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**ILLEGAL MIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES:  
RECENT RESEARCH FINDINGS, POLICY  
IMPLICATIONS, AND RESEARCH PRIORITIES**

Wayne A. Cornelius

**MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT STUDY GROUP**

Center for International Studies  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

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Wayne A. Cornelius

Department of Political Science  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

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Introduction

Both in terms of the sheer number of people involved, and of the social, economic and political consequences of the phenomenon for both the sending and receiving nations, illegal Mexican migration to the U.S. should be regarded as the most critical issue currently affecting relations between the U.S. and Mexico. It is of considerably greater importance than illicit drug traffic, prisoner exchange, Colorado River salinity, and other issues which have dominated discussions between the two countries for more than a decade. Rapidly increasing pressure on both the U.S. Congress and the President from special interest groups within the U.S. to take drastic unilateral action to stem the flow of illegal workers during a period of high unemployment makes it even more imperative that the issue be accorded appropriate attention in forthcoming discussions with the Mexican government. The basic argument advanced in this paper is that a truly effective, long-term solution to this problem can be achieved only through concerted, bilateral efforts, with primary emphasis on action by the Mexican government. The argument will be supported by a review of the best available scientific evidence on the causes and consequences of illegal migration from Mexico, drawn from my own three-year study based in the migrants' communities of origin in Mexico and from other empirical studies undertaken since 1970.

What is the magnitude of illegal Mexican migration to the United States?

Estimates of the total number of illegal aliens of all nationalities present in the U.S. at this time range from 4 to 12 million. The most widely publicized estimate, provided to the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) by Lesko Associates, is 8.2 million illegals (in 1975), of whom 5.2 million are estimated to be Mexicans. The Lesko estimates are regarded by most experts as excessively high, by several millions, and the assumptions and methodology employed in these calculations are scientifically indefensible. Due to the clandestine nature of the population and its great geographic dispersion through the United States, it is impossible to estimate the size of the total illegal population with any degree of precision, using any extant source of data.

The number of illegal Mexican aliens detected in this country increased from 48,948 in 1965 to about 773,000 in 1976. Most experts believe that the INS apprehends only 1 out of 3, or 1 out of 4 illegal aliens who enter the country. While the concentration of INS enforcement activities in those portions of the country where Mexican illegals are clustered makes it impossible

to estimate the true proportion of Mexicans among the country's illegal alien population from apprehension statistics (most experts believe the actual figure to be about 60 percent), it is clear that Mexico is by far the most important source country for illegal aliens. Among the rural Mexican males aged 17 and over interviewed in my study, over one-half had attempted to work in the United States on at least one occasion. Of these, 77% had gone there more than once; and half had made 4 or more trips to the U.S. in search of employment. Fifty-seven percent of those with work experience in the U.S. had entered illegally on at least one occasion.

While hundreds of thousands of Mexicans do enter the U.S. each year in search of work, the vast majority return to Mexico during the same year (usually after 4-6 months of employment). The temporary character of most Mexican wage-labor migration to the U.S. (see page 7 below) is usually overlooked by critics of the phenomenon, who view each year's "crop" of illegal migrants as an increment to the permanent-resident population of illegal aliens.\*

#### Who are the illegal migrants?

The evidence on personal characteristics of illegal migrants from Mexico from all major studies is quite consistent. They are predominantly young (average age, slightly over 27 years),\*\* male, poorly educated (five or fewer years of schooling), occupationally unskilled, and from impoverished rural communities. Most have worked only in agriculture prior to migration to the U.S., but many are new entrants to the wage-labor force, having only helped their fathers on the family plot prior to migration. The vast majority (about 70% in my study) are single when they migrate to the U.S. for the first time, but even after marriage they rarely attempt to take their wives and children with them on return trips, primarily because dependents increase the risk of detection by U.S. authorities and because of the high cost of maintaining them in the U.S.

Movement to the U.S. from those regions of Mexico which have traditionally supplied the largest share of illegal migrants is by now a highly institutionalized phenomenon--indeed, a family and local community tradition in many cases. In my study I found that half of those who had migrated to the U.S. illegally also had fathers who had worked in the U.S., many of them during the period

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\*Typical of this view is the recent statement by Senator Robert Packwood of Oregon, who claimed that "8 to 10 million illegals are already here, and we are getting an additional 500,000 to 600,000 each year" ("Meet the Press," NBC Television broadcast, April 3, 1977; emphasis added).

\*\*Among those included in my study, the average age upon initial migration to the U.S. was 23 years.

of the "bracero" program of contract labor (1942-1964). Three-quarters of the illegals also had brothers or sisters who had worked in the United States. Moreover, 43% of the married men who had worked in the U.S. also had one or more children who had gone to the U.S. Landless agricultural workers and sharecroppers are by far the most migration-prone groups, although some small private landowners and ejidatarios (recipients of small plots of land under Mexico's agrarian reform program) also find it necessary to supplement their income through employment in the U.S.

There is also some evidence from my study indicating that illegal migrants to the U.S. differ from Mexicans who have never gone to the U.S., in terms of certain psychological and attitudinal traits. For example, the illegals have a somewhat higher propensity to take risks; they are more sensitive to inequalities in the distribution of wealth within their home community; and they have weaker attachments to the Catholic Church and Catholic religious symbols.

#### Why do they go?

All studies stress the strongly economic motivation of Mexican illegals. More than 84% of the migrants interviewed in North's (1976) study, Villalpando's (1977) study, and my own said they had gone to the U.S. to find a job or to increase their family income. It is clear, however, that the huge wage differentials (often three to four times, for comparable work) between the U.S. and Mexico are more important than outright unemployment in Mexico in promoting migration to the U.S. Of the "illegals" interviewed in my study 77% cited the need to increase their earnings as their principal reason for migrating to the U.S.; only 9% mentioned lack of work in their community of origin. And when asked why they had gone to the U.S. rather than to some city in Mexico, most migrants (47%) gave higher wages in the U.S. as their reason.\* The attraction of higher wage scales in the U.S. is even more powerful among Mexican rural dwellers who have not yet had a work experience in the United States. Among my interviewees who had not yet migrated to the U.S., nearly half expressed a desire to do so at some point in the future, 92% of these citing better wages in the U.S. as their principal reason. Other research has also demonstrated that the size of the "gap" between Mexican

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\*Another study of 919 apprehended Mexican illegals found that one-third of the illegals originating in the seven Mexican states which provide the majority of migrants to the U.S. had jobs in their home community at the time of their departure for the U.S. (see Bustamante, 1976).

and U.S. wages is the single best predictor of the volume of illegal Mexican migration over time (Jenkins, 1976).

The importance of unemployment and underemployment in Mexico--currently running at 30% or more in the rural sector--should not be underestimated; however, the findings indicate that it is not just the lack of jobs, but of reasonably well-paid jobs, which fuels migration to the U.S. Enforcement of official minimum wage levels is extremely lax in rural Mexico, and since 1971 the real incomes of poor Mexican families have been seriously eroded by a sharply increased rate of inflation. Another inflationary spiral has resulted from the nearly 100% currency devaluation in Mexico during 1976. Wholesale prices rose by 45% from January, 1976 to January, 1977, and the inflation rate may exceed 30% during 1977. With U.S. dollars now yielding twice as much in Mexico, the devaluation can be expected to produce a substantial increase in illegal migration to the U.S. This increase should be noticeable during the first half of 1977, since most illegal workers return to the U.S. each year during the February-April period.\* Historically, severe drought, flooding, or other climatic conditions which affect agriculture have resulted in sharp increases in the rate of migration to the U.S. Another major problem in recent years has been the high cost or unavailability of chemical fertilizers in Mexico, needed even by subsistence farmers to grow crops in their depleted soils. The general point to be made is that the flow of illegal migrants from Mexico seems to respond far more to economic conditions within Mexico than to conditions in the U.S., including the U.S. level of unemployment and the level of apprehension effort by the INS. The massive upsurge in illegal migration to the U.S. in recent years has coincided with Mexico's most serious economic crisis since the late 1930's.

Mexico's poor are aware of the increasing difficulty of finding employment in the U.S., given the current state of the economy and the saturation of some labor markets by illegal aliens. Among those rural dwellers interviewed in my study who had had no work experience in the U.S., 56% believed that it would be difficult for them to find the kind of job they would like to have in the U.S. They are also aware of the considerable expense involved in making the trip and the danger of apprehension by the INS. Even under such

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\*For example, the El Centro, Calif., border patrol station reported 2,250 apprehensions during the month of February, 1977, as compared with 1,582 in February, 1976-- a 42% increase. (New York Times, Feb. 25, 1977, p. A10)

circumstances, however, a decision to go to the U.S. is often eminently rational. The peasant usually estimates that the risk of not finding a job, or of being caught and expelled by the INS, is substantially lower than the risk of being unemployed or having an inadequate income if he remains in his home community. Among the illegal migrants interviewed in my study, 62% had found a job in 10 days or less after crossing the border, during their first trip to the U.S. During their most recent trip, 63% found work within 10 days, and an additional 9% had jobs assured even before they left Mexico (they simply returned to the same employer who had employed them during previous sojourns in the U.S.). The illegals' relative lack of difficulty in finding jobs in the U.S. is clearly reflected in their perceptions of employment opportunities in Mexico and the U.S.: when asked to rate nine possible destinations -- including Mexico City, Guadalajara, four additional Mexican localities, California, Chicago, and Texas -- in terms of the rapidity with which a migrant to each place could obtain work, 58% of the illegals in my study specified one of the U.S. destinations as the place where a job might be obtained most rapidly. (Their responses do not simply reflect unfamiliarity with Mexican destinations--one-third of the illegals had also had one or more work experiences in Mexico outside their home community.)

An excess of population--relative to the amount of cultivable land and the number of non-agricultural employment opportunities-- is one of the most basic factors promoting migration to the United States, as well as to urban areas within Mexico. Mortality rates have fallen sharply in Mexico since 1940, due to improved health care, sanitation, and nutrition; fertility rates remain quite high (the completed family in rural communities often has 8 or more surviving children). The Mexican government claims to have reduced the country's rate of natural population increase from 3.6% (one of the highest rates in the world) to 3.2% in recent years, but these statistics undoubtedly overstate the actual reduction, due to data collection problems in rural areas. In fact, birth control information and services remain conspicuously unavailable in most rural communities, since the Mexican government's family planning program has been heavily concentrated in urban centers. It must be emphasized, however, that even if population growth were somehow to be brought into equilibrium with employment opportunities, illegal migration to the U.S. would undoubtedly continue, as long as the wage differential for unskilled or low-skilled jobs between the U.S. and rural Mexico remains as large as it is today.



Most rural dwellers can earn and save more in 1-3 months of work in the U.S. than they could in an entire year of labor in their home community.

How do they gain entrance?

The vast majority of Mexicans migrating illegally to the U.S. in recent years have entered "without inspection," swimming the Rio Grande along the Texas-Mexico border (59% in my study), vaulting the wire fences in California (27%), or crossing on foot through the deserts of New Mexico and Arizona (7%). Less than 5% have been "visa abusers," i.e., those who secure tourist visas and overstay them in order to work in the U.S. On their first trip to the U.S. 36% of the illegal migrants interviewed in my study made use of "coyotes" -- professional smugglers of alien workers -- to effect entry; 41% found it necessary to use coyotes during the most recent trip, most of them paying between \$150-\$225 (U.S.) for their services. The dependence of so many Mexican migrants on commercial smuggling operations for assistance in entering the U.S. is one of the most unfortunate consequences of the current U.S. immigration policy.

It is noteworthy that a substantial proportion of older illegal migrants (27% in my study) made their initial trip to the U.S. as "braceros" during the 1942-1964 period. When the "bracero" agreement with Mexico was terminated unilaterally by the U.S. Congress (under heavy pressure from organized labor), these migrants continued to go to the U.S., illegally. In this sense, the "bracero" program never really ended; it simply went underground.

About 30% of my respondents who had entered the U.S. illegally on at least one occasion had never been apprehended by the INS (despite the fact that 70% of them had made multiple entries over the years); and another 30% had been caught only once. Of those who had been apprehended on any occasion, 47% had been caught only during their first or second trip. The data show that the probability of apprehension decreases substantially with each successive illegal entry, presumably because the migrants learn successful evasion techniques. The interviews make it clear that the INS is not a very formidable adversary, nor an effective deterrent to illegal migration. Even among those illegals who are caught and "voluntarily" returned to Mexico, a substantial proportion (36% in my study) attempt re-entry within a few days, and more often than not they are successful.

Where do they go?

All studies show that the most favored destinations for illegal Mexican

migrants to the U.S. are in California (especially the southern part of the state), the Chicago area, and the state of Texas, in that order. For those migrating without enough resources to support themselves during a prolonged period of job-seeking, California offers the best possibilities, because agricultural jobs are plentiful there, and are less time-consuming to obtain. Texas is least favored because of the low wage scales prevailing there. The Chicago area, offering higher-paid jobs in both industrial and agricultural enterprises, is preferred by those having sufficient time, money, and personal contacts to facilitate job-seeking. The poorest migrants often prefer jobs located in small towns or rural areas, because of the lower living costs there. Illegals from just one of the rural communities included in my study were working in at least 110 different U.S. localities dispersed through 19 states in 1975; most of these localities were outside major cities. The long-term trend, however, is toward greater migration to large urban centers.

Are the illegals temporary or permanent immigrants?

The answer to this question is crucial, since many of the social and economic costs to U.S. society usually attributed to illegal migration are likely to develop only if the migration is of a permanent rather than temporary character. Most discussions of the illegal alien problem, including the recently released report of the Domestic Council Committee on Illegal Aliens (1976), employ a "stage" model derived mainly from U.S. experience with European immigrants. According to this model, the initial wave of migrants are young and single, and return to the home country after relatively short periods of employment in the U.S.; however, the next wave brings wives from the home country or marries in the U.S. Children of immigrants in this second wave are born in the U.S., and a "second generation" of exploited, disenfranchised and alienated workers emerges. While this pattern may be followed by illegals from other sending countries, there is little evidence indicating that it applies to Mexican illegals.

One major study found that 55% of apprehended Mexican illegals had been in the U.S. less than one year, and the average duration for Mexicans was shorter than that of illegals of other nationalities (North, 1976). Among the illegals in my study 71% had remained in the U.S. for 4 months or less during their initial trip. Fifty-four percent had stayed for 4 months or less during their most recent work experience in the U.S.; only 11% had worked in the U.S. for more than 1 year before returning to Mexico. Historical research shows that Mexicans who migrated to the U.S. during the pre-1930 period were more likely to spend long periods of time (several consecutive years) working there than present-day migrants.

Many, if not the majority, of those Mexicans who migrate illegally to the U.S. have never seriously considered the possibility of moving there permanently. Most simply return to Mexico when their seasonal jobs are ended (30% in my study), or when their separation from relatives in Mexico becomes intolerable (32% of my respondents). When illegals interviewed in my study were asked, "If you could get [legal entry] papers, would you like to live permanently in the U.S., or would you prefer to continue living here and working there from time to time?," 74% reported that they preferred the latter arrangement. When asked for how long they would prefer to work in the U.S. more than 70% said 6 months or less per year. Among the illegals interviewed in Villalpando's (1977) study, only 39% stated that they would prefer to live in the U.S. if given a choice.

Of course, substantial numbers of Mexican illegals do manage to take up more-or-less permanent residence in the U.S., either by concealing themselves in heavily Mexican-Chicano neighborhoods or by eventually legalizing their status. But they are outnumbered--probably by a margin of at least 10 to 1-- by illegals who prefer to maintain a pattern of seasonal or "shuttle" migration. Nearly three-quarters of the illegals in my study resumed their normal occupation in their home community upon returning from their most recent trip to the U.S.

Do Mexican illegals take jobs away from native Americans?

All experts agree that the principal impact of Mexican and other illegal aliens within the U.S. is experienced in the labor market. There is considerable disagreement, however, about the nature of this impact. Most of the concern about the influx of illegal workers from Mexico among the U.S. labor union leaders stems from the fact that illegals tend to be concentrated in the low-wage, low-skill sector of the labor market--where they presumably "compete directly with" or "displace" disadvantaged native Americans, especially blacks and Chicanos. They reason that since illegal aliens are present in the U.S. in large numbers, and since unemployment rates in the U.S. (especially among the young and minorities) are high, there must be a causal relationship between the two. There is, however, no direct evidence of displacement of native Americans by illegal Mexican workers, at least in those sectors of the job market where the Mexicans typically seek employment. The principal impact of illegal migration may be to depress wage scales--or maintain the status quo--for certain types of unskilled jobs, rather than to displace native Americans from them. Workers cannot be displaced if they are not there, and there is no evidence that disadvantaged native Americans have ever held, at least in

recent decades, a significant proportion of the kinds of jobs for which illegals are usually hired, especially in the agricultural sector. (The major exception would be the employment of poor blacks on plantations in the Deep South--a region in which relatively few Mexican illegals have been employed in recent years.)

Most of the jobs in question are the least desirable in the U.S. labor market: they involve dirty, physically punishing tasks, low wages, long hours, generally poor working conditions, low job security (often due to the temporary or seasonal character of the work), and little chance for advancement. Such jobs were held by impoverished European immigrants in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The Europeans were replaced by black migrants from the U.S. South in the 1920's and 1930's. Since the 1940's or early 1950's, Mexican workers have been the principal labor supply for these jobs. The experience of West European countries--particularly France and Germany--in recent years demonstrates that they, too, have found it necessary to import millions of unskilled immigrants from underdeveloped nations to fill the low-status jobs in their societies which are increasingly shunned by upwardly mobile natives.

Concerned labor leaders point to the fact that Mexican illegals are increasingly employed not only in agricultural stoop labor but in more "desirable" industrial, construction, and service jobs. The available data do indicate a trend in this direction, but it is gradual. In the North (1976) study, 58% of Mexican illegals were employed in unskilled agricultural work or menial service occupations; 16% held skilled blue-collar jobs. Among the illegals interviewed in my study, 69% had worked as unskilled agricultural laborers during their first trip to the U.S.; 43% had been so employed during their most recent trip. Of the remainder, only 7% had held skilled jobs in industry, construction, or services during their most recent stay in the United States. Among recent illegal migrants, the most frequently held jobs were (in order of importance) agricultural field laborer, dishwasher or waiter in a restaurant, and unskilled construction worker. Another recent study (Villalpando, 1977) of 217 illegals apprehended on the West Coast in July 1976 found that 57% of the employed aliens were working in agriculture at the time of apprehension; 18% in industry; 17% in services; 3% in construction; and 5% in other sectors (the study provides no data on skill levels).

Even in the urban sector, there is as yet no hard evidence to support the thesis of massive job displacement. One intensive study of Mexican illegals'

participation in the labor market of the San Antonio metropolitan area found that "Mexican illegal aliens in no way compete with or displace workers in the primary [skilled] labor market. In the secondary labor market, where they work alongside blacks and Chicanos, illegals usually represent an additional supply of labor...Blacks and Mexican-Americans worked in similar industries but in basically different jobs...For example, in a typical small construction firm, the Mexican illegal aliens worked as laborers while the Mexican-Americans and blacks had jobs as craftsmen. In a manufacturing industry such as meatpacking, the illegals worked in occupations that Mexican-American and blacks shunned because of dirty working conditions"(Cárdenas, 1976).

The "job displacement" hypothesis is called into question particularly by the failure of two different programs carried out in Los Angeles and San Diego during the 1975-1976 period, programs explicitly designed to fill jobs vacated by apprehended illegal aliens with U.S. citizens. As described in the Villalpando study (1977), the Los Angeles program consisted of an attempt by the State Human Resources Development Agency to fill some 2,154 jobs vacated by the apprehension of illegal aliens. The Agency's efforts to recruit citizen residents of the Los Angeles area to fill these jobs reportedly failed because (1) most of the employers paid less than the minimum wage rate; (2) the low-status job categories did not appeal to local residents; and (3) applicants were discouraged by the difficulty of some jobs and the long hours demanded by the employers. The "Employer Cooperation Program" conducted by the I.N.S. in San Diego from November, 1975 to April, 1976, had a similar outcome. As described by Villalpando, the purpose of this program was "to assist employers to identify illegal aliens on the job, remove them from the payroll, and fill the job slots with local unemployed residents." A total of 340 illegal aliens were identified and removed from their jobs during the six-month program, most of whom had been working in hotel maintenance, food handling and processing, and laundry services, earning wages ranging from \$1.75 to \$7.05 per hour. The 340 jobs were eventually filled, but not by unemployed citizens of San Diego. "Instead, 90% of the positions were occupied by [legally entering] 'commuter workers' from Baja California, Mexico" (Villalpando, 1977: 62).

Such results are extremely important; they indicate that an accurate assessment of the impact of Mexican illegals on the U.S. job market can only be made through intensive studies of occupational patterns, job applicants and hiring practices within specific regions, industries, and sizes of enterprises. This last category seems especially important, since numerous researchers have noted

that Mexican illegals working in urban areas are typically employed in small, marginal firms (e.g., plants manufacturing clothes or shoes, firms processing agricultural products, restaurants and hotels, etc.) which have long been dependent upon Mexican illegals for their supply of unskilled labor and whose very survival might be jeopardized by a sharp reduction or elimination of the supply of illegal workers.\* The jobs themselves might be eliminated through mechanization if labor costs were to rise sharply, and the U.S. consumer prices of products currently produced with alien labor would almost certainly rise, particularly food products.

Findings like those cited above also call attention to the fact that some types of jobs--by the very nature of the work they involve--probably could not be "upgraded" (either by raising wages or improving working conditions) to the extent necessary to attract native American workers. This applies particularly to stoop labor in the agricultural sector, but also to many types of unskilled jobs in services and industry. Welfare and unemployment compensation are undoubtedly attractive alternatives to taking such jobs, for many disadvantaged native Americans.\*\* In short, the frequently repeated claim of INS Commissioner Chapman that with more enforcement resources he could "liberate" more than a million alien-held jobs which would promptly be taken by native Americans is based more on wishful thinking than on scientific evidence. The case for a more restrictive immigration policy cannot be made on the unqualified grounds that "illegals take jobs away from native Americans," at least on the basis of information currently available.

The current upsurge of illegal migration from Mexico, largely in response to devaluation and high inflation within Mexico, will not translate automatically

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\*Of the illegals interviewed in my study, 54% had been employed in firms employing fewer than 25 persons, according to the respondents. 53% of the illegals also reported that nearly all of their co-workers in these establishments had been Mexicans.

\*\*For example, Villalpando's (1977) study of illegal aliens in San Diego County found that the majority of them were working for "far below poverty-level wages." Villalpando and his associates estimate that the average annual income of the illegal alien who is employed for a full twelve months (not the typical situation) is \$4,368. By contrast, a welfare recipient for a family of five would receive approximately \$4,800 per year. The study concludes: "It is unlikely that persons eligible for welfare benefits would work for the wages that the majority of illegal aliens receive, when the applicant can receive as much or more [in] annual welfare payments,...particularly since welfare payments are not considered taxable income."

into higher unemployment among disadvantaged native Americans. Its most probable effect will be to increase the competition among illegal Mexican migrants--and between illegals and Mexican nationals who enter the U.S. with legal entry papers--for the same pool of jobs which traditionally have been filled by migrant labor.

Do Mexican illegals take more from the U.S. in social services than they contribute in taxes?

There is uniform agreement among researchers that Mexican illegals make amazingly little use of social welfare services while present in the U.S., and that the cost of the services they do use is far outweighed by their contributions to Social Security and tax revenues. Illegal aliens must, of course, pay state and local sales taxes. Moreover, at least two-thirds of them also have Social Security and federal income taxes deducted from their wages, as well as payroll taxes for unemployment and disability insurance (North, 1976; Villalpando, 1977; Cornelius, 1977). At the same time, only about 4% of the Mexican illegals interviewed in the North, Bustamante, and Cornelius studies had ever collected unemployment benefits; fewer than 4% had ever received welfare benefits; only 3% or fewer had ever had children in U.S. public schools; and only 8-10% had ever received free medical assistance in a U.S. hospital or clinic. Villalpando (1977) found that there were only 193 illegal aliens on welfare aid in San Diego County in May, 1976, and that the number had decreased to 23 by January, 1977 (.0002% of a total estimated illegal alien population of 92,138).

The Villalpando study provides the first comprehensive analysis of the burden placed by illegal aliens on tax-supported social services in a specific area of the U.S. It estimates that the social services (education, health care, aid to families with dependent children, general relief, food stamps, children's services, burial services, etc.) consumed by illegal aliens cost approximately \$2 million per year; however, the study also calculates that illegal aliens contribute about \$48.8 million in taxes on wages earned locally each year. It should be noted that the San Diego case provides an "acid test" of the hypothesis that Mexican illegals place a heavy burden on public services which is not offset by their contributions to tax revenues: the county receives a massive flow of illegal aliens from Mexico; in 1975 it accounted for 43% of the total apprehensions of illegal aliens along the southern U.S. border and 25% of all apprehensions throughout the nation.

Nevertheless, the INS, several members of the U.S. Congress, and the mass media continue to publicize an estimate made by the Inner City Fund, a Washington-based consulting firm, that consumption of social services by illegal aliens costs the U.S. taxpayer more than \$13 billion per year (which is, presumably, not offset by aliens' tax contributions). This estimate is not based on any original field research, and was apparently arrived at by applying highly questionable assumptions about rates of service utilization to the already discredited Lesko Associates estimate of the number of illegal aliens present in the country.

Do Mexican illegals differ from illegals of other nationalities?

The principal study including illegal aliens from all major source countries (North, 1976) demonstrates that the illegal population is far from monolithic, and that striking differences exist between Mexican illegals and those from other Western and Eastern hemisphere nations. By comparison with the latter groups, Mexican illegals are:

- far less likely to speak any English;
- have less formal education;
- bring fewer occupational skills from the home country;
- earn substantially lower wages from U.S. employers;
- are more likely to be employed in unskilled jobs in agriculture and services;
- make less use of social services;
- remain in the U.S. for shorter periods of time.

Studies of illegal aliens from other Western hemisphere countries (Cruz, 1976; Chaney, 1976; Domínguez, 1975) also suggest that these groups are far more likely than Mexicans to become permanent residents of the U.S.

The findings of these studies indicate that Mexican illegals are severely disadvantaged in competition with both native Americans and immigrants from other countries for higher-status jobs requiring English language competence, formal education, and specialized job skills. The data also show that the presence of Mexican illegals in this country places less of a burden on social services in the short run and poses less danger of long-term social and economic costs resulting from permanent settlement than the presence of illegals from other principal source countries. All this indicates the need for a U.S. immigration policy which is sensitive to the particular characteristics and consequences of illegal migration from Mexico.

Are Mexican illegals exploited in the U.S.?

Mexican illegals are usually paid low wages, by U.S. standards. In the North (1976) study, the average wage received by Mexican illegals was \$2.33



per hour; in the Villalpando (1977) study, the average wage was \$2.36 per hour. Those interviewed in my study had earned an average of \$2.42 per hour during their most recent trip to the U.S. A significant minority of the illegals in all three studies had been "exploited" by U.S. employers, in the sense that they were paid less than the legal minimum wage (though usually not less than similarly employed legal workers). It is doubtful, however, that even these underpaid illegals considered themselves to have been exploited while working in the U.S.; in the rural Mexican communities included in my study, the wages typically paid to landless workers averaged between 25 and 30 pesos per day (U.S. \$2.00 - \$2.40, at the former exchange rate). While Mexican officials have been quite vocal in criticizing the exploitation of Mexican workers in the U.S. as a source of cheap labor, they usually fail to note that by going to the U.S. the landless peasant is escaping considerably more severe exploitation at the hands of wealthy landowners in his home community, who pay starvation wages for even longer hours of labor, under even poorer conditions, than most low-status jobs to be had in the U.S.

What is the impact of illegal Mexican migration to the U.S. on the Mexican Economy?

Mexican illegals typically remit a substantial portion of their U.S. earnings to relatives in Mexico (30% of monthly U.S. earnings in the North, 1976, study; 37% in the Villalpando, 1977, study; 42% in my study). Among the illegals in my study, 81% reported that they sent money regularly (usually by money order or check) during their most recent work experience in the U.S. They remitted an average of \$162 (U.S.) per month (in the North study, the average monthly remittance was \$129; in the Villalpando study, \$138 per month). For nearly three-quarters of the migrants' families represented in my study, these remittances were their sole source of income while the family head was working in the U.S. The illegals in my study were supporting an average of 4.1 dependents in Mexico during their most recent stay in the U.S.

Apart from the money which is remitted periodically by migrants while they are working in the U.S., most (64% in my study) are able to save and bring money back with them: the average was \$458 among my interviewees, brought back after their most recent trip to the U.S. The total amount involved, in periodic remittances as well as savings returned to Mexico, is quite large-- probably in excess of \$3 billion per year. It is a crucial (if generally unacknowledged) factor in the Mexican balance of payments, considerably more important than income from tourism. While migrant remittances clearly represent

a negative factor in the U.S. balance of payments, it must also be recognized that 60-70% of the illegals' earnings typically remain in the U.S., contributing both to tax revenues and to retail sales. The study of the economic impact of illegal aliens (99% of them Mexicans) in the county of San Diego conducted by Villalpando (1977) estimates that 44% of the illegals' wages, or more than \$115 million dollars per year, are spent locally by the illegals for goods and services.

At the level of the local community in Mexico, the impact of migrants' earnings is difficult to overestimate. Income from U.S. employment is crucial to the maintenance of the migrants' families; virtually all of the money remitted to relatives while the migrant is away is used for family maintenance. Among the illegals interviewed in my study, 43% also used the lump sums brought back from the U.S. for family maintenance; another 13% used the money mainly to pay previously accumulated debts; and 8% invested most of their earnings in capital goods (land, livestock, small businesses). Only 18% of the migrants spent most of the money brought back from the U.S. on non-essential consumer goods or recreation. In all of the sending communities studied in Mexico, local commerce has benefited substantially from migrant remittances.

What would be the consequences of a sharp reduction of illegal migration for Mexico?

Given the heavy dependence of thousands of rural Mexican communities upon income from the U.S. over a period of several decades, the economic consequences of a severe reduction or cut-off of the flow of remittances from the U.S. would be catastrophic for many of these communities. In some regions, the short-term effect of such a cut-off or reduction would probably be a sharp increase in the incidence of land invasions by peasants; and throughout rural Mexico a step-level increase in permanent out-migration to large Mexican cities could be expected. Such out-migration has been heavy since the 1940's, but the rate is substantially lower than it would have been, in the absence of temporary migration to the United States. Most internal migrants have settled in Mexico City, which is now (with about 13 million inhabitants) the third largest metropolitan area in the world, after Shanghai and Tokyo. A very large and steadily increasing share of Mexican government revenues is being devoted to providing urban services and infrastructure for the inhabitants of Mexico City and two other large metropolitan centers, and the already exorbitant societal costs of these urban agglomerations would be raised

substantially by a new influx of migrants from the countryside. To the extent that these costs reduce the share of resources which can be allocated to rural development, they will only contribute to further rural-to-urban migration and persistent attempts to migrate illegally to the U.S. The social and political tensions which would be generated within Mexico by a sharp reduction in migration to the U.S. are difficult to estimate, but the fact that such migration has served as an important stabilizing force in the past cannot be ignored.

What is the Mexican Government's position on illegal aliens?

In dealing with this issue, the Mexican Government must balance a number of important and conflicting interests. Illegal migration to the U.S. clearly functions as a political and economic safety valve for Mexico, as President López Portillo himself recently admitted (interview in the New York Times, February 1, 1977). Migrant remittances--which López Portillo did not mention--are also a very important offset to unfavorable trade balances with the U.S. At the same time, the large volume of illegal migrants crossing the border calls attention to the failure of Mexico's development policies to create sufficient employment opportunities and to raise income levels among a very large sector of the rural population. In this sense the illegal migration is an acutely embarrassing phenomenon for the Mexican Government. The issue also has strong nationalistic overtones within Mexico, exacerbated by isolated but widely publicized cases of physical mistreatment of Mexican illegals by U.S. authorities and others, and by the general awareness that historically the U.S. has chosen to recruit Mexican labor in times of national emergency (World War II, the Korean War) while officially shunning it in times of normalcy.

Most recent Mexican administrations have been content to ignore the issue as much as possible, limiting their diplomatic initiatives to calls for greater protection of the rights of illegal aliens while they are in the U.S. and to periodic efforts to secure a new contract-labor agreement (along the lines of the earlier "bracero" pact) between the two countries. Former President Luis Echeverría often complained loudly about mistreatment of illegal (or as the Mexican government prefers to call them, "undocumented") workers, blaming the migration on widening inequalities between rich and poor nations in the international economic system, and using it as a further justification of his plan for a "new international economic order." In 1974 he rejected the idea of a new "bracero" agreement, on the grounds that it would only increase the exploitation of Mexican workers in the U.S.

President López Portillo is likely to take a more pragmatic, non-ideological approach to this and other related issues in discussions with United States officials. His initial message, however, will be virtually identical to that of his predecessor: "We want to export commodities, not people." He has already announced that new trade concessions (e.g., lowering U.S. tariffs on Mexican-made shoes and agricultural products) are at the top of his negotiating agenda with the U.S. Government, arguing that the best means of reducing the flow of illegal migrants is for the United States to "take steps to assist the Mexican economy (through trade measures, for example)... and thereby reduce the pressure on poverty-stricken Mexicans to immigrate" (New York Times, February 1, 1977). He has also announced, significantly, that his top domestic policy priority is to increase food and energy production.

Last year a specific plan for the reduction of illegal Mexican migration to the U.S. was advanced by Dr. Jorge Bustamante, a sociologist at El Colegio de México who has served since 1971 as the Mexican President's key advisor on the illegal alien issue. Bustamante's plan, which was adopted as the official Mexican proposal and presented at a closed session of the joint U.S.-Mexico Commission on Illegal Migration (held in Washington, April, 1976), also ties the reduction of illegal migration to the granting of trade concessions by the U.S. Congress. It calls for the construction of labor-intensive food processing plants in those regions of Mexico which have served as the principal points of origin for illegal migrants, to be capitalized either by the Mexican government directly or through the financing of Mexican development programs by international agencies. The products of these plants would be imported by the U.S. Government to supply programs of foreign aid (e.g., the P.L. 480 "Food-for-Peace" program) to developing nations. The U.S. would guarantee a market (presumably tariff-free) for these products for a period of five years, after which the processing plants (all to be privately or cooperatively owned) would fend for themselves in the Mexican domestic and international markets. While the object of channeling the food products initially into U.S. foreign aid programs would be to avoid competition with U.S. farmers in the U.S. internal market, Bustamante notes that "the main resistance [to] a program such as this probably would come from U.S. farmers" (Bustamante, 1976).

#### Recommendations for U.S. Policy

(1) Moratorium on New Unilateral Efforts to Restrict Illegal Immigration.  
On several occasions in the past (e.g., the 1929-30 "Repatriation" campaign;

"Operation Wetback" in 1953-54), the U.S. Government has demonstrated its capacity to effect mass deportation of illegal Mexican aliens through military-style operations. (It should be noted, however, that both of the above-mentioned operations created a major crisis in our foreign relations with Mexico, and violated the civil and legal rights of hundreds if not thousands of Mexican-American citizens and Mexican nationals legally residing in this country). And while the technological feasibility of "sealing" our 1800-mile border with Mexico is questionable, there is little doubt that significantly increasing the resources available to the INS for apprehension activities would at least shorten the job tenure of many illegals who enter the country. Similarly, federal legislation (along the lines of laws passed recently by the states of Massachusetts, California, Connecticut, Kansas and New Hampshire) to impose criminal penalties and fines of up to \$500 on U.S. employers who knowingly hire illegal aliens might deter some illegal immigration, by reducing the primary incentive for coming to the U.S. -- relatively well-paid (by Mexican standards) jobs. However, my interviews--both formal and informal-- with hundreds of Mexicans who have worked illegally in the U.S. suggest that the deterrent effect of any law to criminalize the hiring process on the behavior of the migrants themselves is likely to be minimal. This applies particularly to those "experienced" Mexicans who have already succeeded in illegally entering the U.S. and finding employment on one or more occasions. A truly massive, ubiquitous, and extremely costly enforcement mechanism would have to be provided to successfully implement any such law; in the absence of such a mechanism, enforcement is likely to be quite uneven, and the impoverished Mexican peasant will assume that the risk of his being denied employment in the U.S. will still be considerably less than the risk of being unemployed or of having an inadequate income in his home community. The operation of this "lottery effect" also ensures that the deterrent effect of technological innovations such as more (or better) electronic sensing devices along the border and a universal system of "counterfeit-proof" identification cards for legal residents of the U.S. will be minimal.

In the long run, all such unilateral police actions or restrictive measures are doomed to failure, since they treat only the symptoms of the "disease" and not the disease itself. It is impossible to legislate away the tremendous migratory pressures at the U.S.-Mexican border, which result from the huge wage differentials between the U.S. and Mexico, rapid population growth, high unemployment and maldistribution of wealth within Mexico, and the perception

of the United States by large sectors of the Mexican poor as a land of relatively accessible economic opportunities. The pressures are so intense, and likely to remain so in the foreseeable future, that most Mexican illegals are not likely to be deterred, even by the most draconian restrictive measures. The essence of the problem, and the futility of dealing with it merely through police actions, was conveyed most succinctly and eloquently by one of my subjects, who had been apprehended by the INS for the third time. Confronted by an INS agent, he was asked: "What can we do to prevent you from doing this again?" The illegal responded: "Shoot me!"

(2) Increase the quota for legal immigration from Mexico. The "Immigration and Nationality Act Amendments of 1976" (H.R. 14535), passed in the final minutes of the last Congress and subsequently signed by President Ford, had the effect of reducing legal immigration from Mexico from about 62,000 to 40,000 per year. It will increase the waiting period for Mexican applicants for immigrant status (already about 2 1/2 years), while shortening the wait for people from elsewhere in the Western hemisphere. This and any similar measure will be counterproductive in reducing illegal migration from Mexico, since all historical evidence shows clearly that greater obstacles to legal immigration simply shift the movement toward illegal channels. As noted above, the restriction of legal entry opportunities brought about by termination of the "bracero" program in 1964 led to a sharp increase in illegal migration from Mexico. The quota for legal Mexican immigration should be raised at least to its pre-October, 1976, level.

(3) Institute a System of Temporary Worker Migration Visas. Such a system would permit temporary migration from Mexico to the U.S. for employment purposes. Employment time in the U.S. could be limited to a total of 6 months per year (not necessarily consecutive), and to maintain a valid visa the worker would be required to leave the country for at least six months a year. The number of visas issued in a given year could be keyed to estimates of the number of low-skill, low-wage jobs for which Mexican migrants have typically been recruited, and to the prevailing level of unemployment among native Americans (see Piore, 1976). No geographical constraint would be imposed upon the movements of the visa holder, and there would be no pre-arranged contract between the visa holder and a particular U.S. employer.

It should be noted that such a system differs importantly from the earlier "bracero" program of contract migrant labor. By not binding the migrant to a particular U.S. employer, it would reduce the risk of exploitation, and

thereby undercut the principal objection of the Mexican government to a new "bracero" - type agreement. More importantly, it also is the only type of temporary worker program which is likely to attract those Mexicans who now migrate illegally. Virtually all of those interviewed in my study expressed opposition to a new agreement of the "bracero" type, which would bind them to a single employer, who could alter their pay scale, pay them irregularly, or commit other abuses at will. They argue that the exploitation of the Mexican worker was much worse under a system in which the migrant had no opportunity to switch employers or to determine the duration of his job with a particular employer. They now earn more, and faster, as illegals than they did as braceros during the 1950's and the early 1960's. They strongly favor, however, a new intergovernmental agreement to legalize entry into the U.S. for specified periods of employment. This would at least have the effect of reducing the physical dangers of unassisted illegal border crossings, as well as exploitation by commercial smugglers and others who profit by the existing situation. But they strongly oppose any restrictions on their movements or their opportunities to select an employer once inside the U.S. In other words, what they seek is free market competition among U.S. employers seeking their services. The proposed system of temporary worker visas would have the effect of encouraging the existing, temporary character of Mexican migration to the U.S. and discouraging permanent settlement.

(4) Declare an amnesty for illegal aliens who entered the U.S. before 1972. Such aliens would not be required to return to Mexico and apply for a visa in order to legalize their status (as they are required to do under present law). Most experts agree that U.S. efforts at controlling illegal migration should be concentrated on preventing future migration rather than apprehending and deporting those who have lived illegally in this country for long periods. Legalizing the status of such persons will make them less vulnerable to exploitation by employers and generally equip them to play a more constructive role in American society.

(5) Encourage and assist the Mexican government in reorienting its rural development policy toward small-scale, labor-intensive rural industrialization. This is the most important policy recommendation, since it is the only approach which addresses the root causes of the problem, within Mexico. None of the previously suggested measures, nor any of the more restrictive immigration policies advocated by labor leaders and others, will have any significant long-term effect upon the flow of illegal migrants from Mexico in the absence of a

new strategy of rural development in Mexico. The present strategy, as practiced with little modification since the 1940's, involves concentrating government resources on huge physical infrastructure investments to assist large-scale agricultural producers situated in high-productivity, irrigated zones. The objectives of this investment strategy have been to (1) increase agricultural production, and thus eliminate importation of basic food commodities; and (2) reduce rural unemployment indirectly, by increasing the demand for labor by large-scale producers. The results of this strategy have not been encouraging; increases in agricultural production have lagged far behind production increases in other sectors of the economy, and the importation of basic food commodities increased sharply in the 1970-75 period. Moreover, the capacity of the rural sector to absorb surplus labor has not increased appreciably--during a time of explosive natural population increase--due to the capital-intensive production techniques employed by the principal beneficiaries of government investments. Huge investments by the World Bank during the past five years have also been biased toward large-scale, commercial agriculture in high-productivity zones.

From 1971 to 1975 the proportion of Mexican federal government revenues invested in the rural sector rose from 12 to 20 percent, and, as just noted, there was also a major increase in international assistance for Mexican rural development projects. Rural unemployment has been alleviated somewhat since 1971 by short-term public works projects (e.g., labor-intensive construction of feeder roads in rural areas), but the employment impact of such projects is usually limited to a few months. Only a small share of the government's resources for rural development, and none of the international assistance, has been devoted to small-scale rural industrialization projects. A rural industries program was launched in 1972, but it is limited to ejidos (rural communities formed as a result of land reform), and the number of communities benefited by the program thus far is under 400.

Much greater attention should be devoted to programs for the direct creation of reasonably well-paid, non-agricultural employment opportunities for rural dwellers. My research strongly indicates that this is likely to be the single most effective policy instrument for reducing rural out-migration, both to the United States and to urban centers within Mexico. Of the rural communities studied intensively in my project, the only one which has experienced a sharp decline in out-migration in recent years is a community in which many small-scale, family-owned textile factories have been established



during the same time period. While in this case the factories were set up through private initiative, there is a strong desire for government action to create rural industries in all of the communities studied. When asked, "Suppose that the government wants to help your community in some way, and that you could choose the [public] work or improvement that the government is going to provide...which work or improvement would you prefer that the government make here?", more of my respondents (37 percent) mentioned "industries" or "factories" than any other type of government project. Another 9% wanted the government to do something to create new sources of employment, without specifying the type of employment. In the communities included in my study, other types of government investments (e.g., in roads, land reform, education, health care, electricity, potable water system) have had little effect on out-migration, and some government investments seem to have stimulated out-migration. These findings suggest that merely increasing the allocation of public funds for "rural development" (in the conventional sense of the term) probably will not achieve the objective of significantly reducing the flows of migrants to the U.S. and to cities within Mexico.

Rural industries need not be limited to food processing plants (as they are in the Bustamante proposal); they could be extended successfully to textile production, shoe and furniture manufacturing, and many other types of enterprises. Efforts to stimulate the creation of such industries should be concentrated initially in the five Mexican states which have provided more than half of the total apprehended illegals from Mexico since 1969 -- Guanajuato, Chihuahua, Michoacán, Zacatecas, and Jalisco. The owners of such industries should be compelled to use labor-intensive technologies, and minimum wage laws affecting their employees should be strictly enforced.

The United States should use its leverage in international financial institutions (particularly the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, and the International Monetary Fund) to encourage a much greater effort by the Mexican government in the area of rural industrialization. Channeling our capital resources through international institutions is far preferable to direct U.S. aid to Mexico, which would not be acceptable to the Mexicans for domestic political reasons.

This approach to the problem would require a substantial increase in U.S. capital commitments to the World Bank and the Inter-American Development bank. In 1975 these institutions provided funds for an "integrated rural development program" (PIDER) in Mexico. The second phase of this

program, to commence later this year, will reportedly include financing for labor-intensive rural industries as well as labor-intensive rural public works projects (e.g., road-building and soil conservation). However, the probable level of funding is far too low to have a significant impact on migration to the United States. Estimates indicate that the integrated rural development program in Mexico is capable of absorbing productively at least three times the proposed amount of funds. Financing for this program could be increased through a special appropriation to the IDB's Special Trust Fund, and through U.S. appropriations for general replenishment of World Bank capital. U.S. representatives on the World Bank and IDB boards could emphasize that increased U.S. contributions to both institutions are intended specifically to support employment-generating projects in Mexico.

A tripling of international development bank efforts in this area is both feasible and highly desirable from the standpoint of reducing illegal immigration. All available evidence suggests that resources spent to reduce the "push" factors in Mexico and other sending countries will have far greater impact on the flow of illegal aliens to the U.S. in the medium-to-long run than resources spent to implement new unilateral restrictive measures. This is, in short, the most "cost-effective" approach to the problem.

(6) The U.S. should encourage the Mexican Government to decentralize its existing family planning program, and provide financial assistance through international lending institutions to permit the expansion of the program. As noted above, the Mexican program of family planning seems to have made some gains among the urban population, but its impact on rural areas--where 40% of the national population still lives--has been extremely limited. This limited impact is directly attributable to the fact that government investments in the family planning program have been concentrated largely in urban areas rather than the countryside, where the problems of low income, low education, and strong Catholic Church influence which impede the adoption of family planning practices are most severe. The continuing political sensitivity of the population control issue within Mexico precludes any direct U.S. financial assistance to the government's program; but the World Bank has already granted Mexico a loan for this purpose, and additional aid through international lending agencies would be welcomed.

## AN AGENDA FOR RESEARCH

The most critical questions requiring additional research relate to the impact of illegal immigration on employment, wage scales, and working conditions within the United States. What is the magnitude of job "displacement"? Where does it occur--in which job categories, types and sizes of enterprises, and geographic areas? To what extent can low wage scales and substandard working conditions be attributed to the availability of undocumented alien labor? To what extent is it feasible to "upgrade" the jobs currently held by undocumented aliens, to make them sufficiently attractive to induce native American workers to seek them? To what extent would employer penalty legislation or other measures designed to reduce the number of U.S. employment opportunities available to undocumented aliens actually reduce the level of unemployment in the U.S., particularly among those groups allegedly most affected by the hiring of such aliens (the young, minority groups, etc.)?

Other key research questions relate to the degree of "temporariness" or "permanency" of illegal immigration. What is the ratio of temporary to permanent migrants in the flow of undocumented aliens? Is the ratio shifting toward higher proportions of permanent settlers? If so, in response to what factors? What is the magnitude of the differences among undocumented aliens of different nationalities in terms of propensity to settle permanently in the U.S.? What factors are responsible for these differences? At least among illegal aliens from Mexico, those who opt to remain in the U.S. as permanent residents represent a distinct minority of the total flow--i.e., they are "deviant cases." Who are these immigrants? How do they differ--in terms of personal attributes, migratory and employment histories, and motivations--from those who choose to maintain a pattern of seasonal or "shuttle" migration to the U.S.? How does their social and economic impact on the U.S. differ from that of temporary migrants?

Other research essential for intelligent public policy-making must be conducted within the principal sending countries for illegal aliens. Particular attention should be directed to identifying the kinds of incentives that would be necessary to deter illegal immigration. Existing data show that both unemployment (or underemployment) and low income levels are key "push" factors. It is also clear that large proportions of undocumented aliens, at least those from Mexico, have jobs--however poorly paid and insecure--

in their home communities, to which they usually return after working in the U.S. The obvious implication is that even if unemployment and underemployment are reduced substantially, the income differential between employment in the U.S. and employment in the home country must be narrowed in order to deter emigration. Wage differentials between the U.S. and Mexico can never be eliminated, but how much narrowing of the gap would be necessary to induce the prospective illegal alien to remain in his home community? What is the threshold level of family income, above which migration to the U.S. is no longer considered necessary for family survival and/or economic improvement? How important is stability of income--a relatively "secure" source of family income--in decisions to migrate to the U.S.? I would argue that one of the principal advantages of creating jobs in rural industries and other types of non-agricultural enterprises is that by taking workers out of agriculture--subject as it is in Mexico and most other sending nations to insecurity of land tenure, the unpredictability of rainfall and other climatic factors, periodic shortages of fertilizer and other necessary inputs, and wide fluctuations in market prices for agricultural products--it automatically provides a much more stable source of income, which in itself may be an important incentive to remain in one's home community. In short, what is the most appropriate mix of incentives--job opportunities, higher wage levels, greater stability of income--for deterring illegal immigration? The answer to this question is crucial in determining the kinds of development assistance to sending countries which will be most effective in reducing illegal immigration.

New research should also focus on the potential economic, social, and political consequences--for both the U.S. and major sending countries--of a significant reduction in the flow of alien workers to the United States. More restrictive policies are being proposed with little or no basis for estimating the adverse consequences of "closing the door." Restricting the flow may have a significant inflationary impact within the U.S., reflected in higher consumer prices for all goods currently produced with alien labor. It may also result in higher bankruptcy rates among small businesses in the U.S. (As reported above, 54% of the undocumented aliens interviewed in my study had been employed most recently in enterprises having 25 or fewer employees.) The failure of such enterprises will eliminate not only jobs for undocumented aliens but the jobs of native American workers currently em-

ployed in them. Within Mexico and other sending countries, the prospects for severe economic dislocations resulting from a restriction of employment opportunities in the U.S. and the consequent fall-off in remittances from workers employed in the U.S. are very real. Important U.S. foreign policy interests, and national security interests, are at stake here. In sum, a much more ample empirical base is needed to permit accurate estimates of the potential costs--both domestic and foreign--of new restrictive measures.

At the bottom of the list of research priorities should be studies aimed at "counting" or estimating the number of undocumented aliens present in the U.S. Given the clandestine nature of the population and its extreme geographic dispersion through the U.S., there is no extant research methodology which would elicit reliable counts or estimates of the number of aliens. House-to-house sample surveys are totally inappropriate for this purpose. Illegal aliens, or their legal relatives, have no incentive to cooperate with such impersonal, "one-shot" studies, and powerful incentives to refuse cooperation or to provide inaccurate responses. INS statistics on the number of apprehended illegals, combined with data from independent studies which permit estimates of the ratio of apprehended to non-apprehended illegals, offer the best opportunity to gauge the volume of the flow and year-to-year changes in the flow.

#### SOURCES OF DATA

The preceding paper draws extensively upon preliminary findings from a three-year (and continuing) study of the causes and consequences of Mexican migration to the U.S. and to cities within Mexico, conducted in nine carefully selected rural communities in the state of Jalisco. Some of the findings included here were initially reported in Wayne A. Cornelius, "Outmigration from Rural Mexican Communities," pp. 1-40 in Interdisciplinary Communications Program, Smithsonian Institution, The Dynamics of Migration: International Migration (Washington, D. C., 1976; ICP Occasional Monograph Series, No. 5, Vol. 2); and in W. A. Cornelius, "Mexican Migration to the United States: The View from Rural Sending Communities," Monographs on Migration and Development (Cambridge, Mass.: Center for International Studies, M.I.T., 1976).

No. C/76-12). Other findings are drawn from a 25% sample of 1,000 two to 2 1/2-hour survey interviews conducted in Mexico in July-August, 1976; these preliminary findings are reported here for the first time. The interviewees, all of whom were interviewed in their own homes, include men who have migrated illegally to the U.S., men who have worked there legally, and men who have been apprehended at least once by the INS, and those who escaped detection. This research is currently supported by a grant from the Center for Population Research, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, National Institutes of Health. Previous sources of financial support include the International Program for Population Analysis (Interdisciplinary Communications Program, Smithsonian Institution) and the Social Science Research Council.

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