

Immigration

Contemporary issues

The Culture of Cruelty



Deaths on the AZ border from Oct '10 to Sept '11: 182

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Language of Immigration

- Undocumented immigrants?
- Unlawful aliens?
- Noncitizens?
- Unauthorized immigrants?
- Compliant vs non-compliant migrants?
- Illegal immigrants?
- “Anchor babies”?

- Why is language important when one talks about immigrants and their social positions in a society like the U.S.?
- What do those terms mean to each of you?

Illegal immigrants or illegal aliens or “illegals”

- Term usually used by anti-immigrant groups to refer to immigrants who do not have proper documents to reside in the U.S.
 - Some of those terms are part of mainstream language now
 - For example, Prop. 187 supporters claimed initially that, despite the anti-Mexican overtones to the campaign, they were not anti-immigrant but only anti-illegal alien and only wanted to limit benefits to “illegal aliens...”
- Can someone be illegal?
- What is made illegal? The person or the status?

Illegal immigrants or illegal aliens or “illegals”

- *Illegal immigrants or illegal aliens or “illegals”*
- The most damning terminology for noncitizens is “illegal alien.” Illegal aliens unquestionably are constructed as the most unpopular group of aliens
 - Although alien is found repeatedly in the Immigration and Nationality Act, “illegal” alien is not defined in this law
 - “Illegal alien” is a pejorative term that implies criminality, thereby suggesting that the persons who fall in this category deserve punishment, not legal protection

Illegal immigrants or illegal aliens or “illegals”

- It's contrary to the Fourteenth Amendment, which affirms that neither the federal government nor state governments may “deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.”
- An undocumented immigrant has violated immigration requirements, but is still a legal person under the law, as is anyone under the jurisdiction of the law. A better word to describe, without implying illegality of the person, would be unauthorized immigrant. In Europe, some use the terms compliant vs non-compliant immigrants.
- The equal protection clause was written to prevent state governments from defining any human being as anything less than a legal person.

Civil or Criminal Infraction?

- In examining the Immigration Naturalization Act (INA), it is crucial to distinguish the civil from criminal violations. Mere unauthorized presence in the U.S. is a *civil, not criminal*, violation of the INA, and subsequent deportation and associated administrative processes are civil proceedings.
- Unauthorized presence is *not* a violation of the U.S. criminal code. A person cannot be sent to prison for being here without authorization from immigration authorities.
- Entering without authorization is a misdemeanor for the 1st offense and felony for any subsequent arrests. It is, however, a violation of civil immigration laws, for which the federal government can impose civil penalties, namely deportation.
- **Undocumented immigrants are therefore not criminals** (*from a pure legal standpoint*). However, an undocumented immigrant changing lanes without signals (infraction) will be prosecuted as a felony.

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Immigrant Aliens vs Non-Immigrant Aliens

- The Immigration and Nationality Act (“INA”) establishes an immigrant selection system.
- It defines the term “alien” as “any person not a national or citizen of the United States.”
- In turn, the universe of “aliens” comprises two categories: immigrants (green card holders) and nonimmigrants (student and business visas).
- Individuals without legal documents are considered “nonresident aliens” by the IRS

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Language of Immigration (4)

- *Illegal immigrants or illegal aliens or “illegals”*
- The illegal alien label, however, suffers from inaccuracies and inadequacies at several levels.
- Many nuances of immigration law make it extremely difficult to distinguish between an “illegal” and a “legal” alien
 - For example, a person living without documents in this country for a number of years may be eligible for relief from deportation and to become a lawful permanent resident. He or she may have children born in this country, who are citizens, as well as a job and community ties here. It is difficult to contend that this person is an illegal alien indistinguishable from a person who entered without inspection yesterday

Language of Immigration (5)

- *Illegal immigrants or illegal aliens or “illegals”*
- The vaguely defined, but emotionally powerful, “illegal alien” terminology also fails to distinguish between the different types of undocumented persons in the United States
- There are persons who cross the border without inspection; there are also noncitizens who enter lawfully but overstay their business, tourist, student, or other visas (roughly 40% according to 2006 Pew Research)
 - The illegal alien in public discussion often refers to a person who enters without inspection, often a national of Mexico. This is not surprising because the furor over illegal aliens, at least in the Southwest, can be seen as an attack on undocumented Mexicans, if not on lawful Mexican immigrants and Mexican-American citizens.

Unauthorized Immigration

Modes of Entry for the Unauthorized Migrant Population

Entered Legally with Inspection	Non-Immigrant Visa Overstayers	4 to 5.5 Million
	Border Crossing Card Violators	250,000 to 500,000
	<i>Sub-total Legal Entries</i>	<i>4.5 to 6 Million</i>
Entered Illegally without Inspection	Evaded the Immigration Inspectors and Border Patrol	6 to 7 million
Estimated Total Unauthorized Population in 2006		11.5 to 12 Million
Source: Pew Hispanic Center Estimates based on the March 2005 Current Population Survey and Department of Homeland Security reports.		

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Language of Immigration (6)

- *Illegal immigrants or illegal aliens or “illegals”*
- The “alien” has increasingly become associated with racial minorities in the modern debate about immigration
 - The words “alien” and “illegal alien” today carry subtle racial connotations
- The dominant image of the alien often is an undocumented Mexican or some other person of color, perhaps a Haitian, Chinese, or Cuban person traveling by sea from a developing nation
- Treating racial minorities poorly on the ground that they are aliens or “illegal” aliens allows us to reconcile the view that “we are not racist” and the desire to insulate ourselves from certain groups of persons viewed as different, racially or otherwise

Language of Immigration (7)

- *Illegal immigrants or illegal aliens or “illegals”*
- Though the term “illegal” alien is seemingly race neutral, it is relatively easy to discern that its use in context refers to undocumented Mexicans and plays into stereotypes of Mexicans as criminals.
- The terminology better masks nativist sympathies than the popular vernacular that it replaced — “wetbacks,” which is even more closely linked to Mexican immigrants.
- The link between “illegal aliens” and Mexican citizens often goes unstated. The courts, with little explanation, often have approached the “illegal immigration problem” as an exclusively Mexican problem.
 - For example, Justice Brennan, writing for the Supreme Court, suggests the equation in his mind between illegal aliens and Mexican immigrants
 - “Employment of illegal aliens in times of high unemployment deprives citizens and legally admitted aliens of jobs; acceptance by illegal aliens of jobs on substandard terms as to wages and working conditions can seriously depress wage scales and working conditions of citizens and legally admitted aliens; and employment of illegal aliens under such conditions can diminish the effectiveness of labor unions. These local problems are particularly acute in California in light of the significant influx of illegal aliens from neighboring Mexico.”

Language of Immigration (8)

- *Unlawful aliens or noncitizens*
- By legal definition, aliens are outsiders to the national community
 - Even if they have lived in this country for many years, have had children here, and work and have deep community ties in the United States, noncitizens remain aliens, an institutionalized “other,” different and apart from “us.”
- The classification of persons as aliens, as opposed to citizens, has significant legal, social, and political importance

Language of Immigration (9)

- *Unlawful aliens or noncitizens*
- Citizens can vote and enjoy other political rights, such as jury service. Aliens, no matter what their ties to the community, enjoy limited political rights
 - Aliens can be deported from the country while citizens cannot be. For example, under the immigration laws, an alien convicted of possession of more than 30 grams of marijuana may be deported, while a citizen convicted of mass murder cannot be
- The term alien masks the privilege of citizenship and helps to justify the legal status quo.

Language of Immigration (10)

- *Unlawful aliens or noncitizens*
- The term alien serves as a device that intellectually legitimizes the mistreatment of noncitizens and helps to mask human suffering.
- Persons (citizens) have dignity and their rights should be respected. Aliens have neither dignity nor rights.
- To further rationalize the differential mistreatment, aliens may be “racialized,” even if they are, at least by appearance, “white” (former European immigrants)
 - If we think that persons who come to the United States from another nation are hard-working and “good,” it is difficult to treat them harshly. If we consider these foreigners (Mexican immigrants) to be criminals who sap finite public resources and damage the environment, it is far easier to rationalize their harsh treatment

Language of Immigration (11)

- *Undocumented immigrants*
- The term “undocumented” as used in the academic literature, UN recommendations and the current text refers to the fact that a migrant has not been (and cannot be) documented/registered by the host country’s system of recording foreigners’ entry or residence in national territory and is not of possession of documentation provided to migrants as stipulated by the receiving country’s legislation

Language of Immigration (12)

Undocumented immigrants

does refer to the fact that a migrant does not possess personal documents such as a passport or birth certificate which do not replace the documents provided to migrants by the receiving country

is not a pejorative term and does not carry any loaded meanings that would prevent any substantial discussions

Language of Immigration (13)

- “Anchor babies?”
- Anchor babies are a disparaging reference (also very *dehumanizing!*) to the U.S.-born children of undocumented immigrants, who presumably help their parents lay claim to a life in the United States
 - Note that a U.S. citizen child only becomes eligible to petition for a parent when they turn 21
 - There have been calls in Congress to do away with automatic citizenship at birth, and questions about the 14th Amendment’s true meaning
 - Young, Professor of Law at Hofstra University, responds to a discussion by FAIR (The Federation for American Immigration Reform), which says such families have a divided allegiance and that the Supreme Court has never considered this issue
 - Young writes, Now, I’m guessing it would be pretty hard to gauge “the allegiance” of any newborn. And “this issue has never been directly decided by the U.S. Supreme Court” because it is so darned stupid.

Language of Immigration (14)

- “Anchor babies?”
- Michelle Malkin, one of the most prominent of those attacking the American citizenship of children born to non-U.S. citizens, says that
 - “the custom of granting automatic citizenship at birth to children of tourists and temporary workers such as [Yaser Esam] Hamdi, tourists, and to countless ‘anchor babies’ delivered by illegal aliens on American soil, undermines the integrity of citizenship—not to mention national security.”
- Of course, it should be noted that Malkin herself was born to Filipino parents, Rafaela and Dr. Apolo Maglalang, while they were in the United States on student visas.

Language of Immigration (15)

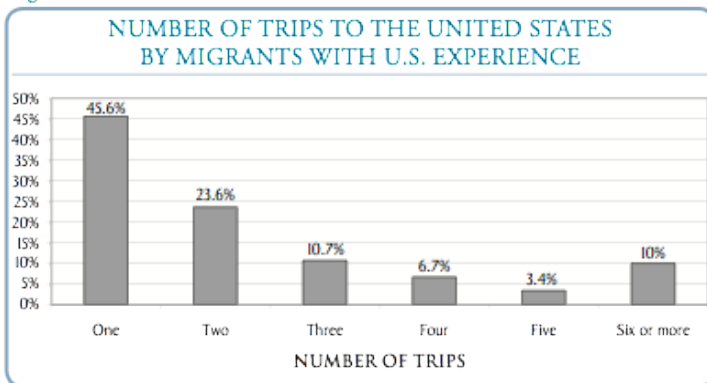
- “Anchor babies?”
- A Georgia Congressman (R) introduced in the 2008 the Citizenship Reform Act. His proposed legislation would have done away with the practice of granting such citizenship by amending the Immigration and Nationality Act to limit automatic citizenship at birth to a child born in the United States to a parent who is a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident
 - This bill would have meant that Malkin could no longer be U.S. citizens and under that regime she would have faced deportation
- Malkin refers to “automatic” citizenship at birth as a “custom”. It was not a custom during the early 1800s. Children born to African slaves and their descendants in the U.S. were not American citizens until the Civil War.
 - In post-Civil War history, “birthright citizenship” was neither a “custom” nor a “practice”, it was a Constitutional right. A right created by the 14th Amendment in 1868 put an end to practices in many states in which African Americans were freed from legal bondage, but denied citizenship.

Circular Migration (1)

- One study found that 85 percent of undocumented migrants from Mexico during the period 1965-1985 were offset by departures, yielding a relatively modest net inflow of just 5.1 million persons over 20 years (around 255,000 persons per year).
- Likewise, another study found that 82 percent of all Mexican immigrants to the United States sent money home during their last trip.
 - According to estimates by a variety of researchers, the annual probability of return migration fluctuated around 33 percent through the early 1990s.
 - If, within any given year, the likelihood of returning to Mexico is one in three, then 70 percent of immigrants will have returned home within five years. Of all Mexicans who have ever migrated to the United States, therefore, the vast majority currently live in Mexico. In other words, Mexico-U.S. migration has historically been circular.

Circular Migration (2)

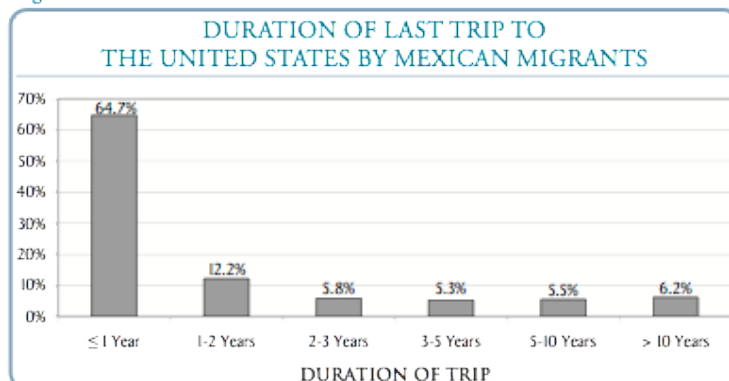
Figure 7:



Source: Mexican Migration Project

Circular Migration (3)

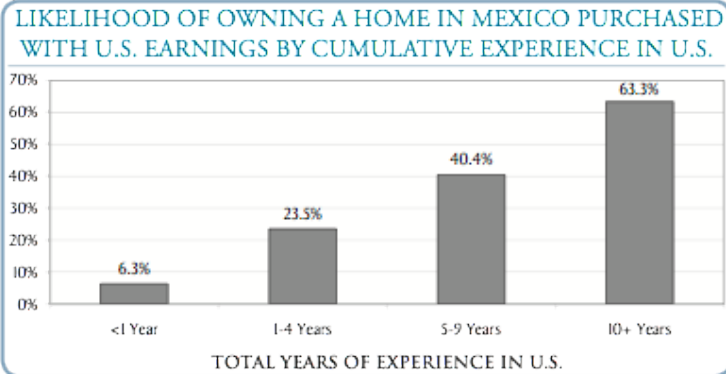
Figure 8:



Source: Mexican Migration Project

Circular Migration (3)

Figure 4:



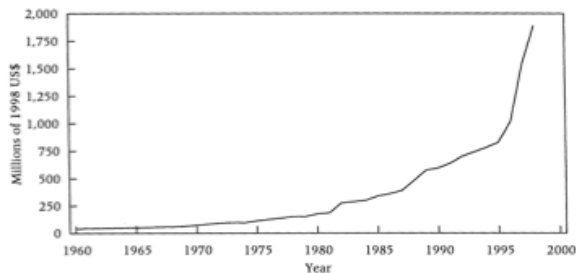
Source: Douglas S. Massey, et al., *Return to Aztlan: The Social Process of International Migration from Western Mexico*. Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987.

Immigration & Enforcement (1)

- Chinese Exclusion Act (1882)**
 - Suspends immigration of Chinese laborers for 10 years.
 - Bars Chinese naturalization.
 - Provides for deportation of Chinese illegally in United States.
- Immigration Act of 1891**
 - First comprehensive law for national control of immigration.
 - Establishes Bureau of Immigration under Treasury.
 - Directs deportation of aliens unlawfully in country.
- Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1924**
 - Imposes first permanent numerical limit on immigration.
 - Establishes the national origins quota system, which resulted in biased admissions favoring northern and western Europeans.
- Immigration and Naturalization Act of June 27, 1952**
 - Continues national origins quotas.
 - Quota for skilled aliens whose services are urgently needed.
- Immigration and Nationality Act Amendments of October 3, 1965**
 - Repeals national origins quotas.
 - Establishes 7-category preference system based on family unification and skills.
 - Sets 20,000 per country limit for Eastern Hemisphere.
 - Imposes ceiling on immigration from Western Hemisphere for first time.
- Immigration and Nationality Act Amendments of 1976**
 - Extends 20,000 per country limits to Western Hemisphere.
- Refugee Act of 1980**
 - Sets up first permanent and systematic procedure for admitting refugees.
 - Removes refugees as a category from preference system.
 - Defines refugee according to international, versus ideological standards.
 - Establishes process of domestic resettlement.
 - Codifies asylum status.
- Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986**
 - Institutes employer sanctions for knowingly hiring illegal aliens.
 - Creates legalization programs.
 - Increases border enforcement.
- Immigration Act of 1990**
 - Increases legal immigration ceilings by 40 percent.
 - Triples employment-based immigration, emphasizing skills.
 - Creates diversity admissions category.
 - Establishes temporary protected status for those in the U.S. jeopardized by armed conflict or natural disasters in their native countries.

Immigration & Enforcement (2)

FIGURE 1 Enforcement budget of the INS, fiscal year 1960-99



SOURCE: Hanson, Scheve, Slaughter, and Spilimbergo (2002).

- The concentration of resources at the border carries many political advantages. It sits well with the public, since the INS appears to be defending the United States against alien invaders.
- It allows the agency to claim cost-effectiveness, since border operations yield a large number of arrests at a low unit cost.
- Border enforcement automatically justifies the need for additional funding, since rising arrests confirm the size of the illegal migration "problem."
- Border enforcement also carries the advantage of not disturbing U.S. citizens (or at least white citizens of European origin), since repressive force is applied only to foreigners, mainly Latino, in a region that is largely outside of public view.

Immigration & Enforcement (3)

- Given the political constraints under which they operate, the career interests of Border Patrol officers are best served by making a large number of arrests and processing them rapidly. Likewise, the interests of the migrants are to avoid arrest but if arrested, to return to Mexico as soon as possible to try crossing again
- Technically, each person arrested while entering the United States has the right to a hearing before an immigration judge, but neither the migrant nor the Border Patrol agent has an interest in pursuing this course of action.
- On the contrary, it is in their mutual self-interest that the migrant be deported to Mexico as soon as possible. Upon arrest, 97 percent of Mexican migrants sign a voluntary departure order waiving their right to a hearing and authorizing the Border Patrol to transport them “voluntarily” back to Mexico, usually within 24 hours

Immigration & Enforcement (4)

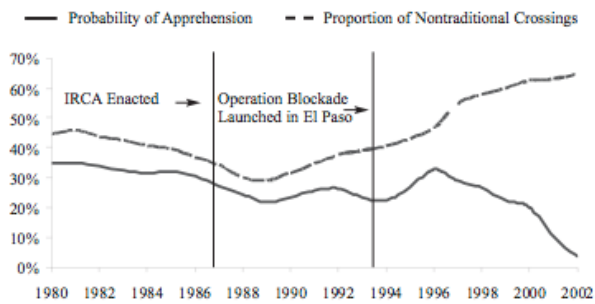
- The migrant will simply try to cross the border again and that on the next attempt he or she will probably get in. This implicit understanding naturally produces a great deal of cynicism, but migrants and Border Patrol agents continue to “play the game.”
- For migrants, the motivation is the reward of possible employment and high earnings on the U.S. side of the border.
- After 55 years of continuous migration and millions of apprehensions, the social encounter between Border Patrol officers and undocumented Mexican migrants has become scripted and highly ritualized (Heyman, 1995)

Immigration & Enforcement (5)

- For the past two decades, the U.S. government has pursued a contradictory policy on North American integration
- While the U.S. government has pursued more commercial integration through the North American Free Trade Agreement, it has sought to unilaterally curb the flow of labor across the U.S.-Mexican border
 - *That policy has not only failed to reduce unauthorized immigration; it has actually made the problem worse*

Immigration & Enforcement (6)

Figure 1
Trends in Use of Nontraditional Crossing Points and Probability of Apprehension, 1980–2002



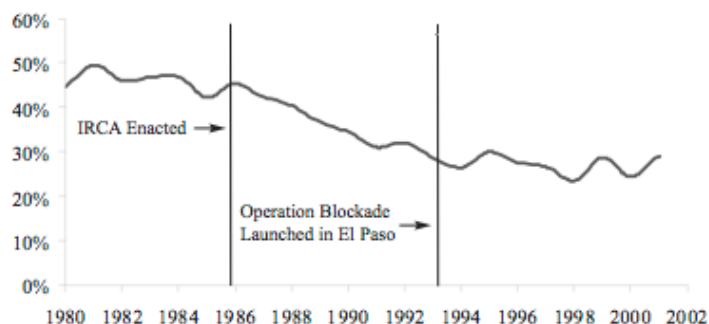
Douglas S. Massey, Jorge Darand, and Nolan J. Malone, *Beyond Smoke and Mirrors: Mexican Immigration in an Era of Economic Integration* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2002), pp. 107 and 128; and computations by the author using Mexican Migration Project data.

Immigration & Enforcement (7)

- Increased border enforcement has only succeeded in pushing immigration flows into more remote regions. That has resulted in a tripling of the death rate at the border and, at the same time, a dramatic fall in the rate of apprehension
- Enforcement has driven up the cost of crossing the border illegally, but that has had the unintended consequence of encouraging undocumented immigrants to stay longer in the United States to recoup the cost of entry
 - The result is that undocumented immigrants are less likely to return to their home country, causing an increase in the number of undocumented immigrants remaining in the United States

Immigration & Enforcement (8)

Figure 2
Probability of Returning to Mexico within 12 Months of Entry, 1980–2001



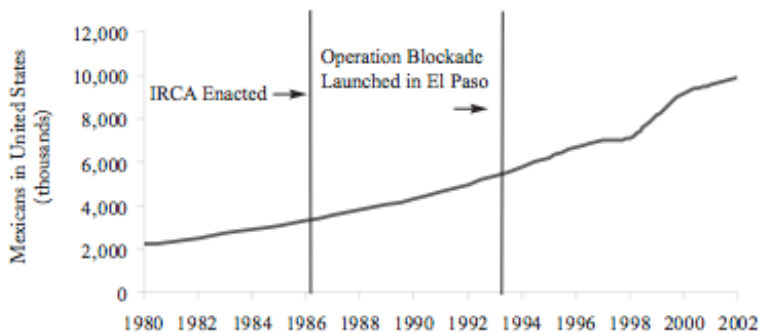
Source: Computations by author from Mexican Migration Project data, mmp.opr.princeton.edu/.

Immigration & Enforcement (9)

- As envisioned by the proponents of NAFTA, cross-border movements of people, goods, and services have grown rapidly along a variety of fronts. Although the United States has committed itself to integrating most markets in North America, however, it has paradoxically sought to prevent the integration of its labor markets
 - Indeed, since 1986 the United States has embarked on a determined effort to restrict Mexican immigration and tighten border enforcement, an effort that intensified around 1994, just as NAFTA took effect.
 - During the 1980s as well as today, border control was framed by U.S. politicians as an issue of “national security,” and unauthorized migration was portrayed as an “alien invasion”
- Early in the Clinton administration, INS developed a new border strategy that took full advantage of this increased funding. Known as “prevention through deterrence”
 - The strategy had its origins in September 1993, when the Border Patrol chief in El Paso launched “Operation Blockade” —an all-out effort to prevent illegal border crossing within that sector

Immigration & Enforcement (10)

Figure 3
Number of Mexicans in the United States, 1980–2002



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Foreign Born Population Database.

Immigration & Enforcement (11)

- The 1990s were a period of growing self-contradiction in U.S. policy toward Mexico. On the one hand, under NAFTA the United States committed itself to lowering barriers to the cross-border movement of goods, capital, raw materials, information, and services. As a result, the volume of bi-national trade increased dramatically as did cross-border movements of people
 - On the other hand, the United States attempted to harden the border against the movement of labor by criminalizing the hiring of undocumented workers and fortifying the frontier with massive increases in money, personnel, and equipment
 - By 2002 the Border Patrol was the largest arms-bearing branch of the U.S. government next to the military itself

Immigration & Enforcement (12)

- From 1942 to the present, the circulation of labor between Mexico and the United States has been widespread and continuous
 - By the end of the 20th century, 2/3 of all Mexicans knew someone who had been to the United States and almost 60 percent were socially connected to someone living in the United States
- This huge stock of social capital connecting people in Mexico to destinations in the United States, combined with the acceleration of economic integration along multiple fronts, presents a huge obstacle for U.S. efforts to seal the border selectively with respect to the movement of workers
- That the policy would fail was almost preordained and should not be surprising to anyone who understands the nature of markets and their integration over time and across international borders

Immigration & Enforcement (13)

- The unilateral militarization of the U.S.- Mexican border has been successful in achieving one outcome: it has dramatically increased the costs and risks of border crossing. The border blockades have tripled the risk of death during crossing. The increased mortal danger was offset by a declining likelihood of apprehension, so that few migrants were deterred from making the attempt
 - Are we at war with Mexico? Why the need to militarize the border?
- Rather than choosing not to enter the U.S. without authorization, undocumented migrants quite rationally invested more money to minimize the risks and maximize the odds of a successful border crossing.
- As U.S. authorities deployed a more formidable array of personnel and materiel at key points along the border, smugglers on the Mexican side upgraded the package of services they offered
 - From 1980 to 1992 the cost of hiring a *coyote*, or *pollero* (as smugglers are colloquially labeled) was relatively flat, averaging around \$400 per crossing
 - With the launching of the new strategy of prevention through deterrence in 1993, however, the cost of purchasing a smuggler's services rose to around \$1,200 in 1999, before leveling off

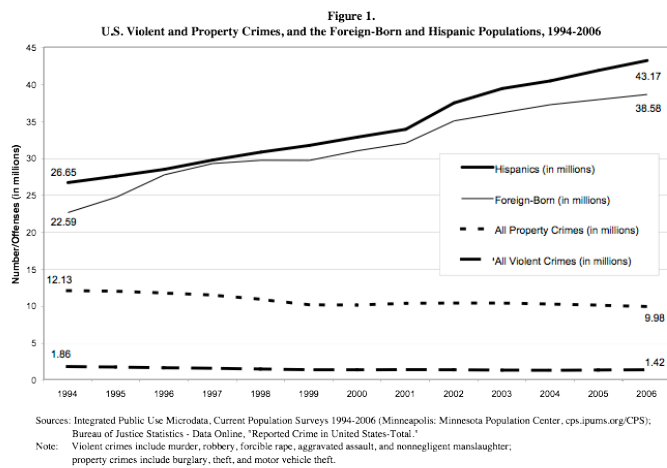
Immigration & Crime (1)

- The perception that the foreign-born, especially "illegal aliens," are responsible for higher crime rates is deeply rooted in American public opinion and is sustained by media anecdote and popular myth.
- The extent to which such views shape American public opinion was shown by the results of the National Opinion Research Center's 2000 General Social Survey, which interviewed a nationally representative sample of adults to measure attitudes toward and perceptions of immigration in a "multi-ethnic United States." Asked whether "more immigrants cause higher crime rates," 25 percent said "very likely" and another 48 percent "somewhat likely." Thus about three-fourths (73 percent) of Americans believed that immigration is *causally* related to more crime.
- But these perceptions are not supported empirically; instead, as demonstrated below, they are refuted by the preponderance of scientific evidence.

Immigration & Crime (2)

- From 1994 to 2006, the foreign-born population grew from 22.6 to 38.6 million people in the United States (a 71 % increase), and the Hispanic population increased from 26.6 to 43.2 million people (a 62 % increase)
- “Hispanics” are included separately in Figure 1 inasmuch as they are often lumped together in both the media and official statistics without regard to generational differences, national or class origins, or immigration status, and are often categorically scapegoated for perceived increases in crime rates
- While correlation is not causation, *it is telling that during a 15-year period when the immigrant population (and especially the undocumented population) was increasing sharply to historic highs, the overall rates of property and violent crimes in the United States decreased significantly, in some instances to historic lows*

Immigration & Crime (3)



Immigration & Crime (4)

- As Table 1 shows, 3 percent of the 45.2 million males age 18-39 were in federal or state prisons or local jails at the time of the 2000 census (a total of over 1.3 million, coinciding with official prison statistics)
- However, the incarceration rate of the U.S.-born (3.51 percent) was five times the rate of the foreign-born (0.68 percent). The latter was less than half the 1.71 percent rate for non-Hispanic white natives, and seventeen times less than the 11.6 percent incarceration rate for native black men. The advantage for immigrants vis-à-vis natives applies to every ethnic group without exception
- Almost all of the Asian immigrant groups have lower incarceration rates than the Latin American groups (the exception involves foreign-born Laotians and Cambodians — two refugee groups with the highest levels of poverty in the country — whose incarceration rate of 0.92 percent is still well below that for non-Hispanic white natives)

Immigration & Crime (5)

Table 1.
Percent of Males 18 to 39 Incarcerated in the United States, 2000,
by Nativity and Level of Education, in Rank Order by Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Males, ages 18-39:		Percent incarcerated, by nativity and by education:			
	Total	Percent	Nativity:		High school graduate?	
	in U.S.	incarcerated,	Foreign-born	U.S.-born	No	Yes
	N	%	%	%	%	%
Total:	45,200,417	3.04	0.68 ^b	3.51	6.91	2.00
<i>Latin American Ethnicities:</i>	7,514,857	3.26	0.99	6.72	3.95	2.62
Salvadoran, Guatemalan	433,828	0.68	0.52	3.01	0.71	0.62
Colombian, Ecuadorian, Peruvian	283,599	1.07	0.80	2.37	2.12	0.74
Mexican	5,017,431	2.71	0.70	5.90	2.84	2.55
Dominican	182,303	2.76	2.51	3.71	4.62	1.39
Cuban	213,302	3.01	2.22	4.20	5.22	2.29
Puerto Rican ^a	642,106	5.06	4.55	5.37	10.48	2.41
<i>Asian Ethnicities:</i>	1,902,809	0.62	0.29	1.86	2.43	0.35
Indian ^c	393,621	0.22	0.11	0.99	1.20	0.14
Chinese, Taiwanese	439,086	0.28	0.18	0.65	1.35	0.14
Korean	184,238	0.38	0.26	0.93	0.93	0.34
Filipino	297,011	0.64	0.38	1.22	2.71	0.41
Vietnamese	229,735	0.89	0.46	5.60	1.88	0.55
Laotian, Cambodian	89,864	1.65	0.92	7.26	2.80	1.04
<i>Other:</i>						
White, non-Hispanic	29,014,261	1.66	0.57	1.71	4.64	1.20
Black, non-Hispanic	5,453,546	10.87	2.47	11.61	21.33	7.09

Source: 2000 U.S. Census, 5% PUMS. Data are estimates for adult males, ages 18 to 39, institutionalized at the time of the census.
^a Island born Puerto Ricans, who are U.S. citizens by birth and not immigrants, are classified as "foreign born" for purposes of this table;
 mainland born Puerto Ricans are here classified under "U.S.-born."
^b The foreign-born incarceration rate is 0.68 percent when island born Puerto Ricans (U.S. citizens) are excluded, 0.86 percent when included.

Myths about Immigration (1)

- *Migration is Caused by Lack of Economic Development in Migrants' Home Countries*
- International migrants do not originate in the world's poorest nations, but in those that are developing and growing dynamically. The largest single source of U.S. immigrants, Mexico, is not a poor nation by global standards. Mexico has a one-trillion dollar economy, a per capita income of almost \$9,000 (compared to \$9,700 in Russia), a fully industrialized economy, a high level of urbanization, and an advanced life expectancy
- People generally do not leave their countries of origin because of a lack of economic development. Rather, they emigrate owing to the onset of development itself.
 - The shift from a peasant or command economy to a market system entails a radical transformation of social structures at all levels; a revolutionary shift that displaces people from traditional ways of life and creates a mobile population on the lookout for alternative ways of making a living
- Because it is the structural transformation accompanying development and the creation of markets that promotes international migration, and not poverty per se, there is no empirical relationship between per capita income and rate of emigration. It is the initiation of economic development under market mechanisms that causes mass migration to occur, not its absence

Research published by Douglas Massey, Princeton University

Myths about Immigration (2)

- *Migration is Caused by Rapid Population Growth in Migrants' Home Countries*
- The fertility rate in Mexico is about 2.3 children per woman, which is only slightly above "replacement" level.
- The highest fertility levels are generally observed in the Arab and Sub-Saharan Africa, but these regions contribute few migrants to global streams

Myths about Immigration (3)

- *Migrants Move Mainly in Response to Differences in Wages*
- Households use international migration as a tool to overcome failed or missing markets for insurance, capital, and credit at home
 - For example, because Mexico has virtually no mortgage banking industry, a large share of the money earned by Mexican immigrants in the United States is channeled into the construction or purchase of homes in Mexico
- Probably the most common misconception about international migration is that it stems from geographic differences in wages. According to “neoclassical” economics, people are assumed to migrate from low- to high-wage areas in order to maximize earnings over the course of their lifetimes
 - People in Mexico are thought to observe their expected wages at home and compare them with their expected wages
- Most Mexican households do not have a credit card and do not participate in savings and loan associations, so if they need to make a sizeable consumer purchase – say buying a washer – they have to borrow the money from an informal money lender at high interest rates or simply forego the purchase.
 - A large share of the money earned by Mexican immigrants in the United States is therefore channeled into the construction or purchase of homes in Mexico

Myths about Immigration (4)

- *Migrants Are Attracted to the United States by Generous Public Benefits*
- Prominent in the popular imagination is the notion that undocumented immigrants consume more in public services than they contribute in taxes, thus burdening U.S.-citizen taxpayers
- The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 barred *legal* immigrants from receiving food stamps or Supplemental Security Income and prohibited them from receiving AFDC for at least five years after admission to the United States.
- However, research on the foreign-born generally finds that immigrants are *less likely* than natives to use public services and that most of those who do use them are refugee groups, such as Russians, Cubans, and Indochinese
- Studies that focus on undocumented immigrants suggest they use public services at rates far below those of legal immigrants.
 - A 1987 study, for example, found that just 2% of undocumented Mexican immigrants had ever received welfare or Social Security payments and just 3% had ever accepted food stamps. In contrast, 84 % paid taxes

Myths about Immigration (5)

- *Most Immigrants Intend to Settle Permanently in the United States*
- Because neoclassical economics presumes that people come to the United States to maximize income over their working lives, it necessarily assumes migration to be permanent
- In contrast, because the new economics of labor migration presumes that people migrate in order to solve economic problems at home, they are predicted to return a significant share of their earnings to their families in the form of remittances or savings and then to return home themselves. Those who return are thus the “successes.”
- Mexico-U.S. migration has historically been circular: 80 percent of Mexican immigrants report that they made no more than three trips to the United States and three quarters stayed less than two years

Myths about Immigration (6)

- *Immigrants take jobs from American workers*
- Immigrants create new jobs, and complement the skills of the U.S. native workforce
- The U.S. workforce is becoming older and better educated, and yet there is still a need for low-skilled workers. In the 1960s, about half of the men in the U.S. joined the low-skilled labor force; now it is only about 10%.
- Growth in immigration is a form of labor replacement for the aging U.S. workforce. For example, a study of immigrants in Arkansas found that from 2000 to 2005, the native-born population in that state did not grow at all, while the number of immigrants rose, slowing the decline of the Arkansas manufacturing sector. As numerous studies have shown, undocumented immigrants usually arrive in the U.S. when the economy is growing and move to areas where there is strong job growth.

Myths about Immigration (7)

- *Immigrants drive down the wages of American workers*
- Immigrants increase overall economic productivity and have no significant effect on overall wages for American workers
- While there have been economic studies that claim to prove that immigration drives down wages, most economic studies have found the opposite—that immigrants either have a positive effect on wages or a near negligible effect.
- The impact on the wages of workers tends to fluctuate from study to study but seems to cluster around 0%. Immigrants tend to have a positive effect on the economy because they differ from U.S. natives in their educational and skill levels, and because more workers in the U.S. labor force increase productivity and stimulate the creation of new business. Many jobs simply would not exist if immigrants had not come to the United States
- Economist Giovanni Peri measured immigration's impact over the span of a decade, and his study revealed that the average yearly wages of U.S. native-born workers increased 1.8% because of immigration.

Myths about immigration(8)

- *Undocumented immigrants do not pay taxes*
- Undocumented immigrants pay billions of dollars in taxes each year, often for services they will never receive
- Most undocumented immigrants have provided an employer with counterfeit documents, so typical payroll taxes, such as federal income tax and Social Security and Medicare taxes, are automatically deducted from their paychecks. Immigrants actually have a positive impact on the solvency of Social Security and Medicare—in 2007, the Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance (OASDI) Trustees Report noted that 100,000 net new immigrants a year would increase the long-range actuarial balance by approximately 0.07% of taxable payroll
- There is more than \$586 billion accumulated in the earned suspense file, or unmatched Social Security Administration (SSA) contributions. The earned suspense file is growing by about \$66 billion a year. These unmatched funds exist largely because of taxes paid by undocumented immigrants.

Myths about Immigration (9)

● *Immigrants do not assimilate*

- Most immigrants make learning English a priority.
- In a survey published in 2006, 57% of foreign-born Latino immigrants said they believe that “immigrants have to speak English to say they are part of American society.”
- Regardless of their level of education or income, a majority of Hispanics agree that immigrants should speak English.
- In fact, more than half (52%) of foreign-born Latinos living in the U.S. speak both English and Spanish. Hispanic immigrants also value teaching English to their children. According to the survey, 96% of foreign-born Latinos believe that teaching English to children of immigrants is “very important.”

Migrant Trail 2009

Sásabe, MX to Tucson, AZ (75 miles)

May 25 – May 31, 2009

Coalición de Derechos Humanos

Mission Statement

- *The precarious reality of our borderlands calls us to walk. We walk together on a journey of peace to remember people, friends and family who have died, others who have crossed, and people who continue to come. We walk to bear witness to the tragedy of death and of the inhumanity in our midst. Lastly, we walk as a community, in defiance of the borders that attempt to divide us, committed to working together for the human dignity of all peoples.*