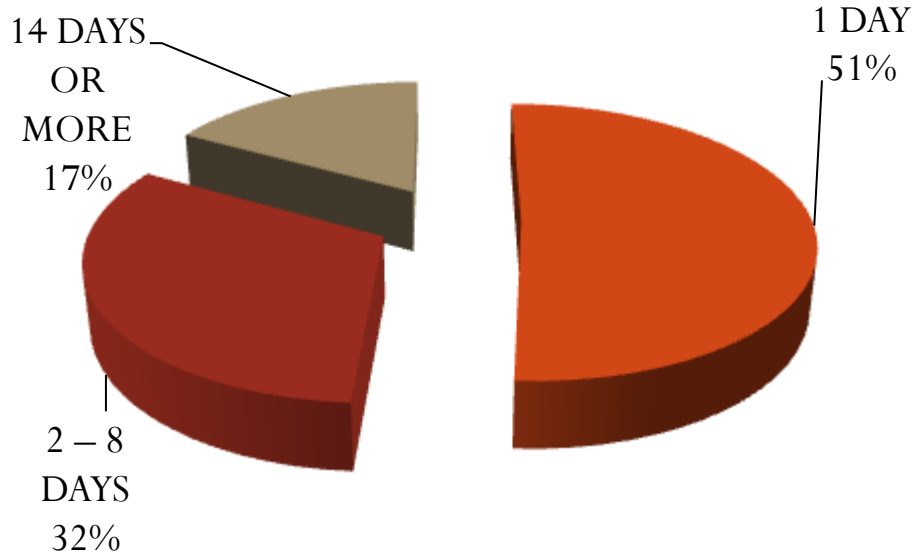


WOULD YOU TRY AGAIN?

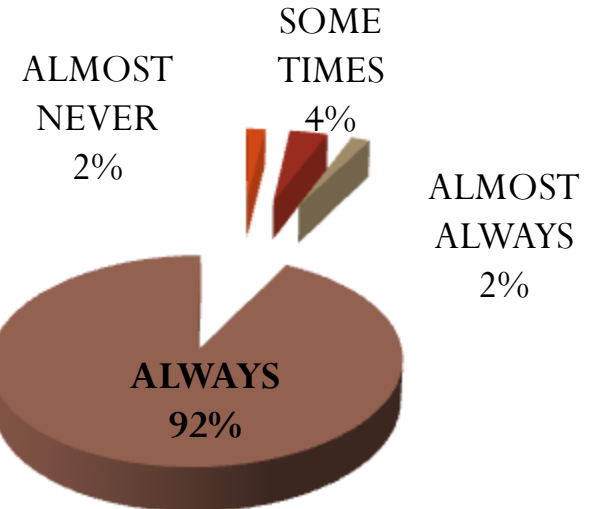


In the Shelter

FOR HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN HERE



DO YOU FEEL SAFE IN HERE



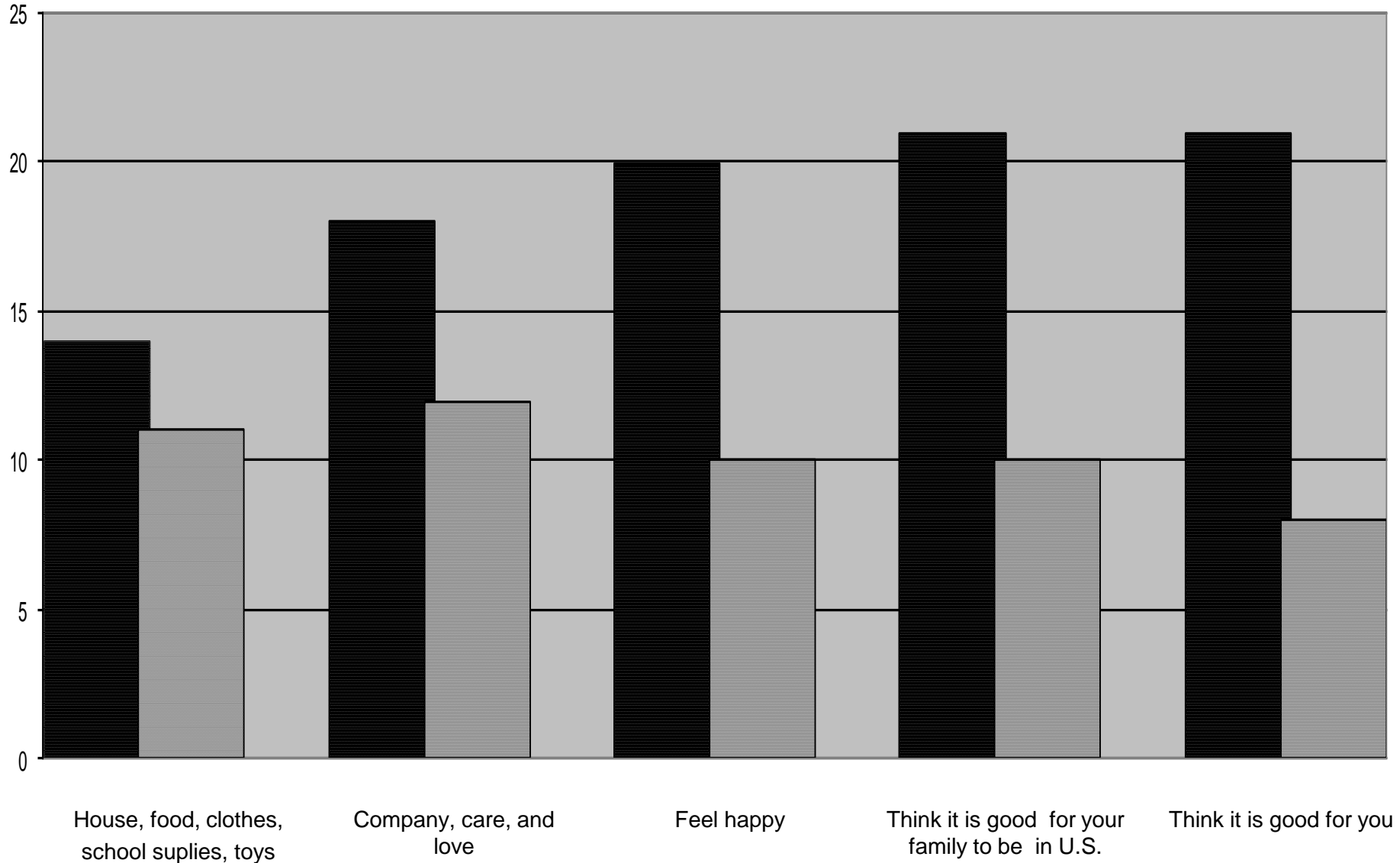
Children psycho-emotional well-being

- Low in family well-being since their parents moved to U.S.
- Low in México's work satisfaccion
- High in attachment quality
- High in resilience
- Low in negative affect (Depression/anxiety)
- Low in risky neighborhood
- Very low in risky peers and behavior

SINCE FAMILY IN U.S. HOW OFTEN DO YOU HAVE HAD...

ALMOST ALWAYS

ALMOST NEVER



From your work experience in Mèxico...

ALMOST ALWAYS

ALMOST NEVER

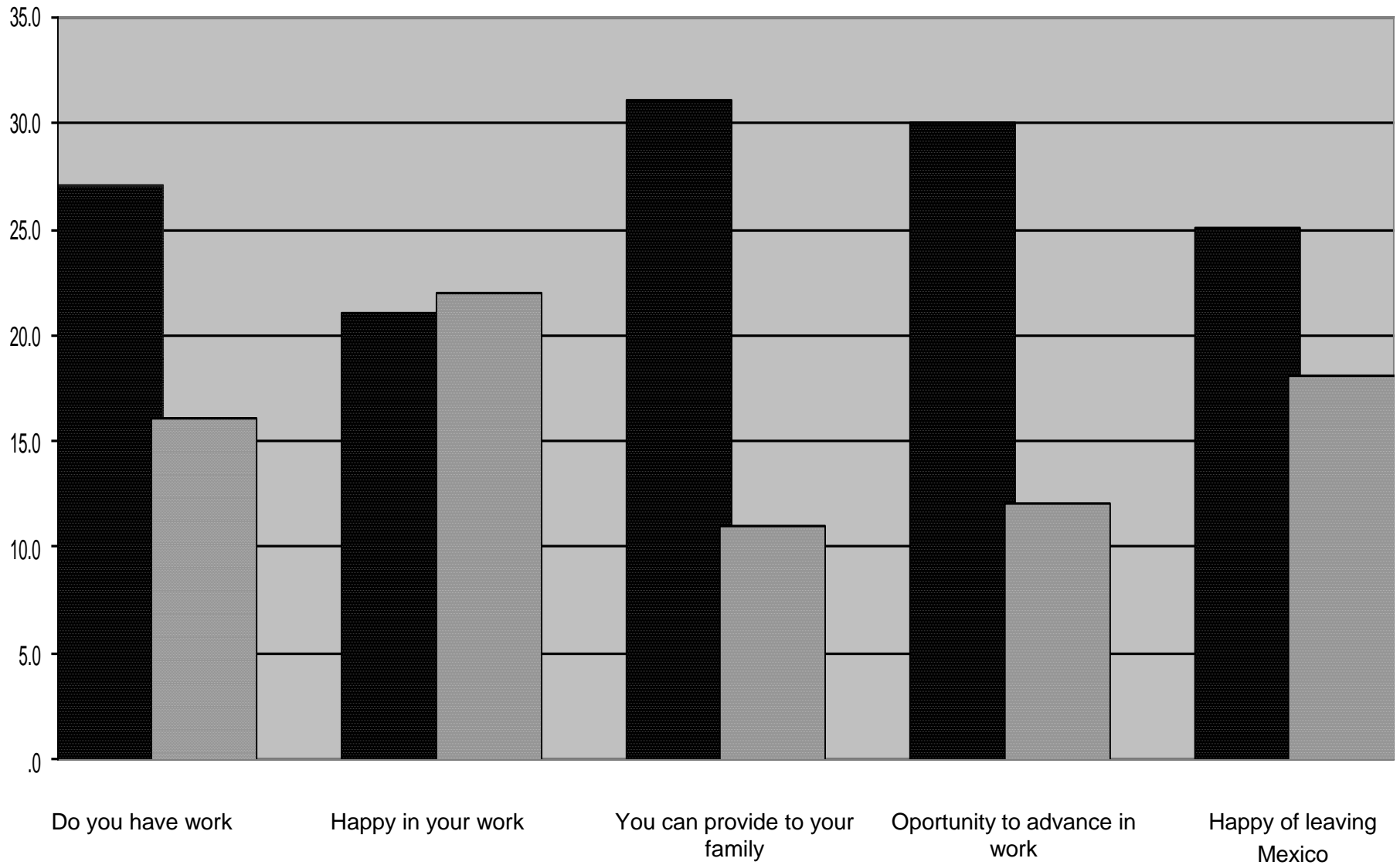


Table 2
Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

Variable	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Min-Max</i>	<i>α</i>
Attachment	48	3.1	1.0	0.0 – 4.0	.99
Resilience	52	3.0	0.4	1.7 – 4.0	.82
Familism Value	49	3.3	0.3	2.6 – 3.8	.53
Family Well-being In México	28	1.4	1.6	0.0 – 4.0	.95
Work Well-being In México	42	1.7	1.0	0.0 – 3.6	.56
Risky Neighborhood	52	1.4	0.9	0.1 – 3.5	.69
Risky Peers	52	0.9	1.0	0.0 – 3.8	.75
Risky Behavior	52	0.3	0.5	0.0 – 2.0	.76
Depression	52	1.2	1.0	0.0 – 3.6	.73
Anxiety	52	1.1	1.0	0.0 – 3.2	.69

Conclusion

- Mexican minor migrants are resilient children and youth seeking for a better future beyond the borders.
- They travel unaccompanied all long the country and risk their life and integrity during illegal crossing looking for job or family.
- Family well-being has not been the best since they were left behind from their parents –who crossed time ago.

Conclusion

- The promised reunification at the other side of the border is more difficult as the time passes.
- Beyond border emergency, there is lack of policy and programmatic efforts to fulfill the needs of these minors in their own country.
- UNICEF: Children has the right to develop and be happy within a safe, known, and familial context.

Conclusion

Mexican minor migrants are excluded from this right in two ways:

- They were left behind by their parents who were searching for survival and opportunities;
- Or, they are leaving their families and towns searching for the very same reasons.

Thanks!

Letter to momy:

~~ES para mi mamá~~ ES Para mi Mamia

mamita te quiero mucho
cuidamuchito a mis hermanos
cuidate te quiero ES pero
que ten cuetres vie mux

Pronto los veremos asta que
me sa quen de aqui

Atttttte. victor ying llote la mando



Thanks!

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