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## U.S. beckons 40% of Mexicans

**Survey also says 20% would cross border illegally**

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More than 40 percent of Mexicans in a new survey would opt to come to the United States and more than 20 percent of them would enter this country illegally given the opportunity, a study released Tuesday disclosed.

The survey done by the Pew Hispanic Center also found that the desire to come to the United States cuts across a wide socioeconomic swath with the poorest Mexicans sharing the urge to move north with high school- and college-educated countrymen.

"Contrary to what people might expect, the desire to immigrate is not restricted to the poor," said Roberto Suro, the director of the Washington-based Pew Hispanic Center. "It is strong in the middle class even among Mexicans who have been to college."

The report was based on surveys of Hispanics conducted in Mexico and the United States. The questions also touched on attitudes toward immigrants and U.S. immigration policy.

The survey of 1,200 people in Mexico was conducted twice, first in February and again in May.

Some 35 percent of Mexican college graduates surveyed said they would come to the United States, the poll found, and 13 percent said they would do so even if it meant entering this country illegally.

Suro said that even among the higher end of the Mexican socioeconomic spectrum the "desire to migrate is strong."

Another poll also showed sharp differences of opinion between Hispanic residents of the United States who were born elsewhere and Hispanics born in the United States.

The former group was inclined to view immigrants favorably and to support the issuance of driver's licenses to people in the country illegally. The latter group supported immigrants, but by a far smaller margin. This group also opposed issuing licenses to undocumented residents.

"Just because someone is Hispanic does not mean you are in favor of immigrants," Suro said.

Suro also noted that Hispanics - in this case mainly Mexicans - could not be assumed to have similar opinions just based on ethnic and national origins.

"People are looking at specific issues and making specific judgments," he said during a conference call Tuesday with journalists from around the country.

Survey participants were also asked if at this moment they had "the means and opportunity to go live in the United States," would they go. In the February survey, 41 percent of the respondents said yes, and in the second round in May, 46 percent said yes. Mexico's population is more than 100 million people.

But a spokesman for a think tank that has raised concerns about illegal immigration said the poll's findings among Mexicans are alarming.

"They're looking at 46 million people who would like to come - if the numbers are to be believed. Even if a small fraction decide to come, you're looking at enormous numbers," said Steven Camarota, director of research for the Center for Immigration Studies, which emphasizes the costs and law enforcement aspects of illegal immigration.

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