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SOCIAL SERVICE USE AMONG ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS

by

Danton Lynx Heinemann

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I	Introduction.....	6
	1.1 Statement of the Problem.....	8
	1.2 Hypothesis.....	10
	1.3 Migration.....	11
	1.4 Organization of the Study.....	13
CHAPTER II	International Migration Theory Within The Context Of The U.S.-Mexican Experience.....	15
	2.1 Economic Migration factors.....	16
	2.2 Social Migration Factors.....	17
	2.3 Conclusion.....	19
CHAPTER III	U.S. Recruitment Practices.....	20
	3.1 Economic and Political Pressures.....	21
	3.2 Institutionalization of Migration.....	23
	3.3 Institutional Support For Illegal Immigrants.....	28
	3.4 Conclusion.....	29
CHAPTER IV	Literature Review On The Impact Of Illegal Immigration On Social Service Institutions In The U.S.....	30
	4.1 San Diego County Findings.....	31
	4.2 Los Angeles County studies.....	35
	4.3 Macro Study of Illegal Immigration affects.....	37
	4.4 Texas Studies.....	39
	4.5 Lack of Consensus.....	40
	4.6 Working Conditions of Illegal Immigrants.....	41
	4.7 Tax Contributions.....	42
	4.8 Conclusion.....	43
CHAPTER V	Methodology Used To Obtain Qualitative Information.....	44
	5.1 Interview Locations.....	45
	5.2 Sampling Techniques.....	45
CHAPTER VI	Research Findings.....	48
	6.1 Demographics.....	48
	6.2 Medical Findings.....	49

TABLE OF CONTENTS

6.3 Tax Payments.....	5 1
6.4 Property Tax and Educational Use.....	5 2
6.5 Proposition 187.....	5 4
6.6 Qualitative findings.....	5 5
6.7 Summary of Findings.....	5 7
Table 6.1 Medical Use by Sample.....	58
Table 6.2 Taxes Paid by Sample.....	58
 CHAPTER VII Conclusions.....	 6 1
7.1 Summary and Conclusions.....	6 3
7.2 Limitations of the study.....	6 5
7.3 Social Service Access.....	6 6
Questionnaires.....	68- 69
 WORKS CITED.....	 7 0

ABSTRACT**SOCIAL SERVICE USE AMONG ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS**

This thesis paper researches the impact of illegal immigration on U.S. social services. The study focuses on information gathered from a group of illegal Mexican immigrants who have lived and worked in the U.S. The sample of illegal Mexican immigrants was attracted to the U.S. primarily for economic reasons. The U.S. economic system has directly and indirectly attracted Mexican workers into America for over a 100 years. The U.S. economy has directly attracted Mexican workers through recruitment practices employed by several U.S. business sectors. Indirectly, the powerful U.S. economy has historically attracted Mexicans north because the U.S.'s economy offers more economic opportunities than the Mexican economy. Illegal Mexican immigrants' presence in the U.S. economy has led to the increased use of U.S. social services and as a result of this extra use, a burden has been put on several social service institutions. To what extent this burden affects the U.S. economy is still not clear because illegal immigrants pay U.S. taxes that may compensate the system for this extra use.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

International migration occurs all over the world and is most commonly induced by economic factors. Many people emigrate from developing countries to developed countries in order to better their economic opportunities. At the same time, developed countries induce migration from undeveloped nations in order to recruit cheap labor. In this way industrialized nations fill labor needs that the native population is hesitant to fill (Piore, 1976). This is most evident in the agricultural and garment industries. In some European countries immigration policy has allowed the entry of "guest" workers to fill labor force deficits that exist in agriculture and manufacturing (Castles, 1987). The United States government has historically allowed and participated in the recruitment of Mexican labor in order to fill labor shortages in parts of the U.S. (Papademetriou et al., 1989). This practice is not technically permitted under U.S. immigration law (Corwin, 1973) but allowed by the U.S. government because of labor shortages in several economic sectors.

This recruitment, in combination with the strong U.S. economy, has resulted in migration from Mexico to the United States. The hiring of illegal Mexican workers into the U.S. economy has allowed many businesses to continue profitably competing in a global market. Although Mexican labor has helped develop several U.S. economic

sectors and has kept them competitive, especially agribusiness, and garment and service industries (Cockcroft,1986), politicians focus on the negative aspects of illegal Mexican immigration (Brownstein,1993).

In addition, migration from Mexico to the U.S. has created social problems resulting from the use of social services by undocumented immigrants (Stewart, 1992). Illegal immigrants' use of social services, especially educational and medical, has caused public concern in the U.S. This public and political concern is pronounced during economic downturns or election years. Also, illegal immigrants are accused of creating many social problems in local communities where they live and work in the U.S. (Chavez, 1992).

Researchers often try to determine whether the undocumented population is beneficial or detrimental to social service systems in economic terms (North and Houstoun, 1976 and Stewart, 1992). Such a demonstration is most often performed through the analysis of statistical data. This approach, though, may overlook positive benefits of illegal labor. For example, illegal immigration has allowed the U.S. agricultural sector to keep its costs down. This has translated into lower consumer prices for many agricultural products (Johnson & Ogle, 1978), with a resulting higher standard of living for the U.S. population as a whole.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Illegal immigration from Mexico into the United States is becoming an increasingly polarized issue, particularly in the border states of California, Arizona and Texas. Some U.S. politicians have suggested that the flow of undocumented immigrants is the main reason for the rising costs and deficits incurred for social and educational services (Brownstein, 1993).

However, this illegal immigration has been encouraged by the U.S. government and U.S. business interests who desire cheap labor (Papademetriou et al. 1989, Hansen, 1979, Bach, 1978, Stoddard, 1976). The degree to which labor migration to the U.S. from the south is encouraged has followed the fluctuations in the U.S. economy and the availability of native labor (Samora, 1971).

The need to study the dynamics of illegal Mexican immigrants use of U.S. public services is increasing. This is due, in part, to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). It has been predicted that NAFTA will displace Mexican farmers because the provisions for this agreement end Mexican tariffs on U.S. grains, thus underpricing many Mexican farmers and displacing them. (Hufbauer & Schott, 1993). Many believe that this displaced Mexican population will illegally seek work in the U.S. (Cornelius and Martin, 1993)

An increase in illegal immigration could lead to increased governmental funding along the U.S.-Mexican border which is already evident in light of the initiation of several Immigration and

Naturalization Service (INS) programs. These include Operation Hold the Line in Texas, Operation Gatekeeper in California and Operation Safeguard in Arizona (Migration News, 1995). These programs are meant to secure the U.S.'s southern border thereby reducing the perceived burden of illegal immigration on social services (Clinton, 1995).

The cost of securing this border, though, is extremely high. For instance, President Clinton has asked for "a billion more dollars to fight illegal immigration... under the budgets already passed we've added 1,000 new border patrol agents just in the Southwest" (Clinton, 1995:2). This level of funding warrants more thorough studies on the impact of illegal immigration on the U.S. economy. Specifically, studies are necessary to determine the prevalence of social and educational service use by undocumented immigrants residing in the U.S. Also, studies should examine whether INS increases in INS spending are effective in curtailing the movement of illegal immigrants across the U.S.-Mexican border

The effects of illegal Mexican immigrants on the U.S. social and economic structure is very complex. As explained by Sidney Weintraub,

[These] effects are most readily analyzed by separately examining economic, social, and political outcomes, but in reality they form a seamless web. Some effects are reasonably clear. The ability of Mexicans to emigrate did ease social pressures in Mexico, and the availability of foreign workers did permit the harvesting of perishable crops at the lowest possible cost to

growers and consumers. Other effects are more speculative. (Weintraub, 1990:187).

Many of these effects do not lend themselves to ready analysis because of the clandestine nature of illegal immigration and the complexity of the possible social effects. In addition, studies of illegal immigration are hindered by what Jorge Bustamante calls "racial chauvinism" (Bustamante,1981). Bustamante explains that studies on illegal immigration create a "...complicated atmosphere characterized by sentiments of ethnic chauvinism and resentment [making] it difficult to analyze the complexities involved in the whole question of undocumented Mexican immigration with some objectivity, especially the benefits..." (Bustamante, 1981:97). Biased reporting on this subject is very common and illustrates contradictions that are glaring but repeatedly made. For example, in The Dilemma of American Immigration, it is stated that, "commentators claim both that new immigrants will take all the jobs and that they will thrive on welfare, and the contradiction is rarely pointed out" (Cafferty et al., 1993:4).

1.2 Hypothesis

The longer an illegal immigrant remains in the U.S., the more likely that individual will use social services. For this study, illegal Mexican immigrants' use of medical services will be the main determinant in demonstrating the validity of the hypothesis.

The independent variables for this study include migration and duration of time spent in the U.S. The dependent variable is medical

service use by the illegal immigrant population. Illegal Mexican migration can be operationalized by economic indicators from both countries. Operationalizing the independent variable for this study will encompass securing a representation of both long and short term illegal residents in order to make a comparison of their use of public services.

1.3 Migration

Many illegal Mexican workers are attracted to the U.S. because employers there desire cheap labor and are willing to hire illegal immigrants. Wayne Cornelius and Phillip Martin illustrate the ability of U.S. employers to attract Mexicans in their paper "The Uncertain Connection" when they state that you have "to recognize that one reason for increased emigration from rural Mexico during the 1980s was that the demand for rural Mexican labor in the United States expanded significantly" (Cornelius & Martin, 1992:491). Cheap illegal labor helps to keep labor costs competitive within a world market system (Papademetriou et al., 1989)

Consequently, undocumented aliens' presence within social service institutions will continue as long as their labor is desired and needed in the U.S. Historically, illegal Mexican labor migration has been recruited into a variety of U.S. economic sectors that have included the railroad, steel and the agricultural industries (Piore, 1979). Many researchers point out that the historical practice of U.S. recruitment of Mexican workers has institutionalized northern migration patterns in Mexico (Cardoso,1980; Levander,1995).

Consequently, the presence of illegal immigrants in U.S. social service institutions are a by-product of an economic system able to hire cheap labor. For instance, in California 40 percent of the farm workers are said to be Mexican born immigrants and in Los Angeles County 1 in 3 manufacturing jobs is filled by a Mexican born immigrant (Vernez, 1993).

Illegal Mexican labor migration has been occurring for more than a hundred years in the U.S. (Reisler, 1976). Illegal Mexican migration patterns to the U.S. have followed fluctuations in the U.S. economy, increasing during economic upturns (Bach, 1978). This also becomes apparent when looking at Border Patrol enforcement along the southern border of the U.S.; it has historically increased when the economy is sluggish and decreased during economic upturns (Samora, 1971). This migration process is best summed up by Niles Hansen when explaining that laborers from Mexico have:

...played a highly significant part in the economic development of the U.S. Southwest. Unfortunately, American knowledge of this contribution has been obscured by lack of knowledge... During periods when U.S. labor markets have been tight, Mexican workers have not only been welcomed but also actively recruited. However, during recessions they have been perceived as a threat to unemployed American workers... (Hansen, 1979:39).

This lack of public knowledge has allowed politicians to sensationalize and distort negative aspects of illegal Mexican immigration (Miller, 1993).

Many U.S. citizens assume that only conditions in Mexico induce northern Mexican migration (Stoddard, 1976), thus blaming Mexicans for their decision to migrate past their northern border. The U.S. Department of Labor has shown that there have been shortages of workers in the U.S. beginning in 1986 (Papademetriou et al., 1989), ironically the year the U.S. Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) passed. These labor shortages are predicted to increase over the next decade (Papademetriou et al., 1989); this strongly suggests that a continued illegal Mexican flow of labor will be required to maintain a competitive economy in the U.S. (Bustamante, 1989).

1.4 Organization of the Study

Chapter II reviews migration theory within the context of the Mexican experience in order to illustrate the dynamics of the migratory process.

Chapter III is a literature review of U.S. labor recruitment practices of Mexicans to secure both legal and illegal Mexican labor.

Chapter IV is a review of the use of social services by undocumented workers. This chapter reveals a lack of a consensus concerning the level of impact that illegal immigrants place on social services.

Chapter V focuses on the methodology used to find and interview illegal Mexican workers during field research.

Chapter VI will sum up field work findings, discuss the number of interviewees and their demographic make-up along with a sample of the study's questionnaire. Findings will be presented with regard to

the percentage of social service use found among the sample and the percentage of tax payments made by the sample. The sample's length of residence in the U.S. will be used to measure the validity of the hypothesis.

Chapter VII has some final remarks concerning the study's sample and the literature reviews. This will be followed by a discussion on the limitations of this study. Finally, some remarks on the need to provide some basic health services to an immigration population that will continue to be present in the U.S.

CHAPTER II

INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION THEORY WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE U.S.-MEXICAN EXPERIENCE

This chapter examines migration theory as it relates to Mexico in order to demonstrate the basic theory behind Mexico's international migratory phenomenon.

The chapter is divided into three sections: the first section discusses the social make-up of the average migrant and the forces driving migration; the second section reviews a common economic theory of migration that has been applied to the international migration phenomenon; in the third section, economic migration theory will be compared and contrasted with a social migration theory. Finally, a summary on migration theory as it relates to this study will be presented.

The people most likely to migrate have been shown to be the most goal-oriented people of a region with "high out-migration"; they tend to have a higher level of education than others in the region and have access to a wide social network (Todaro, 1976). Most studies that examine the cause of migration have emphasized the economic factors that create a migratory pattern (Todaro, 1976). Although, economic conditions are the cause of migration in many cases, there are other important social factors that are intertwined in economic

factors. These social factors can be as influential as the economic factors that influence people to migrate.

2.1 Economic Migration factors

The economic-based migration theory most commonly used to describe Mexican migration to the United States involves the push-pull theories (Weintraub,1990). The factors that push a worker to leave his homeland may include unemployment, low wages and increasing rural population density as is the case in Mexico (Bairoch, 1988). The factors that pull these workers to the United States include increased employment opportunities and higher wages. This is best exemplified by J. Graig Jenkins when he says, "What pull the U.S. exerts [to induce migration] is through offering wages consistently double or more those prevailing in Mexico" (Jenkins, 1977:186). The dynamics of push-pull migration theory are summed up by Dean Williams when he writes:

Normally the individual will weigh the advantages of the region in which he lives against those of the land to which he would go, and, if other considerations do not prevent, will decide whether to go or stay according to which place he thinks offers him the best opportunity. Generally speaking, it is a combination of "push" and "pull" which motivates the immigrant. (Williams,1973:7).

The push-pull migration theory explains the process of migration as though the individual is only influenced by economic factors and pressures. This is even more clear when looking at an economist's view of migration. For example, Julian Simon reduces this

phenomenon, "...to the proposition that the expected gains from the move outweigh the expected costs of the move. That is, the market value of the individual must be greater in one place than another, over and beyond transaction costs" (Simon, 1989:15). This view of the migration process can be deceiving if applied to a whole population of potential migrants in Mexico. In other words, purely economic influences do not explain the social factors that also play into a person's decision making process.

Push-pull economic models of migration illustrate the economics behind migration but fail to explain political, social and psychological factors that may affect a person's decision to migrate (Stoddard, 1976). Also, push-pull migration theories fail to explain why some people choose to migrate and others do not, though, their situation in the sending country may be similar (Weintraub, 1990). Thus, push-pull migration theory fails to explain this phenomenon in a social context. There are social factors that need to be considered that influence peoples decision making process. These social factors can be influential in an individuals decision to migrate or remain in his/her homeland (Papademetriou & Martin, 1989).

2.2 Social Migration Factors

Several migration theories take into account social factors as they relate to migration. One theory, "the household approach" to migration, shows how the makeup of a household can influence an individuals decision making process (García España, 1992). In some rural areas of Mexico the household unit plays a primary role in

migration (Dinerman, 1978). In these regions a member of the household is sent to the U.S. in order to maintain a family's social acceptance within the home community.¹ Ina R. Dinerman explains that the rural household in Mexico can cause a member of the household to migrate because:

...social mechanisms are the primary means of ensuring a household's economic viability, it is important for the household to maintain social respect within a community. A loss of confidence can spell social isolation and poverty. What can an individual household do when it anticipates an inability to fulfill its social obligations? For some households, migration of one of its members to the United States represents an appropriate solution to the problem of replenishing cash supplies. (Dinerman, 1978:496).

Although, economic factors are still the impetus that cause migration, Dinerman shows that social factors need to be examined in order to understand the mechanism that causes migration. It can be seen here that household factors in rural Mexico, as shown by the household approach to migration, illustrates that social pressure from the household unit can influence peoples decision to migrate.

The significance that the rural Mexican household has in forming a social mechanism that causes migration is summed up by Juan España. He states that, "In addition to acting as sustenance units, domestic units are socializing agents; they transmit cultural values and norms which influence who migrates and why. In rural

¹The "sending" region where households have been shown to play a role in the migratory process as described by Ina R. Dinerman is illustrated in Across the Border, (Institute of Governmental Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 1981)

areas of developing countries migration... is an important strategy of households". (García España, 1992:21). Consequently, the household approach allows an understanding of the migration process in social terms since these social factors relate to and are intertwined with economic ones. Thus, economics are a factor within this approach as they relate to the social influences and pressures that creates migration.

2.3 Conclusion

The economic and social migration theories presented in this chapter help to explain how social and economic factors are intertwined in migration. While economic migration theory gets at one of the major factors that cause migration; this theory does not show the social factors that exert pressures above and beyond economic considerations. To fully understand the migration phenomenon within the Mexican context it is helpful to look at both economic and social factors.

CHAPTER III

U.S. RECRUITMENT PRACTICES

This chapter examines the historical factors that influenced northern Mexican migration into the U.S. Influential factors can be seen in both Mexico and the U.S. In Mexico high unemployment and economic recession have helped to induce Mexicans to migrate into the U.S. In turn, some U.S. business sectors have historically helped to induce and perpetuate the flow of illegal Mexican immigrants into the U.S.

This review will demonstrate the historical events that economically and socially entrenched illegal Mexican workers into U.S. society. Naturally illegal immigrants' presence in U.S. society came to include their use of social services as this illegal population incurred health and educational needs while working for U.S. employers. Social service use by undocumented immigrants' is a side effect of the continued desire of U.S. businesses to employ illegal labor. Consequently, as long as U.S. employers are willing to hire illegal immigrants', there will be an extra burden placed on social services by this illegal population.

This chapter is divided into four parts. The first explains the dynamics behind the availability of illegal Mexican labor in the U.S. and the economic and political pressures that regulated this illegal flow of labor; the second, explains the historical events that helped

to institutionalized Mexican northern migration; the third will discuss U.S. institutions that provided support to illegal immigrants; and the chapter ends with some concluding remarks on recruitment.

3.1 Economic and Political Pressures

The influential power that some U.S. business sectors exert on the U.S. government can be seen within the context of securing cheap labor from Mexico (Levander, 1995). First, U.S. business sectors, such as agribusiness, have had the ability and power to consistently circumvent U.S. immigration law. This trend began with the Alien Contract Labor Law of 1885 that prohibited recruitment of foreign labor (Cardoso, 1980); it continued into the 1980s with a loophole in the IRCA legislation that makes it possible for U.S. employers to avoid heavy fines if caught employing illegal workers². (SourceMex, 1988). Also, the U.S. agricultural industry has had the 1885 law waived for the Bracero program from 1942 to 1964, and a provision within IRCA allows agriculturists to recruit foreign labor to work within this industry. (Montwieler, 1987).

The availability of illegal labor in the U.S. has always been contingent on a relatively open border, thus allowing undocumented workers to enter. The reasons for maintaining an open southern border in the U.S. is summed up by Sergio Diaz-Briquets when explaining that industrialized nations:

² Under IRCA employers can hire persons who are able to produce work permits regardless of the authenticity of the work permit. This has allowed U.S. employers to hire illegal aliens with fake work permits. For example, see SourceMex, 1988. "Effects of New Immigration Legislation Declines: Flow of Mexican Workers to U.S. Continues Unabated."

...receiving undocumented immigrants have been prone to ignore or to pay only lip service to these flows, as long as there was the perception that the benefits exceeded the costs. When receiving countries have acted, they have generally done so on the basis of political pressures exerted by some groups who perceive that it is in the national interest to control migratory flows. (Diaz-Briquets, 1991:199).

The above statement is indicative of historical patterns in enforcement of immigration law in the U.S. This can be seen when looking at recruitment practices used by U.S. business interests during economic upturns. During economic downturns official governmental directives have been given to deport Mexicans (Samora, 1971). This pattern of fluctuating immigration control is explained by Nathan Glazer:

...immigration rose and fell in the age of free immigration in response to the business cycle. If jobs were scarce, immigrants stopped coming. When jobs were plentiful, they arrived in number. They found it easier to come and go in response to job opportunity because there were so few restrictions on entry and reentry. (Glazer, 1995:53).

This illustrates the power economic conditions have historically played with regards to U.S. immigration enforcement patterns.

The highest periods in enforcement of restrictive immigration laws can be seen during two periods of economic recession in the U.S. The first occurred between 1929 and 1939 when the U.S. government repatriated more than 400,000 persons of Mexican decent, regardless of citizenship, during the Depression (Hoffman, 1974). Then in 1954, under the INS's "Operation Wetback", over a

million Mexicans were deported because of public concern over job availability in the U.S. (James, 1991). Gilberto Cardenas explains that during economic downturns, "...in the 1930's (and to a lesser degree in the middle 1920's and 1950's), national attention is focused on Mexican aliens as displacers of domestic labor. To accommodate this view restrictive immigration law policies have historically followed." (Cardenas, 1975:88). In other words, during economic recession public concerns influence immigration policy. But when the U.S. economy is strong business interests help form and foster more liberal immigration policy.

3.2 Institutionalization of Migration

The process that allowed northern Mexican migration to become institutionalized involved liberal immigration law, infrastructure development in both Mexico and the U.S., and recruitment of migrant labor. Business interests in the U.S. which participated in recruitment of Mexican labor helped to facilitate the institutionalization of northward migration in Mexico. As Philip Martin explains:

Most labor migration has its genesis in recruitment by employers or their agents from receiving nations. This recruitment creates information networks and economic dependencies that soon become institutionalized, a process which yields the aphorism that migration streams are much easier to start than to stop. For example, much of the illegal Mexican migration to the United States in the 1970s and 1980s can be traced to the recruitment of bracero farm workers in Mexico's central highlands from the 1940s to the 1960s. (Martin, 1991:28)

The ability of labor recruitment to attract more and more immigrants after recruitment has ended is a ubiquitous element of labor recruitment programs all over the world (Lavender, 1995).

Business interests in the U.S. began to recruit workers in Mexico during the early 1900s (Cardoso, 1980) primarily for labor markets in the southwestern part of the United States. This recruitment occurred simultaneously with infrastructure development in northern Mexico and the Southwestern portion of the U.S. The newly built infrastructure provided U.S. recruiters working in Mexico the ability to attract labor with jobs and then easily transport this labor into the U.S (Massey, 1988). Douglas Massey explains how close economic and infrastructure links, like the ones created between the U.S. and Mexico, produce "well-developed transportation and communications links between them. Increasing economic integration naturally leads to the accumulation of an international infrastructure that regularizes the movement of people..." (Massey, 1988:395). This infrastructure development coupled with recruitment during crucial periods of labor shortages in the U.S. facilitated the growth of illegal and legal Mexican immigration (Massey et al. 1987)

Although infrastructure development allowed easier movement between Mexican and the U.S., it was the U.S.'s liberal immigration laws during the early 1900s that gave Mexicans the ability to work in this country. These factors allowed Mexican labor to enter the U.S. labor force relatively freely (Massey et al., 1987). Also, U.S.

agricultural interests were able to get several U.S. immigration rules waived for Mexican laborers' including the literacy test and head tax (Bach, 1978).

The restrictive U.S. immigration laws that were passed between 1875 and 1924 were not aimed at Mexicans migrating between Mexico and the U.S. These laws were directed at illegal European and Asian immigrants crossing the U.S.-Mexican border. Consequently, the enforcement of U.S. Immigration law that took place along the U.S.'s southern border during this period concentrated on curtailing other illegal European and Asian migrants (Corwin, 1973).

One of the laws that could have affected illegal Mexican migration during the early 1900s was rarely enforced. When Mexican labor recruitment began, the already mentioned Alien Contract Labor Law of 1885 was on the books. This law, if enforced, would have reduced much of the labor migration from Mexico during the early part of this century because it prohibited labor recruitment (Martin, 1991) . But enforcement of the 1885 law was not a common practice because during the early part of this century, "American employers, or their foremen, often engaged in direct recruiting despite the Alien Contract Labor Law of 1885, which outlawed such activity" (Corwin, 1973:563). Then during World War I President Wilson allowed the U.S. Employment Service to act as employers and contractors with Mexican workers as they crossed the border (Papademetriou et al., 1987). This was permitted by President Wilson because of the manpower deficit created by the War.

Consequently, President Wilson's decision to allow recruitment of Mexican labor perpetuated the process that institutionalized northern migration in Mexico.

The institutionalization of Mexican migration into the U.S. was also influenced by the Bracero program. The Bracero agreement, initiated in 1942 by the U.S. and Mexican governments, continued well into the 1960s. This program went well past WW II, the historical event that warranted its inception, because agricultural interests in the U.S. were able to extend the Bracero program. (Levander, 1995).

The incentive to maintain the Bracero program and similar U.S. initiated temporary worker programs is best explained by Vernon Briggs jr. when he explains that growers become "quickly addicted to the [labor recruitment] programs since they do not have to compete as do employers in other industries to attract and to keep workers. Hence, the life of these programs tends to be prolonged well after the original justification for their existence ceases" (Briggs Jr., 1978:1013-1014). The ability of U.S. agriculturists to continue programs such as the Bracero program is indicative of their influence within the government in shaping immigration legislature.

The Bracero agreement provided the U.S. agricultural sector with more than 20 years of subsidized labor because labor was provided through a government subsidized program. At the same time this program contributed significantly to the institutionalization of northern Mexican migration into the U.S. This point is conveyed

by Harry Cross and James Sandos when they state that the Bracero program, "...also institutionalized migration through legal contracting, augmented and confirmed de facto by accompanying illegal migration..." (Cross and Sandos, 1981:35). Thus, this program has had many lasting effects that continue to influence segments of the Mexican population, especially during times of economic recession in Mexico.

The Bracero program also served to advertise the availability of jobs in the U.S. to a large segment of the population in Mexico even after its termination. The Bracero program "had served to expose a substantial number of rural Mexican workers to the U.S. labor market. Thus, when the program ended its effects did not. Many former braceros simply kept coming - albeit as illegal immigrants after 1964." (Briggs Jr., 1992:84). The Bracero program and other recruitment programs have lasting effects on the sending country in terms of maintaining a migratory flow.

3.3 Institutional Support For Illegal Immigrants

As this illegal Mexican migration has continued, the U.S. public has become less tolerant of their use of social services, although in the past some U.S. government agencies provided assistance to illegal immigrants. For example the Office of Social Security Assistance used to provide social security numbers to illegal aliens (Stoddard, 1976). Today social service use by illegal Mexicans has caused much public concern, although during the Mexican Revolution U.S. employers learned that social services could be used to subsidize and attract Mexican labor to the U.S. Arthur Corwin explains this aspect of illegal Mexican immigration as:

...an important role in attracting emigrés. Organizations such as the Red Cross and Protestant missions set up kitchens, gave out clothing, and arranged for lodging and employment. Many refugees were thus encouraged to stay and send for others. In the meantime, Mexican laborers and their employers had already discovered that social service agencies could help to subsidize the migrant labor cycle. Families of seasonal workers, who normally would have returned to winter in Mexico or the immediate border area, found that they could winter in cities like Los Angeles....with a little help from community relief agencies, public and private. (Corwin, 1973:564-565).

This U.S. institutional support continues today with churches who provide food, clothing and health care to illegal immigrants and public schools that provide education to undocumented children.

Today illegal immigrants' have restricted access to many social service programs, particularly in California where many politicians want to stop illegal immigrants' access to all social services

(Brownstein, 1993). The U.S. government's stance on this issue is further explained by Leo Chavez when explaining that governmental officials "make it very clear that undocumented immigrants are unwelcome, actively seeking to restrict their economic opportunities and discourage their continued presence in the country" (Chavez, 1992:19). Although this governmental stance seems strong, loopholes in U.S. immigration law, coupled with U.S. employers willingness to take advantage of these loopholes, create contradictions in today's governmental stance.

3.4 Conclusion

The historical northern migration pattern that has developed in Mexico has roots in both the U.S. and Mexico. Recruitment of Mexican labor heavily contributed to the institutionalization of northern Mexican migration in to the U.S. (Martin, 1991, Massey et al., 1987, Cross and Sandos, 1981, Corwin, 1973). People who only blame Mexicans for deciding to immigrate into the U.S. are not looking at this issue in its entirety. Ellwyn Stoddard explains that, "...most people who concern themselves with the alien problem wish to blame it all on the Mexican aliens themselves rather than seeing the part played by the upstanding citizens and social institutions of our own nation" (Stoddard, 1976:205). It is exactly this lack of public knowledge that has allowed politicians to exaggerate negative aspects of illegal Mexican immigration (Glazer, 1995, Marelius and Barabak, 1995), in order to take advantage of the fears of U.S. workers and the U.S. Public.

CHAPTER IV

LITERATURE REVIEW ON THE IMPACT OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION ON SOCIAL SERVICE INSTITUTIONS IN THE U.S.

The goal of this chapter is to present previous research findings on illegal immigrants' tax payments in conjunction with their use of social services in the U.S. The findings presented in this chapter focus on immigrants' use of public medical and educational services and the taxes they pay while working in the U.S. The chapter is divided into eight sections. The first presents findings from several San Diego studies while the second section discusses Los Angeles County findings. In the third section the results of a national study on the impact of illegal immigration are discussed. Then the fourth part introduces some past studies done in Texas. The next three sections analyze the issues that prevent consensus building within this field of study, the working conditions that illegal aliens face and levels of tax contributions found in some other earlier studies. Finally, the last section offers a conclusion.

The effects of illegal immigrants' use of health and educational services on the U.S.'s economy is still unclear. This is especially evident when analyzing the undocumented worker contributions to, and burdens upon the U.S. economy. Illegal aliens economically contribute to the state and federal levels of government through

their payment of taxes but place a concomitant burden on local governments because of their use of public services (Stewart, 1992).

Researchers look at taxes illegal aliens pay while working in the U.S. in contrast to their costs to society through the use of public services. Some studies have concluded that illegal immigrants create a burden on social services despite their tax contributions, but other studies illustrate just the opposite, further complicating the impact caused by illegal aliens' use of social services.

4.1 San Diego County Findings

One of the more recent studies conducted in San Diego County has determined that illegal immigrants create a substantial financial burden to the County of San Diego. This study factored in all estimated contributions made by illegal aliens through tax payments against all forms of estimated social service use. This study found that the County of San Diego incurred close to a \$245 million deficit because of illegal immigrants' use of social services (including the processing of illegal immigrants through the criminal justice system) (Parker & Rea, 1993). A total deficit of \$304 million was estimated to be caused by illegal immigration by this 1993 study; however almost \$60 million was deducted from this total because of their tax payments. Thus, the \$245 million estimate includes the \$150 million estimated to process illegal immigrants through the criminal justice system in San Diego County.

The 1993 San Diego County study concludes that illegal immigration causes a large burden to this county. But an earlier

study conducted in San Diego from July 1975 until January 1977 showed just the opposite. The findings in this earlier study were summed up in the paper "Facts and Myths About the Illegal Migrant" which concluded that when you compare:

...the cost of \$4.2 million... of social services consumed by illegal migrants in San Diego to their state and federal tax contributions of \$48.8 million. The results are obvious: the positive tax contribution of \$48.8 million far outweighs the negative impact of \$4.2 million. Even adjusting to \$6.0 million in the San Diego study, coupled with the research results of Cornelius, North and Houstoun, Bustamante, and the County of Orange, demonstrates clearly that illegal migrants contribute a great deal more to the U.S. social service system than the few benefits they take. (Villalpando, 1979:48).

This study also argues that illegal immigrants create jobs and improve the local economy through their purchases of goods and services in San Diego, thus further offsetting their financial burden to social services institutions (Villalpando, 1979).

It is apparent that studies vary considerably in their estimates and findings concerning the economic burden that illegal immigrants place on U.S. social services³. This is a result of researchers' inability to secure a representative sample of the illegal immigrant population (Cornelius, 1981). One way researchers circumvent this problem is to focus on a specific segment of the undocumented population. For example, one study examined only illegal migrant farm laborers

³Allen C. Miller's Los Angeles Times article "Studies Prove Inconclusive on Impacts" gives a detailed explanation concerning the wide variation of estimates given by studies on this subject.

living in encampments in northern San Diego. This study reported that on average:

...homeless immigrants living in encampments tend not to use Medi-Cal (or other social services) at all. A 1993 survey of 241 non-English speakers living in migrant camps found that 75.5 percent of the residents had never used Medi-Cal...they seek treatment at public clinics, try home remedies, or seek medical attention in Tijuana more often than they receive private care in the United States (Eisenstadt and Thorup, 1994:60).

This group of migrants, when looking at the case of San Diego, does not financially burden the hospital system to the extent that many politicians seem to portray (Marelius and Barabak, 1985). The hospital system in San Diego is financially burdened by illegal immigration but this burden is also contributed to by U.S. citizens. Jim Lott, president and chief executive officer of the Hospital Council of San Diego and Imperial Counties, explains that:

"these costs should not be considered a problem of undocumented workers, but rather a problem of uninsured patients in general. It's very easy in hard economic times-when budgets are being cut-to focus on the cost implications of undocumented immigrants. That's an extremely small part of the problem in San Diego". (Eisenstadt and Thorup, 1994:64)

The above passage illustrates that the economic burden that is placed on the San Diego hospital system by illegal immigrants, which has an estimated undocumented immigrant population of 220,00 (Parker and Rea, 1993), is low, especially in terms of the relatively large size of this illegal population in San Diego.

Two previous studies conducted in San Diego seem to support Jim Lott's contention that illegal immigrants place a relatively small burden on hospitals. These studies concluded that Mexican immigrants did not seek care in emergency hospital rooms at a very high rate (Chavez, et al., 1985 and Community Research Associates, 1980).

Earlier studies in San Diego focused on a specific hospital in San Diego County. One such study, which looked at fiscal year 1979, found that San Diego's University hospital received \$651,967 in reimbursement from the county of San Diego for costs incurred by undocumented immigrants (Community Research Associates, 1980). This same hospital was reimbursed \$2,008,710 for the fiscal years 1971 to 1975 for illegal aliens use of medical services (Villalpando, 1975).

The cost of providing overall health care to undocumented immigrants, which includes paramedic service, community clinics, and emergency care in San Diego has been estimated in various studies. An in-depth 1993 study done for San Diego County estimated that the cost of providing health care to undocumented immigrants was almost 50 million dollars (Parker & Rea, 1993). This cost is reflective of the large population of illegal aliens working, residing and entering San Diego via Tijuana. This border region accounts for half of all INS apprehensions in any given year. For example, in a typical year there are almost one million illegal Mexican immigrant apprehensions by the INS along the U.S.-Mexican

border (Jenks,1992). Half these apprehensions have been shown to occur in the San Diego-Tijuana border region. (Monto,1994) It is not surprising to see that San Diego County feels the effects of illegal immigration more than any other region of the U.S. (Villalpando, 1979). Consequently, San Diego County has become the subject of many studies concerning the illegal immigration issue.

4.2 Los Angeles County studies

The County of Los Angeles has also conducted several studies to determine the financial impact of illegal immigrants on social services provided in Los Angeles County. A 1982 study focused on health services provided to undocumented aliens. This study estimated that providing health care to illegal aliens in Los Angeles County costs close to 77 million dollars (Muller & Espenshade, 1985). This 1982 Los Angeles County study has been followed by one of the most well regarded studies regarding the impact of legal and illegal immigration on social services (Miller, 1993).

The 1992 Los Angeles County study estimated that undocumented immigrants cost this county over \$308 million to provide public services to their illegal population (Stewart, 1992). This same study showed that the illegal population also generated over 904 million dollars to local, state and federal coffers through taxes (Steward, 1992). The estimated level of tax contributions made by illegal immigrants indicates that a surplus of revenue is generated by this population. But this surplus of revenue is overshadowed by the fact that of the \$904 million generated by Los Angeles's illegal

immigrants only about \$36 million dollars is collected by Los Angeles County (Steward, 1992). The bulk of the \$904 million of revenue generated by illegal immigrants in Los Angeles goes to state and federal agencies. Thus, this 1992 Los Angeles County study estimates that during the fiscal year 1991-1992 this county incurred a \$272 million dollar deficit as a result of illegal immigrants use of social services.

A deficit created by illegal immigration at the local level of government, as seen in this Los Angeles County report, allows politicians to effectively illustrate illegal immigrants economic burden to society. This occurs despite the fact that the most recent Los Angeles County report shows an overall surplus of revenue created by illegal immigration (Stewart,1992).

Several studies, looking at all illegal Mexican immigrants, have shown that they pay taxes at a higher rate than their rates of social service use. This was illustrated by Marta Tienda and Leif Jensen who compare their findings to D.S. Massey by stating that, "...our findings are consistent with those of Massey.. who queried Mexicans...about their participation in entitlement programs... Many more reported having paid taxes than have ever received welfare income, particularly among those who were undocumented migrants." (Tienda and Jensen, 1986:396-397). Another study, which focused on Colorado's San Luis Valley, determined that the Mexican alien population in this area contributed more to the community with

tax payments than they took out through use of social services (Johnson & Ogle, 1978).

Another study that examined a specific type of undocumented population was a study that focused on undocumented workers in the garment and restaurant industries. This study found that over 90 percent of undocumented garment workers and over 85 percent of restaurant workers in Los Angeles paid taxes with very few filing income tax returns (Maram, 1980). The low percentage of illegal Mexican immigrants filing income tax returns is a result of their lack of English language skills (Cornelius et al., 1982), although, it is pointed out that many are eligible for tax refunds because of their relatively low salaries.

4.3 Macro Study of Illegal Immigration affects

Some broader studies measuring the costs and contributions of the U.S.'s illegal alien population have also concluded that this group contributes more to the system than they have taken out. This can be seen in an extensive study done by David North and Marion Houstoun. Based on their data, their study suggests, "...that their (illegal aliens) principal direct economic impact is on the labor market (and perhaps upon the balance of payments) but not on the public treasuries." (North and Houstoun, 1976:149). This study found that more than 70 percent of their sample paid social security and federal income taxes while about 27 percent said they used hospitals or public clinics (North & Houstoun, 1976). About the same level of medical care use among the illegal immigrant population was also

reported by six studies conducted in the 1970s (Cross and Sandos, 1981).

The 1970s studies specifically looked at the use of medical care by illegal Mexican migrants and found that: "The samples suggest that 10 to 20 percent of the illegal migrant population probably receive free medical care at some time while they are in the U.S." (Cross and Sandos, 105). The findings of these six studies indicate a relatively small burden to public medical services. That is, illegal immigrants in these studies pay taxes at a much higher rate than the cost of the medical care they received.

A severe burden to public services has been reported by one researcher, Donald Huddle, who has examined the impact of illegal immigrants on the national social service system but his study has been refuted in a subsequent study (Fix and Passel, 1994). Huddle's national survey concluded that deficits incurred by recent immigrants have been large. Huddle, analyzed the immigration population as a whole and determined that immigration, both legal and illegal, cost the U.S. \$40 billion between the years 1970 and 1992 (Fix and Passel, 1994). Two researchers, Michael Fix and Jeffrey Passel, analyzed Donald Huddle's report and counter Huddle's estimates by pointing out that when, "...errors are corrected, the post-1970 immigrants in Huddle's study actually show a surplus of revenues over social service costs of at least \$25 billion" (Fix & Passel, pg.60).

The state and federal levels of government benefit from this surplus of revenue generated by illegal immigration. At local levels of government the opposite is true. Deficits were created at local levels of government because this level of government absorbed social service costs incurred by illegal immigrants. In addition the majority of taxes paid by illegal immigrants go directly to state and federal coffers (Stewart, 1992). A good example is found in Texas.

4.4 Texas Studies

The state of Texas has escaped the burden of illegal immigration while the local level of government handles the burdens created by their illegal alien population. This is illustrated in one Texas study that compared illegal aliens' contributions to their costs. The Texas study accomplished this by comparing undocumented aliens' use of social services to their tax payments to all levels of government and determined that this illegal population contributes:

...more to the revenue of the State of Texas than it costs the state to provide services. The opposite is true for county and local governments. At this level of government, the estimated costs exceed the estimated revenues.

It should be noted that, taken together, state and local contributed revenues exceed the combined estimated cost of services. This is true despite the consistent biasing used to obtain these estimates. It must also be remembered that social security taxes are not treated here because such revenue is federal rather than state... Insofar as Texas residents receive social security benefits, there is an indirect contribution made to Texas by undocumented aliens. (Weintraub and Cardenas, 1984:88)

This Texas study indicates that undocumented workers put more into the system than they take from it through their tax payments to U.S. government agencies. The local level of government, though, is left with a deficit because this level of government pays for social services used by illegal immigrants while state and federal agencies collect the majority of their taxes. (Stewart, 1992).

While the above Texas study illustrates a positive contribution made by illegal immigrants in Texas, another Texas study shows just the opposite. This can be seen because this 1994 Texas study indicated that Texas with, "...its 555,000 illegal aliens contribute only about \$290 m a year to the state economy but cost about \$456 m in prison, health, {and} education..."⁴ This statement contradicts the findings reported in the first study presented on Texas.

4.5 Lack of Consensus

The above literature review reveals the difficulty in finding a general consensus with regard to how this illegal population truly affects the U.S.'s economy and its social service systems. The discrepancy in findings as to illegal immigration can be explained to some extent by the illegal and clandestine nature of this population. Studying an illegal population makes it difficult to get accurate data that in turn cause researchers to put forward findings that are based on estimates. Estimates do not provide a consistent picture of the impact of the illegal immigration issue because samples captured by studies may not be representative of the undocumented population.

⁴" They Shall Not Pass". The Economist. 9th July, 1994, 23-24.

Most economists agree that illegal immigration has an overall positive effect on the U.S. economy (Brownstein & Simon, 1993). Although this positive effect can be seen at the state and federal government levels it must be remembered that local governments with large illegal populations suffer deficits. This is the result of inadequate state and federal funding which does not compensate local governments with large illegal populations.

4.6 Working Conditions of Illegal Immigrants

Politicians who focus on the deficit created by illegal immigrants rarely point out the hazardous conditions that many of these foreign workers face while working in the U.S. This is evident in the report "Undocumented Immigrants: Their Impact on the County of San Diego" focusing on illegal agricultural workers. This report states that, "...very few of those persons surveyed utilized health services even though they worked in jobs which exposed them to environmental health hazards (pesticides, fertilizers, and other chemicals) and injury (machinery, back injuries)" (Community Research Associates, 1980:108). As in other studies, (North, 1983, Chavez et al., 1985) the above study found that undocumented Mexican workers in general under-utilized medical services. This relatively low rate of medical service use is not reflective of the hazardous work conditions faced by this illegal population, although the costs they incur at U.S. medical facilities receive much public attention.

4.7 Tax Contributions

The inability of undocumented workers to obtain benefits from their tax payments is indicative of their illegal status, thus making them ineligible for many programs that they support with taxes. An example of this can be seen when looking at a passage from the book Coyote when the author remembers a:

...well-publicized case of the plastic wallet sold by Woolworth's in the 1970s. Inside was a sample number printed on it. The Social Security Administration, a few months after the appearance of the product, reported that 33,000 people had paid in to the nonexistent account. Such contributions, of course, were of great benefit to the system: Mexicans could pay in, but they couldn't get anything out. (Conover, 1987:207)

Undocumented Mexican workers' tax contribution are summed up in the 1992 Los Angeles County study when it is stated that, "To the extent that they do not claim this money, their contribution is a net gain to other workers". (Stewart, 1992:107). More importantly, one researcher points out that, "In theory, a case for an international court of law could be made by the Mexican government, if the accumulated amount paid by Mexican immigrants in the form of income tax and Social Security to the U.S. Treasury could be determined". (Bustamante, 1984:27-28). This action would, supposedly be justified, because researchers have supported the notion that illegal Mexican immigrants pay more into the system than they take out as shown in the above review.

4.8 Conclusion

The studies reviewed have estimated the amount of social service use among illegal immigrants and calculated illegal immigrants' tax payments to arrive at their findings. Several of the studies reviewed agree that an overall positive effect has been created by illegal immigration at the state and federal government levels (Stewart, 1992; North & Houstoun, 1976). These same studies agree that illegal immigrants create local level government deficits as a result of their use of local public services. Aside from the above two studies, which agree that illegal immigration has a positive overall effect on the U.S., a consensus regarding the effect of illegal immigration is difficult to ascertain from the literature. This is the result of the clandestine nature of an illegal population which makes it difficult to obtain a representative sample of illegal immigrants. Consequently, a consensus regarding illegal immigration's effect on public services has no concrete foundation!

CHAPTER V

METHODOLOGY USED TO OBTAIN QUALITATIVE INFORMATION

The qualitative information for this study has been obtained in order to gather first hand knowledge of illegal Mexican immigrants' rate of social service use and their rate of tax payments. This qualitative information will be used to demonstrate illegal Mexican immigrants' burden on two main social services provided in the U.S.: educational and medical. Although, the illegal Mexican population studied for this thesis is relatively small their responses are informative. The qualitative information will also be used to test the hypothesis.

Qualitative information has been obtained from the target population through interviews and the survey questionnaire (Appendix A). A total of 55 interviews have been conducted with illegal Mexican immigrants, although only 37 were used for the sample because the other 18 interviewees were crossing the border for the first time. All 37 illegal immigrants in the sample had worked and resided in the U.S. and thus met the requirements for this study. The length of residence, among the interviewees in the sample, ranged from 1 month to 28 years, thus providing the necessary time differences needed to test the hypothesis.

5.1 Interview Locations

The interviews and questionnaires were conducted at two specific areas in Tijuana and two locations in northern San Diego. The locations in Tijuana included the man-made banks of the Río Tijuana and the top of a hillside on the northern edge of Tijuana. Both of these research areas in Tijuana were located on the U.S.-Mexican border where Mexican and Central American immigrants had good vantage points of the border region. These locations enabled the immigrants to observe the movements of the U.S. Border Patrol.

In San Diego interviews were conducted at a public clinic and migrant camps located on private agricultural land in northern San Diego County. The agricultural land where these migrant camps are located was close to various San Diego coastal communities. Thus, these migrant camps provided cheap labor to U.S. agriculturists, households, landscapers, restaurants and contractors.^{5 6}

5.2 Sampling Techniques

Personal interviews were conducted in Tijuana and San Diego through both cluster and snowball sampling techniques. Cluster sampling was used because of the lack of lists or other means of identifying illegal immigrants (Bernard, 1994). Cluster sampling is

⁵For a more in-depth look at San Diego's migrant camps see Shadowed Lives: Undocumented Immigrants in American Society by Leo R. Chavez.

⁶The most recent information concerning these camps was obtained through the help of Mercedes Fiorella of the North County Chaplaincy.

implemented by finding out where your target population is known to congregate (Bernard, 1994). This applies to illegal immigrants from Mexico because they gather along the U.S.-Mexican border before crossing into the U.S. Other aspects of cluster sampling could not be implemented because of the nature of the illegal immigrants population. For instance, cluster sampling requires indirect methods of obtaining a sample population. H. Russell Bernard explains that cluster sampling is based, "...on the fact that people act out their lives in more or less natural groups or 'clusters'... Even if there are no lists of people whom you want to study, you can sample areas or institutions and locate a sample within those clusters" (Bernard, pg.89). Cluster sampling could not be fully implemented because of the clandestine and temporary nature of many groups of illegal immigrants.

In order to secure a sample group of illegal immigrants snowball sampling was also used in conjunction with cluster sampling. Snowball sampling allows the researcher to locate a member of a target population and then ask each subsequent interviewee to identify others that may be qualified for the study (Cornelius, 1981). Consequently, cluster and snowball sampling were used in order to obtain information from this illegal population. The methods were used because I looked to the areas where illegal Mexican immigrants congregated and after finding a willing participant I would ask each interviewee if they had any friends willing to participate. More often than not the interviewee would

point to a friend or relative waiting to cross the border. On occasion, though, I would interview first time immigrants who did not qualify for this study, consequently these individuals were not used for the sample.

The interviews conducted in the migrant camps consisted primarily of long term residents of the U.S. The following chapter discusses the demographics of this illegal immigrant group..

CHAPTER VI

RESEARCH FINDINGS

This chapter will first describe the demographic make-up of the illegal Mexican population interviewed. Secondly, findings will be presented regarding the sample populations use of medical and education use in conjunction with previous studies. This is followed by a discussion on the percentage within the sample that paid state, federal and property taxes. The chapter closes with a report on qualitative information gathered during field research in both Tijuana and San Diego County.

6.1 Demographics

Thirty males and seven females were interviewed for the sample; their average age was 27.8 years with a range in age of between 17 and 43 years. The average length of stay in the U.S. for the sample population was 4.4 years. Five interviewees worked as campesinos before migrating to the U.S., twenty seven had urban jobs, and five women worked as housewives. The Mexican states represented by the sample of illegal immigrants included ten of the thirty-one states within the Republic of Mexico and the Federal District of Mexico: they are Baja California, Sonora, Oaxaca, Veracruz, México, Sinaloa, Jalisco, Morelos, Colima and Durango. Interestingly, individuals came from a region of Mexico made up of states that

have traditionally sent a disproportionately high percentage of illegal Mexican immigrants to the U.S.⁷

The impetus given for migrating by the sample population revolved primarily around economics, although four young males stated that their reason for migrating was based solely on their curiosity about the U.S. Many of the other younger immigrants interviewed expressed a curiosity about the U.S. but usually in conjunction with the attraction of earning more dollars.

6.2 Medical Findings

Use of medical services was defined as the use of public medical clinics and hospitals; interviewees did not indicate any other types of medical facilities used except those used in the U.S. Of the 37 immigrants in the sample 19, or 51%, said they received some form of medical care while in the U.S. This included 9, or 24%, who used emergency hospital facilities and 10 who used clinics. Five of the nine individuals who used hospital emergency care said they were able to pay for part or all of their hospital care. It should be noted that one undocumented worker in the sample claimed his employer's health insurance paid his hospital bills. The 10 illegal immigrants who used clinics were only asked to pay for what they could afford; seven of these used a privately funded public health

⁷ This region, as explained in the book Across the Border by Harry Cross and James Sandos, includes the Mexican states of Durango, Guanajuato, Jalisco, Michoacán, San Luis Potosí and Zacatecas. It is argued that the above states, where small scale farms dominate, sends a disproportionate number of its residents to America because of the Mexican government's shift in farm subsidies which did not favor small scale farms. Consequently, many residents in this region are unemployed and thus need to migrate for work.

clinic in northern San Diego where part of the sample population of illegal immigrants was obtained; therefore, these individuals did not incur a tax supported social service deficit.⁸ In conclusion, 32% of the sample may be contributing to a public service debt.

The 51% of the sample that used some form of medical care had been in the U.S. an average of 6.8 years. The rest of the sample had been in the U.S. an average of 2.6 years. This finding supports my hypothesis that the longer an illegal immigrant resides in the U.S. the more likely it is that that individual will have used public health services. This study is also congruent with several other studies that measure rates of medical care use (Chavez, 1985 Chavez, et al., 1985). It should be mentioned that other variables could affect the relationship between length of residence and use of public health services. For example, the hazardous working and living conditions often faced by illegal immigrants could lead individuals to seek medical care earlier than expected. The opposite can also occur if an illegal immigrant has access to social networks that allow him/her to circumvent contact with official institutions.⁹

The medical care usage rates reported here are comparable to those reported in The Roots of Mexican Migration by Alexander Monto (1994). He studied a community in Mexico which sends many of its residents to a community in California. Monto reported that 24 of the 59 illegal Mexican immigrants surveyed, or 41%, received

⁸The North County Chaplancy funds La Clinica De los Hermanos with private donations. This clinic is open to all persons.

⁹See for example, Latin Journey by Alejandro Portes and Robert Bach for a detailed explanation of social networks.

either clinic or hospital care while in the U.S. (Monto,1994). The author goes on to explain that this group of illegal immigrants incurred a low percentage of medical care usage, "...since the U.S. federal and California government generally will not pay for medical care for non-citizens. Many migrants say they prefer treatment in Mexico anyway, because of lower costs and familiarity with how to use the medical system" (Monto,1994:194). In the present study three individuals, or 8% of the sample population returned to Mexico for medical treatment.

The current study reports that only 24% of the sample used hospital services. This finding is congruent with a much larger study that demonstrated a 21% rate of hospital service use (Chavez et al., 1985). This low rate is reflective of the difficulty illegal immigrants have gaining access to hospital health services as a result of their illegal alien status and laws restricting their use of many social services (Chavez, 1985).

6.3 Tax Payments

Although illegal immigrants' access to health care is limited by rules within the system, their ability to pay taxes is subject to far less institutional scrutiny. This has allowed illegal Mexican immigrants to have made tax payments at a level that has been shown to off-set their social service uses.¹⁰ This was shown in several studies and is also reflected within the sample studied here.

¹⁰Most notable among the studies that demonstrate higher levels of tax payments in comparison to illegal immigrants social service use were the studies done by Cornelius, Wayne, Chavez, L and Castro, J, 1982, North and

The ability of the state and federal governments to collect taxes from illegal Mexican immigrants is not indicative of their alien status. Twenty-five of the thirty-seven in the sample population, or 68%, claimed to have paid state and federal taxes. Of the twenty-five, thirteen claimed to have used their own social security number; the others said they used another persons social security number; giving credence to the story concerning the repeated use of social security numbers by the undocumented alien population.¹¹

6.4 Property Tax and Educational Use

It is evident that illegal immigrants pay taxes while they reside in the U.S. For example, they pay sales tax when buying durable and non-durable goods (Villalpando, 1979). These taxes have been estimated to generate hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue to the federal government.¹² Many undocumented immigrants pay property taxes indirectly by paying rent while others pay directly because they are homeowners (Chavez, 1992). Seven out of 37, or 19%, of the informants in the sample, through the payment of rent, pay property taxes.¹³ This portion of the sample also paid state and

Houstoun, 1976, Weintraub and Cardenas, 1984, Stewart, 1992, Villalpando, 1976.

¹¹This aspect of illegal immigration was described in the book Coyotes by Ted Conover.

¹²These taxes generate almost \$300 million to the federal government and \$52.8 million to Los Angeles County according to the 1992 report "Impact of Undocumented Persons and Other Immigrants on Costs, Revenues and Services in Los Angeles County",52.

¹³Los Angeles County in Fiscal 1991-1992 collected an estimated \$35 million in property taxes from their undocumented population (Stewart, pg 52).

federal taxes. In conclusion, at least 19% of the sample paid several forms of taxes.

The percentage of undocumented Mexican immigrants paying property taxes is significant because primary and secondary public school districts draw a portion of their funding from this tax.¹⁴ Educational use among the sample was based on the number of individuals with children enrolled in California's primary and secondary public schools. Only eight individuals within the sample claimed to have children in primary and secondary public schools in the U.S., even though 13 of the 37 participants in the study had children living with them in the U.S.¹⁵ It turns out that seven out of eight informants that send their children to public schools are the same seven that pay property taxes on their rent as discussed above.

The ability of the children of illegal immigrants to gain access to education is limited by rules within the school system. For instance, the San Ysidro School District in southern San Diego requires parents who want to enroll their children in this school district to show: rent agreements, mortgage payment receipts or coupons, as legal documents which show an address within the district boundaries, and a parent's permission allowing the principal or his/her designee to make a home visit to verify residency.¹⁶

¹⁴ 37% of primary and secondary school funding is obtained through California's property tax. See for example: Summary Report: Property Tax Allocation. California Legislature: Senate Committee on Local Government, by Senator Marian Bergeson, 24.

¹⁵ Three of the children were too young to attend school and two held jobs. It should be mentioned that two women included in the sample were pregnant.

¹⁶ This was the list of requirements needed to enroll a child in La Mirada elementary school, which is part of the San Ysidro School District, posted in

6.5 Proposition 187

The San Ysidro School District like all other school districts in California does not enforce any portion of Proposition 187.¹⁷ But effects of this Proposition are being felt here because of its proximity to the border. At the district's board meeting it was discussed by board members that enrollment has increased in their district because of Proposition 187. Implying that those that feared the enforcement of this Proposition would at least be in a community close to the border.¹⁸ The members proposed a campaign to inform parents that Proposition 187 was not in effect.¹⁹

The sample was asked several questions regarding proposition 187 although 15 of the 37 informants had never heard of this proposition or had no comment on it. Twelve individuals in the sample felt proposition 187 would affect them while nineteen informants felt it was discriminatory. The portion of the sample that felt this proposition was racist was summed up by one informant when she stated that, "Hay gente tambien con papeles y todo y los

the principals' office.

¹⁷California's Proposition 187 was passed by the voters of California in 1994 in order to block illegal immigrants access to public services. It has since been challenged in California's court system.

¹⁸Juan M. Trujillo, a San Ysidro School District Board member, expressed in a March 9th, 1995 school board meeting, that fear of Proposition 187 was causing Mexican immigrant families to move away from central San Diego to this border community. San Ysidro is a predominately Hispanic community juxtaposed with Tijuana allowing Mexican immigrants to blend in with the Mexican-American population.

¹⁹March 9th, 1995 San Ysidro School District Governing Board Meeting. Members included President Juan P. Leyva and Clerk Yolanda Hernandez. Board Members Ernestine Jones, Jean A. Romero and Juan M. Trujillo.

han discriminado a tormenta los hijos tambien".²⁰ This immigrant illustrates their fears about what proposition 187 may bring to them and to their U.S. born children. The informants who had children were very concerned that their U.S. born children would be denied education if proposition 187 is implemented.

6.6 Qualitative findings

Interviewing undocumented aliens allows another perspective on the illegal migration phenomenon. It gives insight into their desire to seek medical care and education services for their children while in the U.S.

Beyond the fact that the majority of the sample described their situation as economic there were additional underlying reasons given for migrating. For example, a majority of immigrants in the sample, who were returning illegally into the U.S., discussed their country's corruption and its role in their decision to migrate. Many said that corruption was preventing them from staying with their families in Mexico. In essence, among the sample, corruption has become a migratory push factor (Jenkins, 1977).

Another factor that influenced migration within the sample was the recent devaluation of the peso. The peso's devaluation was also closely associated with government corruption among the sample. The belief that the peso's devaluation was caused by government corruption was especially true among first time

²⁰Author interview with undocumented immigrant at Clinica de Los Hermanos, 6 March, 1995.

immigrants. Some information was gathered from first time immigrants that was not used in the sample because of the immigrants' lack of experience in the U.S.

When asking illegal immigrants about their use of medical services it became apparent that many feel their use of these services is justified. For example, three individuals in the sample expressed that they incurred injuries while working in the U.S. and had to seek emergency medical care at a hospital. These individuals all felt they had a right to medical care because their injuries were job related. The same rationale seen here was also evident with regards to the access of education to children of illegal migrants.

The sub-group in the sample who had children born in the U.S. felt that their children had the right to an education because their children were U.S. citizens.²¹ This perspective was represented in the sample by 5 of the 8 individuals with children in the U.S. The remaining three individuals in the sample who had children in school were Mexican born.²² The parents of these foreign born children felt education was necessary for everybody regardless of citizenship.

The insights given by the sample and other interviewees has allowed several assumptions to be made about illegal Mexican immigration as well. First, their decision to migrate is based on

²¹The ability of children to get an education in the U.S., regardless of citizenship, is based on residency in most cases and not contingent on U.S. citizenship.

²² Not all individuals in the sample had only one child. One individual had 5 children in the U.S., 3 individuals had two children, 1 had three children while the remaining sub-group in the sample with children had one child each in the U.S.

economic factors in both the U.S. and Mexico. Second, the attraction of available jobs in the U.S. will continue to pull illegal Mexican immigrants into the U.S. Finally, illegal Mexicans' use of social services will continue because business interests circumvent existing immigration laws to hire them. Consequently, illegal aliens will encounter situations that require them to use some form of social services in the U.S.

6.7 Summary of Findings

The data gathered for this study indicate lower rates of social service use by illegal immigrants in comparison to the native U.S. population (Tienda and Jensen, 1986). Tax contributions [Table 1] made by illegal immigrants are slightly lower than the native population (Tienda and Jensen, 1986). Fifty-one percent of the sample used some form of medical care during their stay in the U.S. When looking at the sample's use of hospital care [Table 2] the rate of usage drops to 24%. The portion of the sample that used medical care had been in the U.S. an average of 6.8 years while non-users had been in the U.S. an average of 2.6 years. Illegal Mexican immigrants length of residency in the U.S. is an important and measurable variable among the sample. This variable allows for the identification of a common characteristic among immigrants most likely to use medical care.

____Table 6.1 Medical Use by Sample

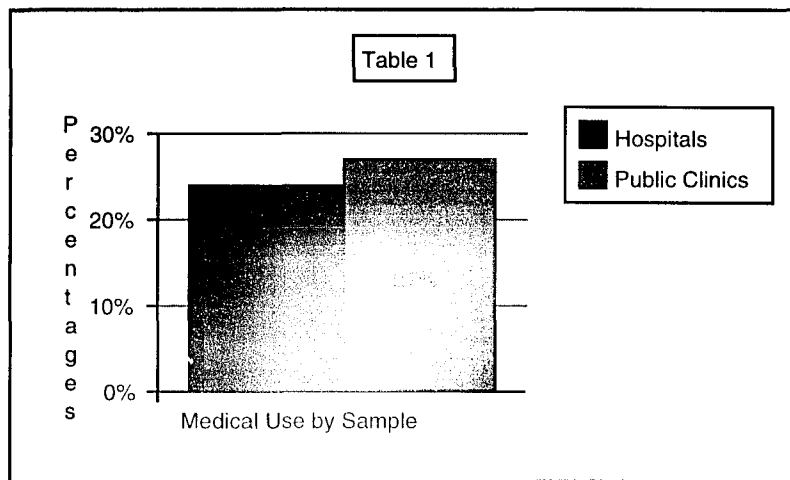
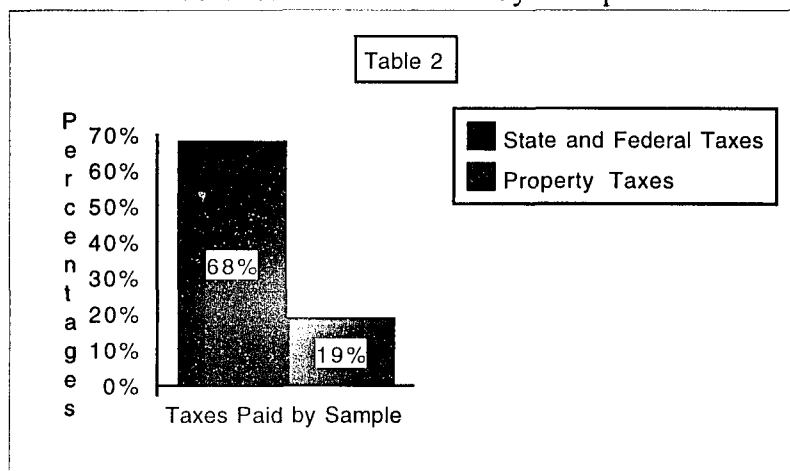


Table 6.2 Taxes Paid by Sample



The medical findings, within the sample, support the hypothesis that the longer an undocumented Mexican immigrant resides in the U.S. the more likely he/she will seek medical care. At the same time it would be plausible to assume that illegal immigrants' tax contributions rise in relation to time. That is, the longer an immigrant works in the U.S. the more likely that that

individual will continue to pay taxes. Consequently, tax contributions would be highest among illegal Mexican immigrants most likely to use social service, thus offsetting the illegal immigrants deficit causing potential.

A higher percentage of the sample was shown to have paid taxes than had used medical care during their stay in the U.S. This is the result of their status as illegal aliens and the different screening process each institution applies to this group. On the one hand, the medical care industry effectively prevents illegal aliens from receiving almost all types of medical care except for life or death situations (Chavez, 1986). On the other hand, methods of tax collection that the government uses rarely prevent individuals from paying taxes no matter what their legal status is. At the same time the ease with which illegal aliens can pay taxes is not indicative of their ability to receive tax refunds or social security (Cornelius, Chavez and Castro, 1982). It could be said that social service systems that incur deficits have more restrictions against the illegal aliens in comparison to the U.S. government's tax collection institutions, which have very few restrictions.

Restrictions are also found within primary and secondary public school systems. That is, public school districts require proof of residency before allowing a child to enroll in many California school districts.²³ The sample had 8 individuals who had children in primary and secondary schools or 21.6% of 37 individuals. Among

²³This information was obtained from the San Ysidro School District enrollment requirements.

the 8 informants with children in school, 5 said their children were U.S. born while 3 said their children were foreign born. Consequently, 3 individuals with children within the sample would have been directly affected by Proposition 187 if it had been instituted.

Over half, (51%) of the sample felt proposition 187 was discriminatory while 32.4% felt the proposition would affect them. All of the parents in the sample feared that their children would be affected by this law. Although proposition 187 was not enforced many feared it as indicated by the sample and the effect it was having on the San Ysidro School District.

Finally, the findings in the sample are somewhat congruent with studies that show a relatively low use of social services among undocumented Mexican immigrants when compared to legal immigrants (Chavez, 1986, Chavez et al.; 1985; Stewart, 1992; Tienda and Jensen, 1986). The sample findings also indicate a higher rate of tax payments in comparison to their social service use. This suggests that the sample group may be putting more into the system through taxes than they are taking out in social service use. But this cannot be proven inconclusively from the data gathered by this study.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

Illegal Mexican immigrants have been attracted to the U.S. for economic reasons for more than one-hundred years. The form of attraction that spurred many to seek work in the U.S. has changed over this period. During the early part of this century, Mexicans' were illegally recruited by U.S. business interests seeking cheap labor. From 1942 to 1964 Mexicans were legally recruited via the Bracero program. These two forms of recruitment helped to create a migratory pattern in Mexico that has become institutionalized.

Illegal Mexicans continue to migrate north because economic conditions in Mexico have not improved and U.S. business interests still desire cheap labor. Consequently, their presence in U.S. social service institutions in the U.S. is a by-product of poor economic conditions in Mexico and available jobs in the U.S. for workers willing to accept low wages. Thus, illegal aliens will continue to use social services in the U.S. because U.S. employers still want and need them in order to maintain a cheap labor source.

Illegal immigrant presence in social service institutions has allowed politicians and nativists to blame them for large deficits within these institutions, even though much of the literature on the impact of illegal immigration refutes this. It was shown earlier in

this paper that several studies demonstrate that illegal Mexican immigrants make tax contributions above their use of social services.

The two sides of the debate make a consensus within this field of study difficult to ascertain. One side of the debate, made up mostly of politicians and researchers, contend that illegal immigration creates a significant overall burden to the U.S., while the other side of the debate, made up of economists and researchers, contend that illegal immigration contributes positively to the U.S. Both sides of the debate put forward numbers and figures that support their stance but contradictions can be found within their positions. Politicians though, are able to sensationalize negative aspects of illegal immigration and promote a side of the debate that leaves out essential information in order to get elected

One of the negative side effects of illegal immigration has been shown to be the deficits created at the local level of government. Although local level deficits created by illegal immigrants is a relevant issue, it is also important to know that illegal immigrants create a surplus of revenue at the state and federal levels of government; many politicians focus on the deficit created at one level of government to overshadow positive aspects of illegal immigration. As mentioned earlier, a deficit created by illegal immigrants at the local level of government occurs because the majority of illegal aliens tax contributions go to state and federal levels of government.

The rest of this chapter is divided in three sections. The first part summarizes the results of the sample and ends with some

concluding remarks drawn from the sample findings. The second section presents the limitations of this study. The last section will conclude with a discussion on the need to provide basic health services to a group that will continue to be employed in the U.S.

7.1 Summary and Conclusions

The sample's participation in public institutions that provide medical care and education was lower than their participation in the payment of taxes. One of the reasons illegal aliens can pay taxes at a higher degree than they use social services hinges on their illegal status and the screening processes used within these institutions. That is, almost all U.S. social service institutions have regulations that screen out illegal aliens while the opposite is true for illegal aliens who participate in tax payment programs. The screening processes that restricts illegal immigrants participation in social services is not the only limiting factor stopping them from using social services. Others include language barriers, fear of the INS, fear of incurring a public charge and social networks that allow illegal aliens to circumvent mainstream institutions. In other words, illegal immigrants are able to pay taxes because the tax system is not set up to stop illegal aliens from paying taxes while social service institutions are.

The portion of the sample that did use medical services had been in the U.S. an average of 6.8 years while non-users had been in the U.S. an average of 2.6 years. This supports the hypothesis that the longer an undocumented immigrant resides in the U.S. the more

likely he/she will have used medical care. Length of stay is an important variable to look at when investigating illegal immigration because it identifies a sub-group within the illegal alien population. This sub-group is generally made up of long term residents of the U.S. who, because of this longer residence, have higher rates of medical care use. It is important to understand that the longer an illegal immigrant resides in the U.S. the more likely that individual will have used medical care. But it is equally important to understand that the sub-population most likely to have used medical care are also the same people who are most likely to have paid more into the system through taxes, thus minimizing their burden to this system.

The burden placed on primary and secondary public educational institutions by the children of illegal immigrants is estimated to run into the hundreds of millions of dollars.²⁴ Among the sample 8 individuals had children in school, although 13 of the 37 participants in the study had children in the U.S. and two individuals were pregnant²⁵. So the potential for future educational costs and needs could increase significantly within the sample. But what is the cost of not providing education? It should be mentioned that all but three of the children of undocumented immigrants in the sample were born in the U.S.

²⁴See for example Stewart, 1992 and Parker and Rea,1993.

²⁵Of the 13 in the sample who had children in the U.S. three children were said to be too young for school and two held jobs.

The number of illegal immigrants who pay taxes was demonstrated to be over 70% in several studies reviewed earlier. The sample indicated a 68% participation rate in the payment of state and federal taxes and 19% of the sample claimed to have paid property taxes. Both the sample and several studies reviewed for this paper show that the percentage of illegal immigrants participating in tax payment programs is higher than their use of public medical and educational services. Thus, even though illegal immigrants create a surplus of revenue at the state and federal levels of government, the burden illegal immigrants create at the local level of government is emphasized by many politicians and government officials. Consequently, this negative side effect of illegal immigration has been emphasized publicly. This in turn has allowed a skewed public perception regarding the impact of illegal immigration on the U.S. and its public service institutions.

7.2 Limitations of the study

Time constraints limited the sample size to 37 participants so the findings may not be generalized to all illegal Mexican immigrants. Also, since the sample was taken from one area of a vast border, albeit the most heavily traveled section of the U.S. Mexican border, the study is limited in scope. This has limited the study's ability to make broad generalizations concerning patterns of social service use among all illegal Mexican immigrants residing in the U.S.

The ability of this study to show a burden to social services in San Diego County was limited by the size of the sample, thus an accurate measurement of the real burden produced by illegal immigrants on social services in San Diego County was limited. Consequently, time and scope will limit this study's results, except in trying to push the debate further and to confirm the results of larger studies in other areas.

7.3 Social Service Access

It can be seen from this study, which included the literature review on social service use and the studied sample, that illegal immigrants to a certain extent use social services while in the U.S. Although illegal immigrants' access to medical services is limited, it may be in the best interest of all concerned to provide some form of subsidized medical care for this population. This medical care should be subsidized by the industries that have historically used illegal labor. Although, it would be hard to get subsidization for such a program, this type of program would alleviate much of the emergency care needed by illegal immigrants.

It was shown by one researcher (Chavez, 1986) that illegal immigrants seek emergency care only after harboring some illness until it requires emergency care. This occurs because of limited access to medical facilities and fear of incurring a public charge. But as the system is set up now it produces the highest level of cost for all parties concerned. If access to medical care was more liberal in

some sort of subsidized program much of the cost incurred by illegal immigrants could be minimized.

Although support for such a subsidized medical care program for illegal immigrants would be extremely hard to find, to say the least, if such a program were started it could alleviate much of the high cost emergency care given to this population.

Cuestionario

1. ¿De donde eres? ¿De cual estado se originaste?
2. ¿Vienes del campo o una ciudad en México?
3. ¿Cuántos años tienes?
4. ¿Vives con sus parientes cuando esté en los Estados Unidos?
5. ¿Tienes hijos que también vengan o nazcan en los Estados Unidos?
6. ¿Tienes parientes en Estados Unidos?
7. ¿Te han acompañado miembros de tu familia cuando viniste a los Estados Unidos?
8. ¿Tus hijos asistan escuela en los Estados Unidos?
9. ¿Y si tus hijos no podrán ir a la escuela en los Estados Unidos?
(Quedar) o (Regresar)
10. ¿Donde has trabajado en los Estados Unidos?
11. ¿Tenías información de donde conseguir trabajo si regresas?
12. ¿Cuanto tiempo has estado en los Estados Unidos?
Unidos?
13. ¿Que te parese la vida en los Estados Unidos en comparación de México
14. ¿Que tipo de trabajo tenias en México antes de ir a los Estados Unidos?
15. ¿Cuántas horas de trabajo tenias diario en México?
16. ¿Qué te hizo decidir de ir a los Estados Unidos?
17. ¿Tienes un numero de seguro social?
18. ¿Has Pagado impuestos en los Estados Unidos?
19. ¿Que tipo de impuestos has pagado? (Estado) (Federal)
20. ¿Has usado los servicios medicos cuando en los Estados Unidos?
21. ¿Cual tipo de servicios medicos recibiste publico o privado?
22. ¿Recibiste los servicios medicos en un hospital o una clinica?
23. ¿Tenias que pagar por esos servicios medicos?
24. ¿Que peinsas sobre la Propuesta 187?
25. ¿Piensas que la Propuesta 187 le efectuará?

Questionnaire

1. Which state are you from in Mexico?
2. Did you live in a rural or city zone of Mexico?
3. How old are you?
4. Are you going to live with relatives while in the U.S.
5. Do you have children that will come to the United states in the future?
6. Do you have relatives in the U.S.?
7. Did other family members accompany you to the United States?
8. Do your children attend school in the United States?
9. What will you do if your children can not attend school in the U.S.? (Stay) (Return)
10. Where did you work in the U.S.?
11. Do you know where you can get work en the U.S. if you return?
12. How long was your stay in the U.S.?
13. What do you think life is like in the U.S. compared to Mexico?
14. What type of work did you do in Mexico before going to the U.S.?
15. How many hours of work did you have a week in Mexico?
16. What reason made you decide to go to the United States?
17. Do you have a social security number?
18. Have you ever paid U.S. taxes?
19. What type of taxes did you pay? (State) (Federal)
20. Have you ever used medical services in the U.S.?
21. Did you use private or public medical services?
22. Did you receive medical services in a hospital or public clinic?
23. Did you pay fees for medical services?
24. What do you think about Proposition 187?
25. Do you think you will be affected by Propostion 187?

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