

Mexico-US Migration

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Highlights

- 1970-2010: Mexico's population doubled; Mexican-born US residents up 15x
- Mexican and US govt policies to reduce unwanted migration have NOT always worked as expected, reducing credibility
- US migration policy options: status quo, enforcement only or first, comprehensive
- Mexico: emigration pressures persist; hard to persuade US to liberalize—what fears?
- US: status quo that “works” for migrants and employers = 2nd best for advocates

Mexico-US Migration

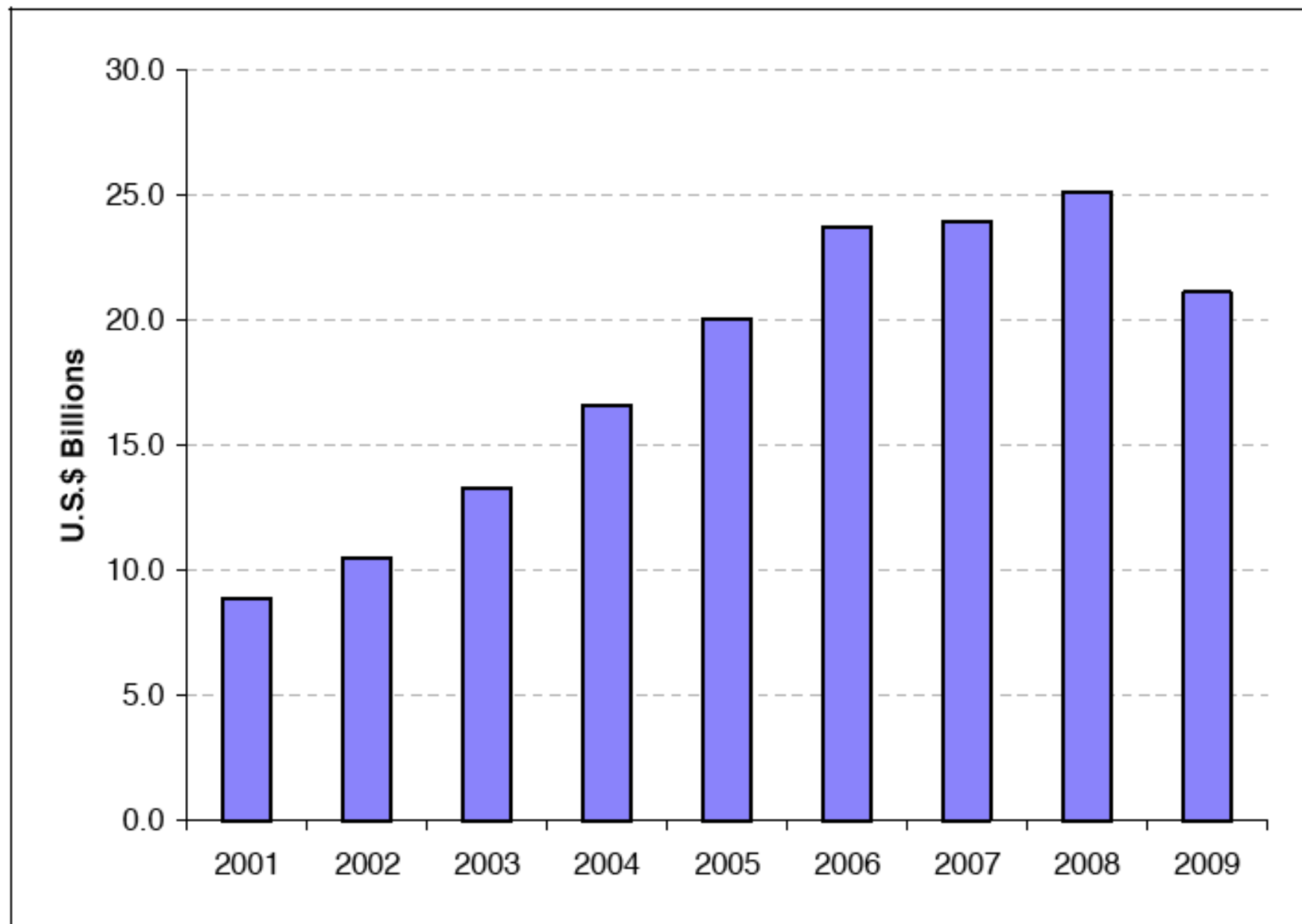
- 1970: Mexican pop = 53 million; less than 800,000 Mexican-born US residents
- 2010: Mexican pop = 112 million; 12 million Mexican-born US residents
- About 10 million Mexican-born US residents arrived after 1980; with US-born children, at least 20 million persons who would otherwise be in Mexico are in the US
- Mexico has about 25 million rural residents; 6-7 million in agriculture (15% of labor force); emigration pressure is likely to persist

Government Ambivalence

- Mexican govt: wants jobs for citizens and remittances, worries about border violence and the unauthorized status of most Mexicans in US
- US govt: unable to say no to farm and nonfarm employers who hire Mexican workers; unable to agree on legalization or larger guest worker programs
- Agreement that Mexican-US migration system is “bad or broken;” but Congress is unable to find a compromise to “fix” the system

Figure 4. Remittances to Mexico: 2001-2009

U.S.\$ Billions



History: US Policy

- 2 periods of Bracero recruitment, 1917-21 and 1942-64
- Mostly benign neglect toward unauthorized Mexicans, punctuated by enforcement drives that had different outcomes:
 - Operation Wetback (1954-55) largely halted unauthorized influx; 465,000 Bracero admissions
 - IRCA 1987-88; legalized 2.7 million foreigners, 85% Mexicans, SAW fraud; Mexicans diffuse throughout US
 - Gatekeeper since 1994: fences and agents on Mexico-US border; more use of smugglers, border deaths, and unauthorized stay in US

Indirect Policies

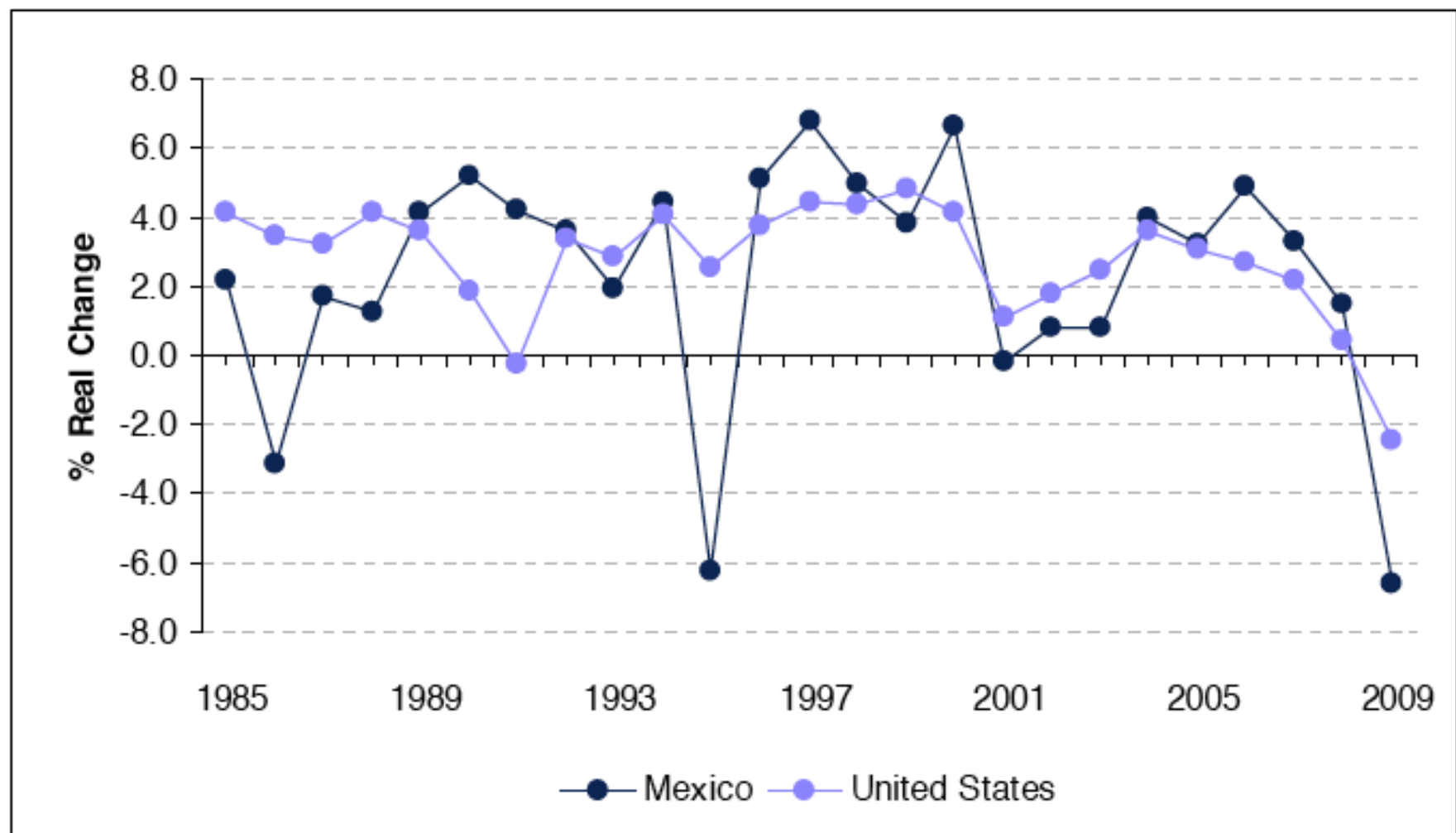
- Mexico: from import-substitution to export-led policy in mid-1980s, plus ejido reforms and NAFTA in early 1990s that speeded up movement out of agriculture
- US: Legalization in 1987-88, + false documents and ineffective workplace enforcement, gave Mexicans geographic and occupational mobility in the US
- Ineffective workplace enforcement:
 - Vanguard: subpoena employee data from 40 meatpacking plants, check against databases, and inform employers of suspect employees
 - I-9 audits: similar “circulate” employees effect

Migration vs. Other Policies

- Solution to unwanted migration: development in Mexico that raises wages and creates formal-sector jobs in urban areas
- Question: how to manage Mexico-US migration until economic gaps narrow?
- Complications: dominant-dependent US-Mexico relationship rooted in history; makes US suggestions and conditionality suspect in Mexico
- Long list of needed Mexican policy changes
 - K-12 schooling reforms, monopolies and oligopolies that raise costs
 - tax and energy sector reforms
 - very hard to make tough policy changes (as in US)

Figure 1. Average Annual Real GDP Growth in Mexico and the United States

1985-2009





3 US Migration Options

- Status quo:
 - More fences and agents and I-9 audits
 - Effects: more smugglers, border deaths, unauthorized workers circulate among employers
- Enforcement-only or enforcement-first:
 - Mandate E-Verify, more secure IDs, tougher penalties for violations
 - Effects: discourage new entrants; uncertain attrition through enforcement
- Comprehensive immigration reform:
 - Enforcement: mandate E-Verify, more secure IDs, tougher penalties
 - Earned legalization: how many hurdles? What end?
 - New guest worker programs: how big? Rules?

Comprehensive immigration reform

- Approved by Senate in 2006; not in 2007: Issues
 - E-Verify—who is responsible for errors in govt databases?
 - Who can earn legalization, and exactly what path to immigrant and citizenship? How many more?
 - Who controls guest worker admission—extend attestation to low-skill workers?
- Interaction effects:
 - If enforcement must be “effective” before legalization begins, what happens to unauthorized who are waiting for legalization?
 - If not all unauthorized qualify, can they become guest workers without leaving US?
 - Can guest workers become immigrants?

Mexico-US Migration

- Mexico: 112 million population in 2010
 - Plus 20 to 25 million Mexican-born in US and their US-born children
 - About 25 million in Mexican rural areas and 15% of workers in ag; reducing ag to 5% means 16 million+ must move, and 4 million must find other jobs
- X-diagram: falling number of new labor force entrants in Mexico (declining birth rate) & rising formal job creation. Goal-manage the downside of the migration hump
- Is there light at the end of the Mexico-US migration hump?
 - Until then, strong enforcement push in Congress
 - S&L governments enact migration enforcement laws

Other Dominant-Dependent

- Germany-Turkey: migration before other economic integration, uncertainty over integration in Germany.
- Turkey: very low LF/ Pop ratio (22 mil/ 74 mil = 30%; Mexico = 40%). Result: Turkey's EU accession negotiations may drag on
- South Africa-SADC neighbors: up to 10% of SA's 50 million pop = migrants; solo guest workers until 1994, tolerate migrants since and urge employers to hire SA Blacks. Result: will SADC implement free movement?
- Thailand-Burma: nationality verification
- India-Bangladesh: largely unauthorized

Conclusions 1

- Low-skilled migration was the major Mexico-US relationship for most of the 20th century
- Mexico changed its economic policies in the 1980s and 1990s in ways that should substitute trade for migration. Managing Mexico-US migration should deal with declining migration
- But Mexico-US migration rose, & there is significant emigration pressure at the extremes of the job ladder (20% of Mexican PhD holders in US)
- History makes it hard for the US to “help” Mexico to make politically tough changes that could speed economic and job growth

Conclusions 2

- Migration status quo is likely in 2011-12:
 - More than 400,000 removals a year, more fences and BP agents, more I-9 audits that circulate workers
 - More S&L government laws, most aimed at stepping up enforcement against unauthorized
- US policy changes after 2013 depend on:
 - Growth and conditions in Mexico—is there light at the end of the migration tunnel that allows US policy makers to believe they are managing the downside of the hump? What US fears of Mexico?
 - Conditions in the US—are US employers requesting Mexican workers at a time of low unemployment?
 - What can Mexico offer? Discourage potential unauthorized on the Mexico-US border?
- Safest prediction: status quo is likely to continue

JUNE 26, 2007

The Big Chill With Russia

Beyond Putin's tough talk

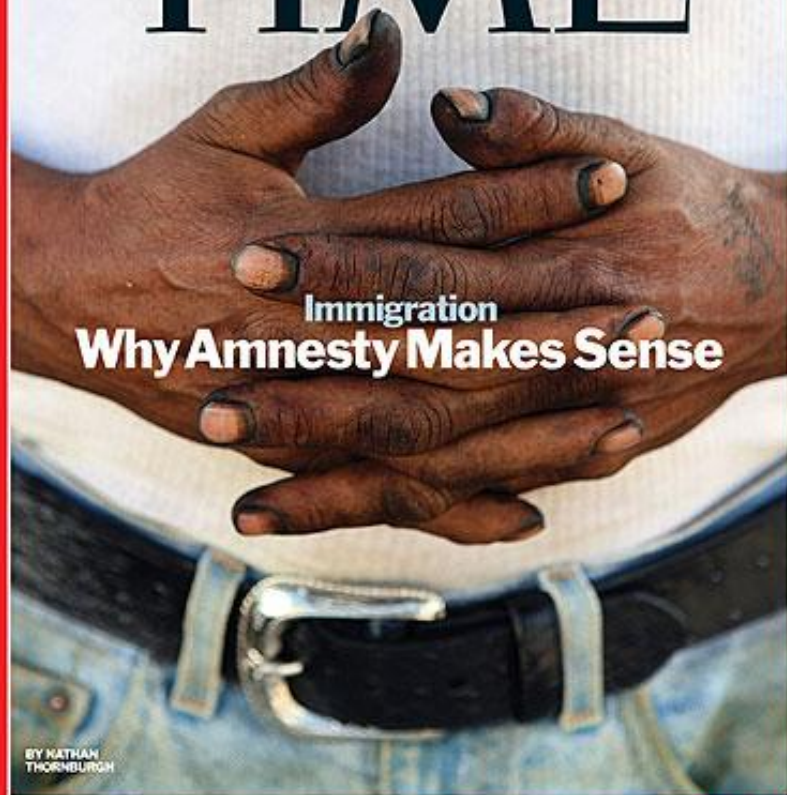


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TIME



Immigration Why Amnesty Makes Sense

BY NATHAN
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JUNE 26, 2007



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A New Crop of State Immigration Laws

In the absence of federal legislation, states have enacted their own immigration laws. In the first three months of 2010 alone, more than 1,100 bills and resolutions related to immigrants and refugees were introduced in state legislatures across the country.

State legislatures that have introduced bills in the first three months of 2010 related to immigration and...



EMPLOYMENT

Bills that address employment verification issues, including immigrant eligibility for unemployment compensation and foreign worker visas.

■ Introduced a bill (29 states)

■ Enacted a law (7 states)

□ No bill* (14 states)



IDS AND DRIVER'S LICENSES

Bills that predominantly deal with lawful immigration status or citizenship requirements for driver's licenses and other state-issued licenses.

■ Introduced a bill (23 states)

■ Enacted a law (9 states)

□ No bill* (18 states)



LAW ENFORCEMENT

Bills addressing bail, parole, no-plea bargains, and other court proceedings with respect to immigrants, including release and deportation requirements.

■ Introduced a bill (29 states)

■ Enacted a law (4 states)

□ No bill* (17 states)

*Montana, Nevada, North Dakota and Texas are not in regular legislative session in 2010; North Carolina's session begins in May.

Source: Immigrant Policy Project, National Conference of State Legislatures

THE NEW YORK TIMES



Battle Lines

Opinions about the recently enacted illegal-immigration law in Arizona could influence elections elsewhere, including California, where the Republican gubernatorial primary has tightened.

Opinions of the Arizona law

OPPOSE ◀ ▶ SUPPORT

All adults



Democrats



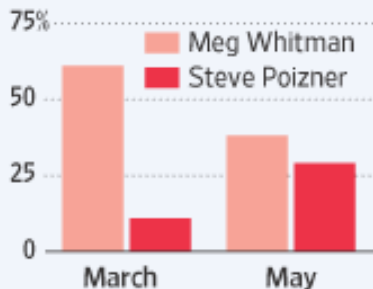
Republicans



Independents



California Republican gubernatorial primary



Sources: WSJ/NBC News telephone poll of 1,000 adults conducted May 6-10; margin of error for full sample: 3.1 pct. pts. (Arizona law); Public Policy Institute of California telephone polls (Republican primary)

