EVOLUTION AND IMPACT OF UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRATION IN AMERICAN SOCIETY

Ву

Mercedes Delia Rivera

Advised by

Professor Christopher Bickle

Soc. Sci. 461, 462

Senior Project

Social Sciences Department

College of Liberal Arts

CALIFORNIA POLYTECHNIC STATE UNIVERSITY

Winter 2011

INTRODUCTION:

There was a time when Mexican immigrants could cross the border and get their documentation on the same day. According to my mother, my great-grandfather told her that his family entered the United States paying only 3 cents per person to get their documentation. They entered through El Paso, Texas (which once belonged to Mexico until 1835) in the 1920's. In those days there was plenty of work, as the nation was young and growing. My great-grandfather worked for the railroad in New Mexico and Arizona. Later, he worked in a cotton factory in New Mexico. Other family members had already migrated to California and my great-grandfather soon followed, as he received word from a relative already in California, that there was more work for better pay. The reason my great-grandfather left Chihuahua, Mexico was due the Mexican Revolution. As a young boy, my great-grandfather was forced into fighting in the Revolution, as was the custom by Villa's men to take anyone who could hold a rifle. My great-grandparents were in their teens and already had four children when they came to the United States. Only three survived after an influenza outbreak upon arriving in the United States. But much has changed since the 1920's.

This paper will look at the history and contributing factors of Mexican immigration to the United States (U.S.), using personal experiences, interviews and academic literature. Included are the contributing factors, which have been evident throughout the history of Mexican immigration, of poverty, lack of job opportunities, lack of a decent wage and the prospect of the American dream. Moreover, this paper looks at the impact of Mexican immigration into the United States. The impact in American society engulfs a wide area, in which it includes the penal system, the educational system, the

health care system, social services and of course at the cultural level. The persons I interviewed reside in Santa Maria, California, and were interviewed for the purpose of gaining a direct perspective. The interviewees range from American born, documented and undocumented. Segments of the interviews will be included throughout this paper and the entire interviews will be included in the Appendix. Over the years, since the end of the bracero program, the population of undocumented immigration has risen dramatically. In 2009, it was estimated that there was 2.6 million in California and 10.8 in the United States. This paper addresses the following questions: How does the presence of millions of undocumented immigrants make an impact on American society? Do undocumented immigrants give more than they take? This paper will examine the evolution of undocumented immigration and the impact of this large group of people on American society.

HISTORY

As the population in both the United States and Mexico continued to grow, economic opportunities in Mexico were not as abundant as they were in the United States.

Mexico has traditionally lacked sufficient opportunities for the people to work and many have come to the United States to find work and higher wages. Mexico's poor economy pushes people out and the better economy across the border pulls people to the United States. I interviewed Pedro (fictitious names were used to protect the confidentiality of the interviewees), a 48 year old Mexican national who has had permanent residency since 2003. He describes the hardships in his trek to America and his reasons for coming to work the United States. He states:

My opinion is that they should do whatever possible to get a permit. To come here legally so that they will not suffer on the road here. Because when a person doesn't have documents, a person doesn't know if he will arrive or not. A person walks a lot at night, exposing oneself to poisonous animals or insects that will bite you or one can break a leg by stepping in a hole because it's night. You break a leg and those that can walk well will leave him there and he will die. That is what happened to my friend. He broke his foot, they left him there and he died. We came in a group with a guide. We paid him. He was not as a 'coyote' just a guide. Yes, well they are basically the same, the guide and the coyote, they are the same. Since, they both get paid. And besides, if it just happens that you come through the desert, what can happen is that one can get lost. And when there is no water it is worse because of the heat and one is very thirsty. When one comes, one sees many things on the road. You see human skeletons. When crossing through Rio Bravo (Rio Grande) near Piedras Negras, Coahuila. They say that there are animals that might be alligators. When I couldn't cross, they took me too different locations about five times. I came because of the famous American Dream. I want to help my family move forward. but to help my family more than anything.

I also interviewed Pedro's brother, Reymundo, a 55 year old who is undocumented and has been in the United States since 1993. He states:

My story, the primary reason for coming here is to help my children and my family, also to make something of myself, to have a business or something like that and to live better than what Mexico has to offer. Where I lived there was no work. Well there is work but they pay very little, you work a lot for very little. Over there it is only to survive that's all the wages provide and that is in the factories.

In the 1940's, an opportunity arose for poor Mexican citizens to come to work in the United States temporarily. As a result of World War II, the United States government started the bracero program. After the 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor, by the Japanese, the United States was pulled into World War II and the Bracero Program (guest-worker program) was put into place to provide needed agriculture workers because one million rural workers had been recruited to join the military and work in factory jobs leaving many agriculture jobs available. At that time, a 1940 U.S. census had counted 377,433 people born in Mexico. By 1942, the first group of Mexican braceros reported for work

in Stockton, California. The U.S. government recruited bracero workers in Mexico until 1947 when it was turned over to private farm interests to continue recruiting in Mexico. The Bracero program was to be in effect until the war was over. By 1945, as World War II ended, more than 300,000 braceros were working in the United State (Bracero Timeline, 2002). During W.W.II, my grandfather, who was a tractor driver for a farmer (Mr. Ferrini) in Guadalupe, CA, was drafted into the military. The farmer requested of the military not to draft him since he was needed to work on the farm. My grandfather's brother-in-law on the other hand was not so lucky. He was drafted and was on a ship on his way overseas. But luck was on his side after all. The war ended on the day the ship arrived to his destination near Japan. In 1946, U.S. farmers pressured the federal government to continue the agriculture portion of the Bracero Program, claiming the loss of workers to postwar urban expansion and increased food demands at home and around the world. It was estimated that at least 26,214 Mexican citizens worked on U.S. farms in 1946. The men lived in camps provided by the farmers (Bracero Timeline, 2002). One camp was near Guadalupe, California and was formerly used as military barracks. In 1946, my mother, age 7, recalls living in a ranch near a bracero camp that was in the outskirts of Guadalupe, California. The camp was nearby on one side of a creek and on the other side was a row of six ranch houses where my grandparents and other relatives lived.

The bracero program served its purpose as a government sanctioned program to help the farmers during and after WWII. The bracero program continued to help farmers until the government ended the program in 1964. After the war, the need to hire available and cheap labor was still in high demand. The farmers still needed cheap

labor and continued to hire the undocumented workers, this time not sanctioned by the U.S. government. Farm contractors and farmers also found that it was easier to take advantage of the undocumented worker, paying lower wages and allowing unsafe working conditions. As more and more American and documented workers found work other than in agriculture, they left more farm jobs available to the undocumented worker (Bracero Timeline, 2002). Since the program started, there were many problems. The workers were treated unfairly with low wages, broken promises and poor living conditions. By 1963, Labor Secretary Arthur Goldberg reflected the Kennedy administration's unfavorable view of the Bracero Program, thus resulting in the U.S. congressional action allowing just one more year of Bracero recruiting. 1964 was the last year of the Bracero Program (Bracero Timeline, 2002).

Since the end of the bracero program in California, there has been a steady rise in undocumented immigration. Undocumented workers began to come to the U.S. to work and make a better life for themselves and their families. The bracero program had made it easier for Mexican workers to come to the U.S. and earn better wages. In 1945, the U.S. count showed that 300,000 Mexican men worked as braceros and by the summer of 1959, the bracero registry reached its peak of 430,000 braceros working in the U.S. Between 1964 and 1996, there was a rise in US-Mexican border apprehensions, from under 20,000 to over 120,000 (Spilimbergo, 1999). At the same time, the government at city, state and federal levels began to look the other way and sanctuary cities came into being. City governments changed their policy which directed police officers to no longer arrest someone just because they were undocumented. Under the new policy, the police officers were now instructed by their supervisors that

they could not do the job of a Federal Immigration Officer. In the 1970's, it became known in the Mexican communities that the police in Santa Maria and Guadalupe could not arrest persons just because they were undocumented. Undocumented immigrants began to be less fearful of the local law enforcement and of "La Migra" (the Spanish slang word for "la migracion" and translated as "the immigration") since the Border Patrol became less and less active in "picking up the illegals".

Over the years, undocumented workers also began to work in other jobs as construction workers, as cooks, gardeners, housekeepers, nannies, waiters, dishwashers, seamstresses, handymen, facilities maintenance staff, factory workers, and welders. Many citizens, as well as immigrants, began to say that the undocumented worker does the work that no one wants to do. In the 1960's, between the ages of 5 to 10, I lived in Winters, California, a small farm town near Sacramento, California. At that time, my family worked in the peach, apricot and almond orchards. I remember seeing men and women harvesting the fruit. While my parents worked picking the fruit, I played and sometimes I would help out picking peaches. I also remember seeing many single men living in barrack like camps provided by the farmers. By age 10, I had my first experience with "La Migra!" My mother and I were taking a nap in our ranch home, when three men came running into our home followed by men in green uniforms, it was the Border Patrol. According to my mother, the border patrol would descend on the ranch with jeeps, helicopters and vans, all in that familiar light green color. People would run in every direction to hide. My mother recalls that "La Migra" would come during the middle of the summer when there were the most workers. By 1969, we moved back to our home town of Guadalupe, California, another small

agriculture town. It was rumored in the Mexican community that by the end of the harvest the farmers would call the Border Patrol to round up the undocumented immigrants. It was believed to be a tactic the farmers used to save money (Chacon, 2006). Most workers would not get paid and thus saving the farmer from having to pay the workers. By the time I was in junior high and high school, I was aware of a few immigrant families but I was not aware of any illegal families. It was usually single men in their twenties who were undocumented to my knowledge.

MIGRATION AND SOCIAL NETWORKING

The lure to come to the U.S. was too great to a Mexican citizen who lived in poverty and had no work opportunities. Average wages in Mexico are about one ninth of those in the U.S. While the economic conditions drive immigrants from their counties, the U.S. economy's growing demand for millions of essential worker lures them to our workforce (Lipman, 2006). Many already had relatives in the U.S. who informed them of the wonderful work opportunities. Others communicate through networks. Researchers, Sallie Hughes and Carol Zabin, wrote about a worker migrating within Mexico, Eustacio Maldonado, a 35-year-old Mixtec. He went to the U.S. with Oaxacan coworkers he met in Baja California. He left his village in Oaxaca for the first time in 1972 at age 14 to harvest sugar cane in Veracruz state. In Veracruz, he heard conditions were better in Sinaloa and went there to pick peppers, tomatoes, and onions in 1976. While in Sinaloa, he heard he could make even more in Baja California, where he went in 1977. In Baja, a coworker told him that working in the United States was far better than anywhere in Mexico. Experienced coworkers snuck Maldonado across the border near San Diego in 1979 and he has lived in California ever since (Hughes,

Economic Integration and Labor Flow, 1995). Another example is Juvencio Martinez, a 28 year old Triqui Indian from a secluded village in the Mixteca mountains of Oaxaca. His first time in "el Norte" (the North), he met a stranger who showed up at his Baja California labor camp in 1992. He describes how he and fourteen others from Rancho Seco went to work in Florida's tomato fields: "The coyote stopped here to use the bathroom. No one had known him before. I told him I would go with him within a day because he was pressuring us, 'If you want to, let's go.' I said, 'OK,' because there wasn't any work here (Baja California). I wanted to work there to earn a little bit so I could go back to the south and build my house" (Hughes, Economic Integration and Labor Flow, 1995). These two stories illustrate how information and contacts available in Baja California serve as networks to help migrants reach the United States. Social networks of contacts and information about travel and jobs help migrants move from Oaxaca to Baja and from Baja to the United States. Compared to other ethnic groups, it was easier to migrate to the United States since the United States was just next door. People would cross the border on foot by themselves or accompanied by a "coyote". A "coyote" was someone who smuggled a person into the United States for a price. As a young girl, I remember hearing undocumented immigrants saying that they come to work in the United States because there were more jobs in the United States and they paid more. They often stated that they had to send money back home to their parents or other family members. They would reminisce about their homeland and how much they missed it. Some would also criticize Mexican-Americans on their not being able to speak Spanish correctly and make fun of our "Spanglish" words. Spanglish is a combination of a Spanish and English word, with a Spanish sounding suffix added to an

English word. I remember using many Spanglish words when I was a child. It is ironic that now, those "Spanglish" words are now part of a Mexican's vocabulary and what was most amazing is that the words are used in TV novelas (soap operas).

LOW WAGES

Mexico does not have the economic opportunities as the United States causing the Mexican citizen to seek work in another country. In the 1980's, efforts were by the Mexican government to improve its economy and provide more opportunities for its people. Mexico was interested in joining the U.S. and Canada which entered into a Free Trade Agreement 1988. In 1987, President Salinas officially proposed to the United States president the negotiation of a free trade agreement between Mexico and the U.S. By 1991, the negotiations became trilateral at the request of Canada. By 1992, the official signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) took place between U.S. President George Bush, Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari and Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney (Timeline). But did NAFTA provide those opportunities that former President Carlos Salinas intended to provide? President Carlos Salinas de Gortari, promised that free trade and foreign investment would jump-start Mexico's development, empowering a richer and more prosperous Mexico "to export goods, not people" (Malkin, 2009). But that was not the case. And another wave of immigrants flowed into the U.S. with the failure of NAFTA. Employment in Guadalajara's IT factories dropped 37 percent in 2001, many factories paid low wages, and the small peasant farmers could not compete with the rising prices. Many farmer's hold other jobs just to subsidize their farms while other farmers depend on families in the U.S. to send them money (Malkin, 2009).

It is commonly believed that the work that undocumented immigrants do is the work no one else wants to do. Is it really because no one wants that kind work or is it that the pay is so low that it deters American workers from being interested? If a person wants to work they most likely want the best paying job. And if the back breaking work is not worth their time in top dollar, they will most likely not do the work. The incentive is to make a good living to be able to achieve the American dream. Why work in back breaking jobs for minimum wage? An example of that would be the Mexican nationals who work in maguiladoras (factories). I interviewed a man by the name of Pedro who stated, "Right now the minimum wage in a good factory job in Mexico is \$80.00 pesos which is about \$8.00 a day. They paid very low wages." I interviewed Pedro's older brother Reymundo, who stated, "The wages were very low in the maquiladoras. You work a lot but get paid very little, just enough to survive. It is all the wages over there can offer." As in Mexico, the workers were not willing to work hard for very little pay and the same applies here to American workers, they also seek the higher paying jobs within the U.S. or in other countries such as in Iran or Afghanistan.

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL IMPACT

In recent years, undocumented immigration has been a topic of heated discussion in the U.S. The national, state and local news media have run many news articles on the impact of undocumented immigration, ranging from criminal activities, the drain in the educational, medical, penal, city emergency services, social services and public assistance. According to the 2010 U.S. Census figures, America's population center is moving away from the Midwest, pulled by Hispanic growth in the Southwest. The historic shift is changing the nation's politics and the notion of the country's heartland

(Yen, 2011). The West is the home of the four fastest growing states, Nevada, Arizona, Utah and Idaho, surpassing the Midwest in population. California and Texas added to the Southwestern shift. Many of the Mountain state arrivals are Hispanic immigrants seeking jobs and affordable family living. Hispanics also tend to vote Democratic. California has become the nation's largest with 37.3 million and continues to grow primarily form immigration and births (Yen, 2011). In my hometown of Santa Maria, California, the population grew 28.6% and Latinos sparked the increase, representing 70.4% of the city's residents, as compared to 56.6% in 2000 (Bullock, 2011). Also noted was that undocumented immigrants are stealing jobs from Americans. The construction industry creates some 185,000 jobs annually, and although construction workers earn between \$30,000 to \$50,000 a year, employers in trades such as masonry and dry-walling report that they cannot find enough young Americans to do the work (Jacoby, 2006). Other complaints are that they do not pay taxes and they take public funds/services that Americans are entitled to because they paid taxes. The public has taken sides and has been critical of the government. Some say that our politicians are not doing their job in immigration reform laws, whether the laws are in favor to grant amnesty to millions undocumented immigrants or to make it more difficult for the undocumented to get jobs. The last attempt to reform immigration was in 1986 with the Immigration Reform and Control Act. The law required employers to attest to their employees' immigration status, made it illegal to knowingly hire or recruit unauthorized immigrants, granted amnesty to certain seasonal agricultural illegal immigrants, granted amnesty to undocumented immigrants who entered the United States before January 1, 1982 and had resided there continuously.

This year (2011), the Democrat controlled congress attempted to pass a law called the Dream Act which would give undocumented children amnesty if they attend college or enlist in the military but it did not pass. The Dream Act was sponsored by Senator Lugar (Indiana), Senator Durbin (Illinois) and others. The idea was to allow undocumented children, who were brought by their parents at a young age and educated in American schools, to become permanent citizens. The first step would be for the child to become enrolled in some type of higher education, such as a university, vocational school, apprenticeship program or the United States military. They would first receive a conditional residency then, upon receipt of an associate's degree or a 2year equivalent within six years of the initial petition, the conditional status can be changed and the individual can become a legal permanent resident of the U.S. (Culwell, 2009). However, some argue that the laws should be made tougher to keep undocumented immigrants from entering the U.S. or deport them, that our immigration laws are not being enforced because the Border Patrol does not have a sufficient budget and man power to enforce immigration laws. There are those that believe that building a cross proof fence will stop the flow into the U.S. Since the pull is to find jobs, some believe that if the jobs were not available they would not come. And one way to make them unavailable is to fine employers and create government ID's that would be hard to forge. The employers would only be able to hire someone with this government ID. It has also been suggested that employers use a national database to make sure the potential employee is legal.

It appears that the situation of undocumented immigration has become out of control, meaning that at this time it is unmanageable by our government. The government has

looked the other way for too long. The first fix was amnesty in the 1986 but that did not stop the uncontrolled flow of undocumented immigrants. And now, as both U.S. citizens and undocumented immigrants are asking for reform, it appears that the politicians have failed to do anything. In California, the farmers needed cheap labor and had influence with the state politicians. The farmer needed a steady supply of farm workers. But in every generation more undocumented immigrants were needed because the children would seek better paying jobs that were not back breaking. Along with the endless supply of farm workers in the fields they have also suffered at the hands of the farmer and labor contractor. The United Farm Worker Movement lead by Cesar Chavez helped all farm workers whether legal or illegal to stand up for their rights. He helped improve the working conditions to higher wages and more safe and sanitary work conditions. He taught the farm worker to be able to complain about working conditions by having a union and a voice for them to protect them from abuse. Since the death of Cesar Chavez in April 1993, the UFW union (founded by Cesar Chavez) is still alive and progressing. In April 1994, the second UFW president, Arturo Rodriguez, led a 343mile Delano-to-Sacramento march or pilgrimage retracing the steps of an historic trek by Chavez in 1966. Some 20,000 farm workers and union supporters greeted the marchers, or peregrinos (traveler or pilgrim), at the steps of the state Capitol in Sacramento. Since then, the UFW has won 21 union elections and signed 25 new, or first-time, contracts with growers. The UFW has recently made legislative progress at the state and national capitals. In 2001, he California Legislature passed and Governor Gray Davis signed UFW-sponsored laws authored by the Assembly Speaker and Senate President Pro Tem that seek to end some of the worst abuses farm workers

suffer from growers and farm labor contractors. And the UFW continues pushing legislation in both houses of Congress that would allow undocumented farm workers and their family members to earn legal status by working in agriculture (Biography of Arturo S. Rodriguez, 2002).

In 1970, Cesar Chavez came to the Santa Maria Valley. My grandparents, my mother and my cousins got involved. We participated in "La Huelga" (The Strike) attempting to convince the workers to join the "La Causa" (The Cause). "The cause, of course, was that of the highly exploited farm worker. As a farm worker himself, Chavez carefully put together a grass-roots organization that enabled the workers to form their own union, the United Farm Workers" (Meister, 2007). Cesar Chavez would often come and speak to the Huelgistas (the strikers). The one thing that my mother remembers learning from Cesar Chavez was "not to let the White man put you down." He encouraged the people to speak up and defend themselves. My mother also remembers that he was not in favor of the farmers using "los illegales" (the illegals) to break the strikes. Although he was fighting for the rights of all the workers in the fields, the tactic of hiring "illegals" made it difficult to unionize.

My grandparents, my mother and I all have worked in the fields. It was hard working in the fields. They worked by necessity and I worked in the fields as a summer job.

Before Cesar Chavez, the farmers did not provide water and toilets in the fields. And the pay was very low. It was also very dangerous, as the farmers would spray pesticides while the workers were still in the fields. My mother remembers that while she and my grandmother were working in a flower field the ranchers would instruct the workers to lay down in the field rows until they were done spraying pesticides. Other

workers suffered literally back breaking work while "thinning." They used a short hoe to thin the plants growing in the rows. The farmers would say they wanted the short hoe because if they could "see the workers asses facing up" they knew they were working. But Chavez helped organize the workers to fight the practice of using short hoes. Farm workers now use long hoes. Chavez also made sure the workers receive higher wages, 15 minute breaks in the morning and afternoon, water and toilets and safer working conditions in regards to pesticides. There were also many other gains. In 1965, when he formed the union, farm workers in California averaged less than \$1.50 an hour. They had no fringe benefits, no seniority rights and no standing to challenge abuses by employers or exploitative labor contractors. Unionization brought sharp pay increases. For the first time, migrant workers were eligible for medical insurance, employer-paid pensions, unemployment insurance and other benefits, and they had a mechanism to challenge employer abuses. And the union's impact extended far beyond its membership. The threat of unionization by Mr. Chavez raised agricultural wages throughout California (LINDSEY, 2010). All workers, including the undocumented workers, now have better working conditions. The undocumented workers do not have a voice in this country but Chavez became their voice through the United Farmworkers Union.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

It is difficult to determine exactly how much is spent on government services for undocumented immigrants but there are several estimates. As the costs are calculated, most experts include the money that is spent on the U.S. born children of undocumented immigrants (Estimating the Cost of Illegal Immigration, 2010). In the

year 2000, it was estimated by the Department of Homeland Security that there was 2.5 million undocumented immigrants in California and by 2007 it rose to 2.8 million. By 2009, it was estimated that there was 2.6 million undocumented immigrants in California

In the prison and jail systems there are many illegal immigrants who have committed a variety of crimes. After they serve their time they are deported. It cost millions of dollars to house the inmate in prison and in jail. In 2004, the Center for Immigration Studies estimated that 12.4 percent of California state prison population was undocumented immigrants. By comparison the undocumented immigrant made up about 6.9 percent of the California population that year (Border States Deal With More Illegal Immigrant Crime, 2010). Imprisoning undocumented immigrants also adds to the overcrowding in prisons and jails. On the local level, when an undocumented immigrant is arrested, the officers are required to find out the identity of the person during the booking procedure. And when it is discovered that they are undocumented the must be deported after serving their time. The financial impact begins on the street with the police officer investigates a crime and makes an arrest. The officers are paid by the city or county depending on the jurisdiction. The financial impact continues to the court system, where the judge, court appointed attorneys or public defenders, various court staff, Marshalls, and Sheriffs spend more time dealing with the undocumented immigrant offender.

Complaints made by citizens are made about the financial impact to the communities, all the extra services provided are draining the system and that people are killed by the undocumented immigrant. For example, drunk drivers causing fatal accidents, or committing crimes (i.e. selling drugs, theft, and assault) resulting in killing

innocent victims. One thing that angers US citizens is when an undocumented immigrant is not deported and that person continues to drive drunk or committing crimes thus endangering the lives of others. Although the incidents are lower than the mainstream population the focus is on them because if they were not here a life would have been saved. Conventional theories of crime and incarceration predict higher rates for young adult males from ethnic minority groups with lower educational attainment (characteristics which describe a much greater proportion of the foreign-born population than of the native born). It would be expected that immigrants have higher incarceration rates than natives. And immigrant Mexican men, who comprise fully a third of all immigrant men between 18 and 39, and who have the lowest levels of education, would be expected to have the highest rates (Rubén G. Rumbaut, 2006). Data from the 5 percent Public Use Microsample (PUMS) of the 2000 census was used to measure the institutionalization rates of immigrants and natives (males 18 to 39) most of whom are in correctional facilities. Of the 45.2 million males age 18 to 39, 3 percent were in federal or state prisons or local jails at the time of the 2000 census, a total of over 1.3 million in line with official prison statistics at that time (Rubén G. Rumbaut, 2006). Surprisingly, the data show the above hypotheses to be unfounded. In fact, the incarceration rate of the U.S. born (3.51 percent) was four times the rate of the foreign born (0.86 percent). The foreign-born rate was half the 1.71 percent rate for non-Hispanic white natives, and 13 times less than the 11.6 percent incarceration rate for native black men (Rubén G. Rumbaut, 2006).

Another complaint is about the undocumented immigrant driving without car insurance, putting a strain on the insurance companies and citizens who do have

insurance. Accidents cost money and someone has to pay. The insurance rates go up when someone does not pay their insurance in the case of an accident. There are a handful of states that issue licenses to undocumented immigrants. These states are Hawaii, Maine, Michigan, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, and Washington. Having the license encourages immigrant motorists to buy insurance. New Mexico goes further and taps the foreign government's databases to look up names, birthdays, and photos of Mexicans drivers. Ken Ortiz, director of New Mexico's Motor Vehicle Division, said the ability of Mexicans to get a New Mexico licenses, contributed to a steep drop in the states rate of uninsured motorists. In 2003, New Mexico had one of the worst uninsured rates in the country with 33 percent. Now, its rate is 11 percent. New Mexico, licenses 30,000 drivers who don't have Social Security numbers (Vock, 2007). In 2010, Arizona passed a restrictive law targeting noncitizens. That law prompted public debate over immigration and brought on the assumption that noncitizens are responsible for the increasing crime. In California, some politicians reinforced the perception that California and the rest of the United States are beset by a crime epidemic that is caused by undocumented immigrants (Krisberg, 2010). Data obtained from the Department of Finance and the Department of Justice reveal that during a long period of new immigration, crime has shown a large and steady decline in California. From 1991-2008 it is estimated by the Department of finance that 3,667,886 foreign-born persons migrated to California. While it is difficult to calculate the exact proportion of these immigrants who were unauthorized, the Pew Hispanic Center estimated that unauthorized immigrants accounted for approximately one-third of the foreign born immigrants in California. The foreign born included persons with permission to be in the

United States (U.S.) for work, travel, education and those possessing U.S. Citizenship (Krisberg, 2010). During the 1991-2008 time frames there was a dramatic decline in crime rates reported to the police. The violent crime rate (homicide, rape robbery and aggravated assault) dropped by 55 percent. Serious property crime rates (auto theft, grand larceny, burglary and arson) declined 29 percent (Krisberg, 2010). The trend was identical for those counties that are near the California-Mexico border, where the nexus of unauthorized entries and crime is assumed to be the most direct. For example, San Diego County received 258,973 foreign-born person from 1991-2008 and its crime rate went down 58 percent, that of serious property crimes declined 35 percent (Krisberg, 2010). So as the immigration rate increased, the crime rate decreased.

Another perceived financial drain to the state is in the educational system. And in some communities many blame the undocumented immigrants. Children of undocumented immigrants make up about 6.8 percent of kindergarten through 12th grade in the United States. In California, it is a least 10 percent, according to the Pew Hispanic Center. (Estimating the Cost of Illegal Immigration, 2010). The Center for Immigration Studies, which supports stricter immigration enforcement, says it is 13 percent and that the students cost Californians about \$9 billion a year (Estimating the Cost of Illegal Immigration, 2010). The Pew Center reported that 40 percent of undocumented immigrant households in California get food assistance, such as free school lunches, for their children. Over the years the quality of California's educational system has declined for many reasons. At one time, California was one of the nation's top states that had quality education.

There are many reasons why the education system has declined in California but many citizens blame the undocumented immigrants to have contributed to the decline. For example, many citizens complained about the Bilingual Program costing too much money. When more and more children of Mexican families who came to the United States registered their children in the school system, it was noted that the children were not learning and were falling behind. Community grassroots organizations rallied for laws that would help the children to be taught in bi-lingual classes with bilingual teachers. The children's lessons were taught in Spanish and they were also taught English. The bilingual program cost the school system extra money. Over the years the schools became overcrowded and California did not have enough money to build larger schools or hire enough teachers. The best the state could do is to add modular buildings to ease the overcrowding and use year-round school. In the sixties, when I was a child, the number of children per classroom was in the low twenties and by the time my children went to school the class size was higher. In 1996, California began a class size reduction program. Some schools had been coping with 30-40 students in each classroom in the early grades, and a reduction to 20 would be an improvement (Berliner, 2008). Schools had also starting using the year round school year to be able to accommodate so many children. Because of rapid growth, overcrowding, and the cost-effectiveness of year-round programs in achieving class size reduction, the number of districts using multi-track year-round education has grown significantly. In 1988, 69 districts used year-round programs. By June 1997 more than 100 did so (California Department of Education, 2010). A person may ask, "How do you know that it was the children of the undocumented immigrants?" In some communities there are a larger

proportion of immigrant families, such as the agriculture town as in Santa Maria. Higher proportion of immigrant children in school can give the impression that overcrowding in all schools is due to the immigrant children. In 2000, the US Census Bureau data showed there were 59.7 percent persons of Latino origin and 32 percent foreign born in Santa Maria, California. During the May Day Boycott in 2006, many families participating were not undocumented and a very high percentage of children were kept from school. Although many of the children had parents who were documented immigrants or U.S. citizens, it is unknown how many were undocumented. An exact count is unknown. I spoke to a staff person at the Santa Maria-Bonita School District who is a coordinator of curriculum and she stated that they did have statistics on the day of the boycott. She also added that the school district does not track undocumented children and families, further stating, "We do not ask". I recall that day; the West side of Santa Maria was like a ghost town. The schools and the roads were nearly empty. The traffic was so light it reminded me of the days in the sixties and seventies when the traffic was that light, and when the population of Santa Maria was much lower. May Day of 2006, reminded me of the movie, "A Day Without a Mexican". I believe that movie was the inspiration. On May Day, those of Mexican descent were asked by organizers not to send their children to school, not to go to work, not to do any shopping and not to drive anywhere. It was very strange to see the Westside practically deserted. It is important to note that many Mexican families believe it is important send their children to school, to be educated and increase opportunities in their future. Coming in the U.S. has economically alleviated the immigrant family thus allowing their children to attend school rather than having to put the children to work at a young age.

The immigrant children have also enriched their schools by being bilingual and by keeping alive the Spanish language in the second, third, etc. generations of Mexican-American children.

Another area of financial impact is in Social Services. One of the biggest criticisms toward the undocumented immigrant is that they take advantage of the government welfare system by applying for cash benefits, food stamps and Medi-Cal. "This belief is demonstrably false. Every empirical study of illegals' economic impact demonstrates the opposite...: undocumented actually contribute more to the public offers in taxes than they cost in social services" (Lipman, 2006). Many workers that come to the U.S. are low income. They come to seek a better life working in the U.S. because there is no work for them in their homeland. Here in California they mostly seek work in agriculture, construction or other service jobs. The jobs are usually difficult and low wage. Rent and other commodities cost more in California than in Mexico. So even though they make more in the U.S. they have to pay more for their basic necessities. In many cases the families do need extra assistance to provide for their children. Many critics also believe that the undocumented immigrant parents also receive the government aide. But it is only their American born children that can full aide and undocumented children receive some medical assistance. Moreover, undocumented immigrants make unrequited contributions to Medicare (Lipman, 2006). Because most of the undocumented immigrants work in seasonal agriculture they tend seek the assistance, such as food stamps, when they are not working. The readiness of many observers to believe that immigrant net public sector costs are high is due at least in part to the myth that immigrants are heavy users of welfare.

Many believe that both authorized and unauthorized immigrants are drawn to this country by the lure of welfare. In fact, many immigrants (documented or undocumented), including most recent arrivals, are prevented from receiving most forms of welfare or public assistance (Michael E. Fix, 1994). Undocumented immigrants are barred from almost all government benefits, including food stamps, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (cash aide), Medicaid, federal housing programs, Supplemental Security Income, Unemployment Insurance, Social Security, Medicare, and the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) (Lipman, 2006). Generally, the only benefits federally required for undocumented immigrants are emergency medical care (subject to financial eligibility) and elementary and secondary public education (Lipman, 2006). Undocumented immigrants are eligible for emergency medical care under Medicaid and Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) nutrition program benefits (Michael E. Fix, 1994). Some immigrants, even if they are not Legal Permanent Residents or U.S. citizens, may still be eligible for full scope Medi-Cal benefits under the Medi-Cal "PRUCOL" classification. PRUCOL stands for "Permanently Residing in the United States Under the Color of Law" and means that the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) (formerly known as the INS) knows that the immigrant is living in the U.S. and is not taking steps to deport him or her. PRUCOL is a Medi-Cal classification, not a type of immigration status (Immigration and Medi-Cal Issues, 2008).

Immigrants legalizing under Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA) are barred from most federally funded public assistance programs for five years after legalization (the five-year ban has lapsed for most of these immigrants). As a result, we may see higher levels of public assistance use within this population in the future.

Those granted temporary protected status (TPS) under the Immigration Act of 1990 are barred from most federal benefit programs and legal permanent residents are effectively barred from receiving most cash assistance during their first three years in the country. because their sponsor's income is "deemed" to be theirs during this period when determining eligibility for public benefits. They can also be deported as a public charge if they use public benefits during their first five years in the country. More important, use of public welfare makes it more difficult for immigrants to bring their relatives into the country, another relatively effective deterrent (Michael E. Fix, 1994). There are also those undocumented immigrants who do not seek financial assistance and do well in good paying jobs or self-employment, such as mechanics, seamstress, selling homemade food (tamales, fruits, corn, etc.) and other handcrafted items. A Santa Barbara County employee I interviewed stated that statistics are not gathered to track undocumented persons served. Other government assistance would include Social Security disability (SSI) payments. I was employed as an Infant Specialist working with children who were born with disabilities. There were low income families whose child was born with a significant disability which requires the parents to travel to many medical appointments and treatments. They were in need of extra financial assistance so that at least one parent can stay out of work to care for the child's extra needs. The majority were documented families and not undocumented. This agency also did not keep statistics on those who were undocumented and receiving aide. Until 1996, poor immigrants who were legal permanent residents of the U.S. generally qualified for SSI on the same basis as U.S. citizens. The 1996 welfare reform law eliminated most noncitizens' eligibility for SSI unless they fall into one of three main groups: lawful

residents who entered the United States by August 1996; refugees and other humanitarian immigrants who entered after that date (who can receive SSI only on a temporary basis, set at seven years); and ordinary immigrants who entered after August 1996 and have earned 40 quarters of coverage under Social Security (Introduction to the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Program, 2011). As of December 2009, the SSI Statistical report showed 15.6 percent of children under age 18, received SSI (Introduction to the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Program, 2011). The SSI statistics were not broken down to show ethnicity or immigration status.

In Child Welfare Services (formally known as Child Protective Services) is another area where the undocumented immigrants are impacting financially. I also worked as a Social Worker for Santa Barbara County (California) and many of the abuse reports were for physical abuse and sexual abuse in the Mexican immigrant community (documented and undocumented). In this area there were many instances of undocumented persons that the county spent much time with and because of the high instances of reports new Social Workers were needed and hired to provide for the demand. It was my experience as a Social Worker, to encounter "cultural differences", in which many Mexican immigrant families believed it is ok to hit their children with a belt or other object. It should be noted that most Latino parents raise their children lovingly and without major problems. It was also my experience to work with Mexican immigrant families that it is okay for a man in his twenties to have a relationship with a minor beginning at the age of 13 or 14. Many of these families were Mexican indigenous people from Oaxaca. Since the Oaxacan population has increased, more of the sexual abuse reports have also increased. Many young girls from the ages of 13

and up come to the United States without their parents to work. Their mother and father stay in Mexico. Some come accompanied by brothers, sisters or other relative. The young women are mostly left unsupervised and have relationships with older men. The girls end up getting pregnant but cannot marry their boyfriends. It has come to the point where the Mexican Consulate in Los Angeles began to assist and making it easier for consenting couples to be married with the permission of their parents in Mexico. A Santa Barbara County employee who trains Social Workers stated that the County does not track how many undocumented persons are provided with Emergency Response services and they are not tracked monetarily.

In the area of health care, the Pew Hispanic Center estimates that 62 percent of undocumented immigrants do not have health insurance and they make up one of four uninsured people in California. It was also noted that that they are less of a burden on health care system than other residents, possibly because they have less access to services and tend to be younger and healthier (Estimating the Cost of Illegal Immigration, 2010). A study by the Rand Corporation, a nonprofit research institution, found that undocumented immigrants in 2000 made up 3.2 percent of the United States population but only accounted for 1.5 percent of medical spending in the country. But on the other hand, it was my experience as a Social Worker that many of the young girls and women having babies qualified for Medi-Cal to pay for the health care for prenatal care and at the hospital.

The emergency room had become the doctor's office for many undocumented immigrants. With jobs that can barely sustain their basic needs of food, shelter and clothing, and with no health insurance; medical care is usually neglected. But by the

time, they see the doctor it is because it has become a serious problem. Sometimes they use the emergency room for flu or other minor injuries that a regular doctor could have attended to. Since the undocumented immigrant does not have medical insurance, what other choice do they have? In recent years more and more county or non-profit clinics have been opening up to serve the low income population, since it became a burden on the hospitals. The clinics are called Community Health Centers in Santa Barbara County and they now alleviate the high costs of health care in hospital emergency rooms. The clinics provide affordable medical care. The hospitals also have programs that assist those that cannot afford to pay for major hospital bills. There are citizens that feel it is unfair that programs that are there to assist tax paying Americans end up paying for the undocumented immigrant.

Infrastructure (City, County) services that are used by the undocumented immigrant are paid by taxes. The services include the fire department, police, code compliance, roads, water, sewage and trash. It is argued that the undocumented immigrants do not pay taxes and others argue that they do. With a high growth in the population it creates a heavy burden on the system that cannot keep up in the maintenance and upgrading. With a naturally slower growing population from a normal birth and death rate, the infrastructure is expected to maintain its effectiveness. In some communities the infrastructure is over-burdened. Many argue that even if they do not pay taxes with their employment, they still pay sales taxes. The undocumented immigrant does contribute financially back into the system but many critics state that they are low income and do not pay enough as others do. And that is the question, do they contribute enough in proportion to what they receive? I interviewed, Adelita Hernandez, a Mexican-American,

49 year old female, who has an MPA degree from Harvard University and has a business in tax and organizational consulting. She explains the process of an undocumented taxpayer:

And so, an undocumented person if they don't already have a social security number which some do, from when they were little, they don't have a social security number and cannot apply for one, they can apply for taxpayer identification number. It's called an I-TIN. And what that does, is that allows undocumented persons to be good taxpayers and report their earnings. They only get money back if they have a withholding, and if they have children who live with them whom they support, then they qualify for some child tax credit. But they do not qualify for earned income tax credit, which is the largest benefit to low income families in the country. And they cannot qualify because they are not documented. That could be up to 4 to 5 thousand dollars. The only thing they can benefit from is the child tax credit. They don't get back any Social Security, Medicaid, or unemployment is paid by the employers. The only they would get back is if they had Federal or State income withheld. Because they are so low income they don't have Federal or State income tax withheld or very little. The average amount of income for a low income person, here in Santa Maria, it's usually about \$20,000 and that's not per person that's like per couple, from 20 to 25 thousand dollars. They can get their money back if they have an ID but most people don't even know that and don't file taxes and so they lose out.

She went on to say that most undocumented workers do not file their taxes because they are afraid of being reported. And on the other hand, their hard work does contribute by putting more money in our pockets by saving us in the grocery store, in construction jobs, landscaping jobs, housekeeping jobs, nanny jobs, restaurant cooks, etc. It does balance out. Even if they do not pay more in taxes, the lower their wage the higher the savings or profit for the rest of society.

Since the enactment of the Revenue Act of 1913, the federal government has subjected undocumented immigrants, like all citizens and residents of the United States, to pay taxes. Despite the historic and strong American opposition to taxation without representation, undocumented immigrants have not enjoyed the right to vote on any

local, state or federal tax or other matter for almost eighty years. Nevertheless, each year undocumented immigrants add billions of dollars in sales, excise, property, income, and payroll taxes, including Social Security, Medicare and unemployment taxes, to federal, state and local coffers. Hundreds of thousands of undocumented immigrants go out of their way to file annual federal and state income tax returns (Lipman, 2006). Undocumented workers who choose to file taxes need an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) since they not eligible for a Social Security number (SSN). Each year, hundreds of thousands of tax returns are filed with ITINs on W-2 forms with invalid (false) Social Security numbers. In the year 2000, 353,000 "resident aliens", not authorized to work in the United States, filed tax returns and 75 percent had invalid SSNs. In 2003, the government collected an estimated \$7 billion in Social Security taxes, from 7.5 million workers with mismatched SSNs. That dollar amount has tripled in the last decade. A motivation to file tax returns is because they understand it is an important step toward naturalization (Lipman, 2006).

CULTURE:

Culturally the immigrant (whether legal or illegal) contributes to the human landscape giving us the diversity of language, food, crafts, music, architecture and cultural characteristics. The state of California was once Mexico and has a long history of influence by the Mexican people. Many generations have evolved into a new subculture that is in between American and Mexican. There is such a variety and diversity just among the Mexican culture here in California. There are those that have generations born in the United States, the documented immigrant who came many years ago, assimilated and became citizens, those that recently immigrated (authorized

or unauthorized) keeping the Mexican traditions and language alive here in California and in other states.

CONCLUSION:

Historically the Mexican immigrant has migrated to the United States for a better life in which they could not find in Mexico. The lure was too great for someone who lived in poverty. It is most likely that people will continue to migrate to the United States as it is a natural force of humanity. The push from Mexico has been the lack of opportunities and low wages and the pull to the U.S. has been higher wages. The bracero program brought many workers to the U.S. during WWII and at the end of the program many stayed instead of returning to Mexico. This made it easier for many more immigrants to come since there were social networks in place. Although immigrants first came to work in agriculture, many are now working in other types or work. There is a demand for workers in certain types of jobs that documented workers or U.S. citizen do not fill, thus creating job opportunities for the undocumented workers. They do the work that no one wants to do because of the low pay for hard work. Over the years, many undocumented immigrants have become increasingly comfortable living in the U.S. without fear of "La Migra". Sanctuary cities, counties and states have looked the other way allowing the workers to fill the unwanted jobs. At one point, Mexico attempted to improve economic conditions in Mexico with NAFTA but it did not succeed. The Mexican president wanted to "export goods and not people" but stead it created another wave of immigrants to the U.S.

Undocumented immigration has become a heated topic of discussion in recent years. As the population increases, and as our economy takes a turn for the worse the undocumented immigrant takes the blame for many of our society's problems.

Especially when some undocumented immigrants commit crimes it is exaggerated out of proportion. Statistics show that the crime rates are lower with immigrants.

Many in our society complain that undocumented immigrants are a drain to our society (penal, social services, education, health care, infrastructure) when in fact many undocumented immigrants pay income taxes, sales taxes, excise, property, payroll taxes including Medicare, unemployment and Social Security. This is money that the majority will never receive in tax returns. The undocumented immigrants that file their tax returns with a special number (ITIN) do get some money back but they are few. Many are afraid to file tax returns because they fear deportation. It is estimated that undocumented immigrants have paid 21 billion dollars to Social Security. Undocumented immigrants are subjected to "taxation without representation" under a Federal law enacted in 1913. They continue to add billions to all levels of federal, state and local coffers.

There are many solutions to the situation of undocumented immigration in the United States but at this time it is difficult for politicians and states to agree on how to handle it. Some states have taken the initiative to do something in controlling undocumented immigration while nothing is done on a Federal level. There is a demand for cheap labor in the United States and as Adelita Hernandez stated, "I think that the United States holds up two signs, one that says help wanted and the other one that says no trespassing. And as long as we continue to have those kinds of policies, we are going

to have people who come here without documentation." And with that said, it appears that our government is hypocritical.

Our government should authorize a guest worker program allowing immigrants to work in the jobs that are in demand. The wages should be a least minimum wage to stop wage exploitation. If the Federal government had a Federal ID system in place, all immigrant guest workers could file taxes legally and fairly. Their Social Security deductions could be returned to them if they decide to return to their homeland. Using the Federal ID system, employers could check the authorized status of a prospective worker and this system would curb the flow of unauthorized immigration into the United States. No Federal ID, no job. I believe that guest workers in the United States should be allowed in the U.S. on a limited time basis to allow for other immigrants to have a chance in working in the U.S. After working a few years in the United States he/she could decide if they would like to become a permanent resident and get in line. I believe the Federal government should allow each state to grant a provisional driver's license to guest workers which will allow them to get auto insurance. Also, immigrants should be able to have a voice in unions to protect their rights in the labor force.

BIBLIOGRAGHY

- Dallas Morning News. (2002, January 27). Retrieved January 27, 2011, from www.latinamericanstudies.org: http://www.latinamericanstudies.org/immigration/bracero-timeline.htm
- *United Farm Workers*. (2002, January). Retrieved March 9, 2011, from www.ufw.org: http://www.ufw.org/_page.php?menu=research&inc=history/06.html
- Maternal and Child Health Access. (2008, September). Retrieved March 1, 2011, from www.mchaccess.org: http://www.mchaccess.org/pdfs/training-materials/Immigration%20%20MediCal%20Issues-PRUCOL%209-08.pdf
- California Department of Education. (2010, September 16). Retrieved March 1, 2011, from www.cde.ca.gov: http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/fa/yr/guide.asp
- Fox News. (2010, April 30). Retrieved February 10, 2010, from www.foxnews.com: http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2010/04/29/border-states-dealing-illegal-immigrant-crimedata-suggests/
- The Sacramento Bee. (2010, November 16). Retrieved February 10, 2011, from www.sacbee.com: 2011
- Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. (2011, January 10). Retrieved March 10, 2011, from www.cbpp.org: http://www.cbpp.org/cms/index.cfm?fa=view&id=3367
- Berliner, B. J. (2008). Small Class Size and Its Effects. In J. H. Spade, & J. H. Spade (Ed.), *Schools and Society: A Socialogical Approach to Education* (3 ed., p. 224). Thousand Oaks, California, United States: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Bullock, B. (2011, March 10). Santa Maria grows 28.6%. (T. Bolton, Ed.) Santa Maria Times, 129(323).
- Chacon, M. D. (2006). *No One is Illegal: Fighting Violence and State Repression on the U.S.-Mexico Border*. Chicago, Illinois: Haymarker Books.
- Culwell, A. L. (2009, December 7). *Ezine Articles*. Retrieved February 10, 2011, from www.ezinearticles.com: http://ezinearticles.com/?The-Dream-Act---Immigration-Law-Reform-in-2010?&id=3361262
- Hughes, C. Z. (n.d.). Retrieved from www.jstor.org: http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.lib.calpoly.edu/stable/2546787
- Hughes, C. Z. (1995, Summer). Economic Integration and Labor Flow. *International Migration Review, Vol* 29(No 2), p.395-422.
- Jacoby, T. (2006, November/December). Immigration Nation. Foreign Affairs, 85(6).

- Krisberg, B. (2010). Where is the Fire? Immigrants and Crime in California. UC Berkeley, School of Law. Berkeley, California: Berkeley Center For Criminal Justice.
- LINDSEY, R. (2010, April 24). *New York Times*. Retrieved March 6, 2011, from www.nytimes.com: http://www.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/bday/0331.html
- Lipman, F. J. (2006). Taxing Undocumented Immigrants: Separate, Unequal and Without Representation. *Harvard Latino Law Review*, *9*, 57.
- Malkin, E. (2009, March 24). *World Business*. Retrieved February 8, 2011, from www.nytimes.com: http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/24/business/worldbusiness/24peso.html?_r=1
- Meister, D. (2007, March 29). *Third World Traveler*. Retrieved March 6, 2011, from www.thirdworldtraveler.com: http://www.thirdworldtraveler.com/Heroes/Cesar_Chavez.html
- Michael E. Fix, J. S. (1994). *Immigration and Immigrants: Setting the Record Straight*. Washington D.C.: Urban Institute.
- Rubén G. Rumbaut, R. G. (2006, June). Migration Information Source. Retrieved March 9, 2011, from www.migrationinformation.org: http://www.migrationinformation.org/usfocus/display.cfm?ID=403
- Spilimbergo, G. H. (1999). Illigal Immigration, Border Enforcement, and Relative Wages: Evidence from Apprehentions at the U.S.-Mexican Border. *The American Economic Review*, 1337-1357.
- Timeline, N. (n.d.). *The North American Forum of Integration*. Retrieved February 2, 2011, from www.fina-nafi.org: http://www.fina-nafi.org/eng/integ/chronologie.asp?langue=eng&menu=integ
- Vock, D. C. (2007, August 24). *Stateline*. (The PEW Center of the States) Retrieved March 1, 2011, from www.stateline.org; http://www.stateline.org/live/details/story?contentId=234828
- Yen, H. (2011, March 8). *The Wall Street Journal*. (Associated Press) Retrieved March 2011, 2011, from www.wsj.com:

 http://online.wsj.com/article/AP9dd7f9dabadf401692435a6da2588c92.html?KEYWORDS=Geor gia

APPENDIX

Interview Questions

Several persons in Santa Maria, California were interviewed to gain a direct perspective. Interviewees ranged from American born, documented and undocumented and fictitious names will be used. Basic demographic information, such as, age, gender, educational level, economic status (low, middle, or high income), immigration status, type of work or profession, was gathered before interview questions were asked. I asked the following questions: For those who are documented or undocumented; What is your opinion on unauthorized immigration? How do you feel unauthorized immigrants impact to California or the U.S? Where were you born? Why did you come to the United States? How long have you been in the United States? Do you speak English? If not, why? If undocumented, do you feel you or others have the right to be in the United States, why or why not? How do you feel about the U.S. Southwest being obtained from Mexico? Would you like to become a U.S. Citizen? How do you feel about amnesty? For those that are American born: What is your opinion on unauthorized immigration? How do you feel unauthorized immigrants impact California or the U.S? Where were you born? How many generations has your family been in the U.S? How do you feel about amnesty?

Adelita Hernandez (fictitious name) is a 49 year old female, who has an MPA degree from Harvard University and has a business in tax and organizational consulting. Hilda was born McClelland, Texas and is a fifth generation Mexican-American on her father's side and second generation on her mother's side. Her father's family lived just outside

of San Antonio, Texas; they were never were from the interior (Mexico). The signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848 made them American. Her mother's family was from Monterrey, Mexico.

Adelita's opinion on unauthorized immigration;

I believe that the movement of people has been a part of our world and people move to make things better for their families. And so the United States is an example of a stupid immigration position. I bear no ill will towards people who move to better their families. I think that the United States holds up two signs, one that says help wanted and the other one that says no trespassing. And as long as we continue to have those kinds of policies, we are going to have people who come here without documentation. So I will support, always and forever, the rights of people to seek a better life for themselves and their family.

On the impact of unauthorized immigrants in California or the United States, (economic or socially), Hilda stated;

Well, there's absolutely impacts. Some of the impacts I think are yet to really be seen and that's the shift in our culture. And I think that that's what ends up creating such hatred against a foreigner. Which is what I see, for example, through the minutemen. We have minutemen here. The culture impact, I think that's what really drives a lot of the fear of people who are xenophobic, afraid of the foreigner. And I think that yes there are absolutely impacts both positive and negative. And that the positive impacts are the contribution to the economy especially in this community where if it wasn't for the undocumented worker there would be no agriculture production. And that means then there wouldn't be any pay checks, and that means then there would not be any renters; that means that there would not be people buying groceries or buying gas. And that even though yes, dollars are sent to Mexico. Actually, I understand it like the first or second highest income to the country of Mexico is monies that come from the United. They're called remittances from the United States. And I believe though that the net impact is a positive one. Absolutely, economically, financially, socially, culturally, I believe it is a positive impact. And the thing that makes it different is that because we are primarily "Mexicanos" we don't do a very good job assimilating, we don't do a good job rejecting our culture and I'm fifth generation American but I'm as Mexican as the person who just got here from Oaxaca. Because that is how we maintain our culture its part of our identity. And so I think that also makes it more difficult. The immigrants of the early 1900's, their goal was to be American so they had to stop speaking there language. I think it was a great loss.

On the subject of amnesty, Hilda stated;

It's interesting; the last amnesty we had was in 1986, sponsored by Reagan. And it was sponsored by Reagan because of the pressure and frankly the republican position of cheap labor of wanting to encourage cheap labor and having a supply of cheap labor. The thing that happened though that people didn't expect to happened is that cheap labor, because now they realized they had rights, stopped allowing themselves to be abused and so many of them left the fields. And that's why it opened up all this opportunity for the undocumented people to come and continue to provide cheap labor. So I think the same thing would happen. I think that amnesty is something that should be earned. One thing I have absolutely no tolerance for is people who commit any kind of criminal activity. Certainly, that's not the type of individual we want no matter where they come from. We have enough criminal activity of our own here with our citizens why would we want to bring in additional. So yes I support an earned amnesty and I also support of the Dream Act absolutely and positively. These children were brought here not of their own free will and basically this is their country and they should be given the rights of citizenship.

When asked what her experience is with undocumented people who do their taxes, Hilda responded;

I run the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA) for the Northern Santa Barbara County United Way and I am a part of the Central Coast Coalition of private programs where we prepare taxes for low income families and that includes people who are undocumented because as far as the IRS is concerned, we are all taxpayers if we earn income here. And so, an undocumented person if they don't already have a social security number which some do, from when they were little, they don't have a social security number and cannot apply for one, they can apply for taxpayer identification number. It's called an I-TIN. And what that does, is that allows undocumented persons to be good taxpayers and report their earnings. Do they get money back? They only get money back if they have a withholding, and if they have children who live with them whom they support, then they qualify for some child tax credit. But they do not qualify for earned income tax credit, which is the largest benefit to low income families in the country. And they cannot qualify because they are not documented. That could be up to 4 to 5 thousand dollars. The only thing they can benefit from is the child tax credit. They don't get back any Social Security, Medicaid, or unemployment is paid by the employers. The only they would get back is if they had Federal or State income withheld. Because they are so low income they don't have Federal or State income tax withheld or very little. What would be the average amount of income for a low income person? Here in Santa Maria it's usually about \$20,000 and that's not per person that's like per couple, from 20 to 25 thousand dollars. The IRS allows us to prepare income tax returns, as long

as they make less 49,000.but the majority of our families make less than 25,000. The IRS definition low income for purposes of qualifying for free income services is \$49,000. You can't have a business or rental properties. They can get their money back if they have an ID but most people don't even know that and don't file taxes and so they lose out.

I asked if someone who is more stable and finds out from friends and family that they can file their taxes. Hilda's response;

Right. That you need to go file taxes. And the IRS does not talk to the Immigration or Homeland Security. The IRS is all confidential. I always urge everybody who is a taxpayer has to file a return.

I also asked if she knew of people who don't file taxes because they are afraid of being reported. She replied;

Yes, there are people who believe that if they have their taxes prepared that they will be reported.

Pedro (fictitious name) is a 48 year old male with a high school education from Mexico. Pedro was born in Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico. He has a Center for Employment Training (CET) certificate in construction. He currently works as a butcher in a grocery store. Pedro came in 2000 and has been in the United States for 101/2 years. He has had permanent residency since 2003.

Pedro's opinion on unauthorized immigration;

My opinion is that they should do whatever possible to get a permit. To come here legally so that they will not suffer on the road here. Because when a person doesn't have documents, a person doesn't know if he will arrive or not. A person walks a lot at night, exposing oneself to poisonous animals or insects that will bite you or one can break a leg by stepping in a hole because it's night. You break a leg and those that can walk well will leave him there and he will die. That is what happened to my friend. He broke his foot, they left him there and he died. We came in a group with a guide. We paid him. He was not as a 'coyote' just a guide. Yes, well they are basically the same, the guide and the coyote,

they are the same. Since, they both get paid. And besides, if it just happens that you come through the desert, what can happen is that one can get lost. And when there is no water it is worse because of the heat and one is very thirsty. When one comes, one sees many things on the road. You see human skeletons. When crossing through Rio Bravo (Rio Grande) near Piedras Negras, Coahuila. They say that there are animals that might be alligators. When I couldn't cross, they took me too different locations about five times. I came because of the famous American Dream. I want to help my family move forward, but to help my family more than anything.

Pedro's opinion on the United States obtaining the Southwest from Mexico;

I think that it is okay. They should have taken all of Mexico. (laughter) The system that the United States has here is more orderly, the laws and everything is better. I don't think it was stolen. I think that it helped everyone who was here, everyone who was already living here when the United States bought the land. It was better for them.

When asked if he felt that undocumented immigrants had the right to come to the United

States, Pedro responded;

I think that we all have the right when we come here to work and help make this country prosperous. We can have rights, when we help ourselves and when they help us by giving us work. And I will work.

Pedro was asked if he sent money home and he replied;

Every week, to my parents and everyone; my nephews, the grandchildren and my cousins. They use the money to eat.

Pedro was asked if he spoke English and he stated that;

I speak bout 30-40%. I am going to school to learn. I want to learn English because I want to improve myself. I want to know both languages.

When asked if he would like to be a U.S. citizen, he replied;

Yes, because it would give me the opportunity to have a job with the county and to be able to vote.

He was also asked what his opinion is on amnesty;

My opinion is that those that have the right and the requirements necessary to prove they have been here and collaborating while in the United States. Those people should be given the opportunity to become permanent residents. If they have a long time working here and they have collaborated by paying their taxes, then they should have the right to have their papers fixed.

When asked about the other people in line who are already fixing their papers through the regular route, he replied;

I think that those that are slow but surely getting their paperwork and documents in order, that they would also have their turn. I think there should be more permits to work in this country. That way the people can come here legally, to work for a short time and then be able to return home.

I asked about the "maquiladoras" in Guadalajara and Pedro stated;

Yes, there are factories in Guadalajara and I worked in one called Vidriera Guadalajara. They used to make all the glass bottles for everything, for the sodas, the milk, medical, for everything. They paid just a little above minimum wage. I don't remember how much that was. Later, the whole family moved to Durango where they have lived in the last 15 years. There in Durango there was lots of work but in time they started closing many of the maguiladoras. And then there were not many left. In the year 2000 is when I came to live in the United States. There just wasn't any work most everything had closed. I'm not sure but I think they closed because the economy went down. To this day everything is closed or abandoned. It was an industrial zone with many factories. Factories that made pants (Wranglers or Levi's) and they were American factories. They paid very low wages. Later, I heard people say that they moved to another country. When we lived in Guadalajara, my father worked in a shoe factory for 30 years, he retired from there. It was called Canada and it was a well know company throughout the world. The company had Mexican owners. They would sell their shoes throughout the world. But they also closed due to low sales, too much competition. Also in Durango were many worldwide companies, like Renault and auto making company. That one is gone too. That place was huge. In Durango, they a lot of cotton crops and that's why they had a pant making company there. I used to also work in a prison there and that is still there.

Reymundo is a 55 year old male and who is Pedro's older brother. Reymundo has a third grade education and was born in Leon, Guanajuato, Mexico. Reymundo works as an auto mechanic in various shops and now his own business. Reymundo came to the

United States in 1973 for 1 ½ years, he later returned in 1993 and has lived in the United States for 18 years. He is undocumented.

Reymundo talked about his story and why he came to the United States.

Reymundo's opinion on unauthorized immigration;

My opinion is that we should all get an opportunity because we all come with a goal. Also we should be able to get amnesty because it is the only way that we can have the American dream. It's getting harder nowadays, the situation more difficult now. You see that now there are more raids and that is making more problems.

Reymundo was asked what he thought about the impact of undocumented immigrates and he replied;

My impact is that we are many (laughter). That is my first impact. Not just Mexicans but those from many other countries.

When asked how they would impact the community he replied;

I think that in no way we impact the community. I think that because the work that we do, we do it better than those that are here. What impacts me are the people that are accusing us in that manner. To me, that impact in reality we are not doing.

Reymundo was asked why he came to the U.S. and he replied;

My story, the primary reason for coming here is to help my children and my family, also to make something of myself, to have a business or something like that and to live better than what Mexico has to offer. Where I lived there was no work. Well there is work but they pay very little, you work a lot for very little. Over there it is only to survive that's all the wages provide and that is in the factories. Back then the only requirements they would ask is a junior high school education but now some ask for a high school or college education requirements. Other jobs were in mechanic shops, tire shops or in construction and then sometimes they would not even pay you. Back then you had to sacrifice to become someone, to learn a trade. Many of the companies that were in Mexico were American, those companies were many opportunities to work there but they also had many requirements to get a job. So there are people like me that only had a third grade education.

Reymundo went on to say;

I was born in Leon, Guanajuato but I grew up in the Tijuana, Baja California. I was alone in Tijuana. In Leon, my father worked making shoes and my mother was a housewife. We were always poor. None of my brothers finished school, back in those days it was harder, except my youngest brother (Pedro) did finish school. There were the eight in the family and my brother was the seventh to be born. I was the fourth one born and from me up my brothers did not finish our primary grades. Some after me went to junior high. I remember my worked for Canada Shoe Company in Guadalajara for many years. They close many factories there including Canada.

Reymundo was asked if he spoke English and he stated;

A little. I didn't learn because the majority of the time I have been working. Because here, life is fast. For example, the bills are always due. We have to pay more in bills but we get paid more too. What good does it do to make more money because there are more bills like the rent and others.

When asked if he or other undocumented immigrants have the right to be here he stated:

Well to have the right, the actual right, no. I think that no illegal can have the right. Because we don't have the documents and we don't have an easy way to go back and forth to Mexico.

Reymundo was asked what his opinion is on the Southwest being obtained by the U.S.;

Well, that is more critical. Mexico was all of California and the U.S. stayed with all of the lands. I'm not sure what to say but I do think that it was all purely political. Back in those days the governors did what they wanted with the land. They could sell or just give away the land. They were debt to the U.S. I think they are only ones that know what really happened is the government of that time. We here so many stories, that it was stolen, that it was sold and others say because it was the foreign debt. But what we do know is that part of the United States once belonged to Mexico.

When asked if he would like to be a U.S. citizen, he replied;

Well yes, it is the dream of all of us. What I would like to ask for myself, is that they would give me an opportunity. Right now I have my own business, it's small not big. I pray to God that they give me an opportunity to have my residency so

that I can go back and see my family. To go back and forth to Mexico without a problem.

When asked what his opinion is on amnesty and on being in front of the line, he replied;

Yes, I would like amnesty. I think everything would depend on the system in the immigration offices. I have seen cases where there were people who were fixing their papers were first in line and then later they were last. Because the ones who were last, were in front. So I think that it depends with the people that work within the immigration offices. I think that if they raise the prices to fix papers they should take into consideration, the first process of paperwork costs \$700 dollars. They should charge moderately. I think they should keep in mind if they have money or not.