

Julian Simon Lecture Series

No. VIII

Douglas S. Massey

2011

Chain Reaction:
The Causes and Consequences of
America's War on Immigrants



Julian Simon Lecture Series

2011

Presented at the IZA Annual Migration Meeting, May 2011, Washington D.C.

**Chain Reaction:
The Causes and Consequences of America's
War on Immigrants**

Douglas S. Massey

Office of Population Research
Princeton University

Abstract

In a very real way, the rise of undocumented migration and the growth of America's undocumented population are a product of poorly conceived immigration and border policies, which in the course of a few decades transformed Mexico-U.S. migration from a stable, circular flow of male Mexican workers going to three states into a much larger settled population of Mexican families living in 50 states. During the late 1950s the United States was providing opportunities for half a million Mexican migrants to enter the United States legally each year, 450,000 as temporary workers and 50,000 as permanent residents. In 1965, however, the temporary worker program was eliminated and permanent resident visas were capped, ultimately at just 20,000 per year by 1976. The resultant rise of illegal migration offered political and bureaucratic entrepreneurs an opportunity to frame Mexican migration as a threat to American society and the immigrants themselves as lawbreakers, criminals, and most recently terrorists. The demonization of Mexican immigrants set off a chain reaction of events that ultimately yielded a massive increase in both border and internal enforcement, which transformed the circularity, demography, and geography of Mexico-U.S. migration.

**About the IZA Annual Migration Meeting (AM²)
and the Julian Simon Lecture:**



In June 2004, IZA hosted the first Annual Migration Meeting (AM²) in Bonn. It was created to foster migration research by bringing together international researchers and establishing the IZA migration group. AM² established the Julian Simon Keynote Lecture in honor of Julian Simon, in recognition of his research on the economic effects of population change.

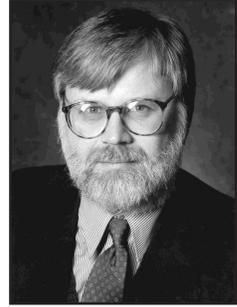
Julian Simon was an optimist on population issues and a migration expert. He was Professor of Business Administration at the University of Maryland, Distinguished Senior Fellow at the Cato Institute, and a member of the Action Institute's Advisory Board. He died unexpectedly on February 5, 1998, four days short of his 66th birthday.

Dr. Simon graduated from Harvard University, where he completed the ROTC program, and later served as a naval officer before receiving an M.A. in Business Administration and a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago Graduate School of Business. An entrepreneur, he opened his own business before joining academia.

A prolific writer, Simon was the author of almost two hundred professional studies in technical journals, and he wrote dozens of articles in such mass media as the *Atlantic Monthly*, *Readers Digest*, *New York Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal*. In 1989 he published *The Economic Consequences of Immigration*, arguing that immigrants make “substantial net economic contributions to the United States.” Julian Simon was an advocate of an open-door immigration policy.

About the Author

Douglas S. Massey is Henry G. Bryant Professor of Sociology and Public Affairs at Princeton University, with a joint appointment in the Woodrow Wilson School. He also serves as Director of the Office of Population Research. A member of the National Academy of Sciences, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the American Philosophical Society, he is the current president of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, a member of the Council of the National Academy of Sciences, and co-editor of the *Annual Review of Sociology*.



Massey's research focuses on international migration, race and housing, discrimination, education, urban poverty, stratification, and Latin America, especially Mexico. His recent books include *Brokered Boundaries: Constructing Immigrant Identity in Anti-Immigrant Times*, co-authored with Magaly Sanchez and published by the Russell Sage Foundation.

The nation's current immigration crisis didn't just happen. It is a direct result of poorly conceived immigration and border policies implemented by the United States over the past 50 years, which have created a large undocumented population. More than sixty percent of all unauthorized migrants in the United States today come from Mexico. The next closest country is El Salvador at 5%, followed by Guatemala at 4% and Honduras at 3% (Hofer, Rytina, and Baker 2010). No other country accounts for more than 2%, which is the rough share comprised by Ecuador, the Philippines, Korea, and India. Brazil comes in at 1%, as does China. The overwhelming majority of undocumented migrants thus come from Latin America, and Mexico dwarfs all other source countries, with more than 12 times the number of undocumented migrants as the next largest contributor.

Mexican immigration to the United States is nothing new, of course. Large flows date to the early 20th century and except for a brief hiatus during the Great Depression, Mexicans have been migrating to the United States continuously from 1907 to the present (Massey, Durand, and Malone 2002). The modern era of immigration begins in 1942, when the United States began recruiting temporary workers from Mexico under the auspices of the Bracero Accord, a binational program that sought to revive flows that had died in the deportation campaigns of the 1930s (Calavita 1992). The program grew slowly at first, but expanded dramatically in the 1950s after employers complained about labor shortages and citizens reacted against undocumented migration.

At that time, there were no numerical limits on the number of resident visas available to Latin Americans, and by the late 1950s around a half million Mexicans were legally entering the United States each year, 90% temporarily as guest workers and 10% as permanent residents. Bracero migration was overwhelmingly male and focused heavily on growers in California, and to a lesser extent on agricultural employers in Texas. Braceros and legal immigrants also went to work sites in Illinois, particularly Chicago, where Mexican migrants had established a foothold in the 1920s (Arrendondo 2008). As temporary and permanent migration from Mexico grew during the 1950s, social networks evolved and ramified to connect workers in Mexico with employers in the United States, and by 1960 the movement of male workers back and forth was fully institutionalized and

well integrated into social structures on both sides of the border. This mass movement was entirely legal and unauthorized migration was close to non-existent. For most Americans, Mexican migration, despite its volume, was invisible and the presence of Mexicans in the country was uncontroversial.

The Rise of Undocumented Migration

This picture of tranquility along the border came to an end in 1965, when the U.S. Congress undertook two actions that greatly reduced the legal possibilities for entry into the United States from Latin America, especially from Mexico. Politically, these actions were not framed as anti-immigrant measures so much as civil rights reforms. As the civil rights movement gained momentum during the 1960s, pressure grew to eliminate racism from U.S. immigration system, and in 1965 Congress responded, first by passing landmark amendments to the Immigration and Nationality Act and second by terminating the Bracero Program, despite strenuous objections from Mexico.

The 1965 amendments eliminated long-standing prohibitions on immigration from Asia and Africa and discarded the discriminatory national origins quotas that had been levied against southern and Eastern Europeans in the early 1920s. In their place, a new non-discriminatory quota system was substituted. Each country in Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Pacific would be given an annual quota of 20,000 resident visas to be allocated on the basis of U.S. labor needs and family reunification criteria. The Bracero Program was shut down entirely because, in the context of an expanding civil rights movement, it came to be seen as an exploitive labor system on a par with sharecropping in the south.

Although both actions were undertaken for understandable, even laudable reasons, legislators at the time gave little thought to the potential effects of their actions on the large and by then well-established North American immigration system. Under the new legislation, numerical limits were placed on immigration from the western hemisphere for the first time in history and by 1976 nations in the Americas were also subject to the individual country quota of 20,000 visas per year. Whereas in the late 1950s, some 450,000 Mexicans had entered the U.S. each year as Braceros

and 50,000 as permanent residents, by the late 1970s the Bracero Program was gone and legal visas were capped at 20,000.

After decades of mass movement back and forth across the border, the North American migration system by the 1960s had acquired a strong momentum rooted in well-developed migrant networks that operated to connect specific employers in the United States with specific sending communities in Mexico. Under the auspices of the Bracero Program, millions of Mexicans had established strong connections to the United States and accumulated significant amounts of time north of the border. As a result, when the avenues for legal entry suddenly disappeared in 1965, the migratory flows did not cease, but simply continued under other auspices. In the absence of legal channels of entry, migrants entered the country without authorization, often going to the same employers where they had worked as Braceros.

The inevitable result of U.S. immigration reforms launched during the civil rights era was a sustained increase in the volume of undocumented migration between Mexico and the United States. The shift in the legal composition of Mexican migration is documented in Figure 1, which uses official statistics from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (2011) to assess Mexican migration to the United States in three categories: legal permanent residents, legal temporary workers, and illegal border crossers. Legal immigration is indicated by the number of Mexicans admitted to permanent residence, guest worker migration by the number of entries made by temporary workers, and undocumented migration by the annual number of apprehensions divided by the number of Border Patrol officers (expressed per thousand). The latter indicator—apprehensions per thousand officers—is a proxy for the volume of undocumented migration in any given year, one that standardizes for the intensity of the enforcement effort, which as we shall see has varied greatly over time.

FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

As can be seen, in 1959 guest worker migration was just under 450,000 per year and during the early 1960s legal immigration fluctuated around 50,000, per year. Apprehensions, meanwhile, were running at around 10,000 per officer per year. With the elimination of the Bracero program in 1965, however, and the progressive imposition of more restrictive limits

on legal immigration from the Americas, undocumented migration rose dramatically, with the number of apprehensions per officer going from around 30,000 in 1965 to 464,000 in 1977. Legal immigration increased more slowly, rising from around 40,000 in 1965 to reach 135,000 in 1978.

Although the 20,000 visa cap took full effect in 1977, immigrants increasingly were able to overcome this limitation by acquiring U.S. citizenship. Whereas legal residents have the right to sponsor the entry of spouses and minor children subject to quota limitations, once they become U.S. citizens they attain the right to sponsor the entry of these relatives outside of the quotas. Newly naturalized citizens also acquire the right to sponsor the entry of parents without restriction, as well as the right to sponsor the entry of brothers and sisters subject to numerical limitations. In other words, each new U.S. citizen tends to create additional legal immigrants in years to come, and as more Mexicans have taken out U.S. citizenship the volume of legal immigration has continued to grow and has remained well above the annual cap of 20,000 entries for decades.

As suggested by the figure, the migratory system stabilized during the late 1970s and the volume of both documented and undocumented stopped rising. From 1976 to 1986 apprehensions fluctuated between 330,000 and 470,000 per thousand agents, dropping during Mexico's oil boom of 1978-1982 and rising with the onset of the peso crisis in 1982, but with no consistent trend over time. Over the same period, legal immigration fluctuated between 73,000 and 150,000 entries per year and followed much the same temporal pattern, but again with no secular trend. In practical terms, the North American migratory system had reestablished itself by the late 1970s, but with the crucial difference that most of the movement was now unauthorized.

In essence, the United States after 1965 shifted from a *de jure* labor system based on the annual circulation of legal temporary workers and a small number of legal permanent residents to a *de facto* system based on the annual circulation of undocumented workers and a somewhat larger number of permanent residents. According to estimates by Massey and Singer (1995) 85% of all undocumented entries between 1965 and 1985 were offset by departures. Among legal immigrants, meanwhile, around a one third of arrivals were offset by departures (Jasso and Rosenzweig

1982). The system was thus largely circular, and once the status quo ante of seasonal migration had been re-established in the late 1970s, there was no real change in the volume of either documented or undocumented migration up to the passage of the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) in 1986.

As shown in Figure 1, after this date undocumented migration dropped while legal immigration rose. Legal immigration from Mexico increased because of IRCA's amnesty and farm worker legalization programs, which ultimately admitted 2.3 million former undocumented migrants to legal permanent residence. IRCA also required legalizing immigrants to take English and civics courses and pushed them toward citizenship, which as we have seen simply produced more legal immigration in years to come. In the aftermath of the legalization, the volume of undocumented migration dropped dramatically as migrants stopped circulating and remained in the United States to file applications for legalization. Thus from 1988 through 1996 annual apprehensions fluctuated between 250,000 and 300,000 per officer and legal immigration fluctuated between 150,000 and 200,000 per year.

In 1976, Congress had quietly reinstated temporary worker migration under the H-visa program, but the number of such visas issued to Mexicans remained small until 1996. The number of temporary admissions from Mexico rose from just 2,000 in 1977 to 26,000 in 1995. As shown in Figure 1, however, temporary worker migration surged in the late 1990s to reach 120,000 in the first years of the new century, and then surged again after 2005 to peak at 361,000 in 2008, the largest number of temporary entries from Mexico since the Bracero Program. In that year entries by legal permanent residents totaled 192,000, bringing the total number of Mexican entries to 553,000. As opportunities for legal entry rose, the number of apprehensions steadily fell, going from 319,000 per officer in 1993 to just 28,000 in 2009 and by the time of the great recession of 2008, undocumented migration had all but stopped.

Rise of the Latino Threat Narrative

Although Mexico-U.S. migration may have stabilized in the late 1970s and the growth in undocumented migration had essentially ceased, the annual

circulation of hundreds of thousands of undocumented migrants and the large number of annual border apprehensions offered a tempting opportunity for political entrepreneurs to mobilize around the issue of illegal migration. In 1976, annual apprehensions along the Mexico-U.S. border totaled some 780,000 and in October of that year the head of the U.S. Border Patrol published an article in *Reader's Digest* entitled "Illegal Aliens: Time to Call a Halt!" (Gutierrez 1995). In it he alleged that for every migrant apprehended two got in, and that the undocumented population had reached 12 million and was rapidly rising. To stop illegal immigration he naturally called for a massive increase in funding for his agency.

Because so many migrants were now "illegal," they were easily framed as "criminals" and portrayed as "threatening" to American society. Politicians looking for an issue to mobilize voters seized on the rise in apprehensions as evidence of an unprecedented "alien invasion" in which "out-gunned" Border Patrol officers "fought" to "hold the line," against "banzai charges" of "alien hordes" (Dunn 1996; Rotella 1998). Likewise, journalists looking for a sensational story to grab headlines pointed warned of a "rising tide" of "illegals" that would "flood" the United States to "inundate" American society and "swamp" its culture (Andreas 2000; Chavez 2001).

After 1965 the description of Latino immigration was increasingly framed using such threatening martial and maritime metaphors (Massey and Sanchez 2010). Politicians and journalists were provided with a steady stream of sensational stories, images, and statistics by Border Patrol officials eager to increase their budgets and expand their bureaucratic influence (Rotella 1998; Massey, Durand, and Malone 2002). To measure the rise of what Chavez (2008) calls "the Latino threat narrative," I used the Proquest Database to search articles published in the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post*, and *Los Angeles Times* from January 1965 through December 2009 and counted the number of times undocumented, illegal, or unauthorized migrants or aliens were paired with Mexico or Mexicans and with the words crisis, flood, or invasion. The resulting data were smoothed using three year moving averages to yield the plots shown in Figure 2.

FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE

As revealed by the figure, the use of threatening marine and martial metaphors in connection with Mexican immigration was close to zero in 1965. As the number of apprehensions steadily rose in the ensuing years to render Mexican migrants more visible and seemingly more threatening, the use of these metaphors rose exponentially, going from a average of just 0.5 in 1965 to peak at 36 in 1979. After this date the frequency of threatening metaphors, like the trend in apprehensions itself, stopped rising and began to fluctuate, falling during periods of economic expansion in the United States and rising during periods of economic decline.

Each peak, however, coincided with the passage of new piece of anti-immigrant legislation or the implementation of a new restrictive border policy. In 1978, for example, amendments to the Immigration and National Act were passed to eliminate the separate quota for the western hemisphere, essentially forcing Mexicans to compete for visas with immigrants worldwide. Likewise at the peak in 1986 the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) was passed to criminalize undocumented hiring and expand the Border Patrol. Then in 1994 Operation Gatekeeper undertook a full scale militarization of the busiest border sector in San Diego; in 2001 the Patriot Act further augmented enforcement resources and streamlined removal proceedings; and finally in 2006 the Sensenbrenner Bill (HR4437) sought to make undocumented status a felony and dramatically ramp up enforcement efforts not only at the border but throughout the United States (although this legislation passed the House, however, it failed in the Senate and was never enacted).

Thus rising undocumented migration from 1965 to 1975 and its perpetuation thereafter set off a self-feeding cycle of ever-greater border enforcement and more restrictive immigration legislation (Andreas 2000; Massey, Durand, and Malone 2002). Increased restrictions and greater enforcement generated more apprehensions, which generated more political pressure for more restrictive measures, which produced still more apprehensions, which justified more enforcement, and so on—all this despite the fact that volume of undocumented entries had, in fact, peaked by the late 1970s. During the 1980s and 1990s, immigration enforcement increasingly fed off itself.

Figure 3 presents a path diagram to illustrate the nature of this feed-

back loop. I estimate the parameters for this model using two-stage least squares for data compiled for the period 1965 to 1995. The feedback loop was initiated by an increase in the number of attempted undocumented entries which resulted in a rising number of apprehensions. I measured entries using data from the Mexican Migration Project to compute annual probability of taking an undocumented trip to the United States and then applying the resulting probabilities to annual population counts garnered from Mexico's national statistical office. The apprehensions data come from Statistical Yearbooks published by the U.S. Department of Justice. As can be seen, undocumented entries is strongly connected to border apprehensions, with a path coefficient of 0.905.

FIGURE 3 ABOUT HERE

In order to measure the anti-immigrant reaction I would like actually to have measured expressions of anti-immigrant sentiment but such data do not exist for a complete time series. Data from Gallup and the General Social Survey (GSS), however, I was able to compile a series indicating percentage of Americans who annual self-identified as conservative. In order to establish the connection between this indicator and anti-immigrant sentiment, I estimated an individual-level model using data from the 1996 and 2004 GSS surveys, which contained measures of support for exclusionist policy. I found that such support was very strongly and significantly ($P < 0.001$) predicted by self-identification as a conservative, controlling for age, gender, race, marital status, presence of minor children, education, income, occupation, region, and urbanism.

As shown in the figure, across time apprehensions very strongly predicts the percentage of Americans who self-identify as conservative, with a path coefficient of 0.937. I also replicated this result using an individual level model that entered the number of apprehensions as a contextual variable, along with expected earnings (mean wages times the probability of employment) and the individual controls mentioned above. Apprehensions positively predicted individual self-identification as conservative with a coefficient that was more than five times its standard error.

The increasing drift of public opinion toward conservatism---determined in no small way by rising apprehensions and their attendant depiction as a serious threat in the media---led in turn to the passage of restrictive

legislation and the implementation of restrictive enforcement operations. I measure the shift toward restrictive legislation by tabulating the cumulative number of restrictive laws enacted by year and as measure restrictive operations the cumulative number of restrictive enforcement operations launched by year. Estimation of the corresponding equations yield path coefficients of 0.820 for the effect of percent conservative on restrictive legislation and 0.336 between conservatism and restrictive operations. The accumulation of restrictive laws and enforcement operations lead axiomatically to a rising number of Border Patrol Agents (with coefficients of 0.873 for restrictive legislation and 0.181 for restrictive operations) and a growing Border Patrol budget (with respective coefficients of 0.337 and 0.402), both of which were measured annually using data obtained from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Finally, a rising number of agents and growing budget translate into a rising number of linewatch hours spent patrolling the border (with respective coefficients of 0.935 and 0.029), which then feeds back to increase the number of apprehensions independently of the number of undocumented entries (0.936---estimated using entries as an instrumental variable). The principal causal pathway from apprehensions to percent conservative through restrictive legislation, Border Patrol Agents, and linewatch hours back to apprehensions yields a causal effect of 0.626 and adding in the other minor pathways yields a total feedback effect of 0.691, compared to a direct effect of 0.905 for entries alone. Thus the causal effect of the feedback loop is three-quarters the size of the effect of apprehensions, meaning that the enforcement machinery set in motion by the anti-immigrant reaction is sufficiently powerful to keep apprehensions rising for some time even if the actual flow of immigrants remains constant.

The War on Immigrants

This powerful feedback cycle can only yield one result—an exponential increase in border enforcement—and this is precisely what we observe in Figure 4, which shows trends in three indicators of the intensity of enforcement along the Mexico-U.S. border: the number of Border Patrol officers, the number of linewatch hours they spend patrolling the border, and the

size of the Border Patrol budget. In order to standardize the curves and put them on the same scale, each series was divided by the value in 1986, when the militarization of the border began in earnest. The numbers plotted after that date thus indicate the number of times the enforcement indicator has increased since 1986.

FIGURE 4 ABOUT HERE

In each series, we observe little upward movement before 1986; but after the passage of IRCA we witness an acceleration in the enforcement effort, which quickens again after the 1994 launching of Operation Gatekeeper in San Diego. Enforcement accelerates once more after 1996 with the passage of the Illegal Immigrant Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act and other pieces of anti-immigrant legislation, and then rises dramatically after the passage of the PATRIOT Act in 2001. By 2009 the number of Border Patrol Officers was 5.5 times the number in 1986, the number of linewatch hours had increased 8.6 times since that date, and the Border Patrol budget has risen 23 times.

As dramatic as the rise in border enforcement was, the increase in internal enforcement was even steeper, as indicated in Figure 5, which shows the trend in the annual number of Mexicans deported from within the United States. From 1965 to 1985, the annual number of deportations fluctuated in the tens of thousands with no clear trend. After the passage of IRCA, deportations begin to rise slowly; but with the passage of the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act in 1996, they abruptly increased to plateau at 150,000 in 1999-2001 and then increased exponentially thereafter to reach 283,000 in 2009. From 1986 to 2009, the annual number of Mexicans deported from the United States rose by a factor of 26 even though over the same period the estimated size of the undocumented Mexican population increased by a factor of just three.

FIGURE 5 ABOUT HERE

Consequences of the War on Immigrants

The tripling of the number of undocumented Mexicans between 1986 and 2009 is nothing to scoff at, of course, and the presence of 6.5 million undocumented Mexicans (plus 4.7 million non-Mexicans) carries serious im-

plications for U.S. society. It would also seem contradict my earlier assertion that the Mexican migration system had stabilized by the middle 1970s and that the volume of undocumented migration experienced no sustained increase thereafter. This seeming contradiction is resolved by understanding the effect that border enforcement had on the behavior of undocumented migrants. To put it bluntly, restrictive U.S. immigration and border policies paradoxically acted to transform what had been a circular flow of male Mexican workers going to three states into a settled population of Mexican families living in 50 states. What changed was not so much the number of undocumented migrants arriving and crossing the border each year, but where they crossed, where they went after getting in, and how long they stayed at their new places of destination—and all of these behaviors changed dramatically as a result of the War on Immigrants.

Likelihood of Leaving for the United States

Unauthorized migration from Mexico naturally begins with a decision to set out for the border and attempt to cross it without proper documentation. Since such migration is clandestine, official statistics offer little information about the migration decision itself. Undocumented migrants are included in the U.S. Census and Current Population Survey, and given data on the number of legal entries, mortality trends, emigration patterns, and undercount rates, one can derive an indirect estimate of the size of the undocumented population (see Warren and Passel 1987). Indeed, using such an approach, estimates of the stock of undocumented migrants living in the United States are now regularly produced by the Department of Homeland Security (Hofer, Rytina, and Baker 2010) and the Pew Hispanic Center (Passel and Cohn 2011).

Useful as they are, aggregated estimates of the number of undocumented migrants reveal little about changes in migratory behavior over time. For that information, we turn to the Mexican Migration Project (MMP), a binational study that each year surveys Mexicans on both sides of the border and adds the information they provide to a cumulative database on patterns and processes of documented and undocumented migration (<http://mmp.opr.princeton.edu/>). The database currently contains

life histories of 21,475 household heads, and each history includes a complete history of migration and border crossing that can be used to compute annual probabilities of undocumented migration to and from the United States (Massey, Durand, and Pren 2009).

Prior work indicates that the likelihood that someone who has never migrated before will take a first undocumented trip to the United States is much lower than the likelihood that an experienced migrant will take an additional trip (Massey et al. 1987). Figure 6 thus displays two trends: in the probability that a Mexican household head took a first trip to the United States and in the likelihood that a household head took an additional trip, given that at least one trip had already occurred. As expected, the likelihood of initiating undocumented migration is much lower than the likelihood of migrating again without documents. On average, the probability of taking a first undocumented trip is just 0.008 whereas the probability of taking another trip is 0.039.

FIGURE 6 ABOUT HERE

In terms of trends, the probability of taking a first undocumented trip begins at just 0.003 in 1965, but consistent with the trend in apprehensions observed earlier in Figure 1 it rises steadily to peak at .012 in 1979, a fourfold increase in a little over a decade. After this date the probability of initiating undocumented migration stabilizes and fluctuates around .010 through the year 2001 and then drifts downward to reach zero by 2009. In contrast, the probability of taking an additional undocumented trip fluctuates around 0.040 from 1965 through 1992, but once Operation Blockade and Operation Gatekeeper are launched in 1993 and 1994, the probability rises abruptly to peak at around .055 in 2000. The militarization of the two busiest border crossings thus seems actually to have *encouraged* rather than discouraged experienced migrants to undertake an additional U.S. trip. Knowing that border crossing was becoming more difficult, migrants in the know sought to get in while the getting was good. The probability of migration remained high until 2004, and then plummeted to zero between then and 2009.

According to these data, therefore, the massive increase in border enforcement during the late 20th century had little effect on the likelihood of initiating undocumented migration, at least through 2000, and may

even have increased the likelihood of continuing undocumented migration among experienced migrants between 1993 and 2005. Consistent with the apprehension statistics analyzed in Figure 1, however, both likelihoods drop to zero by 2009. As already noted, in the context of a severe recession and given the greatest access to legal visas since the 1950s, undocumented migration from Mexico has effectively ceased.

Likelihood of Returning to Mexico

The growth of the undocumented population depends not only on the number of unauthorized entries, of course, but also on the number of undocumented departures. In addition to computing the likelihood of leaving for the United States, MMP data can be used to compute the probability of going back to Mexico, and Figure 7 shows trends in the probability that an undocumented migrant returned to the United States within 12 months of entering on first and later trips. As one might expect, migrants are more likely to return from later trips than first trips. Those migrants with prior trips are likely already to have settled into a strategic pattern of recurrent migration (Massey et al. 1987). From 1965 to 1986, the likelihood of returning from an additional trip fluctuated around 0.80 whereas the likelihood of returning from a first trip varied between 0.55 and 0.60.

FIGURE 7 ABOUT HERE

In neither case, however, do we see any evidence of a trend before the

Year	Immigration				Emigration			
	Denmark	Finland	Iceland	Norway	Denmark	Finland	Iceland	Norway
2000	2996	3820	445	6577	2084	3113	460	4955
2001	3564	3659	433	6287	2247	3445	342	4421
2002	4250	3532	485	6374	2241	3211	347	4404
2003	4603	3395	474	5807	2585	3386	348	4391
2004	4674	3035	428	4884	3024	3507	362	4211
2005	5008	3282	450	4317	3341	3875	483	4445
2006	6432	3092	475	4489	3456	3365	406	5018
2007	6615	2888	457	4714	4307	3076	533	6006
2008	5605	2879	582	5055	4754	3336	349	7206

passage of IRCA in 1986. After that date, both return probabilities undergo a rapid decline that pauses briefly during the period 1995-1999, but

accelerates thereafter. By 2009 the probability of returning from a first trip had dropped to zero while the probability of returning from a later trip had fallen to 0.30. Return migration fell because the militarization of the border dramatically increased the costs and risks of undocumented border crossing. According to Massey, Durand, and Malone (2002), IRCA tripled the death rate among border crossers and estimates computed by Massey, Durand, and Pren (2009) suggest that smuggling fees increased by a factor of six, rising from an average of around \$500 before IRCA to around \$3,000 in 2008 (in constant 2008 dollars). In order to minimize the costs and risks of border crossing, undocumented migrants quite rationally stopped crossing the border, not by deciding remain in Mexico in the first place, but by hunkering down and staying longer in the United States once they had managed to get in.

To this point, the data clearly indicate that the probability undocumented entry remained stable or increased slightly from the late 1970s through the year 2000, despite the massive increase in border enforcement, but that the likelihood of out-migration fell markedly after 1986. The coincidence of these two trends necessarily implies an increase in *net* undocumented migration. Arithmetically, net migration equals in-migration minus out-migration, so that if undocumented in-migration persists while undocumented out-migration falls, net undocumented migration must rise. If we apply the probabilities shown in Figure 6 and 7 to annual counts of Mexico's population, we can derive an estimate of total net annual migration. Figure 8 shows the results of this exercise.

FIGURE 8 ABOUT HERE

As shown in the figure, net undocumented migration rose sharply after 1965, but by 1979 had stabilized and fluctuated around 380,000 net entries per year. Net migration fell during Mexico's oil boom to reach 270,000 in 1982, but with the onset of economic crisis in that year it rose back up to 380,000, where it persisted from 1985 through 1987. With the implementation of IRCA, however, the net rate of undocumented migration began to rise, not because more people were coming to the United States without authorization, but because fewer undocumented migrants were going home, a trend that accelerated after the implementation of the border blockades in 1993 and 1994 and ultimately reached a net of

922,000 entries in 2004. The area between the dashed horizontal line and the curve of net entries represents the number of additional entries caused by the militarization of the border. If enforcement efforts had remained at pre-1986 levels, there would have been around 5.3 million fewer net undocumented entries thereafter. To a large and very significant extent, the growth of the undocumented population was an artifact of U.S. policies.

Changing Geography of Migration

Not only did American policies backfire by discouraging return migration, they also radically transformed the geography of undocumented migration. Historically the vast majority of Mexican migrants crossed into the United States along the border between San Diego and Tijuana, and to a lesser extent between El Paso and Juarez. When IRCA began the expansion of border enforcement after 1986, enforcement resources were naturally concentrated in these two sectors; and when these measures failed to stop the inflow, U.S. authorities implemented a full scale militarization in El Paso in 1993 and in San Diego in 1994, complete with steel walls, watch towers, motion detectors, air surveillance, and additional Border Patrol officers. As the costs and risks of crossing in these sectors rose, migrants quite rationally began crossing elsewhere, mostly through the Sonoran desert into Arizona.

The changing geography of undocumented border crossing is indicated in Figure 9, which draws on MMP data to show trends in the state of crossing from 1965 to 2009. Up until the border militarization began, undocumented migration had been focused increasingly on California. The percentage of crossings into California rose from 57% in 1965 to peak at 71% in 1988. After this date, the share of border crossings into California underwent a sustained decline that only accelerated after the launching of Operation Gatekeeper in 1994, ultimately reaching a nadir of 20% in 2003 before experiencing a brief revival to 30% in 2006 and then falling back down to 14% in 2008

FIGURE 9 ABOUT HERE.

As entries into California steadily fell, crossings into Arizona correspondingly rose. Prior to 1988 the Arizona-Sonora border had been a

quiet backwater, accounting for just 5%- 8% of all border crossings. After this date, crossings into Arizona rose quite rapidly to peak at 47% in 2003. From a quiet backwater Arizona had become the busiest sector along the entire border. With the launching of the Arizona border initiative in 2004, however, crossing there become more costly, risky, and difficult and migrants once again shifted their attentions to other sectors along the border and crossings into Arizona fell back down to around 20% by 2009. Despite the rapid decline, however, crossings into Arizona still remained well above the historical level of 6% to 8%.

The deflection of undocumented migrants away from California left them far from traditional destinations at a time when employment opportunities elsewhere were surging, and undocumented migrants responded by proceeding in growing numbers to new destination areas throughout the country rather than heading back to California. Figure 10 uses MMP to show trends in the state of destination for undocumented migrants from 1965 to 2009. Prior to IRCA, the vast majority of undocumented Mexicans went to just three states: California, Illinois, and Texas. As shown in the figure, the percentage going to these states fluctuated between 85% and 90% from 1965 through 1988 with no particular trend.

FIGURE 10 ABOUT HERE

Afterward, however, migration to traditional destinations underwent a sustained decline and by 2009 only 54% of all undocumented migrants went to one of the three principal states. Almost all of the shift came at the expense of California. Whereas two thirds of all Mexicans who arrived in the United States between 1985 and 1990 went to California, ten years later only one third who arrived between 1995 and 2000 went to that state, a fraction that persisted for Mexicans who arrived between 2000 and 2005 (Massey and Capoferro 2008). The hardening of the border in San Diego may have reduced the flow of undocumented migrants into California, but not the United States and by 2009 nearly half of all undocumented migrants were going to non traditional destinations. As a result, the most rapidly growing Mexican communities in the United States are no longer in California, Texas, or Illinois, but in North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Iowa, Nebraska, and Minnesota. As a result of U.S. border policies Mexican immigration was transformed from a regional to a national issue.

Consequences of the Chain Reaction

In sum, the progressive prosecution of the War on Immigrants and the consequent militarization of the border transformed what had been a stable circular flow of Mexican male workers going to three states into a much larger population of Mexican families living in 50 states. As noted above, undocumented migration to the United States has effectively ceased. According to estimates by the Hofer, Rytina, and Baker (2009, 2010) the undocumented population of the United States fell from 11.6 million to 10.8 million between January 1, 2008 and January 1, 2009. Clearly, the undocumented population of the United States has stopped growing and flows have dropped to zero or below. In other words, after 25 years of steadily rising border enforcement, the border by any measure is now “under control.”

At the same time, however, legal immigration and guest worker immigration from Mexico have both risen to record levels, with temporary legal entries from Mexico averaging 331,000 per year and entries of legal permanent residents around 178,000 per year. As in the late 1950s, therefore, the United States is taking in roughly 500,000 Mexican migrants per year in legal status and undocumented migration has virtually disappeared. The proponents of immigration reform have long articulated four basic goals: gaining control of the border, creating a large guest worker program, expanding quotas for legal immigration from Mexico, and legalizing undocumented residents already present in the United States. In a very real way, four of the five goals have already been achieved. Undocumented migration has ended, legal immigration has expanded to nearly 180,000 per year, and guest worker entries are at levels not seen since the height of the Bracero Program.

The only piece of unfinished business at this point is the legalization of the estimated 11.2 undocumented residents now living in the United States, 6.5 of whom are Mexican. During a time when undocumented migration has ceased, legalizing these people and integrating them into American society should be the focus of future policy efforts at both the state and national levels. The undocumented population of the United States was created by U.S. policies and U.S. policy actions are required to solve the

problem. The longer we put off this day of political reckoning, the worse the situation will get for all concerned. Undocumented migrants currently comprise 4% of the population, 8% of the labor force, a third of the foreign born, and 60% of Mexican immigrants. The United States cannot continue to function well as a democratic republic with such large shares of people lacking social, economic, and civic rights.

REFERENCES

Andreas, Peter. 2000. *Border Games: Policing the US-Mexico Divide*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Arrendondo, Gabriela F. 2008. *Mexican Chicago: Race, Identity and Nation, 1916-39*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Calavita, Kitty. 1992. *Inside the State: The Bracero Program, Immigration, and the I.N.S.* New York: Routledge.

Chavez, Leo R. 2001. *Covering Immigration: Population Images and the Politics of the Nation*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

_____. 2008. *The Latino Threat: Constructing Immigrants, Citizens, and the Nation*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Dunn, Timothy J. 1996. *The Militarization of the U.S.-Mexico Border, 1978-1992: Low-Intensity Conflict Doctrine Comes Home*. Austin: Center for Mexican American Studies, University of Texas at Austin.

Gutiérrez, David. G. 1995. *Walls and Mirrors: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants, and the Politics of Ethnicity*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Hoefler, Michael, Nancy Rytina, and Bryan C. Baker 2009. *Estimates of the Unauthorized Immigrant Population Residing in the United States: January 2008*. Washington, DC: Office of Immigration Statistics, U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

_____. 2010. . *Estimates of the Unauthorized Immigrant Population Residing in the United States: January 2009*. Washington, DC: Office of Immigration Statistics, U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Jasso, Guillermina, and Mark R. Rosenzweig. 1982. "Estimating the Emigration Rates of Legal Immigrants Using Administrative and Survey

Data: The 1971 Cohort of Immigrants to the United States.” *Demography* 19:279-90.

Massey, Douglas S., Rafael Alarcón, Jorge Durand, and Humberto González. 1987. *Return to Aztlan: The Social Process of International Migration from Western Mexico*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Massey, Douglas S., and Chiara Capoferro. 2008. “The Geographic Diversification of U.S. Immigration.” Pp. 25-50 in Douglas S. Massey, ed., *New Faces in New Places: The Changing Geography of American Immigration*. New York: Russell Sage.

Massey, Douglas S., Jorge Durand, and Nolan J. Malone. 2002. *Beyond Smoke and Mirrors: Mexican Immigration in an Age of Economic Integration*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Massey, Douglas S., Jorge Durand, and Karen Pren. 2009. “Nuevos Escenarios de la Migración México-Estados Unidos: Las Consecuencias de la Guerra Antiinmigrante.” *Papeles de Población* 61:101-28.

Massey, Douglas S. and Magaly Sánchez R. 2010. *Brokered Boundaries: Creating Immigrant Identity in Anti-Immigrant Times*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Massey, Douglas S., and Audrey Singer. 1995. “New Estimates of Undocumented Mexican Migration and the Probability of Apprehension.” *Demography* 32:203-13.

Passel, Jeffrey S., and D’Vera Cohn. 2011. “Unauthorized Immigrant Population: National and State Trends, 2010.” Washington, D.C.: Pew Hispanic Center.

Rotella, Sebastian. 1998. *Twilight on the Line: Underworlds and Politics at the U.S.-Mexico Border*. New York: W.W. Norton.

U.S. Department of Homeland Security. 2011. Website of the Office of Immigration Statistics. <http://www.dhs.gov/files/statistics/immigration.shtm>. Accessed February 14, 2011.

Warren, Robert, and Jeffrey Passel. 1987. "A Count of the Uncountable: Estimates of Undocumented Aliens Counted in the 1980 US Census." *Demography* 24:375-96.

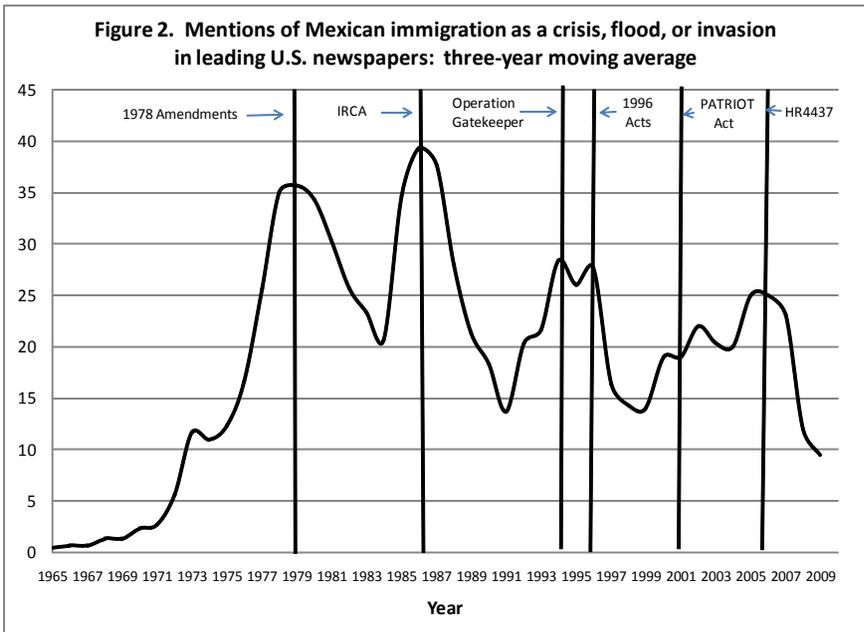
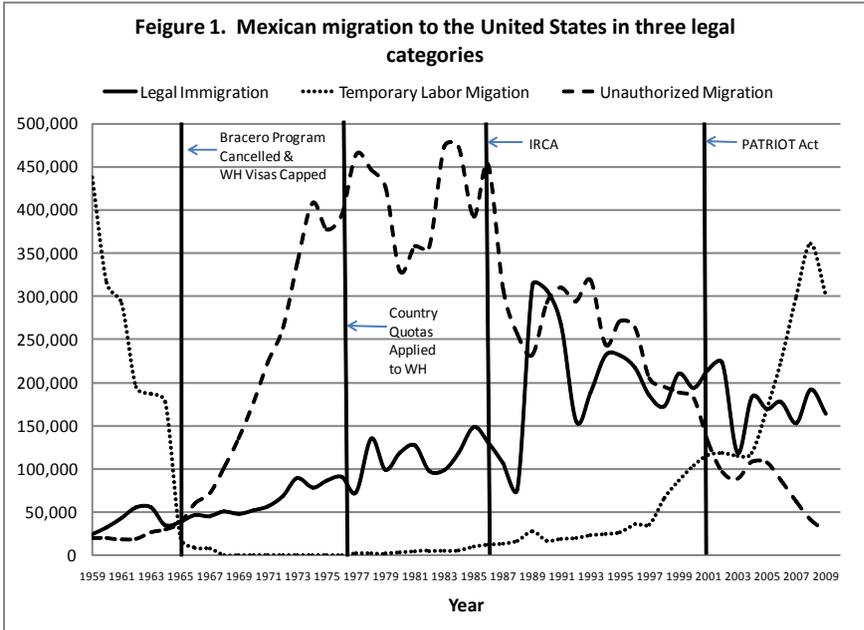


Figure 3. Feedback Loop Between Apprehensions and Border Enforcement 1965-1995

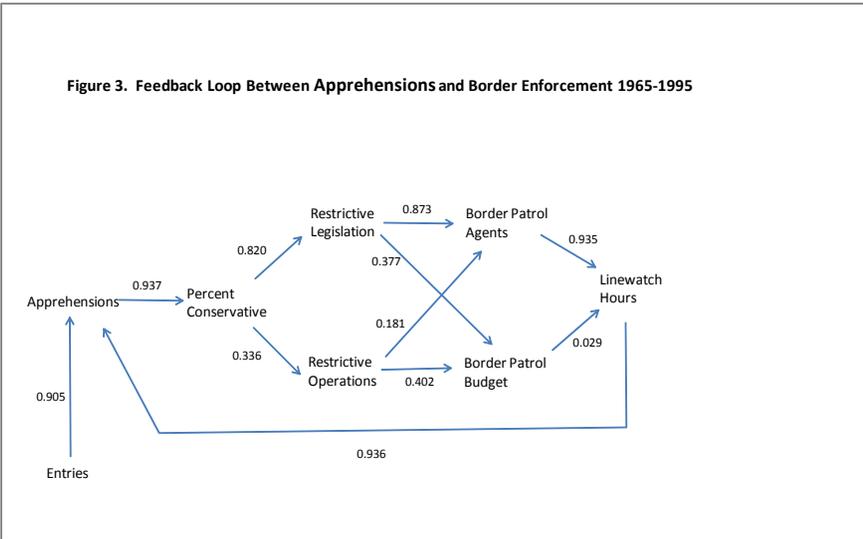
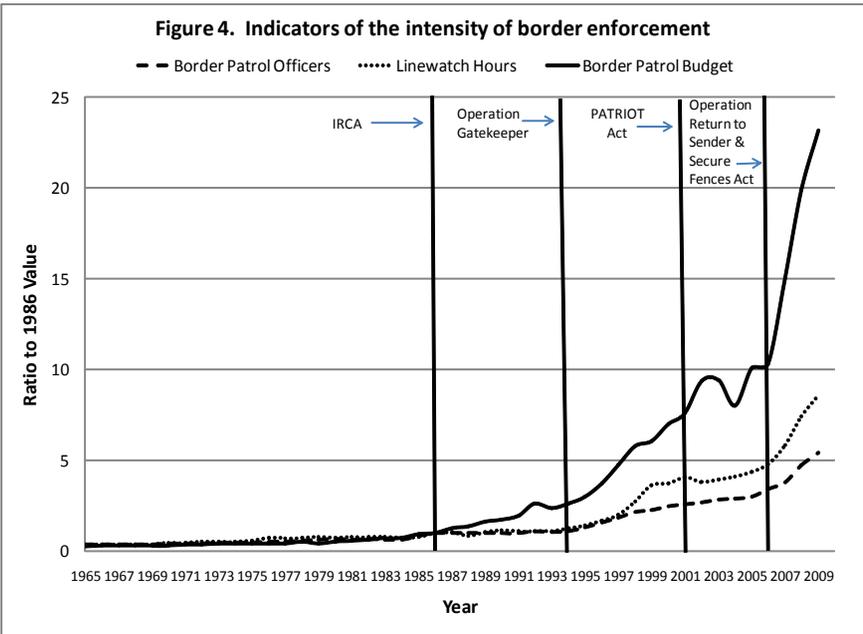
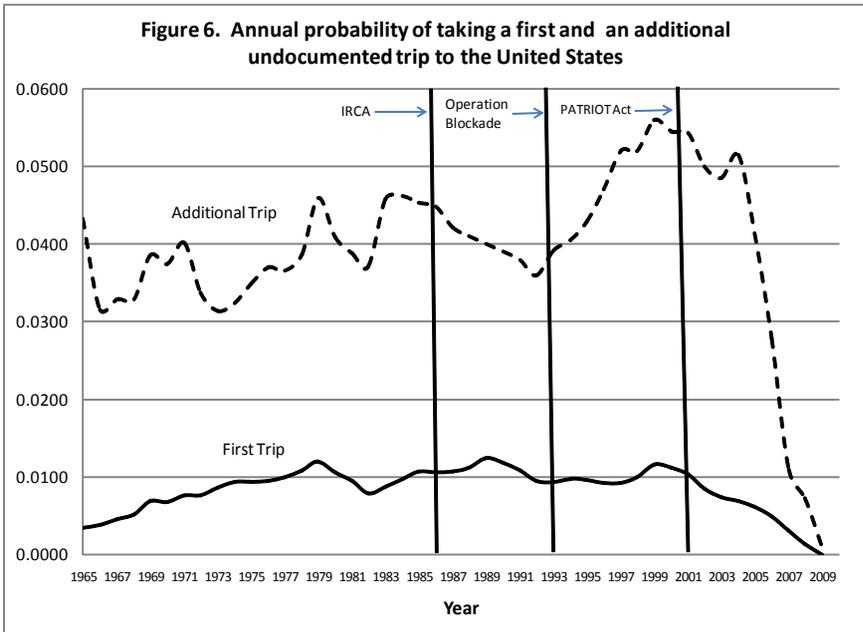
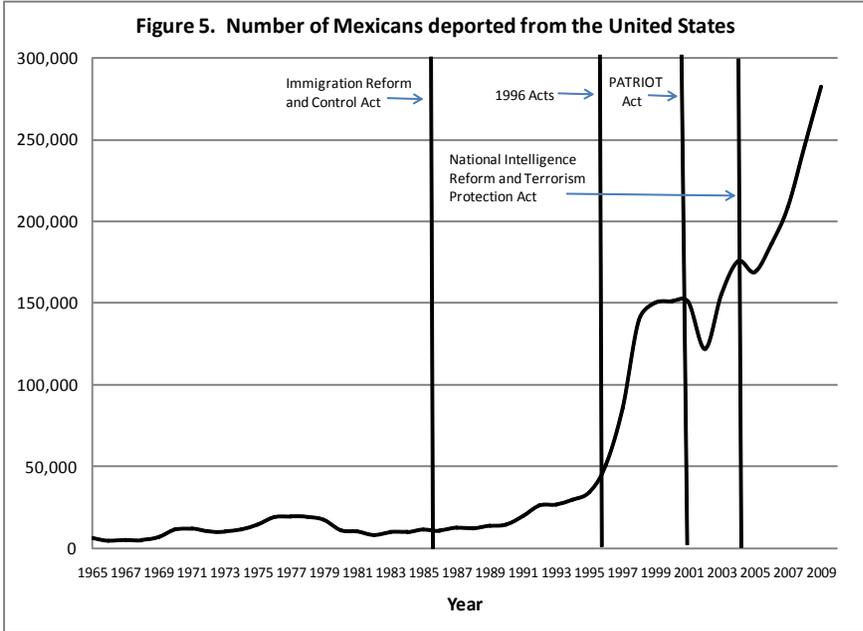
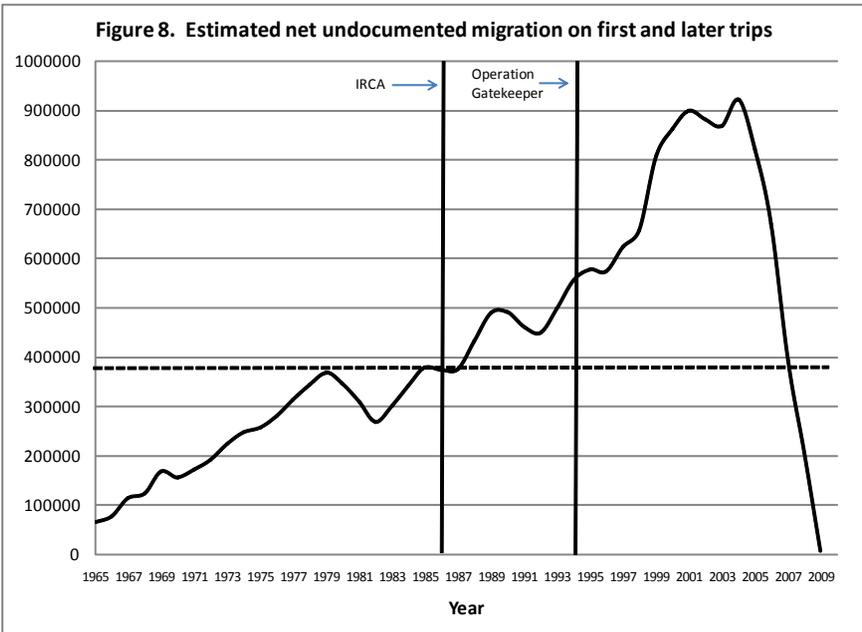
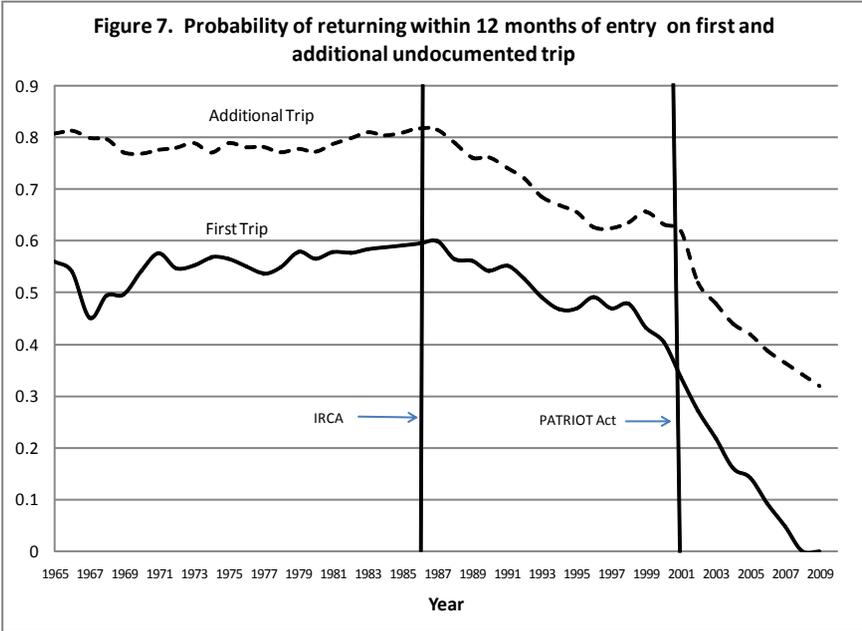
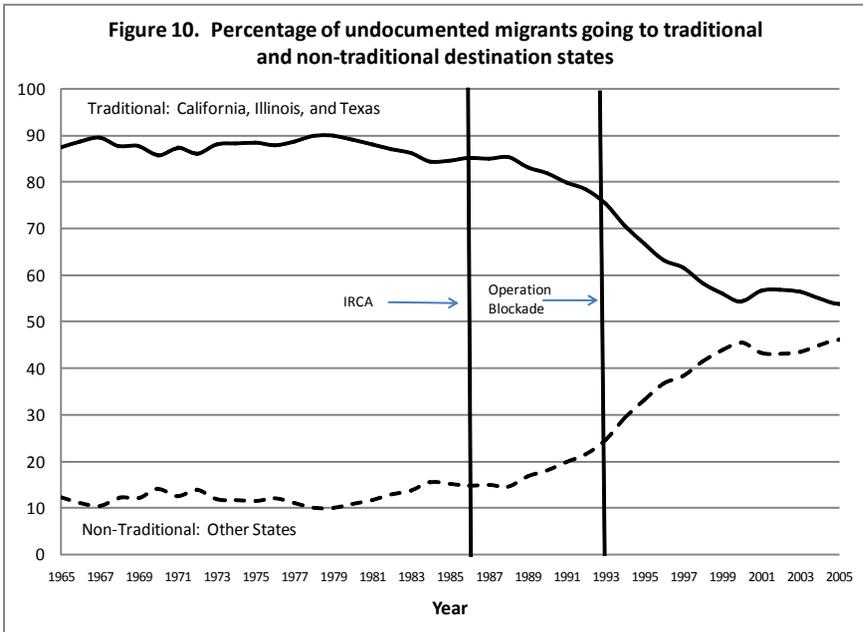
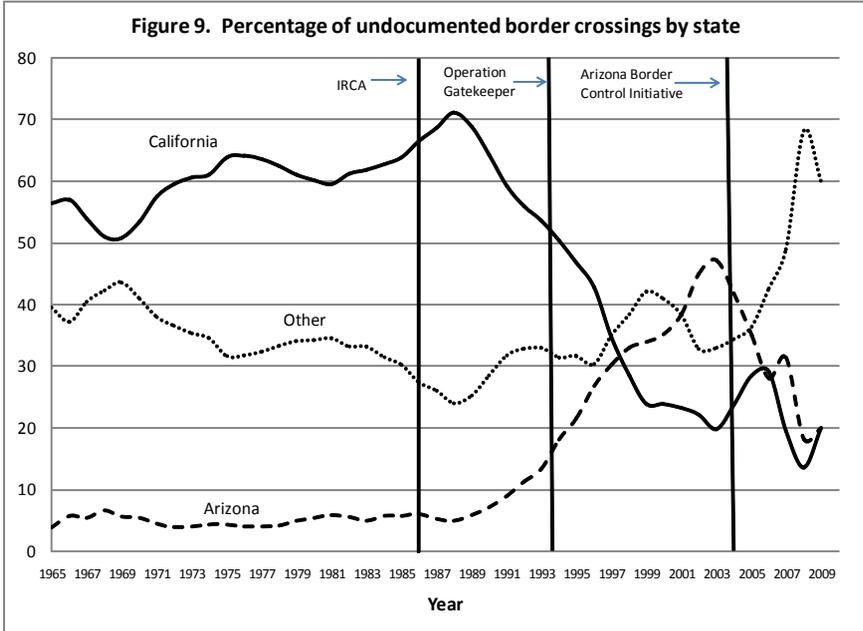


Figure 4. Indicators of the intensity of border enforcement











ANNUAL
MIGRATION
MEETING



IZA

P.O. Box 7240

D-53072 Bonn

Germany

phone: +49-(228) 38 94 0

fax: +49-(228) 38 94 210

email: iza@iza.org

web: www.iza.org