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The New Era of Mexican Migration to the United States

Jorge Durand, Douglas S. Massey, and Emilio A. Parrado

The decade of the 1970s ended a long period of economic growth based on a development model applied widely in the years after World War II. The fundamental aim of this model was to create and sustain internal markets that could serve as springboards for broader economic growth. In industrial nations, governments employed regulation, spending, and monetary policies to generate consumer demand capable of supporting mass production and sustained growth. In developing nations, officials undertook large-scale spending and investment to generate income and eliminate bottlenecks in production; at the same time they erected barriers to the entry of foreign goods and services, thus creating internal demand that national producers—both public and private—could satisfy to initiate and sustain industrialization.

The promotion of economic development through these strategies instigated new migratory movements. In the developing world, much of the geographic mobility was internal, with high rates of rural-to-urban migration and rapid urbanization. In developed countries, domestic labor reserves were quickly exhausted, and foreign workers were imported to enable rapid economic growth without inflation. In Western Europe, for example, immigrant workers were initially recruited from culturally similar but less advantaged countries in the south, such as Spain, Italy, Portugal, and Greece, but by the 1960s these sources were tapped out and migrants from culturally dissimilar and much poorer nations in North Africa and the Middle East were recruited in their stead. By the early 1970s, a series of guest-worker agreements and bilateral treaties had brought hundreds of thousands of Turkish workers into Germany and large numbers of Algerians, Moroccans, and Tunisians into France.¹

In the United States, foreign workers were imported under the aegis of the 1942 Bracero Accord, which over the next twenty-two years arranged for the recruitment

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¹ Samuel H. Preston, "Urban Growth in Developing Countries: A Demographic Reappraisal," *Population and Development Review*, 5 (June 1979), 195–216; Michael P. Todaro, *Internal Migration in Developing Countries: A Review of Theory, Evidence, Methodology, and Research Priorities* (Geneva, 1976). Charles P. Kindleberger, *Europe's Postwar Growth: The Role of Labor Supply* (Cambridge, Mass., 1967). Solon Ardittis, "Labour Migration and the Single European Market: A Synthetic and Prospective Note," *International Sociology* (Rome), 5 (no. 4, 1990), 461–74. Philip L. Martin, *The Unfinished Story: Turkish Labour Migration to Western Europe* (Geneva, 1991); Gil-das Simon, *Géodynamique des migrations internationales dans le monde* (Geodynamics of global international migration) (Paris, 1995).

and importation of 4.6 million temporary workers from Mexico. When the program finally ended in 1964, the United States did not stop employing Mexican workers; it simply shifted from a *de jure* policy of active labor recruitment to a *de facto* policy of passive labor acceptance, combining modest legal immigration with massive undocumented entry. Despite successive amendments to the U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act (in 1965, 1976, 1978, and 1980) intended to restrict Mexican immigration, the number of legal immigrants rose from 38,000 in 1964 to 67,000 in 1986; and over the same period gross undocumented migration grew from 87,000 to 3.8 million entries per year.²

The postwar model of industrial growth based on internal market development came undone in the early 1970s, and over the course of the next decade it was progressively abandoned in favor of a new economic model based on international trade. In developed nations, production grew more capital intensive and markets fragmented as mass production methods gave way to just-in-time delivery, flexible accumulation, out-sourcing, and continuous flow manufacturing, all carried out on a global scale. In developing nations, state bureaucracies were slashed, government-owned firms were privatized, and tariff barriers were dismantled to expose formerly protected, insular economies to the full force of global competition.

These changes came earliest in Mexico's northern border region, where in the 1970s the government launched an ambitious industrialization program based on export processing.³ Binational agreements were negotiated to create a special trade zone along the border within which companies could import unfinished inputs into Mexico, assemble them into final goods, and then reexport them back to the United States paying tax only on the value added (that is, the relatively small cost of labor inputs). Soon *maquila* factories were sprouting up in cities throughout northern Mexico, initiating a wave of rapid economic and demographic growth along the border.

This model of export-led development was ultimately expanded to embrace all of Mexico under presidents Miguel de la Madrid and Carlos Salinas de Gortari in the 1980s. First, Mexico joined the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade in 1986 and then, in 1988, entered into negotiations with the United States and Canada to create a continent-wide free-trade zone.⁴ These negotiations led to the implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) on January 1, 1994, creating an open market area extending from the Arctic Ocean to Central America.

The new economic order envisioned by NAFTA had different effects in different regions of Mexico. Along the northern border—especially within dynamic urban centers such as Tijuana, Mexicali, Ciudad Juarez, Nuevo Laredo, and Monterrey—

² Kitty Calavita, *Inside the State: The Bracero Program, Immigration, and the I.N.S.* (New York, 1992). Douglas S. Massey and Audrey Singer, "New Estimates of Undocumented Mexican Migration and the Probability of Apprehension," *Demography*, 32 (May 1995), 203–13; U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, *1989 Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service* (Washington, 1990).

³ Leslie Sklair, *Assembling for Development: The Maquila Industry in Mexico and the United States* (San Diego, 1993).

⁴ Richard S. Belous and Jonathan Lemco, eds., *NAFTA as a Model of Development: The Benefits and Costs of Merging High- and Low-Wage Areas* (Albany, 1995); Maria de los Angeles Pozas, *Industrial Restructuring in Mexico: Corporate Adaptation, Technological Innovation, and Changing Patterns of Industrial Relations in Monterrey* (La Jolla, 1993).

free trade and closer ties with the United States brought economic expansion and continued high rates of growth, but interior cities were not so well positioned to compete globally and found themselves sinking further into poverty. For millions of Mexicans, economic restructuring under the neoliberal regime of President Salinas brought joblessness, hardship, neglect, and growing economic marginalization.⁵

Within economically marginalized regions of Mexico, especially, households were left with little more than a decision of whether to emigrate or revolt. It is no coincidence that the first popular armed uprising since the early 1940s occurred in Chiapas, a poor, predominantly rural, and heavily Indian state lacking a strong tradition of migration to the United States.⁶ Without social ties connecting residents to work in the United States, the only feasible option for poor Chiapanecos was rebellion. However, in other states also characterized by high levels of marginalization, large Indian populations, and pervasive poverty—but with strong connections to the United States—sporadic guerrilla movements emerged but never evolved into mass popular uprisings (for example, in Guerrero, Oaxaca, and Michoacán). In these states, the inflow of migradollars mitigated the pressures for revolt and circumscribed the appeal of armed rebellion.

The expansion of the global economy also had serious consequences for the United States. After 1973, wages stagnated, unemployment rates rose, income inequality grew, and the distribution of wealth became progressively more skewed. During the 1970s and 1980s, economic insecurity was confined mainly to blue-collar workers; by the early 1990s, however, economic fears and anxieties had spread to white-collar workers as well, as computerization eliminated routine clerical tasks and corporate downsizing condensed successive layers of management. These structural changes coincided with a cyclical recession triggered by the end of the Cold War, a downturn that was especially pronounced in California.⁷

That state, of course, had long been the leading destination for Mexican migrants to the United States. In 1992, 62 percent of all Mexicans legally admitted for permanent residence intended to settle in California, and 60 percent of all undocumented migrants were located in this state. Although some argue that California's economic crisis would have been even more severe were it not for cheap Mexican labor, the coincidence of high immigration with rising income inequality, stagnat-

⁵ Fernando Cortés, "La Evolución de la Desigualdad del Ingreso Familiar Durante la Década de los Ochenta" (Trends in family income during the 1980s), typescript, 1993, working paper, Centro de Estudios Sociológicos (El Colegio de México, Mexico, D.F.); Fernando Cortés and Rosa María Rubalcava, "El Ingreso Familiar: Su Distribución y Desigualdad 1984–1989" (Family income: Its distribution and inequality), *Demos: Carta Demográfica sobre México*, 5 (1992), 28–30.

⁶ Rodolfo O. de la Garza and Gabriel Szekely, "Policy, Politics, and Emigration: Reexamining the Mexican Experience," in *At the Crossroads: Mexican Migration and U.S. Policy*, ed. Frank D. Bean et al. (Lanham, 1997), 201–26. George Collier, *Basta! Land and the Zapatista Rebellion in Chiapas* (Oakland, 1994).

⁷ Sheldon Danziger and Peter Gottschalk, *America Unequal* (Cambridge, Mass., 1995); Edward N. Wolff, "The Rich Get Increasingly Richer: Latest Data on Household Wealth during the 1980s," in *Research in Politics and Society*, vol. V, ed. Richard E. Ratcliff, Melvin L. Oliver, and Thomas M. Shapiro (Greenwich, 1995), 33–68. Bennett Harrison, *Lean and Mean: The Changing Landscape of Corporate Power in the Age of Flexibility* (New York, 1994); Jeremy Rifkin, *The End of Work: The Decline of the Global Labor Force and the Dawn of the Post-Market Era* (New York, 1995).

ing wages, and widespread unemployment created a new politics of nativism.⁸ Although it began in California, this nativist movement ultimately spread nationwide and produced legislative and policy changes whose effects on immigration were modest but whose long-term consequences for both Mexico and the United States were far-reaching.

The Road to the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA)

In a 1985 speech intended to frame political debate for the 1986 congressional elections, President Ronald Reagan asserted that the United States had “lost control” of its borders to an “invasion” of illegal migrants. In doing so, he transformed undocumented immigration from a useful political issue (which it had always been) into a more fundamental question of national security. He thus moved the issue of border control out of the backwaters of the federal bureaucracy and into the realm of high politics. Henceforth immigrants were connected symbolically with invaders, criminals, and drug smugglers, who were pictured as poised menacingly along a lightly defended two-thousand-mile frontier dividing the United States from Mexico and the poor masses of the Third World.

Posed as an issue of national security, undocumented migration by definition required immediate and forceful action. The most promising proposal for repelling the “invasion” came from a bill that had languished in the United States Congress for more than a decade. Reintroduced and cosponsored in 1985 by Sen. Alan Simpson of Wyoming and Rep. Peter Rodino of New Jersey, the bill made its way through various congressional committees and reached the floor of both chambers in late 1986. With the midterm elections approaching, “doing something” about undocumented migration had become a popular cause and a hot political issue. The bill passed Congress in late October and was signed into law by President Reagan on the eve of the November elections.

The final bill, known as the Immigration Reform and Control Act (or IRCA), contained four key provisions: new resources were allocated to the United States Border Patrol for enforcement along the Mexico—United States border; sanctions were enacted to remove the lure of United States jobs by penalizing employers who knowingly hired unauthorized workers; long-term undocumented residents were offered an amnesty (the so-called LAW, Legally Authorized Worker, program) to wipe the slate clean and secure the support of Latino and civil rights groups; and undocumented agricultural workers were offered a special legalization program (known as the Special Agricultural Worker program, SAW) to placate growers in Texas and California and earn their support.

Even though IRCA was enacted as a general change to immigration policy and did

⁸ U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, *1992 Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service* (Washington, 1993); Robert Warren, “Estimates of the Undocumented Immigrant Population Residing in the United States, by Country of Origin and State of Residence: October 1992,” typescript, 1995, working papers, Statistical Branch (U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, Washington, D.C.). Katrina Burgess and Abraham F. Lowenthal, “Los Desafíos que Vienen del Sur” (Challenges from the south), in *La Conexión México California*, ed. Abraham F. Lowenthal and Katrina Burgess (Mexico, D.F., 1995), 305–28.



Retablo of M. Esther Tapia Picón. Undated. Oil on Metal. The caption reads: We give thanks to the Virgin of San Juan for saving us from the migration authorities on our way to Los Angeles.

From Jorge Durand and Douglas S. Massey, Miracles on the Border (Tucson, 1995).

not single out any particular country for enforcement action, there is little doubt that its primary purpose was to curb undocumented migration from Mexico. Accordingly, immigrants from that country have borne the brunt of the law's consequences: Mexicans constitute 70 percent of those granted amnesty under the LAW program, 80 percent of those legalized under the SAW program, and 95 percent of those apprehended by the Border Patrol since the bill's passage.

Although IRCA's primary purpose may have been to deter undocumented migrants, it does not seem to have made much progress in meeting that goal.⁹ Rather than slowing down the rate of undocumented entry, IRCA seems only to have succeeded in transforming a seasonal flow of temporary workers into a more permanent population of settled legal immigrants. Indeed, more than any other factor, IRCA is responsible for creating a new era in Mexican immigration to the United States and thus transforming social, economic, and political conditions on both sides of the border.

⁹ Shirley J. Smith, Roger G. Kramer, and Audrey Singer, *Characteristics and Labor Market Behavior of the Legalized Population: Five Years Following Legalization* (Washington, 1996). Keith Crane et al., *The Effect of Employer Sanctions on the Flow of Undocumented Immigrants to the United States* (Santa Monica, 1990); Katharine M. Donato, Jorge Durand, and Douglas S. Massey, "Stemming the Tide? Assessing the Deterrent Effects of the Immigration Reform and Control Act," *Demography*, 29 (May 1992), 139–57; Douglas S. Massey and Kristin E. Espinosa, "What's Driving Mexico-U.S. Migration? A Theoretical, Empirical, and Policy Analysis," *American Journal of Sociology*, 102 (Jan. 1997), 939–99.

The Great Transformation

The fact that so many Mexicans (2.3 million) took advantage of IRCA's legalization provisions reflects economic circumstances in Mexico as well as opportunities in the United States. The implementation of the SAW and LAW programs (during 1987–1989) coincided with a period of unusually severe inflation and unemployment in Mexico, as presidents de la Madrid and Salinas successively administered the harsh medicine of neoliberalism: balanced budgets, slashed spending, reduced wages, and downsized bureaucracies.¹⁰ The resulting economic dislocations rendered the traditional alternative of returning to Mexico infeasible for many migrants working in the United States. In view of the weak economic conditions at home, migrants opted to remain abroad, accept the proffered legalization, and settle more permanently into a United States life.

IRCA thus dramatically altered the rhythms of seasonal migration back and forth across the border. Prior to 1986, most migrants sought to work abroad temporarily in order to manage risks and acquire capital for a specific goal or purchase. By sending one family member abroad for a limited period of foreign labor, households could diversify their sources of income (thus managing risks) and accumulate savings from their United States earnings (thus acquiring capital). In both cases, the fundamental objective was to return to Mexico. The various privations and sacrifices endured while working abroad were justified ultimately by the dream of a better life at home.

IRCA ruptured this dream in several ways. First, legalization offered migrants the prospect of a secure existence north of the border during a period of exceptional economic and political turmoil at home. The LAW program, in particular, virtually *required* undocumented migrants who had formerly circulated back and forth to remain in the United States until their petitions for legalization were resolved. As soon as the program was announced, all undocumented migrants with a potential claim for amnesty ceased circulating immediately and began preparing their petitions.¹¹

Thus, some 461,000 Mexicans filed for legalization under the LAW program in 1987, followed by another 728,000 in 1988 and 41,000 in 1989. These people were joined by 106,000 SAW applicants in 1987, 544,000 in 1988, and 424,000 in 1989. Of the 2.3 million Mexicans who ultimately filed for legalization, most ceased crossing illegally in early 1987, and their removal from the seasonal flow of undocumented migrants caused a sharp reduction in the number of apprehensions in subsequent years. Indeed, arrests along the border fell from 1.6 million in 1986 to 830,000 in 1989, a decline of nearly 50 percent in just three years.¹²

¹⁰ De los Angeles Pozas, *Industrial Restructuring in Mexico*; Miguel Angel Centeno, *Democracy within Reason: Technocratic Revolution in Mexico* (University Park, 1994).

¹¹ Jacqueline Maria Hagan, *Deciding to Be Legal: A Maya Community in Houston* (Philadelphia, 1994).

¹² U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, *1986 Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service* (Washington, 1987); U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, *1987 Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service* (Washington, 1988); U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, *1988 Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service* (Washington, 1989); U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, *1989 Statistical Yearbook*. Thomas J. Espenshade, "Undocumented Migration to the United States: Evidence from a Repeated Trials Model," in *Undocumented Migration to the United States: IRCA and the Experience of the 1980s*, ed. Frank D. Bean, Barry Edmonston, and Jeffrey S. Passel (Washington, 1990), 159–82; Michael J. White, Frank D. Bean, and Thomas Espenshade, "The U.S. 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act and Undocumented Migration to the United States," *Population Research and Policy Review*, 9 (May 1990), 93–116; U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, *1989 Statistical Yearbook*.

Even after being legalized, most Mexican migrants did not return home as frequently as before. For one thing, IRCA required them to remain in the United States and take classes in English and civics in order to obtain their permanent "green cards." Once permanent legal status was achieved, moreover, migrants who returned home were compelled to reenter the United States each year in order to maintain a bona fide status as legal resident aliens, and few families could afford to throw away the economic security represented by having legal residence papers.

Congress had intended legalization to wipe the slate clean, while employer sanctions and border enforcement were intended to prevent the entry of new undocumented immigrants, thus "solving" the problem of undocumented migration. In practice, however, IRCA's border controls and employer sanctions backfired. They did not deter undocumented Mexicans from heading northward or prevent them from crossing the border so much as they discouraged them from returning home.¹³ Because migrants are at greatest risk while crossing the border, a buildup of enforcement resources there perversely creates strong incentives for undocumented migrants to stay put. Rather than returning home to face another risky crossing later on, migrants rationally chose to hang onto their jobs and settle into the expatriate Mexican community.

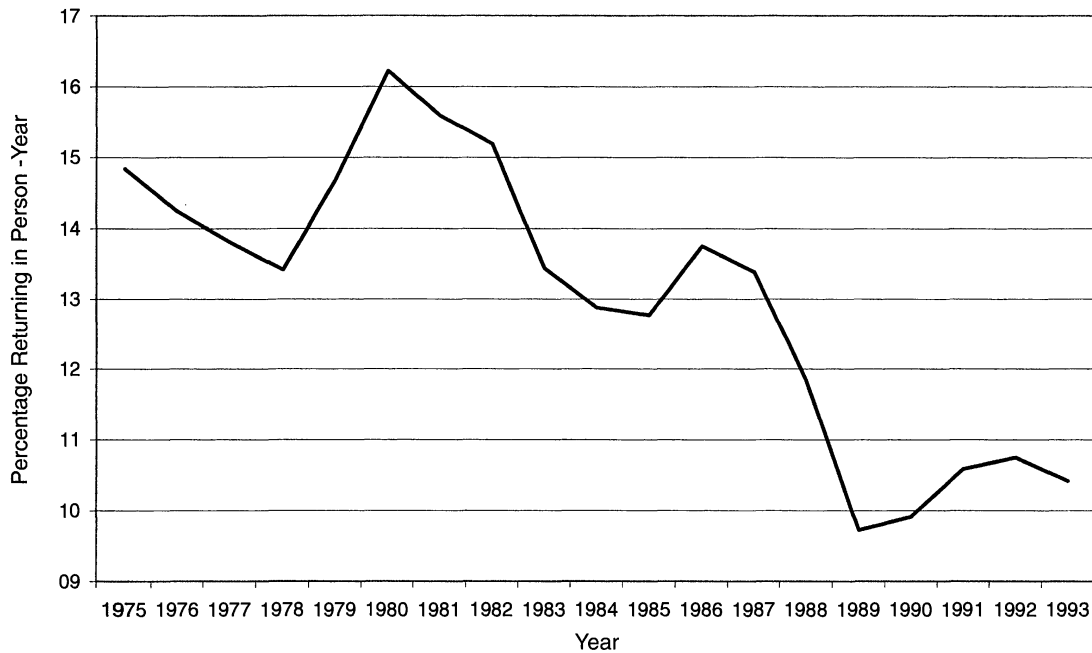
Figure 1 illustrates these various perverse effects by showing trends in the probability of returning to Mexico among migrants already in the United States. The probabilities were estimated from life histories compiled for 3,166 migrant household heads enumerated in the Mexican Migration Project (MMP), which since 1982 has randomly sampled communities throughout Mexico and combined them with parallel surveys of out-migrants from those places who have settled in the United States, thus creating a representative database on documented and undocumented migration.¹⁴ Further information on these data can be obtained from the MMP website: <http://lexis.pop.upenn.edu/mexmig/>.

We computed probabilities of returning to Mexico by following respondents year by year from the moment they entered the United States. We then counted up the number of return moves in each year and divided by the number of person-years spent in the United States. To smooth trends over time, we computed three-year moving averages. As figure 1 shows, the likelihood of returning home peaked in 1980, fell through 1986, and then plummeted to very low levels thereafter, remaining at historical lows through the 1990s. Throughout the 1990s, the probability of return migration hovered at just 10 percent to 11 percent.

¹³ Wayne Cornelius, "Impacts of the 1986 U.S. Immigration Law on Emigration from Rural Mexican Sending Communities," *Population and Development Review*, 15 (Dec. 1989), 689–705; Donato, Durand, and Massey, "Stemming the Tide?"; Massey and Espinosa, "What's Driving Mexico-U.S. Migration?"; Massey and Singer, "New Estimates of Undocumented Mexican Migration"; Audrey Singer and Douglas S. Massey, "The Social Process of Undocumented Border Crossing among Mexican Migrants," *International Migration Review*, 32 (Fall 1998), 561–92. Sherrie A. Kossoudji, "Playing Cat and Mouse at the U.S.-Mexican Border," *Demography*, 29 (May 1992), 159–80; Massey and Espinosa, "What's Driving Mexico-U.S. Migration?"

¹⁴ These data are described and evaluated in René Zenteno and Douglas S. Massey, "Especificidad versus Representatividad: Enfoques Metodológicos para el Estudio de la Migración Internacional" (Specificity versus representativeness: Methodological foci for the study of international migration), *Estudios Demográficos y Urbanos* (Mexico, D.F.), 14 (Jan. 1999), 75–116.

Figure 1
Trends in the Likelihood of Returning to Mexico, 1975–1993



SOURCE: Mexican Migration Project Database (<http://lexis.pop.upenn.edu/mexmig/>), Population Studies Center, University of Pennsylvania.

As migrant household heads began settling and staying in the United States longer, they naturally sought to reunite with their wives and children, and IRCA consequently became a trigger for additional migration. Some of this new movement was legal, of course. In 1992, for example, 52,000 dependents of persons earlier legalized under IRCA were granted permanent residence, followed by another 55,000 in 1992 and 34,000 in 1994. But most of the post-IRCA movement for family reunification was illegal, averaging perhaps 300,000 persons per year. One study found that having a newly legalized migrant in the family increased the probability of undocumented migration by a factor of seven.¹⁵

IRCA thus unleashed an intense process of family reunification involving the parents, spouses, children, and siblings of recently legalized immigrants. In doing so, it substantially feminized and urbanized the population of migrants. A relatively large share of those legalized under the LAW program, 43 percent, were women; and although the percentage of women among SAW applicants was smaller, it was nonetheless significant at around 15 percent. The vast majority of those who qualified for amnesty, meanwhile, lived in large cities. Some 95 percent of those legalized under the LAW program, for example, lived in metropolitan areas; and even among SAWs,

¹⁵ Smith, Kramer, and Singer, *Characteristics and Labor Market Behavior of the Legalized Population. Encuesta sobre Migración en la Frontera Norte: Síntesis Ejecutiva* (Survey of migration on the northern border: Executive summary) (Tijuana, 1996). Massey and Espinosa, "What's Driving Mexico-U.S. Migration?"

Table 1
Selected Characteristics of Mexico–United States Migrants on Their First Trip
to the United States

	<i>Pre-IRCA</i> 1980–1986	<i>Transition Period</i> 1987–1990	<i>New Era</i> 1991–1996
Undocumented migrants			
In agriculture	33.1%	21.8%	19.5%
Female	21.3%	27.8%	25.6%
Women <18	22.6%	26.6%	31.1%
Hourly wage earned (1990 dollars)	\$4.81	\$5.14	\$4.44
Employed through contractor	6.7%	4.9%	9.2%
In California	65.7%	72.2%	58.6%
Number of cases	2,762	389	235
Documented migrants			
In agriculture	7.4%	7.7%	2.6%
Female	47.8%	50.9%	59.1%
Women <18	71.7%	57.1%	48.2%
Hourly wage earned (1990 dollars)	\$6.04	\$5.52	\$4.44
Employed through contractor	13.2%	15.4%	9.4%
In California	73.0%	72.2%	65.5%
Number of cases	636	389	235

SOURCE: Mexican Migration Project Database (<http://lexis.pop.upenn.edu/mexmig/>), Population Studies Center, University of Pennsylvania.

who were, in theory, agrarian laborers, 84 percent of the applicants gave metropolitan addresses.¹⁶

Among migrants working in agriculture, moreover, there was a pronounced shift toward urban occupations in the years after legalization. Agricultural growers, of course, had envisioned just such a turn of events and had successfully lobbied Congress to have IRCA include a Replenishment Agricultural Worker (RAW) program so that the newly legalized workers could be replaced after they left for the city. They also lobbied successfully for an expansion of the H-2A program, a Bracero-like temporary worker program that grew from 2,000 Mexicans in 1986 to 6,000 in 1995.¹⁷

¹⁶ Smith, Kramer, and Singer, *Characteristics and Labor Market Behavior of the Legalized Population*. U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, *1990 Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service* (Washington, 1991).

¹⁷ Katharine M. Donato, Jorge Durand, and Douglas S. Massey, "Changing Conditions in the U.S. Labor Market: Effects of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986," *Population Research and Policy Review*, 11 (no. 2, 1992), 93–115. Philip L. Martin and J. Edward Taylor, "Harvest of Confusion: SAWS, RAWs, and Farmworkers," Working Paper PRIP-UI-4, 1988, Program for Research on Immigration Policy (The Urban Institute, Washington, D.C.). Jorge Durand, "Enganchadores y Contratistas: Un Eslabón Partido en la Migración de Trabajadores Mexicanos a Estados Unidos" (Hookers and contractors: A lost step in the migration of Mexican workers to the United States), in *Las Relaciones México–Estados Unidos desde la Perspectiva Regional* (Mexico–United States relations from a regional perspective), ed. Tomás Calvillo (forthcoming); U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, *1995 Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service* (Washington, 1996).

As a program of legalization, therefore, IRCA was a great success: more than two million Mexicans—including many women and children—achieved legal status under the legislation. As an enforcement policy intended to control undocumented migration, however, IRCA was an unequivocal failure. Not only did it fail to deter undocumented migrants from leaving Mexico but it actually encouraged additional undocumented migration by family and friends who had remained behind, and it was instrumental in transforming a predominantly rural, male, and temporary flow of migrant workers into a feminized, urbanized, and permanent population of settled immigrants.

The foregoing trends are documented in table 1, which again uses data from the Mexican Migration Project, showing the characteristics of documented and undocumented migrants leaving on their first trip to the United States during three periods: the pre-IRCA period of 1980–1986, the transition phase of 1987–1990, and the new era of migration of the 1990s. As can be seen, the percentage of undocumented migrants working in agriculture falls steadily over time, reaching just 19.5 percent in 1991–1996. Likewise, the percentage of agrarian workers among those with legal documents, already low before IRCA, reaches just 2.6 percent in the new era. At the same time, the percentage of women rises in both categories. Among the undocumented migrants, the percentage female goes from 21.3 percent in 1980–1986 to 25.6 percent in 1991–1996, whereas among documented migrants the shift is even more dramatic, with the share of women rising from 47.8 percent in the pre-IRCA period to 59.1 percent most recently. Moreover, among undocumented migrants, who have found it increasingly difficult to move back and forth across the border, a growing fraction were dependents. Among undocumented women, for example, the fraction under eighteen rose from 22.6 percent in 1980–1986 to 31.1 percent in 1991–1996.

IRCA's employer sanctions also had profound effects on the United States labor market. In developing them, the United States Congress was mindful of the needs of employers, requiring that sanctions be applied *gradually* to give them time to adjust to the new regime. Congress also did not require employers to verify the *authenticity* of documents offered by laborers to prove their identity and right to work in the United States. Instead, they simply had to fill out an I-9 form to demonstrate they had *seen* what *appeared to be* valid documents. Even if these documents later turned out to be false and the worker was deported, the employer was not liable to prosecution if he or she could produce an I-9 form and a photocopy of the document they had seen. The predictable result was a boom in the market for fraudulent documents.¹⁸

Despite the low odds of prosecution under the law, employers did face *some* new risks, particularly if they relied heavily on unauthorized labor. To compensate them-

¹⁸ Michael Fix and Paul T. Hill, *Enforcing Employer Sanctions: Challenges and Strategies* (Santa Monica, 1990); Manuel García y Griego and Mónica Vereá Campos, "La Crisis Económica Fiscal de California y la Nueva Ofensiva Verbal en Contra de los Indocumentados" (The economic and fiscal crisis of California and the new verbal offensive against undocumented migrants), in *California: Problemas Económicos, Políticos y Sociales* (California: Economic, political, and social problems), ed. Rosa Cusminsky (Mexico, D.F., 1995), 125–52. Gustavo López Castro, "Coyotes and Alien Smuggling," in *Migration between Mexico and the United States, Volume 3*, ed. the staff of the Binational Study of Migration between Mexico and the U.S. (Washington, 1998), 1965–74.

selves for these new risks, employers embarked on a pattern of systematic wage discrimination against Latinos in general and undocumented Mexicans in particular. Rather than taking the time and trouble to identify which migrants were undocumented, they simply discriminated against foreign-looking workers; and rather than denying them jobs, they simply lowered their wages.¹⁹

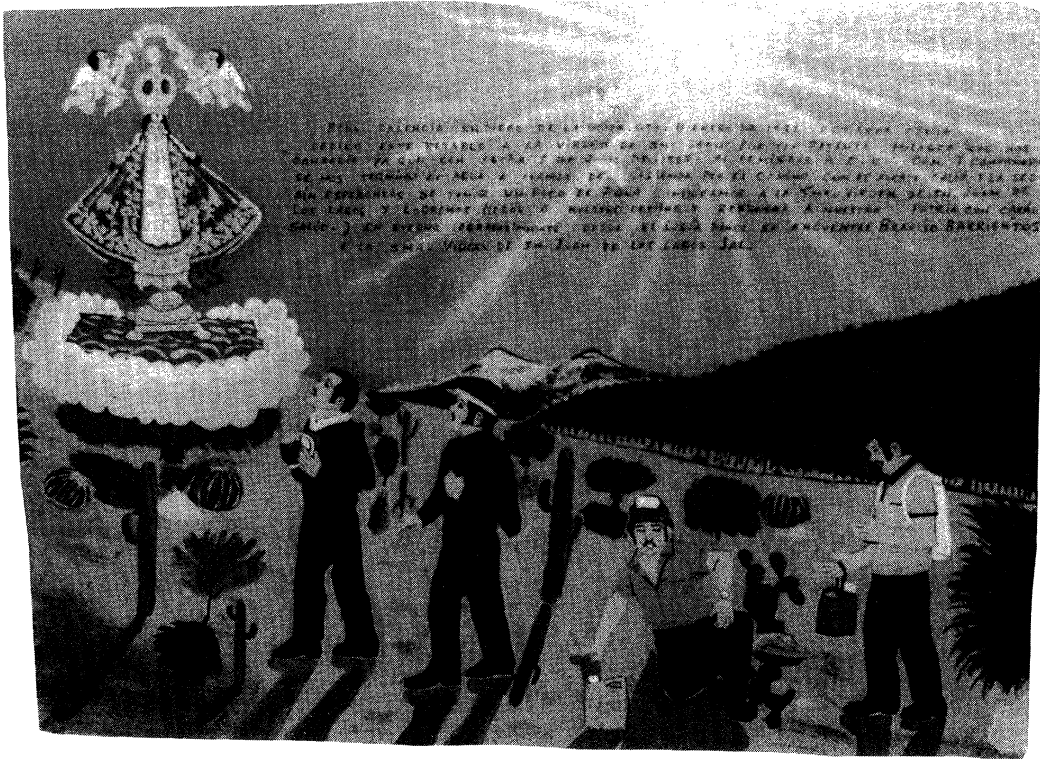
Among foreigners, post-IRCA wage discrimination was especially severe against undocumented migrants. Whereas before IRCA undocumented migrants earned the same wages as documented migrants, and rates of pay were determined largely by education, United States experience, and English language ability, afterward undocumented migrants earned wages that were 28 percent less than those earned by documented migrants; and rather than being determined by schooling, experience, and English ability, they were determined by a person's social contacts. As wages deteriorated for undocumented migrants in the wake of IRCA, so did working conditions, with higher proportions earning wages below the legal minimum and larger numbers working under irregular circumstances.²⁰ As table 1 indicates, entry-level wages for undocumented Mexican workers averaged \$4.81 during 1980–1986, rose temporarily to \$5.14 during the transition period, and then fell to \$4.44 during 1991–1996 (expressed in constant 1990 dollars).

The imposition of employer sanctions also generated significant paperwork burdens for employers, who were required to keep I-9 forms on file for every person they hired. In seasonal industries such as agriculture, construction, food service, janitorial services, and private household work, where the use of casual workers is common and turnover is high, the added burdens were significant, and the prospect of so much paperwork caused many employers to shift from direct hiring of immigrants to a subcontracting arrangement.²¹ Labor subcontractors are typically citizens or legal resident aliens who sign a contract with an employer to provide a specific number of workers, for a specified period of time, to engage in a particular task, at a set rate per hour. By working through a subcontractor, employers at once eliminate the risk of prosecution under IRCA and escape the law's tiresome paperwork requirements. As table 1 indicates, the percentage of undocumented migrants hired through a

¹⁹ Deborah A. Cobb-Clark, Clinton R. Shiells, and B. Lindsay Lowell, "Immigration Reform: The Effects of Employer Sanctions and Legalization on Wages," *Journal of Labor Economics*, 13 (July 1995), 472–98; Richard Fry, B. Lindsay Lowell, and E. Haghighat, "The Impact of Employer Sanctions on Metropolitan Wage Rates," *Industrial Relations*, 34 (July 1995), 464–84; B. Lindsay Lowell, Jay Teachman, and Zhongren Jing, "Unintended Consequences of Immigration Reform: Discrimination and Hispanic Employment," *Demography*, 32 (Nov. 1995), 617–28.

²⁰ Barry R. Chiswick, "Illegal Aliens in the United States Labor Market: An Analysis of Occupational Attainment and Earnings," *International Migration Review*, 18 (no. 3, 1984), 714–32; Barry R. Chiswick, *Illegal Aliens: Their Employment and Employers* (Kalamazoo, 1988); Barry R. Chiswick, "Speaking, Reading, and Earnings among Low-Skilled Immigrants," *Journal of Labor Economics*, 9 (April 1991), 149–70; Katharine M. Donato and Douglas S. Massey, "Effect of the Immigration Reform and Control Act on the Wages of Mexican Migrants," *Social Science Quarterly*, 74 (Sept. 1993), 523–41; Douglas S. Massey, "Do Undocumented Migrants Earn Lower Wages than Legal Immigrants? New Evidence from Mexico," *International Migration Review*, 21 (Summer 1987), 236–74. Julie A. Phillips and Douglas S. Massey, "The New Labor Market for Mexican Immigrants to the United States," *Demography*, 36 (forthcoming). Donato, Durand, and Massey, "Changing Conditions in the U.S. Labor Market."

²¹ Philip L. Martin and J. Edward Taylor, "Immigration Reform and Farm Labor Contracting in California," in *The Paper Curtain: Employer Sanctions' Implementation, Impact, and Reform*, ed. Michael Fix (Washington, 1991), 239–61.



Retablo of Braulio Barrientos. 1986. Oil on Metal. Part of the caption reads: While I was reemigrating to the United States with three friends, the water we were carrying ran out. Traveling in such great heat and with such thirst, and without hope of drinking even a little water, we invoked the Virgin of San Juan and were able to arrive at our destination and return to our homeland in health.

From Jorge Durand and Douglas S. Massey, Miracles on the Border (Tucson, 1995).

subcontractor, which fell to 4.9 percent in the transition period, nearly doubled to 9.2 percent by the early 1990s.

In return for absorbing the risks of prosecution and the burdens of paperwork, subcontractors retain a share of the migrants' earnings, further reducing their net wages. Whereas before IRCA, migrants employed through a subcontractor earned the same wages as others, after IRCA they earned 30 percent less.²² Thus, IRCA's employer sanctions did not block access of undocumented immigrants to United States jobs; it simply pushed their employment further underground and induced greater wage discrimination against Latinos. In short, it created black market conditions that put downward pressure on all workers regardless of nativity or citizenship.

The new underground economy created by IRCA appears to have had spillover effects on the native-born working in the same sectors. Whereas research conducted using the 1980 census (that is, before IRCA) found few effects of immigration on the wages or employment of natives, work done using the 1990 census (after IRCA)

²² Phillips and Massey, "New Labor Market for Mexican Immigrants."

uncovered significant negative effects on certain racial and ethnic subgroups.²³ The attempt to eliminate the lure of United States jobs through employer sanctions thus appears to have gone badly awry, contributing to the deterioration of wages at the lower end of the labor market and exacerbating income inequality in the United States. As a result, not only have the wages of undocumented workers fallen, so have the wages of documented workers, which went from an average of \$6.04 per hour before IRCA to \$4.44 in the early 1990s (again expressed in constant 1990 dollars).

IRCA had one final consequence: the geographic dispersion of Mexican immigrants away from traditional gateway regions. Among migrants legalized under the LAW program, there was a clear pattern of geographic mobility away from areas of Mexican concentration in the years after legalization.²⁴ With documents in hand, Mexicans were suddenly free to leave historical enclaves and established niches to search for better opportunities elsewhere; and, as legalized immigrants dispersed geographically, so did later waves of immigrants arriving to join them.

Whereas 82 percent of Mexican immigrants arriving in 1986 stated their intention to settle in California, Illinois, or Texas, by 1995 the percentage had dropped to 71 percent. Moreover, only five states received more than a thousand Mexican immigrants in 1986 (the traditional receiving states of Arizona, California, Illinois, New Mexico, and Texas); but by 1995 the number had grown to 11 (with the addition of Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington). New Jersey–New York combined to equal a twelfth region receiving more than a thousand Mexican immigrants per year. According to data from the Census and Current Population Survey, the proportion of recent Mexican immigrants going to California dropped from 63 percent to 40 percent between 1990 and 1996 while the percentage going to nontraditional states grew from 13 percent to 31 percent, yielding a sharp increase in the diversity of destinations.²⁵ This dispersion is reflected in the survey data shown in table 1, where the share of undocumented migrants going to California drops from 65.7 percent in 1980–1986 to 58.6 percent in 1991–1996, and the share of documented migrants doing so drops from 73.0 percent to 65.5 percent over the same period.

Political Aftershocks

IRCA was thus instrumental in transforming Mexican immigration from a seasonal and predominantly male flow of rural, undocumented workers going to a handful of states into an urbanized population of settled legal immigrant families dispersed widely throughout the United States. This transformation has dramatically altered the horizons of life and work for Mexicans north of the border and has transfigured

²³ George J. Borjas, *Friends or Strangers: The Impact of Immigrants on the U.S. Economy* (New York, 1990). George J. Borjas, "The Economics of Immigration," *Journal of Economic Literature*, 32 (Dec. 1994), 1667–1717.

²⁴ Kristin E. Neuman and Marta Tienda, "The Settlement and Secondary Migration Patterns of Legalized Aliens: Insights from LAPS [Legally Authorized Population Survey] Data," in *Immigration and Ethnicity: The Integration of America's Newest Arrivals*, ed. Barry Edmonston and Jeffrey Passel (Washington, 1994), 187–226.

²⁵ Jorge Durand, Douglas S. Massey, and Fernando Charvet, "The Changing Geography of Mexican Immigration to the United States, 1910–1996," *Social Science Quarterly* (forthcoming).

the political landscape of both countries. As they have put down roots, Mexican immigrants have come to value political participation as never before, and they have begun to enter public debates, political organizations, and electoral campaigns and ultimately to become important political actors north as well as south of the border.

The issue of international migration was barely mentioned in the NAFTA accords, and no steps were taken to prepare for the emergence of a transnational population with claims on citizenship in both the United States and Mexico. Indeed, both sides tacitly agreed to sweep the issue of immigration under the rug. President Salinas opined that Mexico's goal in implementing NAFTA was to export goods and not people, and presidents George Bush and Bill Clinton stated that by encouraging job formation in Mexico NAFTA would ultimately reduce the pressures for undocumented migration to the United States.

Unfortunately, in the same year that NAFTA was implemented, Mexico's intertwined political and economic crises returned with a vengeance. On the very day that the agreement took effect, armed guerrillas launched an offensive in the state of Chiapas; in the ensuing months, both the leader of Mexico's ruling party and its presidential candidate were assassinated. The year ended with Mexico's new finance minister, in office for just three weeks, bungling a devaluation and igniting a new round of capital flight, hyperinflation, and unemployment. Despite the appearance of political stability and economic progress during the Salinas presidency, two ancient problems refused to go away: the economic marginalization of large sectors of the population and the resistance of Mexico's ruling elite to political change.

Given the selling of NAFTA as a means of helping Mexico "export goods and not people," the failure of the Mexican economic miracle created an opening for the return of immigration as a political issue in the United States. With the Mexican economy in distress and a United States financial bailout on the horizon, the specter of massive undocumented migration returned as newspapers throughout the country ran features on the crisis and its likely effects. Mexico's economic collapse and deepening political crisis once again turned the United States public against Mexican immigrants and offered politicians a ripe opportunity.

With the end of the Cold War, the United States obsession with external threats gave way to worries about its internal enemies. As IRCA's massive legalization and its accompanying settlement and dispersal increased the salience of Mexicans in the public eye, immigrants came to be blamed for everything from the high cost of welfare to the fiscal crisis of the social service system. United States politicians deliberately encouraged the belief that United States schools, hospitals, and public services were spending massive resources on immigrants, both legal and illegal, who came to the United States to take unfair advantage of public generosity and the taxes paid by ordinary United States citizens.

Immigration revealed its potency as a political issue in 1994 when California governor Pete Wilson found himself struggling for reelection. With his state still mired in a recession, he was unpopular and far down in the polls until he made immigration his chief campaign issue. He endorsed Proposition 187, a referendum to ban undocumented migrants from receiving public health, education, and welfare ser-

vices, and made it his rallying cry. This initiative also obliged government employees to report immigrants they suspected of receiving unauthorized services, effectively deputizing them to enforce United States immigration law. Both the governor and the proposition were endorsed by a substantial majority of the state's voters.

Although it began in California, the anti-immigrant bandwagon soon went national and swept up documented as well as undocumented migrants. The political wave crested in 1996 with the passage of two landmark pieces of legislation: the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (better known as the 1996 Immigration Reform Act) and the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (better known as the 1996 Welfare Reform Act). The net effect of these two laws was to bar noncitizen immigrants (legal as well as undocumented) from receiving means-tested federal and state benefits and to raise the income threshold required for immigrants to sponsor the entry of relatives. The immigration act also enacted harsher penalties against people who overstayed visas or entered the United States without inspection.²⁶

In the political climate of the late 1990s, Mexican immigrants were left with very few ways of protecting themselves and their interests. The only foolproof way of forestalling the potential loss of rights and privileges was through naturalization, which not only guaranteed unhindered access to the full array of United States government benefits but also offered the possibility of voting to fight further losses and restrictions. The reaction of Mexican immigrants to the new political climate was thus predictable: a rush toward United States citizenship. As nativist movements gained strength and began to achieve legislative success, applications for naturalization mushroomed. From 1980 to 1990, the total number of petitions for naturalization fluctuated between 200,000 and 300,000 per year, and as late as 1991 only 207,000 applications were filed (it is not possible to tabulate petitions by Mexicans separately from published INS data). Beginning in that year, however, the number of filings rose precipitously, reaching just under a million in 1995.²⁷

Mexicans historically have had the lowest rate of naturalization of any major immigrant group. According to one estimate, only 17 percent of the 1973 cohort of Mexican immigrants had naturalized by 1989, sixteen years later. As a result, Mexicans constitute the largest single population of noncitizen legal immigrants present in the United States. In 1990, 77 percent of all Mexican immigrants—some 3.3 million persons—were unnaturalized. Thus, the potential for increase in naturalization among Mexican immigrants is huge, and, in fact, the number of Mexicans becoming citizens increased by 383 percent from 1990 to 1995.²⁸

As if the actions of the United States Congress were not enough, the move toward citizenship was also encouraged by the Mexican congress, which late in 1996 approved amendments to the Mexican constitution permitting dual nationality.

²⁶ Austin T. Fragomen, "The Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996: An Overview," *International Migration Review*, 31 (Summer 1997), 438–60.

²⁷ U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, *1995 Statistical Yearbook*.

²⁸ Zai Liang, "On the Measurement of Naturalization," *Demography*, 3 (Aug. 1994), 525–48. U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, *1995 Statistical Yearbook*.

Before, naturalization in the United States implied the relinquishment of Mexican citizenship and the loss of rights to live, work, own property, and travel freely in Mexico. The new amendments allow Mexicans who become United States citizens to keep Mexican nationality and retain those rights. By recognizing dual nationality, Mexico thus removed a major impediment to naturalization in the United States precisely at a time when legislative and political changes there had dramatically increased the costs of remaining unnaturalized. The end result has been a flood of naturalization.

In reversing its historical opposition to dual nationality, the Mexican government sought to accomplish several goals. First, it sought to mobilize Mexican immigrants to defend their rights in the United States. Second, it also saw immigrant voters as a potential means of influencing United States policy on issues involving trade and bilateral relations. Finally, the political elite paradoxically saw it as a way of incorporating immigrants more effectively into the Mexican political system. The extension of dual nationality represents an important gesture signaling that although political realities may compel immigrants to naturalize, in the eyes of the state they will remain Mexicans. In concert with the move toward dual nationality, various programs were established through Mexican consulates in the United States to organize the Mexican diaspora and to facilitate investment in their home communities.

Assuming that millions of Mexicans respond to the new incentives and suddenly seek United States citizenship, the implications for the future of immigration are enormous, as under United States law the acquisition of citizenship creates legal entitlements for entry by family members. Whereas the spouses and minor children of unnaturalized legal resident aliens have to wait in line for immigrant visas that are numerically limited, the spouses and minor children of United States citizens enter immediately, *outside of* these limitations; and whereas legal resident aliens cannot sponsor the legal entry of parents, siblings, or unmarried adult children, citizens immediately acquire these rights upon naturalization.

Thus, each new person that becomes a United States citizen creates more people entitled to immigrate to the United States without numerical restriction, as well as new classes of people entitled to come in under numerically limited categories. In seeking to discourage immigration by restricting the access of foreigners to United States social services, therefore, Congress has inadvertently encouraged additional immigration. By pushing 3.3 million noncitizen Mexican immigrants decisively toward United States citizenship, it has sown the seeds for an even larger influx of Mexican immigrants down the road.

The massive acquisition of citizenship by Mexicans and other immigrants will thus have political consequences of great importance. To the extent that citizenship brings voter mobilization, it represents a radical change from the past, when Mexican immigrants displayed low rates of political participation in the United States.²⁹

²⁹ Rodolfo O. de la Garza and Louis DeSipio, "The Changing Hispanic Political Landscape," in *Redistricting in the 1990s: A Guide for Minority Groups*, ed. William P. O'Hare (Washington, 1989), 171–80; Rodolfo O. de la Garza, Martha Menchaca, and Louis DeSipio, *Barrio Ballots: Latino Politics in the 1990 Elections* (Boulder, 1994).

The passage of anti-immigrant referenda and legislation pushed Mexican immigrants decisively toward new strategies of naturalization and voter mobilization. These strategies paid their first dividends in November 1996, when Rep. Robert Dornan, a conservative Republican from Orange County, California, who made no secret of his anti-immigrant stance, was defeated for reelection by a pan-ethnic coalition of Latinos in which naturalized immigrants cast the decisive votes. Without intending to, United States immigration policy has succeeded in consolidating a broad political coalition among Latinos (and Asians) that cuts across specific nationalities to unite Mexicans, Cubans, Puerto Ricans, and other Central and South Americans.

Like IRCA, therefore, the latest anti-immigrant measures have boomeranged, yielding results contrary to those anticipated by the politicians who instigated them. All signs are that the next several years will yield an intense political battle reminiscent of the civil rights movement of the 1960s, except that Mexican immigrants will now be full partners in the social struggle. A large demonstration in Washington, D.C., during October 1996 included undocumented as well as legal immigrants and was organized by a coalition of different Latinos, who together will soon comprise the largest minority group in the United States.

The reaction has not been long in coming, of course. Republicans, the principal promoters of the anti-immigrant fervor, have viewed the avalanche of naturalizations with alarm and have accused Clinton administration officials of speeding up the process to create Democratic voters and of slipshod practices that have granted citizenship to criminals (once again creating a symbolic link between immigration and criminality). The stage is thus set for a political showdown.

Political mobilization does not stop at the border, however. The economic crisis that persists in Mexico and widespread disenchantment with the performance of the ruling party have turned migrants into vocal critics of the Mexican government's policies. Although discontent in Mexico has led some to armed resistance and others to homegrown justice, it has also led to the mobilization of opposition through established political parties such as the National Action Party (PAN) and the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD), in which migrants have contributed both financial and human resources. Just as migrants have awakened to their political potential in the United States, they have become less tolerant of the deficiencies of the Mexican political system, which ultimately is responsible for the social and economic conditions that led them to emigrate in the first place.³⁰

Mexican immigrants have thus openly welcomed opposition candidates touring the United States, and they have contributed generously to electoral campaigns in their regions of origin. They have also helped to finance local public works even when elected authorities are not members of the official party. The historical disinterest of Mexican authorities in the situation of migrant communities and in the specific problems of the immigrants themselves has spurred many current and former migrants to political action in Mexico, often within channels outside the official party.

³⁰ De la Garza and Szekely, "Policy, Politics, and Emigration."

The New Era of Mexico–United States Migration

In retrospect, it is now clear that the passage of the Immigration Reform and Control Act in late 1986 was a watershed event in the history of Mexico–United States migration. From the end of the Bracero Program in 1964 through November 1986, the United States for all intents and purposes sponsored a liberal temporary worker program in which millions of workers, predominantly undocumented, circulated back and forth between Mexico and the United States. Although some migrants established ties north of the border and ultimately settled more permanently in the United States, illegal status constituted a deterrent to settlement and there were few reasons to remain anyway. The border was porous, United States jobs were accessible, and employers cared little about whether one was documented or not, so migrants lacked strong incentives to prolong their stay once a savings target or short-term income goal had been reached.

According to computations recently published by Audrey Singer and Douglas Massey, from 1965 through 1986 some 27.9 million undocumented Mexicans entered the United States and 23.3 million returned to Mexico, yielding a net increase of just 4.6 million persons. Over the same period, just 1.3 million Mexicans were admitted to permanent legal residence in the United States. From the end of the Bracero Program to the passage of IRCA, in other words, 84 percent of undocumented entries from Mexico were offset by departures. In an earlier study, when we classified migrants interviewed in 1982–1983 according to the strategy they employed during their years of active United States labor, we found that only 20 percent relied on a settlement strategy; the rest simply crossed into the United States temporarily.³¹

The passage of IRCA inaugurated a new era of Mexico–United States migration in which the United States applied increasingly coercive sanctions and border controls in an effort to constrict established flows while offering regularization to undocumented farm workers and long-term settlers already in the country. The rising hazards of border crossing and the ongoing economic crisis in Mexico gave undocumented migrants new reasons to remain abroad and, when combined with IRCA's legalization of 2.3 million persons, tilted Mexican immigration decisively toward permanent United States settlement. In a few short years it was transformed from a seasonal, undocumented, and regionally specific flow in which rural males predominated into an urbanized and substantially female population of permanent settlers who were increasingly dispersed throughout the United States. In the nine years from 1987 through 1995, 2.7 million Mexicans were admitted to permanent resident status, twice the number admitted over the prior twenty-two years.³²

The implementation of IRCA's employer sanctions, meanwhile, undermined wages and working conditions for Mexican workers in the United States, opening up wide gaps between documented and undocumented migrants. In addition to fomenting

³¹ Singer and Massey, "The Social Process of Undocumented Border Crossing." U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, *1989 Statistical Yearbook*. Douglas S. Massey et al., *Return to Aztlan: The Social Process of International Migration from Western Mexico* (Berkeley, 1987).

³² U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, *1995 Statistical Yearbook*.

wage discrimination, IRCA pushed employers toward labor subcontracting in order to escape its burdensome paperwork requirements and to eliminate the risk of prosecution for unauthorized hiring. The passage of California's Proposition 187 in 1994 sought to bar undocumented migrants from attending public schools, using public hospitals or clinics, or receiving public assistance, and in 1996 the United States Congress disenfranchised noncitizen legal immigrants from means-tested social programs. The post-IRCA period is thus characterized by growing political distinctions between undocumented, documented, and naturalized immigrants and widening economic gaps between them.

The creation of invidious distinctions on the basis of citizenship and the approval of recent amendments to the Mexican constitution permitting dual nationality have unleashed a stampede toward naturalization by millions of Mexican immigrants, a move that will further strengthen the trend toward long-term settlement and integration in the United States and generate additional future immigration as newly naturalized immigrants acquire rights to sponsor the entry of their relatives. In concert with this unprecedented wave of naturalization, the anti-immigrant drift of United States politics has led to a new mobilization of Mexicans as voters. Once politically mobilized, moreover, migrants have felt empowered to express their dissatisfactions with political affairs in Mexico as well as in the United States, giving rise to new transnational political movements.³³

Although this interplay between politics in Mexico and in the United States may worry officials on both sides of the border, it is nonetheless a harbinger of things to come. Post-IRCA policies in the United States, when combined with political and economic developments occurring under the North American Free Trade Agreement, have had rather unexpected social, economic, and political consequences in promoting a new transnational politics. Authorities in both countries now face a newly mobilized population of Mexicans who operate in a sphere beyond the full control of either government, simultaneously working to defend their rights in the United States and helping to bring about political change in Mexico.

³³ S. Mara Perez Godoy, "Social Movements and International Migration: The Mexican Diaspora Seeks Inclusion in Mexico's Political Affairs: 1968–1998" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1998).