



Border Militarization and the Reproduction of Mexican Migrant Labor.

Social Justice; 6/22/2001; Brownell, Peter B.

Introduction

AUTHORS FEATURED IN THIS SPECIAL ISSUE HAVE DESCRIBED THE CHANGES IN U.S. policy and practice at the Mexican border under the rubric of militarization (Dunn, 2001, 1999, 1996; Palafox, 1996). While Timothy Dunn traces these changes as far back as 1978, I focus on changes in border enforcement starting in September 1993. The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) has dubbed this shift in policy its "Comprehensive Southwest Border Enforcement Strategy" (U.S. INS, 1996).

Various scholars and human rights groups have documented some of the serious costs of this policy. Much of this research has focused on human rights abuses (Amnesty International U.S.A., 1998; American Friends Service Committee, 1998; Americas Watch, 1995; Huspek et al., 1998). Particular attention has been paid to violations against women (Light, 1996a, 1996b; Falcon, this issue). Dunn (1996) and Palafox (1996) address human rights violations, but also focus on the erosion of legal barriers to military involvement in internal policing. Similarly, Parenti (1999: 154) argues that the border serves as a "testing ground" for "militarized systems of social control" and discipline. Finally, Eschbach et al. (1999) and Cornelius (2001) document the costs of border militarization in human life: migrant deaths.

Generally, we would hope that the state would pursue and maintain a policy with such high human costs only when it lacked alternatives to fulfill some critical, socially necessary function. My claim (argued in detail below) is that the shift in border policy seeks to address economic concerns of the U.S. electorate. This new policy not only fails to resolve the issues underlying these concerns, but may also exacerbate them. As shown below, changes in the composition of migrant flows may have effects that are independent of changes in the size of those flows. These effects are similar in many respects to

proposals by agribusiness for a new guest-worker program. Organized labor has staunchly opposed a new agricultural guest-worker program. Despite this similarity, the public largely perceives the militarization of the U.S.-Mexico border as protecting U.S. workers from the economic effects of undocumented immigration.

A Change in Strategy

Before September 1993, there were numerous holes in the chain-link fence separating El Paso from its Mexican sister city, Ciudad Juarez. Rather than repair the holes, the U.S. Border Patrol trained low-light video cameras on them. The Border Patrol waited until migrants entered, and having observed them on video, attempted to apprehend them. This approach maximized apprehensions, but hardly deterred migrants from attempting entry. It is an excellent metaphor for the old border policy and demonstrates the basis for much of the criticism leveled against it. The INS (1996: 3) describes deterrence as "the overarching goal" of its new strategy.

Despite the rhetoric surrounding the new deterrence strategy, until sometime in the early 1990s, the INS apparently believed that its previous strategy was also deterrence based. The INS (1978: 17) Annual Report states: "Prompt apprehension and return to country of origin is a positive deterrent to illegal reentry and related violations." Scholars have long questioned this assumption. Cornelius (1978) found that 32% of apprehended migrants attempted to cross again within a few days. Using data from the Mexican government's 1978 National Survey of Emigration to the Northern Border and to the United States (ENFNEU), Kossoudji (1992) found that the effect of apprehension on undocumented migration was perverse; that is, apprehended migrants are not deterred from reentry. Rather, they return to the U.S. sooner and stay longer than those who return to Mexico of their own accord. However, these analyses are based on data from the late 1970s. In 1986, Congress passed the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA), which granted legal status to many undocumented migrants and dedicated more resources to border enforcement (Bean et al., 1990). Donato, Durand, and Massey (1992: 155) found "little evidence that IRCA has significantly deterred undocumented Mexicans from entering the United States." Espenshade (1994: 886) analyzed apprehension data using a repeated trials model, which estimates the probability of apprehension. Controlling for "other known influences" on migration, he "found no association between the perceived threat of apprehension at the U.S.-Mexico border and the total volume of illegal immigration to the United States."

Fogel (1978) and Heyman (1995: 267) argue that the INS fails to deter migration because of what Heyman calls "the voluntary departure complex." "Voluntary departure" is the INS practice of encouraging apprehended migrants to waive their right to a lengthy deportation proceeding in return for a speedy return to Mexico. Despite INS claims concerning the deterrent effect of "prompt apprehension and return," the INS uses voluntary departure because it lacks the space and other resources to detain migrants until they can be officially deported. Kossoudji (1992: 161) describes this dynamic as "a game of cat and mouse." Heyman's (1995: 270) interviews with Border Patrol officers reveal a similar view:

I enjoy my job, I have fun - since it is a game of tag and catch - I see if I can catch more than anybody else.... [Migrants] know the game, they're docile if caught. They're delayed eight hours and then they do it over again. That's all we basically do, delay them.

The changes introduced in September 1993 have as their historical backdrop this dynamic of a "game" at the border and the failure (according to many academic and other observers) to significantly deter undocumented migration. In that year, the Border Patrol launched Operation Blockade in El Paso. Beyond repairing border fences, Operation Blockade attempted to deter would-be migrants through a massive show of Border Patrol force along 20 miles of border between El Paso and Ciudad Juarez. Four helicopters patrolled from the skies, while on the ground agents were so densely distributed along the border that each agent could see at least one agent on either side (Martin, 1993; Bean et al., 1994).

In February 1994, the attorney general and the INS commissioner announced a new "Comprehensive Border Control Strategy" based on the Operation Blockade model (by then renamed Operation Hold the Line). According to the INS, the plan's key objectives and overall goals were:

- * To provide the Border Patrol and other INS enforcement divisions with the personnel, equipment, and technology to deter, detect, and apprehend illegal aliens;
- * To regain control of major entry corridors along the border that for too long have been controlled by illegal immigrants and smugglers;
- * To close off the routes most frequently used by smugglers and illegal aliens and to shift traffic to areas that are more remote and difficult to cross illegally,

where INS has the tactical advantage;

- * To tighten security and control illegal crossings through ports of entry; and
- * To make our ports of entry work for regular commuters, trade, tourists, and other legitimate traffic across our borders.

These objectives are essential to effectively deter illegal immigration into the United States. The over-arching goal is to make it so difficult and costly to enter this country that fewer individuals even try (U.S. INS, 1996: 3).

The INS began by concentrating resources in its El Paso sector (Operation Hold the Line) and San Diego sector (Operation Gatekeeper). These two sectors historically accounted for approximately 65% of apprehensions. As migrants have shifted to new crossing points, the INS has focused new resources on the Tucson, Arizona, sector and the McAllen, Texas, sector. Overall, between October 1993 and September 1998, the Border Patrol more than doubled its personnel. Of the almost 4,000 new agents, 79% worked in the four sectors mentioned above (U.S. GAO, 1999).

Most of the additional agents have been deployed in urban areas to push migrants into the more "remote areas...where INS has the tactical advantage" (U.S. INS, 1996: 3). This advantage is based largely on the increased time it takes migrants crossing in remote areas to reach an urban (or at least populated) area, where the INS has much greater difficulty in distinguishing between those who are undocumented and those who are not.

But Does It Work?

The consensus among scholars is that this INS strategy has not effectively reduced undocumented migration from Mexico to the U.S. Using projections from models based on earlier data, Espenshade, Baraka, and Huber (1997) question whether the changes in probability of apprehension due to increased staffing will be sufficient to deter migrants. Cornelius (2001, 1995) and Bean et al. (1994) argue that labor migrants are merely entering the U.S. in the areas where fewer enforcement resources are directed.

My own empirical examination of the strategy's effectiveness draws on INS apprehension statistics. Apprehension statistics are problematic since they are a function of the number of undocumented migrants (in which we are interested) and the probability of apprehension (which we do not necessarily know).

Espenshade (1995) examined this issue and concluded that the number of apprehensions is an appropriate measure for examining whether flows are increasing or decreasing.

In an interview on Operation Gatekeeper, a Border Patrol public information officer pointed to the reduction in the number of annual apprehensions as evidence of success (U.S. Border Patrol, 1999). Indeed, apprehensions have dropped significantly in the San Diego and El Paso sectors. Total apprehensions for all sectors along the U.S.-Mexico border dipped in fiscal year (FY) (1) 1994, the first year of Operation Hold the Line. However, as Border Patrol apprehension data show, since FY 1994 apprehensions have increased substantially in other sectors (see Figure 1 at the end of the article). The result is a continuing increase in the number of apprehensions for the border as a whole. Using the Border Patrol's own logic, the data support the argument that the INS has not stopped or significantly reduced undocumented migration from Mexico. On the contrary, they suggest that migration continues to grow despite unprecedented levels of Border Patrol staffing and capital expenditure.

Selective Effects?

Several authors have observed that two main patterns characterize Mexican undocumented migration. One is temporary labor migration. (2) This pattern involves household members who leave their families and migrate to the U.S. to work. Such migrants typically circulate between the U.S. (where they work) and Mexico (where their families remain). Permanent or settled migrants establish a permanent residence for their families in the U.S. (Chavez, 1998; Bustamante et al., 1998; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994; Massey et al., 1987). Many authors observe that temporary migrants are mostly male, while settlers are almost evenly balanced between the genders (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994; Bustamante et al., 1998; Woodrow and Passel, 1990; Massey et al., 1987; Reyes, 1997). More important, within households women are more likely to want to settle permanently, while men often express a desire to return to their homeland (Pessar, 1999; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994; Cornelius, 1990). Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994) also argues that women are more likely to be the household members who interact with institutions such as schools, clinics, social service agencies, and other institutions that help integrate migrants into U.S. society. Similarly, Valeazuela (1999) argues that the presence of children often leads to settlement (see also Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994; Chavez, 1988; Massey et al., 1987) and that children often act as intermediaries between their parents and U.S. institutions, actively consolidating settlement. In summary, women and children are not merely indicators of settlement, they are agents of settlement.

Based on the sociological and anthropological literature connecting settlement and the formation or reunification of families, I use the term "settlement" to describe what might be better called "family settlement." Male temporary migrants could choose to settle permanently in the U.S., even in the absence of a family. Yet, the ethnographic literature tells us that this is likely to be the exception rather than the rule. Further, the settlement of families differs from the settlement of single migrants with regard to the reproduction of migrant labor.

Thus, although researchers generally agree that the INS has not managed to stop or significantly reduce undocumented migration in the short term, no such consensus exists around the possible selective effects of INS efforts with regard to settlement. The question remains whether the INS Southwest border strategy has selective effects on the patterns of migration and, if so, what they are.

Espenshade, Baraka, and Huber (1997) speculate that a family traveling together may have a harder time avoiding the increased presence of the Border Patrol. However, they also point out that a family intending to migrate permanently may be more persistent because of their great incentive to cross. Because of a lack of data, they do not attempt any empirical analysis to determine the selective effects. Espenshade and his co-authors do argue that virtually all migrants persist in attempting to cross the border until they succeed (see also Espenshade, 1994). Given the high levels of persistence they attribute to all migrants, it seems unlikely that a major difference in persistence would create different outcomes for single, temporary migrants as opposed to families of permanent migrants.

Some researchers suggest that heightened border enforcement is increasing levels of settlement (Cornelius, 2001, 1995; Johnston, 1999; Taylor et al., 1997). They argue that temporary migrants extend their stays in the U.S. to avoid the increased risk of being apprehended while attempting to reenter the U.S. As their stays extend, they may decide to bring their families to the U.S., or they may form new families. Once the nuclear family is in the U.S., the incentives for returning to Mexico decrease, and migrants are likely to begin considering their U.S. immigration to be permanent.

If Kossoudji's (1992) findings from the 1978 ENFNEU data on the relationship between border enforcement and migrants' length of stay hold in the present border enforcement regime, then her research seems to provide empirical support for this hypothesis. She found that migrants returned to Mexico by the INS (i.e., deported or allowed to "voluntarily depart") stayed in the U.S. longer

on their next trip. Massey and Espinosa (1997), however, report that the probability of apprehension has no statistically significant effect on the odds that a migrant in the U.S. will return to Mexico in a given year. Although these two findings seem contradictory, they are not. Kossoudji found that the average migrant apprehended on the preceding trip spends 307 days in the U.S., whereas his unapprehended counterpart spends an average of 258 days in the U.S. In either case, the migrant returns to Mexico within a year.

The literature (e.g., Massey et al., 1987) supports the idea that as migrants stay in the U.S. for longer durations, they are likely to eventually bring their families and settle. However, existing research contradicts the thesis that migrants respond to an increase in border enforcement by choosing to stay in the U.S. indefinitely. It is likely that having crossed the border at least once, migrants are aware that being apprehended carries little cost (Espenshade, 1994). They are not likely to believe that an increase in enforcement will prevent them from reentering the U.S.

Huspek (in this issue) argues that by "channeling" migrants through dangerous desert and mountain terrain, the Border Patrol is selecting young, fit males and selecting out women and children. Existing research on increased migrant deaths (Eschbach et al., 1999; Cornelius 2001) due to heat stroke, dehydration, and exposure makes this a plausible argument.

Without assuming any responsibility for these deaths, the Department of Justice (the INS 's parent organization) acknowledges that the areas into which the INS strategy pushes people are dangerous. The policy of the U.S. attorney's office in San Diego is to prosecute migrant smugglers who bring people into eastern Imperial County if their charges are injured or die (U.S. Border Patrol, 1999). However, this is also the "more remote area" to which the INS has attempted to "shift traffic" from San Diego to gain the "tactical advantage" (U.S. INS, 1996: 3; U.S. Border Patrol, 1999). The U.S. attorney's designation of eastern Imperial County as an especially dangerous area suggests a causal link between Operation Gatekeeper and migrant deaths due to environmental causes.

Given this apparent increase in the risk of death and injury during border crossing, how have migrants responded in their patterns of settlement? Building upon Huspek's work in this issue, my hypothesis is that Mexican households may decide to adopt or continue a strategy of temporary labor migration to protect household members other than the migrant from exposure to this risk. The gender-specific risk of sexual violence (Light, 1996a, 1996b; Falcon in this issue) may further influence household decisions to adopt strategies in which

men migrate and women remain in Mexico. Even in fieldwork before 1993, HondagneuSotelo (1994: 70) found that "migrant husbands who had not yet obtained legal status told their wives surreptitiously crossing the border was too dangerous for women." Temporary male migration provides income from labor in the U.S., but shields women and children from the increased danger. However, it also continues or creates the separation of families and discourages the settlement of families in the U.S.

In contrast to my hypothesized decrease in settlement, Cornelius (2001, 1995), Johnston (1999), and Taylor et al. (1997) expect an increase. If they are correct, we should be able to observe a decrease in the male migration rate as temporary migrants settle in the U.S. and stop crossing the border. Simultaneously, we would expect an increase in the migration of women and children as they cross to reunite with the migrant. If my hypothesis is correct, we should see a decrease in the rate of migration for women and children without a corresponding decrease in the male rate.

To test these hypotheses, I analyzed data from two surveys, the Mexican Migration Project (MMP) and the Canyon Zapata Project. From the MMP, I used data from surveys gathered in the Mexican states of San Luis Potosi and Oaxaca in 1996 and 1997. (3) Unfortunately, the survey only collects detailed migration histories for heads of household. However, the PERSFILE (Mexican Migration Project, 1999) does contain data on each household member's first and last trip to the U.S. Therefore, I have calculated the percentage of first-time undocumented migrants who are female for each year from 1980 to 1996.

The Canyon Zapata Project (1999) uses a short questionnaire to collect demographic and migration-related data from would-be border crossers in the Mexican border cities of Tijuana, Mexicali, Ciudad Juarez Nuevo Laredo, and Matamoros. From this sample, I also calculated the percentage of females for each year from 1987 to 1999. (4) Figure 2 shows the change in that percentage over time in both data sets. The MMP data show considerable variation, due largely to the much smaller numbers of migrants in each year. (5) Any conclusions drawn from such small sample sizes should be treated with caution. More recent MMP data should be available soon, which would reduce the signal-to-noise ratio in this series. Preliminarily, the MMP shows an increase in the percentage of female first-time undocumented migrants in the post-IRCA years from 24% in 1986 to a peak of 42% in 1994, the first full year of Operation Hold the Line. Between 1994 and 1996, the figure for females drops to 20%. The 1994 peak could be interpreted as an initial increase in settlement, followed by a decline to pre-IRCA levels. Alternatively, it could show that

Operation Hold the Line had no negative effect on female migration, but Operation Gatekeeper (which began in October 1994) has prevented women from entering the migrant stream.

The Canyon Zapata Project data show a slightly increasing trend from 13% female in 1987 (immediately after IRCA). The figure peaked at 18% in 1993, dropped after the INS adopted its new strategy in 1994 to a low of 2.5% in 1996, and rebounded to five percent in 1999. The Canyon Zapata data show a clear shift in the gender composition of flows of undocumented migrants.

Analysis

The post-1993 INS Southwest border enforcement regime represents a significant increase in resources and a fundamental shift in strategy toward deterrence rather than apprehension (U.S. INS, 1996). In the first three years of the new strategy, the INS spent \$2.3 billion on border enforcement activities (U.S. GAO, 1997a). Since the human costs of these efforts are also extremely high, one might hope to see commensurate success in meeting the goals of the policy.

The existing literature and my own analysis of INS apprehension statistics suggest that the INS has not succeeded in reducing the flow of undocumented migrants into the U.S. from Mexico. However, the data support INS claims of reasserting "control" over sectors of the border that were previously major routes for undocumented border crossers. This new level of control in mostly urban areas is consistent with the goal of pushing migrants into more remote areas. Despite these successes, in the short term the policy has failed if measured against the overall goal of reducing undocumented migration. Difficulties in further increasing or even maintaining staffing levels suggest that this failure will extend into the medium term, as the INS is unlikely to hire and retain the number of agents necessary to extend its "control" to the entire 2,000-mile border (U.S. GAO, 1999).

The Canyon Zapata Project and MMP data show that the gender composition of migrant flows has been significantly affected, while the overall number of undocumented migrants continues to grow. This suggests that settlement among undocumented Mexicans has decreased in the period since 1994. Nothing in my statistical analysis establishes causation between the INS Southwest border strategy and these demographic effects. However, these effects are consistent with the hypothesis that Mexican households are choosing temporary labor migration to provide access to wage labor in the U.S., while shielding most

household members from exposure to the increased risks of crossing the border.

Border Militarization as Symbolic Law

Since the unprecedented buildup of resources and personnel along the U.S. Mexico border will likely fail to reduce migration in the future, one might reasonably ask: What is going on there? A possible answer is that the entire border crackdown is an exercise in symbolic law. That is, it could be a symbolic solution to conflict over undocumented migration (see Andreas, 2000). Calavita (1984: 13), writing about contract labor laws, defines symbolic legislation as follows:

To the extent that a given piece of legislation is entirely the result of potential or actual protests and this legislation is made ineffectual in action, it is symbolic legislation. It is probably the case that some legislators are aware of the symbolic function of the given legislation and consciously support it for the symbolic effect. What is important here, however, is that symbolic legislation is created as a response to specific demands and protests, yet cannot be substantially implemented because of its potential interference with powerful interests or profit making in general.

Using different terminology, Bustamante makes the same argument about the employer-sanctions provisions of IRCA, which made it illegal to employ undocumented workers. For him, "this mechanism has the political function of giving the U.S. public the impression that something is being done to stop the flow of foreign workers, when in reality it does absolutely nothing to stop this flow or to structurally modify the demand for these workers within the United States" (Bustamante, 1997: 216, author's translation).

A symbolic law-based explanation of the INS border strategy implies that conflict exists between various interest groups over undocumented migration. This has certainly been the case historically. U.S. immigration policy has developed to mediate conflict between those who feel threatened by competition with immigrants (usually workers, merchants, and capitalists who lack access to migrant labor) and those who benefit from immigration (capitalists who employ migrants) (Calavita, 1992; 1984).

Restrictive U.S. immigration policy began with the Chinese Exclusion Act. The white labor movement in California pushed for the exclusion of Chinese laborers (Saxton, 1971). Although capitalists, especially in agriculture, opposed the law, it ultimately succeeded when labor won the support of white small

capitalists in industries such as cigars, clothing, and shoes. This sector of capitalists found itself in increasing competition with emerging Chinese small capitalists (Cheng and Bonacich, 1984).

In the years following World War II, labor vigorously opposed the Bracero Program, which had allowed temporary labor migration from Mexico between 1942 and 1964. Agribusiness interests that relied on the program for cheap labor fought to retain it (Calavita, 1992).

A renewed Bracero-like guest-worker program was a central theme in the legislative debates that eventually led to the passage of IRCA in 1986. Then Senator Pete Wilson (R-Cal.) threatened to filibuster if the bill did not contain a provision for a guest-worker program that would allow 300,000 foreign workers to come temporarily to the U.S. each year (Los Angeles Times, 1985). Agribusiness supported the amendment and organized labor opposed it. The bill that finally passed contained a general program to legalize a portion of the undocumented population and a Special Agricultural Worker (SAW) program with less stringent legalization requirements for those who had worked in agriculture. Labor won the provision outlawing the employment of undocumented workers, which Bustamante (1997) argues is symbolic. Until 1986, it had been legal under federal law to employ "illegal" immigrants. One might say, then, that the history of U.S. immigration policy has been the history of struggle between U.S. workers and capitalist s.

In the early 1990s, the U.S. economy entered a deep recession. Frustration levels ran high among many people who found themselves jobless (Los Angeles Times, 1993). In late 1993, tension was manifest at the Mexican border because on January 1, 1994, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was to go into effect. In November 1993, an opinion piece (Raspberry, 1993) attributed the following to Labor Secretary Robert Reich:

The dirty little secret buried inside the NAPTA debate is class consciousness. Low-skill, low-wage workers don't think NAFTA will help them. I think it will. The suspicion is that NAFTA will help the elite. That's not hard for me to understand. The rate and duration of unemployment for blue-collar workers have gone up in the last 15 years, and their real wages have gone down.

Thus, many working-class Americans, perhaps already concerned with migrants crossing the border and "taking American jobs," at the end of 1993 had to contend with the prospect of American jobs crossing the border into Mexico.

The importance of the political climate is exemplified by operations created by El Paso Border Patrol Chief Reyes, such as Blockade/Hold the Line, during his posting at the McAllen, Texas sector (Martin, 1993). These operations did not draw Washington's attention until October and November 1993; just before implementation of NAFTA, Operation Blockade caught presidential attention and became the basis for a border-wide strategy.

Despite its commitment to NAFTA, the Clinton administration addressed the polity's anxieties regarding undocumented migration, albeit symbolically. Before 1994, critics described the border as "out of control." Bustamante (1990) contends that Republicans introduced the phrase, "We have lost control of our borders," into political debate by criticizing President Carter's handling of the Mariel boatlift (from Cuba). Subsequently, the concept was applied to the U.S.-Mexico border. The author of an opinion piece in the San Diego Union-Tribune describes the border in pre-Gatekeeper San Diego as follows:

When [then-San Diego Sector Chief] de la Vina was assigned to this border six years ago, it was totally out of control. The few agents at work were pinned down by illegals on the Mexican side barraging them with rocks. Two thousand to 3,000 illegals were brazenly running over every night, and drug smugglers were driving back and forth across dusty open roads as if to a Sunday picnic (Geyer, 1994).

The INS's description of its strategy reflects this view, with one "key objective" being to "regain control of major entry corridors along the border that for too long have been controlled by illegal immigrants and smugglers" (U.S. INS, 1996:3).

These quotes convey not so much a border out of control, as one controlled by foreigners. Although the INS has not stopped undocumented migration, it has created a sense of control in areas previously perceived as controlled by "illegal immigrants and smugglers," namely San Diego and El Paso. Its plan to shift traffic to more remote areas thus gives the INS a tactical and a political advantage. By shifting the flow away from high-visibility urban areas to remote ones, the INS's lack of control at the border becomes invisible to most people. This strategy has drawn fire from rural Arizona residents, who unlike their urban counterparts in San Diego and El Paso, see the border as increasingly out of control (U.S.A. Today, 2000; Arizona Daily Star, 2000).

If it is important for the policy to appear effective, then urban areas would be the logical place to concentrate resources. This is consistent with the argument

that the INS border strategy is symbolic law. It creates, for the majority, the appearance of a border under control, while in reality, undocumented migration continues unabated.

Border Militarization As De Facto "Guest Worker" Program

Although the symbolic law hypothesis is a coherent explanation of policy developments at the U.S.-Mexico border, another hypothesis points to an even deeper disjunction between the policy's stated goals and its actual effects. Symbolic law serves to temporarily resolve conflict between the interests of capital and those who perceive themselves to be harmed by the unhindered operation of capital. This is accomplished through legislation that, on its face, addresses anticapitalist concerns, but through loopholes or a lack of effective enforcement allows business as usual.

Another possibility is law that claims to address anticapitalist demands, but in reality works in capital's interest. Articulated at the end of a recession that led to high levels of unemployment, the Southwest border strategy sought to address concerns of the U.S. working class over competition with Mexicans. Mexican workers were viewed as potential competition for two reasons. First, the border was about to become more "open" to trade and investment because of NAFTA. International trade theorists believed this would produce a "leveling" of wages in both countries, meaning a reduction in U.S. wages (Leamer, 1993). Moreover, many NAFTA critics, most notably Reform Party presidential candidate, H. Ross Perot, predicted that the liberalization of investment and trade would lead to an exodus of manufacturing facilities (and thus jobs) from the U.S. to Mexico. Second, because of the perception that the INS had lost control of the border to undocumented migration, U.S. workers feared competition from undocumented migrants within the United States. The administration chose to deal with this latter perception.

The Southwest border strategy has as its stated goal to "deter illegal immigration into the United States" (U.S. INS, 1996: 3). This directly addresses the fears of U.S. workers over competition, which is reduced as fewer migrants enter the country. Yet, the data suggest little or no reduction in the number of migrants, only a reduction in female undocumented migration relative to male undocumented migration. This implies that since the Southwest border strategy went into effect in 1994, settlement has decreased relative to temporary labor migration. Although the effects of such a shift and their importance may not be obvious, they warrant closer examination.

It is troubling that border militarization fails to stop undocumented migration, instead channeling it into a pattern of temporary labor migration. This is so because a policy intended to protect U.S. workers from competing with undocumented migrants is functioning more like the infamous Bracero program, which ended only after extensive lobbying by organized labor and its allies (Calavita, 1992). An agricultural guest-worker program, Bracero allowed legal temporary labor migration. Begun as a World War II effort to address wartime labor shortages, the Bracero program continued until Congress terminated it in 1964. Since then, much smaller, more closely regulated guest-worker programs have continued to exist. Agricultural employers, however, have often criticized the restrictions and argued for a larger, more flexible program (see, e.g., Fresno Bee, 1998; Los Angeles Times, 1985). More recently, Mexican President Vicente Fox called for a new guest-worker program (Washington Post, 2001).

Labor unions and Chicano civil rights groups oppose such proposals (Dallas Morning News, 2001; Cockcroft, 1982). Perhaps surprisingly, those advocating a larger, less-regulated guest-worker program include prominent figures more commonly associated with anti-immigrant policymaking. As noted, then-Senator Pete Wilson championed a vastly expanded guest-worker program in 1985 (Los Angeles Times, 1985). Despite his support for California's anti-immigrant Proposition 187, (6) he has not reconsidered allowing hundreds of thousands of Mexican workers enter the country to work temporarily in agriculture. In the same speech in which he called on the federal government to pass a "federal version of Prop 187," Governor Wilson pushed for an expanded guest-worker program to meet the needs of agricultural employers (Los Angeles Times, 1994).

Why do anti-immigrant politicians like Wilson support guest-worker programs? Why a guest-worker program, rather than a legalization program for undocumented immigrants already here? The comments of a Vidalia onion grower on his preference for Mexican workers and his support for a new guest-worker program offer insight:

If we had a bunch of American workers, we'd have to hire someone like a personnel director to deal with all the problems. The people we have now, they come and they work. They don't have kids to pick up from school or to take to the doctor. They don't have child support issues. They don't ask to leave early for this and that. They don't call in sick. If you say to them, "Today we need to work 10 hours," they don't say anything. The problems you have with American workers are endless (Chicago Tribune, 1998).

This grower's focus on the benefits of workers without their families present points us to a key distinction between temporary and permanent migration.

The Economic Effects of Temporary Migration

The separation of the worker and his or her family is fundamental to an analysis of the economic aspects of temporary labor migration. The worker is separated from his family and is employed in another country with a distinct economy. Neoclassical models of immigration decision-making assume that wages are higher in the receiving country. If the wages were the same or lower than those in the sending country, the migrant would have no reason to move (Massey et al., 1993). However, Djaji's (1989) economic model of a guest-worker policy that allows temporary legal labor migration suggests that temporary migrants' decisions are not based on a comparison of real wages in both countries. Rather, the choice of a temporary migrant from a country with a lower cost of living may take into account the purchasing power of the wage earned in the receiving country and the purchasing power of the portion he can save to spend in his home country. Such a choice is rational in that his wages will purchase more in his home country, where the cost of living is lower. (8)

Hanson and Spilimbergo's (1999) study of Mexico and the United States used INS apprehension data to model the effects on migration flows of enforcement efforts and relative wages. They found that apprehensions were more closely correlated with the ratio of U.S. wages relative to the Mexican consumer price index (CPI) than with the ratio of U.S. wages to the U.S. CPI. Mexican undocumented migrants apparently expect to spend a significant portion of their U.S. earnings in Mexico. This is consistent with Djaji's model and the findings of Massey and Parrado (1994), who estimate that approximately two billion dollars are remitted or transferred annually from Mexicans in the United States to Mexico.

These studies are important to understanding the economic distinctions between patterns of migration. Temporary labor migration implies the separation of worker and family. Massey and Parrado's study found that 65% of the "migradollars" returned to Mexico by migrants were spent on consumption. "Family maintenance" and housing accounted for a combined 58% of migradollars. However, in the case of settled migrants, whose families have joined them in the U.S., these costs are paid in the U.S., where they are higher.

Burawoy (1976) observes that systems of migrant labor differ from normal capitalist production in that the reproduction of the labor force is split. He

divides the costs of reproducing the labor force into two categories, the maintenance of the worker and the reproduction of future generations of workers. Meillassoux (1981:100) argues that labor power is composed of three elements: "Sustenance of the workers during periods of employment (i.e., reconstitution of immediate labor power); maintenance during periods of unemployment (due to stoppages, ill-health, etc.); replacement by breeding of offspring." Demographers make a similar distinction in terms of the dependent population. Young children and the elderly segments of the population are assumed to be dependent on society (generally kin or the state), while working-age people are assumed to support themselves.

In any of these systems of classification, only the costs of reconstitution of Mexican temporary labor migration must be paid in the U.S. All of the replacement costs and much or all of the maintenance costs are paid in the cheaper Mexican economy (Wilson, 2000). Marx argues in *Capital* (1970: 170-171) that it is these costs that determine the value of labor-power, that which laborers exchange for wages:

The value of labour-power is determined, as in the case of every other commodity, by the labour-time necessary for the production, and consequently also the reproduction, of this special article. So far as it has value, it represents no more than a definite quantity of the average labour of society incorporated in it.

In theoretical terms, because the temporary migrant's labor power costs less to maintain and reproduce, the value of the temporary migrant's labor power is less than that of the settled migrant (independent of immigration status) or that of the native-born worker. The settled migrant and the sojourner must make enough money to support themselves and their families, that is, to pay the costs of reconstitution, maintenance, and replacement. Because the temporary migrant pays a portion of these costs in the cheaper Mexican economy, he can afford to make less than the settled migrant does and still support his family.

This difference, in what Marx (1970: 173) calls "the minimum limit of the value of labour-power," is critically important in the case of undocumented workers. These workers, given their "illegal" status, have little recourse to assistance from the state in enforcing laws meant to guarantee minimum wages and working conditions. Even when these laws do technically offer undocumented workers protection, few are willing to seek the help of the state, given their presence in violation of immigration law.

Those who employ undocumented migrants are well aware of the power imbalance created by their workers' immigration status. Says one onion grower in reference to the possibility of "troublemakers" in his work force: "If a bad one slipped in, we'd just call the INS to take them away. We don't tolerate crazy people" (Chicago Tribune, 1998).

Durand, Massey, and Parrado argue that rather than penalizing those who employ undocumented workers, the "employer sanctions" provision of IRCA has benefited employers by creating a rationale for wage discrimination:

Among foreigners, post-IRCA wage discrimination was especially severe against undocumented migrants. Whereas before IRCA undocumented migrants earned the same wages as documented migrants...afterward undocumented migrants earned wages that were 28 percent less than those earned by documented migrants.... As wages deteriorated for undocumented migrants in the wake of IRCA, so did working conditions, with higher proportions earning wages below the legal minimum and larger numbers working under irregular circumstances (1999: 528).

Thus, a law that sought to outlaw employer hiring of undocumented workers has outlawed the workers themselves, decreasing their power and further reducing their wages.

Similarly, the rights of undocumented immigrants to join unions are limited by their status. In 1984, the Supreme Court ruled in *Sure-Tan v. National Labor Relations Board* that the reinstatement of workers who were retaliated against for their union activity was conditioned on reentering the country lawfully. The INS had apprehended the workers in question in response to a call from the employer. In his partial dissent, Justice Brennan writes:

The Court never addresses the disturbing anomaly it creates by holding in Parts II and III that undocumented aliens are "employees" within the meaning of the [National Labor Relations] Act, and thereby entitled to all the protections that come with that status, but then finding in Part IV that these same aliens are effectively deprived of any remedy, despite a clear violation of the NLRA by their employer (*Sure-Tan v. NLRB*, 1984:911).

The decision Justice Brennan describes here is still the law of the land with regard to remedies for undocumented workers. However, a recent case involving undocumented migrants employed by a Minnesota hotel was resolved on terms more favorable to the workers. They received a settlement for discrimination

and seven of the nine were allowed to stay in the U.S. for two years. This case does not disturb the precedent set in *Sure-Tan v. NLRB*. The discrimination claim was settled out of court and the INS exercised its administrative discretion to "defer action" on the removal of the seven workers (Minneapolis Star Tribune, 2000). Such use of administrative discretion is less likely under a Republican administration. Until the Supreme Court overturns *Sure-Tan* or Congress passes a law explicitly giving undocumented workers equal access to remedies, employers will continue to use undocumented workers' lack of legal power against them. Indeed, Parenti (1999) argues that one of the key social control functions of militarized immigration enforcement is labor control.

Undocumented workers thus have great difficulty in improving their wages and working conditions through government intervention or union activity. Moreover, current INS policies only increase the powerlessness of undocumented workers vis-a-vis their employers. In the context of this lack of power within the labor market and the legal system, the difference in the minimum limit of the value of labor power of temporary migrants is important. (9) Undocumented workers are much more likely than are those with legal documentation to be working at or near this minimum.

Accounts of the Bracero program show a similar situation of low wages, poor working conditions, and selective deportation or blacklisting of workers demanding the rights guaranteed them by their contracts (Calavita, 1992; Anderson, 1963; Galarza, 1964). Whether the system of temporary labor migration is an official guest-worker program or a de facto one, the impacts reach beyond the migrants themselves. Remember that border militarization is framed as a response to concerns of U.S. citizens over competition with Mexicans. Given the low education levels (10) of most Mexican migrants, there is little basis for most U.S. workers to fear direct competition. Those most likely to be affected by migration are previous immigrants and others with similar skill levels, such as high-school dropouts (Stalker, 2000). However, the possibility exists that wages in the lowskill sectors where undocumented migrants work may affect wages more broadly.

Over the long term, employer access to relatively cheap migrant labor allows them to maintain low wages in low-skill positions. For example, according to the National Agricultural Worker Survey, average agricultural wages in 1998 were \$6.18 per hour. Adjusted for inflation, they have declined from \$6.89 in 1989 in constant 1998 dollars (U.S. Department of Labor, 2000). Such stagnant or declining wages in sectors that rely heavily on undocumented immigrants may limit wage inflation in other, higher-skill sectors. Piore (1979) argues that

wages have a social meaning apart from their function in the labor market. They signify the relative status assigned to various occupations. Thus, onion growers, for example, might be able to attract a sufficient nonmigrant work force by improving wages and working conditions, but this would have an impact on other occupations. Those in higher-status occupations would, according to Piore, demand higher wages, so that their wages would continue to reflect their higher status. Therefore, the use of migrant labor in low-wage, low-status jobs prevents structural inflation throughout the status ladder.

A 1993 survey of small and medium-sized enterprises in the Republic of Korea by the Korea Labor Institute and the International Labor Organization found that employers chose immigrant labor for the reasons postulated by Piore:

Many firms complained of being unable to attract Korean workers, yet they were reluctant to raise wages for jobs at the bottom of the wage ladder since this would cause all wages to rise. Instead, many chose to employ legal or undocumented foreign workers at a little over half the wages of Korean workers (Stalker, 2000).

For the most part, U.S. employers are not so frank. In sectors like agriculture, employers routinely complain of "labor shortages." Like Korean employers, they seem unwilling to attract workers by improving conditions. U.S. agribusiness instead relies heavily on undocumented migrants (U.S. GAO, 1997b) and for at least the last 20 years has pushed for a new guest-worker program (Cockcroft, 1982).

Mexican workers in the U.S. are not inherently "cheap labor." Rather, U.S. immigration policy structures the conditions of their participation in the labor market. Two measures that claim to protect U.S. workers from competition actually harm their interests. The first is employer sanctions, which has decreased the power of undocumented workers in their work places and in the labor market. The second is the INS Southwest border strategy, which seems to push migrants into a pattern of temporary rather than permanent migration, with the consequences described above. Increasingly, the result is a system of undocumented temporary labor migration that approximates guest-worker proposals that agribusiness has long lobbied for in Congress without success.

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Robert and Colleen Haas Scholars Program. The author also wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Dr. Jorge Santibanez, and Dr. Jorge Bustamante for providing data collected by El Colegio de la Frontera Norte, including the Canyon Zapata Project data used here. This article benefited from the further assistance, support, and feedback of a great number of people, including Alex Saragoza, Cynthia Schragger, German Vega, Rafael Alarcon, Melinda Swanson, Judith Wise, Nicholas De Genova, George Tapinos, and an anonymous reviewer.

NOTES

- (1.) The INS fiscal year runs from October to September.
- (2.) This pattern is also referred to as cyclical, circular, or sojourner migration.
- (3.) For a detailed description of the MMP methodology, visit the MMP (www.pop.upenn.edu/mexmig/) or see Massey and Espinosa (1997).
- (4.) Canyon Zapata Project (CZP) data for 1999 are for a partial year. Unless women migrate on a different seasonal cycle than men, this should not affect the percentage of females. CZP data include fixed weights based on survey city. Because flows have shifted in response to the INS strategy, I did not use these fixed weights. A separate analysis for each city found a similar relationship. For further details on the Canyon Zapata Project methodology, see Bustamante (1997, 1990).
- (5.) The total number of migrants is less than 30 for the years 1980 to 1985 and 1987. The number of female migrants never exceeds 25 and is as low as two in early years.
- (6.) California's Proposition 187 required schools and health care and social service providers to verify the immigration status of their students and clients, and to deny services to and report those they suspected of lacking the proper documents. The major provisions were ruled unconstitutional in federal court.
- (7.) Real wages measure the wagepaid (the nominal wage) and the purchasing power of that wage. It is a measure of wages relative to the cost of living, as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI).
- (8.) I focus here on wage effects. Another economic concern is the fiscal costs of immigrants: whether they receive more in government services than they

contribute in taxes. A National Research Council (Edmonston and Smith, 1997) study evaluated the fiscal effects of immigration. The study found a net fiscal gain for immigrants who arrived in their working years. However, this net gain is the sum of losses at the state and local levels and a larger gain at the federal level. In the highest immigration states (e.g., California), the state and local costs are greater than the federal contributions. On the whole, these fiscal effects are not particularly large and would probably be most effectively addressed through transfers from the federal government to state and local governments.

(9.) We have strong theoretical reasons for believing that temporary undocumented workers should earn less than their settled counterparts, but I am not aware of any empirical study that addresses this issue. It is an important direction for future research.

(10.) It is on average 7.7 years for men and 8.3 years for women, based on calculations from census data (Edmonston and Smith, 1997: 187-189).

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[Figure 1 omitted]

[Figure 2 omitted]

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