Latinx Migrant Workers in United States Today:

a quantitative report on the Latinx migrant experience and the impact of American immigration policy on their work and wealth

Giavanna Anguiano
University of Washington, Bothell
Summer 2020

Completed in fulfillment of the degree requirements
for Master of Arts in Policy Studies
under the instruction of Daniel Jacoby, Ph.D.

Table of Contents

Abstract

The field of Latinx studies grows every day as more Latinx immigrants arrive in the US. Current knowledge on immigration describes a harrowing path towards citizenship as immigrants disproportionately face discrimination in American society and politics and are funneled into a periphery labor market with poor conditions and little to no opportunity for growth. This study begins with a recount of these stories and goes further to compare and understand the migrant experience for both documented and undocumented workers. The migrant experience is analyzed by looking at significant life variables such as health, relationships, access to state assistance, and work and wealth. Conventional wisdom suggests that undocumented workers are worse off, but this study finds through correlational analyses and multi-logit regressions from data collected by the Mexican Migration Project that documented workers are not always doing much better. This study concludes with a discussion on the findings, study limitations, and potential implications for American immigration policy.

I. Introduction

The United States is a nation built by immigrants. Those that arrived on the Mayflower back in 1602 were fleeing religious persecution in England as their practices did not align with the Church of England and had nowhere to practice freely. After the its founding, the nation relied on immigration to help settle "empty" lands and boost its budding economy. This desire on the side of American enterprises has not changed despite the increasing restrictions on immigration and hostile environment for immigrants. Businesses continue to eagerly accept migrant labor, and as their home countries struggle to provide jobs, they are often left with no choice but to cross the US/Mexico border in pursuit of jobs. Migrants are often overlooked in worker protection plans, leading them to often rely on each other for support. This system has led to a cycle of poor opportunity for Latinx[1] immigrants, and this study seeks to understand what the migrant experience looks like for undocumented[2] and documented workers and if modern American immigration policy such as IRCA (1986), NAFTA (1994), LIFE (2000), and presidential executive action (2014, 2017) imposes a difference in work and wealth for immigrants. Past research has made it evident that Latinx undocumented workers face horrible conditions and difficult experiences in the US on a regular basis, but this study hypothesizes that the effects and experiences of Latinx documented[3] workers are different, implying that with the current trend in American immigration policy, even entering the country the "right" way does not guarantee you the American dream.

[1] This study is opting to use the term "Latinx" rather than "Hispanic" or "Latino" to be inclusive of all peoples by removing the masculine connotation of "Latino" and to dispel the colonization implications that come from the root of the word "Hispanic."

[2] This study is opting to use the term "undocumented" rather than "illegal" as commonly seen in immigrant nomenclature. While all these words often have negative connotations, undocumented has been reclaimed by immigrant youth in recent years.

[3] For the sake of analysis, this study has determined anyone with some sort of legal status, i.e. DACA, visa, etc. is documented. A further breakdown of this group can be found in Table 1.

A. History of Immigration Policy

In early American history, there was little legal regulation of immigrants, though there were strong opinions from both ends of the political spectrum on the status of immigration in the United States. Certain states, particularly those in the Southern separatist movement leading up to and following the Civil War, began to pass immigration legislation of their own and bar immigrants from entering their state borders (Camarota, 2014). The states' decisions to do this were questioned by the federal government, arguing that this should be under national jurisdiction rather than state power. In 1876, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled that immigration was a federal responsibility and any legislation on immigration would be decided through Congress and/or the President.

Legislation such as the Chinese Exclusion Act and the 1891 Immigration Act served as the first major pieces of immigration law, and the 1891 law led to the creation of the Office of the Superintendent of Immigration, now under the name Bureau of Immigration, within the Department of the Treasury. This federal unit was tasked with all matters regarding immigration and was the first dedicated agency to standardizing immigration operations in the US and enforcing all legislation passed in Congress. The Chinese Exclusion Act, however, is one prominent instance of anti-immigration legislation in Congress as it is the first act to exclude an entire ethnic group of people. Legislation like this was often based around the political climate at the time, and the country was experiencing an influx of immigrants from China due to the rapid urbanization and land expansion that had created an industrial revolution in the US. The rhetoric that jobs were being stolen from American workers began to emerge as Western miners and agriculture workers saw a decline in wages and sought an explanation. Immigrants became the obvious scapegoat. (Office of the Historian). This law became a stepping stone for anti-

immigration legislation and allowed bills like the Immigration Act of 1917 and 1924 to gain momentum in Congress. The former established a literacy test for immigrants above the age of 16, increased the head tax for each individual wishing to enter the country, and created the "Asiatic Barred Zone." Because the Chinese population was already excluded, this 1917 act sought to bar anyone else from the Asiatic zone. This included all countries in Asia except Japan and the Philippines. These two countries were exempt from this rule because 1) the Japanese government had already limited emigration through their 1907 Gentleman's Agreement, and 2) The Philippines was considered a United States colony and thus Filipinos persons were able to travel freely between the two.

In the early 1900s, the "Great Wave" occurred in the United States and brought almost 24 million immigrants into the American population. In response, the federal government drafted the Immigration Act of 1924 (with the Asiatic Barred Zone Act still in place) that issued quotas to the world's countries, meaning that only a small percentage of immigrants from various countries authorization into the United States. This legislation favored immigration from Northern Europe in hopes of preserving the ethnic and religious identity in the United States, thus completely excluding those arriving from Eastern and Southern Europe and Asia (Department of State). US Border Patrol agents were first hired at this time and deployed to secure the Northern border and attempt to prevent illegal immigration. This patrol was not yet its own agency and was an on-the-ground extension of the Bureau of Immigration. Just one year later, the areas of interest expanded to include the Gulf of Mexico and the Florida coast line. The Border Patrol then divided its supervision to two directors, one to manage the Canadian border and the other to manage the Mexican border, in 1932. Come 1933, the Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) was established, first under the Department of Labor and second

under the Department of Justice, and was identified as its own agency with its own responsibilities and duties to eliminate unauthorized immigrants.

As the United States moved through World War I , the Great Depression, and World War II very little legislative new action was undertaken to reform the immigration system. Representative Emanuel Celler (D-NY) critiqued the isolationists in Congress as well as President Franklin Delano Roosevelt for not relaxing immigration policy or failing to address the refugee problem as more people fled their war-torn countries(Jewish Virtual Library). After World War II, with the national-origins system in place and active, the United States saw a decline in immigration and decided to restructure its immigration legislation under the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 that created just one singular text dictating all immigration prevention and allowance decisions throughout the years. The Act attempted to dampen racist aspects of earlier legislation, i.e. the Chinese Exclusion Act, by creating pathways and opportunities for Asiatic immigration.

Even though it did away with the Asiatic Barred Zone, the national-origins system that was kept in place still discriminated those coming from Asia and determined their quotas based on race rather than nationality, leading to fewer opportunities for Asian peoples from a variety of countries. President Harry Truman (1945-1953) expressed concern over this legislation because of its ongoing discriminatory nature and in turn issued an executive veto. However, Congress remained in support of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 and overturned the executive veto to dismantle it. Still displeased with the legislation proposed by his peers, Rep. Celler, along with Senator Phillip Hart (D-MI), introduced the Immigration Act of 1965 (Hart-Celler Act) that abolished the national-origins system completely and instead established a preference system designed to attract skilled workers and families. This allowed the ethnic and

geographic make-up of immigrants in the United States to shift and diversify as more people from Asia and Africa were granted entry into the country.

Twenty years later, the United States began to see more immigration legislation in Congress. By 1980, Congress had established a policy for refugees, and the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA) was passed under President Ronald Reagan (1981-1989). The IRCA focused on amnesty and enforcement; If a person had been residing in the United States since 1982 or had completed 90 days of agricultural work between 1985 and 1986, they were granted amnesty and could continue to reside in the country without fear of deportation. This act was the first and most comprehensive immigration reform in Congress, and it created a clear pathway to legalization and citizenship that affected nearly 3 million people (Enchautegui, 2014; González-Baker, 1997). In continuation of this effort to expand immigration policy, the 1990 Immigration Act was introduced and increased the immigration quota to 700,000, increased visas by 40%, and established a lottery system to encourage emigration from "underrepresented" countries (Center for Immigration Studies). Although more restrictive policies emerged later on, the IRCA and these other open-immigration bills advanced a mission towards legalization that sparked pro-immigrant movements in the country that we can still see today (González-Baker, 1997).

Come 1996, Congress introduced and passed the Illegal Immigrant Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) under President Bill Clinton (1993-2001). The Act's goal was to "crack down on illegal immigration at the border, in the workplace, and in the criminal justice system without punishing those living in the United States legally" (Kerwin, 2018). In reality, this bill inflicted a lot of harm on both non-citizens and citizens. The IIRIRA removed due process from removal cases, threating those that had entered legally with

deportation. Under this bill, the 287(g) program was also created allowing state and local law enforcement officers to be deputized and perform the duties of federal immigration officers (American Immigration Council). This bill further exasperated the consequences of NAFTA that resulted in the loss of American jobs as production moved to Mexico and dislocated millions of Mexican workers (Faux, 2013). The Legal Immigration Family Equity Act (LIFE) introduced in 2000 was an attempt to address the roadblocks created by the IIRIRA that negatively impacted families and workers entering the United States. LIFE granted amnesty to those awaiting green cards through marriage, employment, etc. and removed some of the extraneous waiting periods. During the time of the LIFE act, millions of people remained in other countries waiting for their chance at legal entry.

On September 11th, 2001, the United States was attacked by twenty foreign-born terrorists that caused 2,974 civilian deaths. Of those twenty terrorists, four had entered the country with visas but had violated the terms of entry and thereby became unauthorized immigrants. This information and the attack itself greatly impacted the public opinion towards immigration and who was allowed into the US, exposing a policy window for security and immigration reform.

A multitude of security-related bills and restricted immigration laws were introduced, and the INS was divested to three distinct agencies to further enforce these restrictions: Customs and Border Protection (CBP), U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). In a legislative attempt to reorganize and establish protections in a post-9/11 country these agencies fell under the Department of Homeland Security (U.S. Customs & Border Patrol).

In December of 2005, the United States House of Representatives passed the Border Protection, Anti-terrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act that focused on enforcement at the border as well as in the interior of the country. Around the same time, the United States Senate introduced the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act (CIRA), a bill that would have significantly increased the pathways towards legal immigration (Center for Immigration Studies). However, both bills failed after leaving their respective bodies. The Senate bill was re-introduced in 2007 under a bipartisan effort known as the Gang of Eight, but because of the ongoing tensions within the American public around immigration, the Senate bill did not pass yet again. This was the last attempt at immigration reform in Congress until 2013 when Senate Bill 744 was introduced by a bipartisan group of senators. That bill ultimately failed, and the only changes to immigration policy in the US since have come from executive actions by former President Barack Obama in 2014 and current President Donald Trump in 2017.

Despite the United States remaining a hot spot for immigration and continuously seeing a rise in the immigrant population, both documented and undocumented, the nation often fails to act and create sustainable immigration policy, furthering the displacement and discrimination against new entrants in American society. The Latinx population is no stranger to this phenomenon, and their situation has only been exasperated by modern anti-immigrant rhetoric and exposed that the US has repeatedly failed to pass comprehensive and progressive immigration reform Their migrant experience has been heavily impacted by the relationship between two nations bordering each other and the wealth disparities between them. In 2017, 25% (11.2 million) immigrants that arrived in the United States were from Mexico, and this group regularly has the largest number of unauthorized people entering the US (Radford, 2019). American businesses, especially the agricultural and manufacturing industries, rely on

immigrants for their cheap, accessible, and temporary labor, and the supply of labor never diminishes as the US, Mexico, and parts of Latin America continue to experience economic difficulties and immigrants see the opportunity to seize jobs that American workers won't (Sanmiguel-Valderrame, 2013).

Research shows that the burden of increased immigration scrutiny and border militarization impacts migrant day laborers from Mexico and Central America as they attempt to navigate these precarious situations and adjust their livelihoods in an anti-immigrant state. These migrants are generally the breadwinners for their family, and they and their loved ones are impacted most by harsh immigration policies. We saw this in its extreme during the Bush administration as racial profiling and patrolling increased in minority communities. Immigrants have found themselves targeted during daily tasks such as driving. Once apprehended, they faced jail time and/or deportation, often leaving children behind to go into the foster care system. Despite these increasing threats, people still cross because they weigh the economic benefits more heavily than the risk of deportation and are often in need of a better life. Understanding the history of American immigration policy is necessary to understand that today's immigrants are living in an outdated system that has failed to acknowledge the situations in the United States and their home countries, leaving this community in limbo.

II. Review of Literature

The 1980s became known as the Hispanic Decade because of the Latinx community's growing appearance in American culture, and this trend continued into the 1990s, prompting greater adoption of the Latinx community in arts and academia. Since then, scholars have worked to develop the discipline of Latinx studies in order to "understand and interpret the

Hispanic reality" (Melendez, Rodriguez, and Figueroa, 1991, p.1) where the "dominant theme has been the immigrant experience" (p. 2). The literature reviewed here covers the following topics: migrant experience, Latinx labor and the market, assimilation into American economy and society, and the impacts of American immigration policy. This will serve as a foundation for this study that seeks to further examine the migrant experience for documented and undocumented workers and analyze how modern American immigration policy like IRCA, NAFTA, LIFE, and presidential executive actions in 2014 and 2017 impact the work and wealth of Mexican immigrants. As many studies have previously done, this research will concur with the fact that Mexican mass labor migration needs to be understood through an intersectional lens that thoroughly considers their experience in the contexts of economic, political, and social structures.

A. Migrant Experience

Though Latinx immigrants were searching for the American dream just like others, studies find that though there are some "obvious similarities," the migratory and assimilation paths are greatly different and the socioeconomic decline that this community faced in the 1980s prompted a greater distinction between the immigrant experience and the Latinx experience (p. 3). Since then, policymakers, academics, and community organizations have sought to understand why the Latinx community has met such adversity in its integration into American labor markets and culture.

Unlike their European counterparts, Mexicans, the largest group within the Latinx community in the United States, first arrived due to military conquests and Southwest annexation in the 1840s. The instability in Mexico and the growing economic boom in the United States

prompted more migration as American industries sought Mexican labor for its accessibility and cheap costs. American business has always been able to exploit the immigrant population and apply pressure to domestic workers, prompting a stronger identity separation of the working class and restrictive immigration policies (p. 3). Come World War II, the experience for immigrants significantly changed, and Mexican immigrants began to face greater restrictions, leaving their status unresolved and undocumented. Despite these restrictions, a 2013 Latino Studies article by Olga Sanmiguel-Valderrama finds that no matter how extreme and militarized the border is, people will still cross the border to find work as they value the opportunity of a better livelihood higher than the risk of being deported. The securitization and deportation imposed by the American government creates undue burden for immigrant manual laborers from Mexico that rely on a cross-border lifestyle and often find themselves trapped between two worlds and stuck in an exploitative cycle of labor[4].

In contrast, other groups in the Latinx community, such as Cubans and Central Americans, face a very different reality when migrating to the United States. Because of the political unrest in Cuba, instability in Central America, and US involvement, these communities were able to establish residencies in various parts of the country, like Miami, Florida. These communities received government aid due to the United States' geopolitical expansion into their home countries. With these varying origin stories and incorporations into American life, we can begin to see the "impact of the United States' territorial expansion, its sphere of political influence, and American economic interdependencies" that European immigrants had not experienced themselves. The economic conditions that existed in the country during the Europeans' arrivals was that of growth and change; these immigrants greatly contributed to the

[4] This cycle is further discussed in B. Latinx Labor and the Market.

Industrial Revolution and forged the United States' path towards modernization. Latinx immigrants, like other immigrants that were forced into servitude or sweatshops, were exploited by American enterprises for their cheap labor, leaving this community to only see job opportunities for low-skilled labor and no chance to advance their labor outcomes. But, the Latinx community saw a new wave of enforcement where employers could take advantage of their undocumented and vulnerable status.

The barriers in the United States' political arena, public schools, labor market, etc. further expose these differences in experience, shifting away from the standard immigrant model to one that is more cognizant of the factors inhibiting the Latinx population. Melendez et al. identified some of these changes in the 1980s when the Latinx community was simultaneously gaining and losing prominence in American life. By examining the migrant experience through this intersectional lens, researchers such as Ibarra et al. can begin to imagine a future where this community and other marginalized groups can thrive in an anti-racist and anti-capitalist[5] reality. Ibarra et al. concur that there is much to be done in Latinx studies and the American body politic, and the current era of President Donald Trump has placed great impediments on this progress as "the Latinx working classes (feel) the sting of inequality, austerity, and grave uncertainty in these perilous times" (Ibarra, 2018, p. 178). Studies continue to better the impact of race and perception on the livelihood of Latinx immigrants.

A 2013 dissertation by Albert Ponce, now an Assistant Professor of Political Science at Diablo Valley College, dives into the racial violence faced by day laborers and documents physical attacks against this community. In response, Mexican day laborers have rallied together to establish the National Day Laborer Organizing Network, showing the resistance and resilience

[5] Ibarra et al. describes this reality in further detail but implies that capitalism and its nature to divide and conquer has caused greater worker alienization and help channel immigrants into the periphery labor market.

of this community in the face of harmful immigration policies and violence at the hands of American citizens, border patrol agents, and police officers. Ponce himself has become a target of hate through his teaching of race and politics and the migrant experience (NPR, 2018). Even though the violence observed by Ponce has led to the formation of alliances and bolstering immigrant rights organizations, the other literature suggests that these experiences are harmful to the laborers and impact their capacity and ability to function efficiently in the United States' labor market.

B. Latinx Labor and the Market

The demand for labor in the agricultural sector had declined with the increased industrialization and mechanization in the start of the 20th century, shifting employer interest to manufacturing jobs that were often available in urban centers. With their change in citizenship in 1917, Puerto Ricans became the primary group to achieve access to these jobs but faced great displacement like other Latinx immigrants as make-up of the American economy began to evolve in the 1970s. Though race, gender, and household composition are part of the things that make this community so diverse, these have also been shown to impact their local labor market conditions and can contribute to wage discrimination and differences in labor force participation rates (Melendez, 1991, p. 6) While labor force participation for Latinx men was about 5% higher than non-Latinx men, their share of earnings dramatically declined from 88.5% in 1979 to 57.5% in 1987 (p. 12-14).

Language, nationality, skin color, and other characteristics "may serve as screening devices for employers," prompting barriers to the labor force in some sectors and restricting Latinx immigrants to others. Melendez explores how these "immigrant characteristics" play out

amongst different groups within the Latinx population and finds that Puerto Ricans are able to work in white-collar positions while Mexican workers are limited to agricultural and manufacturing jobs. This is evidence that employers are relying on racial profiling for hiring, and Melendez reaffirms that discrimination accounts for one-third of wage gap here and is negatively impacting Latinx workers compared to non-Latinx workers.

We now move into a discussion on the dual labor market theory. This theory describes two distinct sectors – the core and the periphery; The core sector is larger and offers greater mobility and advancement as well as higher earnings for its workers while the peripheral is often smaller and offers the opposite. The relationship between the Latinx population and this economic model is complicated as researchers come into conflict with each other; some say that certain groups are more affected than others, i.e. Mexicans and that being in the core sector was not as impactful on earnings as previously thought. Other studies contradict this by showing that Latinx immigrants employed in the periphery earn 50% less than American-born workers because of their position in the secondary market. This implies that there is a significant difference between the two sectors and reaffirms contemporary theory that Latinx workers are indeed concentrated to low skill and low wage work in the periphery. Melendez continues to suppose that in this market scheme with their labor market location, the restriction to low skilled work and their ethnic traits are the true determinants behind the wage gap between immigrant and non-immigrant workers.

According to Torres et al. (1991), the dual labor market that Melendez referenced was theorized by Doeringer & Piore in 1971, and other economists worked on the model as a way to understand the issues faced by non-White workers in the labor force. Because of their reception to the country and dismal work experience prior to entry, Latinx workers found themselves in

this secondary (periphery) sphere where they were unable to advance beyond these dead-end jobs. This became identified as a cycle as businesses that operated here were not incentivized to train or educate their workforce because the workforce had no means to learn more and earn a higher wage. Torres et al. expanded this theory to one of class, citing that class conflict also contributes to individual income, unionization, unemployment, and social welfare. Breaking down "worker solidarity" was a key tactic of racist labor practices designed to exploit and trap workers (p. 276). This continues into capitalist theory as capitalism often tries to "divide and conquer" to earn the highest profit, but in reality, this division just allows for greater worker exploitation.

Jorge Durand, Douglas S. Massey, and Karen Pren affirm the role of Latinx immigrants in the periphery in their 2016 study that explores the labor landscape of undocumented and documented workers using data collected from their ethnosurvey, the Mexican Migration Project. They find that undocumented immigrants are disproportionally channeled into the periphery labor market and become entrapped in the cycle described above. Durand et al. also find that Mexican immigrants, regardless of legal status, saw a decline in their real wages between 1970 and 2010. The study hypothesizes that this is due to the crackdown in the hiring of undocumented workers, leaving businesses without employees and workers without jobs. The risk and scarcity here failed to raise wages as employers refused to pay more when they had been paying less and employees were forced to compete for work and offer their labor at lower costs.

Because the labor market that immigrants operate in are so unregulated, businesses are often able to withdraw any economic advances made on behalf of migrant workers and force them to return to "despotic" working conditions (Ness, 2013, p. 164). Even though labor laws are intended to protect all workers, those that are undocumented do not ask for enforcement due to

fear of deportation. Despite this, the supply and demand for this cheap and indispensable labor never folded, keeping workers in the cycle discussed by Torres et al (1991). Because of oversight and a poorly regulated labor market, businesses were able to maintain a capital's hegemony, aiding the cycle of low skill and low wage work with no room for advancements. As workers attempt to unite themselves, enterprises adjust to their methods while unions remain the same, leaving many workers without support in the "workplace democracy" (Ibarra, 2018, p. 53).

C. Assimilation into the American Economy and Society

The state of the country post-9/11 was hostile and painful for everyone and this pain was seen by the whole world, but instead of bonding together amidst this terrible attack, nationalism and an extreme "us versus them" mindset was adopted, and immigrants residing in this country bore the brunt of undue backlash from the government and American public. Immigrants impacted by this event and loss of business found that they were unable to afford their living situations and could no longer send remittances back home to family. Coupled with accusations and violent behavior from the American people, many were forced out to their home countries. The unstable economy prior to 9/11 was already a concern for many workers, and this country saw 226,100 jobs lost in New York City alone after the attack. Those that did not have the means to return to their birth country were lost in the streets. Because so many immigrants were desperate for work, "businesses seized…(the) opportunity to reverse the legal and wage gains of immigrant workers by threatening to turn them over to immigration authorities" (Ness, 2013, p. 170). Any appeals to the U.S. government made by these workers were often met with silence and apathy despite their importance to the American economy.

The Latinx voting population has long been considered a "sleeping giant," and many politicians from both political parties have tried to rally this group with empty promises (Ibarra, 2017, p. 5). This rhetoric distorts the experiences of the very diverse Latinx population in the United States and fails to consider all of the factors that contribute to their lifestyles. As previously discussed, different groups within the Latinx community experience different realities as Puerto Ricans find work in white-collar jobs than their Mexican counterparts. In contrast, there is a never a push to round up the "white vote," forcing greater assumptions and "presumed behavior" onto Latinx people (p. 7). Without the extended support of unions, migrant workers had to protest restrictive policies themselves, as they did during the introduction of a particular harmful policy by a Republican congressman in 2006. Those that joined the protest faced detention and deportation, though many migrants reported that they valued the opportunity to be politicized and the chance to have an opinion in American politics.

However, because of the rise in unauthorized immigration in recent decades, we have seen new perceptions emerge for Mexican-Americans. A 2007 study by Tomás R. Jiménez explores these perceptions through interviews and observations of later-generation Mexican Americans. While this group is ambivalent towards migration itself, the increased anti-immigrant rhetoric and restrictive policies have made them fearful of discrimination and "status degradation for all people of Mexican descent" and has thus increased the costs of migration and the assimilation experience for Mexican migrants (p. 599). There is an imminent social concern of the United States' increased belief that immigrants are "taking" scarce economic resources, i.e. jobs, from Americans that are already struggling and thus "deserving" of said jobs (Obinna, 2017). Research has shown that this is a false narrative, and even past administrations like the Bush administration have identified that immigrants are not stealing jobs. Rather, we can begin

to see a shift in American workers. A 2018 study by Laura-Anne Minkoff-Zern examines this in agrarian work as white farmers in the United States "retire en masse" and Latinx farmworkers are able to acquire farm ownership. This shift has forced these workers and researchers such as Minkoff-Zern to examine "the struggle and relationship to land and labor in a country where their race and citizenship status have relegated them to the working poor" (p. 389). Immigrants have attempted to organize together through informal unions with the goal of protecting their jobs in these already precarious industries like agricultural to move beyond the working poor class they have been boxed into. Without formal support of established unions and the American government and public, business enterprises have been able to thwart those efforts and have continued to force immigrants into these poor working conditions with little room for improvement (Ness, 2005, p. 163).

D. Impacts of American Policy

The push for "full employment and increased affirmative action" is still central to the immigrant debate today and "should be two inseparable demands of a progressive program for economic democracy and (Latinx) equality in the post-Reagan era" (Gonzales, 2006, p. 283). Mexican labor continues to grow and show that it is essential to the "core of the largest capitalist enterprises in the world" (p. 141). The U.S. government tried to manage migrations and implemented various H2-A programs. There was a clear economic bond between the U.S. market and these workers, and U.S. President George W. Bush and Mexico President Vicente Fox tried to arrange ways to ensure the security of these workers. In the wake of 9/11, Bush tried to make a path for undocumented immigrants through a guest worker program that acted similarly to the Bracero program, prompting widespread disagreement throughout Congress and creating a

legislative standstill. To many researchers like Gonzales, this guest worker program only served one purpose: to keep migrant workers entrenched in a labor force with little to no independence. Even though the U.S used this labor and relied on it so heavily, they did not provide any fail safes for these workers, leaving them to face unemployment and "dire poverty" (p. 143).

In 1929, José M. Davila made a proposal to the economic safety of migrant workers through "public and private policies that ensured year-round employment" and fail-safes such as a compulsory savings plans with deductions made from their payroll. These ideas amongst other proposals inspired the Bush proposal introduced many years later. This proposal implemented savings and remittances as well as a push to secure jobs for the millions of undocumented workers already residing in the US, giving them a chance at legal residency and an opportunity to secure the Southern border. The reception of this plan was the opposite of lively as politicians, community organizers, and Mexican workers themselves questioned the motives and efficacy of Bush's proposal. The plan ultimately served as nothing more than an election stunt and did not accomplish more beyond that. Still, the Bush administration continued to emphasize the necessity of a guest worker program to protect and promote jobs that "Americans won't take" (p. 167).

Policies like NAFTA that were introduced in the same areas as the IRCA and Operation Gatekeeper, an initiative to secure the Southern border, opened the American and Mexican economics to capital but excluded human beings who relied on U.S. jobs due to situations in their home countries. NAFTA impacted the wages and benefits workers could receive and did not help Mexico reap its benefits when compared to other countries as they only saw a growth of 0.76% from 1994 to 2013 (Ibarra, 2017, p. 30). This policy greatly affected the agricultural sector, the largest employer of Latinx migrant labor in the United States, and harmed Mexico's

ability to produce its own food and resources for its people as the country relied exclusively on imports that were costly to citizens. immigrants lucky enough to gain status under policies like the IRCA no longer had to face daily threats of deportation when completing basic tasks. Those who immigrated in the NAFTA era dealt with new challenges as many that migrated to the U.S. would have never previously experienced.

Because NAFTA so greatly destroyed the resources available to Mexican citizens and destabilized the Mexican economy, workers and their families were "displaced and forced to see employment in the United States" (p. 70). Families were separated and others had to journey between Mexico and the U.S., and children over the age of 12 were able to work alongside their parents in the agricultural sector, exacerbating the conditions that contribute to this labor trap such as lack of education. With restrictive immigration policies, undocumented immigrants not only face incarceration and deportation but are also subjected to complete forbearance of their parental rights, leaving children in the hands of the United States welfare system (Sanmiguel-Valderrame, 2013). Sanmiguel-Valderrame suggests that this is a modern reemergence of the racist practice of residential boarding schools that separated children from their aboriginal communities enforced by the US government. Three stories of immigrants are recounted, and their experience of being "caught" and deported was solely based on racial profiling tactics as one was subjected to a "random" traffic stop in his rural town and another was accused of sex work. In these cases, those that were deported were the sole breadwinners for their families, leaving their children with no support and a gap in the US labor and policy system as "Mexican citizens have historically met the demand in the US for cheap, accessible, and temporary manual labor" and have not been supported by the law (p. 83).

III. Methodology

This study seeks to examine the experiences of undocumented and documented workers in the United States and if American immigration policy impacts their work and wealth. Knowing this information is critical to understanding the life of an immigrant and can serve as the foundation for progressive immigration reform that is both ethical and sustainable. As the United States continues to see this community grow and enter American life, it is necessary to examine their situations and determine if further support is needed to ensure that they can continue to contribute to the American economy. This challenges current policy as it advocates for the acceptance and inclusion of a villainized community, scapegoated for the US's economic failures for centuries. Yet, many researchers and activists alike have documented their value to this country, and this study hopes to join those ranks with its analysis of the impact of modern American immigration policy on the migrant experience using the Mexican Migration Project (MMP) dataset to compare worker experiences in four subcategories: Health, Relationships, Benefits, and Work & Wealth.

In the Health category, the following variables were examined: health at time of survey, if respondent experienced emotional or psychiatric problems, health prior to US, and health after US. Respondents could only answer Yes or No to having experienced emotional or psychiatric problems. All other variables had the following response categories: 1 (Poor Health), 2 (Regular Health), 3 (Good Health), or 4 (Excellent Health). Any unknown or No Answer responses were coded as missing values[6]. These variables have been considered to be the best indicators of

[6] Because some survey questions were asked in later years and not all respondents answered all questions, this study has chosen to exclude those as missing values to get the best view of the data. This may impact some results and should be further investigated if more information becomes available.

migrant health and they travel to and from the US and Mexico and provides a general look at the health of migrants throughout the survey's lifetime (1982 to 2018).

In the Relationships category, the goal was to determine if there was a relationship with other races and if the respondent had participated in any social activities. The following variables of interest: contact with community members, participation in social clubs, types of relationships with Chicanos, Black people, Asian people, White people, and other Latinx people. The first two variables only accepted Yes or No responses. The other variables had the following response categories: 0 (No Relationship), 1 (Workplace Only), 2 (Friendship), 3 (Very Close), 4 (Other). MMP did not define what "Other" meant. We explore these variables to see if undocumented workers have better or worse relationships and serves as a test of assimilation into their respective communities and American society as immigrants.

In the State Benefits category, the following variables were examined: If children were enrolled in public school(s), if unemployment benefits were received, if food stamps were utilized, if any welfare was received, if Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) was received, if Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) benefits were received, if Supplemental Security Income (SSI) was received, and if any general government assistance was received. All responses are either Yes or No, any unknown responses were coded as missing. These study variables help us determine if immigrants are receiving these benefits and if documented workers have a greater chance of receiving these benefits than undocumented workers.

In the Work & Wealth category, the following variables were examined: hourly wage in US dollars, hours worked in a week, months worked in a year, and average monthly savings. This category seeks to examine how respondents work and earn their money and what they are doing with their income, i.e. putting any leftover funds into a savings account. All variables in this

category are on a ratio scale. Examining these study variables is done to better understand how one's legal status impacts their wealth and if American immigration policy has any impact.

All of the variables used in the study have been deemed integral to the migrant and to the general human experience. One's physical and mental health, ability to form relationships with peers, receive support when needed, and generate sustainable wealth are important to living a healthy and happy life, and this study is interested in examining if the lives of migrants are indeed healthy and happy once they arrive in the United States.

A. Description of Data

The MMP is a collaboration by an interdisciplinary team of researchers and directed by Jorge Durand of the University of Guadalajara (Mexico) and Douglas S. Massey of Princeton University (United States). This project began in 1982 to explore and understand Mexican migration to the US. This data set includes social and economic factors that are an integral part of the migrant story and has allowed researchers to track patterns and processes of immigrants from 1982 to today. The study design of the MMP is rooted in anthropological and sociological research methods, and surveyors have used an ethnosurvey approach to gather qualitative and quantitative data about the migrant experience. Each year, the MMP team surveys border communities in the US and Mexico about their journeys and migratory experiences as well as detailed labor histories about wage earnings and industry. Respondents include those with regular border crossings as well as those that have permanently relocated to the US.

B. Description of Analysis

To begin this analysis, a preliminary test to determine if there is any significant correlation between variables and legal status (see Tables 1 through 6) is conducted. This test is conducted to determine if further analysis is worth studying. Variables that do not show a relationship in a preliminary analysis will likely yield inapplicable results in more advanced analyses. Upon examining the data, we can see that most variables are categorical, so a chi-square test was first implemented to determine any significant relationships (see Table 7). If significant relationships are found, then we can concur that legal status and these study variables are directly related and influence each other.

For variables in Work & Wealth, an independent samples t-test was conducted to determine if there was a mean significant difference between documented and undocumented respondents (see Table 9). This is due to the variable type and the ability to conduct more sophisticated analyses with ratio/interval data. Another independent samples t-test was conducted to examine the difference in work and wealth 5 years before and after American policies such as IRCA (1986), NAFTA (1994), LIFE (2000), and presidential executive actions (2014, 2017).

After conducting a preliminary analysis, a multinomial logistic regression was conducted to examine whether responses to the questions of interest were impacted by the likelihood of being undocumented or not (see Table 8). This analysis will help us understand if there are differences in experience and understand what life may look like for undocumented and documented immigrants. Any results with a p-value less than 0.05 are considered significant in this study.

C. Sample Descriptive Statistics and Data Definitions

Of the 8791 respondents, 74.5% identified as Undocumented and 25.5% identified as Documented. Documented includes those with an H2A visa, in the Bracero Program, with citizenship in the US, holding permanent resident status, holding a Silva letter, or having a temporary visa for work or tourism. No respondents identified themselves as part of the DACA/DAPA programs. Because the majority of respondents identified as Undocumented, all respondents with some form of documentation, even a tourist visa, were considered Documented to ensure that proper weight was given to this group during the analysis.

Table 1: Legal Status

Variable	Mode
Legal Resident	4%
Contract Bracero	12.5%
Contract H2A	1.8%
Temp. Worker	0.9%
Temp. Visitor	6.2%
Citizen	0.1%
Silva Letter	0.01%
Undocumented	74.2%
Refugee/Asylum	0.3%
DACA	0%

4.1% of respondents reported having Poor Health at the time of the survey, 26.3% had Regular Health, 58.7% had Good Health, and 10.9% had Excellent Health. Only 5.6% of respondents reported having emotional or psychiatric problems. Prior to the US, 0.3% experienced Poor Health, 3.7% experienced Regular Health, 70.4% experienced Good Health, and 16.5% experienced Excellent Health. After being in the US and returning to Mexico, 3.1% reported having Poor Health, 10.2% reported having Regular Health, 70.2% reported having Good Health, and 16.5% reported having Excellent Health. This study did not control for age as

most respondents fell between the range of 36 and 50. Future studies should consider this and could control for age when further examining health.

Table 2: Responses to Health Questions

Variable	N	Poor Health	Regular Health	Good Health	Excellent Health
Health at Time of Survey	2105	4.1%	26.3%	58.7%	10.9%
Health Before US	2102	0.3%	3.7%	70.4%	16.5%
Health After US	1677	3.1%	10.2%	70.2%	16.5%

62.8% of the survey population had contact with community members while only 9.7% participated in social organizations.

Table 3: Responses to Community Questions

Variable	N	Yes	No
Community	7513	62.8%	37.2%
Social	8339	9.7%	90.3%

21.9% reported having no relationship with Chicanos, 37.2% reported having a workplace only relationship with Chicanos, 38.2% reported being friends with Chicanos, 2.5% reported being very close to Chicanos, and 0.1% reported having some other type of relationship. 33.1% reported having no relationship with Black people, 23.3% reported having a workplace only relationship with Black people, 42.4% reported being friends with Black people, 1.1% reported being very close to Black people, and 0.01% reported having some other type of relationship. 67.4% reported having no relationship with Asian people, 22.1% reported having a workplace only relationship, 8.3% reported being friends with Asian people, 2% reported being very close to Asian people, and 0.2% reported having some other type of relationship. 12%

reported having no relationship with White people, 49.3% reported having a workplace only relationship, 36.6% reported being friends with White people, 2.1% reported being very close to White people, and 0.9% reported having some other type of relationship. 9.5% reported having no relationship with Latinx people, 39.8% reported having a workplace only relationship with Latinx people, 45.1% reported being friends with Latinx people, 5.5% reported being very close to Latinx people, and 0.1% reported having some other type of relationship.

Table 4: Responses to Relationship Questions

Variable	N	No Relationship	Workplace Only	Friendship	Very Close	Other
Chicano	8147	21.9%	37.2%	38.3%	2.5%	0.1%
Black	8161	33.1%	23.3%	42.4%	1.1%	0.01%
Asian	4337	67.4%	22.1%	8.3%	2%	0.2%
White	8190	12%	49.3%	36.6%	2.1%	0.9%
Latinx	8195	9.5%	39.8%	45.1%	5.5%	0.1%

Most respondents were not accessing the various state benefits described. Of the state benefits explored, a majority of responses was only seen in the WIC subcategory as 69.3% said they were receiving those benefits. Responses to the latter half of these questions dramatically decreased, but no information was provided by the MMP to explain why.

Table 5: Responses to State Benefits Questions

Variable	N	Yes	No
Kids in School	8543	12.2%	87.8%
Unemployment	8450	7.9%	92.1%
Food Stamps	8383	5.3%	94.7%
Welfare	8342	4.8%	95.2%
AFDC	302	14.2%	85.8%
WIC	303	69.3%	30.7%
SSI	298	6.7%	93.3%
General Assist.	298	18.8%	81.2%

The average hourly wage of all respondents was $6.04. The average hours worked in a week was 45.79 hours. The average number of months worked in a year was 8 months. The average monthly savings amount was $113.79.

Table 6: Mean Responses to Work & Wealth Questions

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Hourly Wage (USD)	6196	6.04	5.59
Hours Worked	7443	45.79	14.87
Months Worked	8028	8.36	3.73
Monthly Savings (USD)	6079	113.79	225.89

IV. Analysis Results & Discussion

In the preliminary logistic regression, year of survey and legal status was regressed together. The result showed that as time goes on, the odds of being undocumented decreased (OR=0.965, p=0.0001, β=-0.036). This will serve as the baseline regression for all analyses.

A. Health

The cross-tabulation analysis revealed that there is a significant relationship between respondent's legal status and health at time of survey from 2006 to 2018: $X_2(3, N=2104)=11.668$, p=0.009. There is also a significant relationship between legal status and health prior to the US: $X_2(3, N=1983)=8.185$, p=0.042. The relationship between legal status and health after the US is also significant as $X_2(3, N=1676)=22.321$, p=0.0001. These relationships are important in determining if undocumented or documented workers have the same, worse, or

better health than the other respective party. There is no significant relationship between legal status and having emotional or psychiatric problems.

Table 7: Cross-Tabulation between Legal Status and Health Variables

Variable	df	N	X_2	p-value
Health Now	3	2104	11.668	0.009*
Emotional Problems	1	2101	0.036	0.850
Health before US	3	1983	8.185	0.042*
Health after US	3	1676	22.321	0.0001

*statistically significant at the 0.05 level

In the multinomial logistic regression, the odds ratio of being undocumented over time remained the same. Respondents that reported having regular health at the time of the survey are 2.6 times more likely to be documented (OR=2.691, p=0.0006) than those with poor health. This implies that throughout 2006 and 2018, respondents with regular health were documented while those with poor health were undocumented. Those with regular health after the US are 3.12 times more likely to be undocumented (OR=0.322, p=0.027) than those with poor health after the US. Those that reported having good health after the US are 4.37 times more likely to be undocumented (OR=0.229, p=0.001) than respondents with poor health. All other results were not significant. This implies that undocumented workers saw an improvement in their health condition after their most recent stay in the US, and these seems to contract prior studies that show that undocumented workers are worse off as they often work in poor environments.

From this analysis, it is clear that there is some relationship between legal status and health, but the variables within those are unknown and yet to be explored. Those that are undocumented seem to be experiencing better health after they leave the US and return to Mexico, but we cannot say if that experience is due to healthcare they received while in the US

or in their home country. It is worth exploring other health factors here and further assessing how one's legal status impacts health.

Table 8: Multi-Logit Model Predicting Legal Status for Health Variables

Variable	Odds Ratio	p-value
Health at Time of Survey	----	----
Poor	2.691	0.006
Regular	1.259	0.372
Good	0.958	0.861
Excellent		
Emotional Problems		
Yes	----	----
No	0.816	0.492
Health before US		
Poor	----	----
Regular	4.4089	.
Good	1.861	0.207
Excellent	0.891	0.694
Health after US		
Poor	----	----
Regular	0.322	0.027
Good	0.229	0.001
Excellent	0.607	0.127

B. Relationships

The cross-tabulation analysis revealed multiple significant relationships here. There is a significant relationship between legal status and contact with community members [X_2(1, N=7489)=5.45, p=0.02)], relations with Chicanos [X_2(4, N=8315)=0.024, p=0.0001], relations with Black people [X_2(4, N=8138)=60.116, p=0.0001], relations with Asian people [X_2(4, N=4323)=11.302, p=0.023), relations with White people [X_2(4, N=8167)=58.563, p=0.0001],

and relations with Latinx people [$X_2(4, N=8172)=18.165$, p=0.0001]. There is no significant relationship between legal status and participation in a social club.

Table 9: Cross-Tabulation between Legal Status and Relationship Variables

Variable	df	N	X_2	p-value
Community	1	7489	5.45	0.02*
Social	1	8315	0.024	0.877
Chicano	4	8124	23.317	0.0001*
Black	4	8138	60.116	0.0001*
Asian	4	4323	11.302	0.023*
White	4	8167	58.563	0.0001*
Latinx	4	8172	18.165	0.001*

*statistically significant at the 0.05 level

In the multinomial logistic regression, the odds ratio of being undocumented over time changed slightly but remained significant (OR=0.941, p=0.0001, β=-0.036). Respondents that did not connect with community members are 1.35 times more likely to be undocumented (OR=0.742, p=0.001) than those that did. Respondents that did not connect with social clubs are 1.4 times more likely to be documented (OR=1.415, p=0.01) than those that did. There seems to be greater social isolation occurring here. Perhaps undocumented workers are hesitant to expand their community relations due to their vulnerable status, making them more likely to only interact with those that are also undocumented or those that can be trusted with that information.

Respondents that only had a workplace relationship with Latinx people are less likely to be undocumented (OR=2682304.5, p=0.0001). Those that have friendships with Latinx people are less likely to be undocumented (OR=3072261, p=0.0001). Those that are very close to Latinx people are also less likely to be undocumented (OR=2188718.21, p=0.0001). This would mean that undocumented respondents are not forming relationships with other Latinx people.

However, because of the extremely high odds ratio, these results cannot be accepted as completely valid as there is likely issues within the data, such as not having enough respondents respond to these specific questions in the survey.

Table 10: Multi-Logit Model Predicting Legal Status for Relationship Variables

Variable	Odds Ratio	p-value
Community		
Yes	----	----
No	0.742	0.001
Social		
Yes	----	----
No	1.415	0.01
Chicano		
No Relationship	----	----
Workplace Only	0.184	
Friendship	0.212	
Very Close	0.129	
Other	0.135	
Black		
No Relationship	----	----
Workplace Only	2094726.761	0.0001
Friendship	2391389.126	0.0001
Very Close	2329435.724	0.0001
Other	4811749.804	0.0001
Asian		
No Relationship	----	----
Workplace Only	0.803	0.119
Friendship	0.740	0.108
Very Close	1.057	0.149
Other	0.940	0.127
White		
No Relationship	----	----
Workplace Only	1.912	0.106
Friendship	1.683	0.093
Very Close	2.030	0.111
Other	1.564	0.084
Latinx		

No Relationship	----	----
Workplace Only	3072261.120	2179246.129
Friendship	2682304.496	1938487.321
Very Close	2188718.215	1565238.928
Other	2791718.387	2791718.387

Even though there was a significant relationship in the preliminary cross-tabulation, most of those significant relationships vanished when applying the multinomial logistic regression. This suggests there this is some collinearity between the variables, and having a relationship with one race is likely dependent on having a relationship with another. However, the significance that was shown in the preliminary analysis is interesting and worth exploring. If more respondents had engaged with these questions, the regression analysis may have been more successful and shown greater information about these relationships between undocumented and documented respondents and people of other races.

C. State Benefits

The cross-tabulation analysis revealed that there is a significant relationship between legal status and having children enrolled in public school [$X_2(1, N=8516)=4.994$, $p=0.025$] receiving unemployment benefits [$X_2(1, N=8423)=30.156$, $p=0.0001$], receiving welfare [$X_2(1, N=8316)=4.016$, $p=0.045$], and receiving WIC [$X_2(1, N=302)=3.907$, $p=0.048$]. There is no significant relationship between legal status and receiving food stamps, AFDC, SSI, or any general government assistance. This implies that immigrants, regardless of legal status, are choosing to not request state benefits. Perhaps they are not needed, or perhaps there is a perception that they would be denied these benefits in the first place.

Table 11: Cross-Tabulation between Legal Status and State Benefit Variables

Variable	df	N	X_2	p-value
Kids in School	1	8516	4.994	0.025*
Unemployment	1	8423	30.156	0.0001*
Food Stamps	1	8356	0.128	0.720
Welfare	1	8316	4.016	0.045*
AFDC	1	301	1.599	0.206
WIC	1	302	3.907	0.048*
SSI	1	297	0.833	0.361
General	1	297	0.099	0.753

*statistically significant at the 0.05 level

The multinomial logistic regression revealed that there were no significant relationships, implying that there is strong multicollinearity between these state benefit variables, legal status, and year. The regression of year and legal status was also no longer significant.

Table 12: Multi-Logit Model Predicting Legal Status for State Benefit Variables

Variable	Odds Ratio	p-value
Kids in School		
Yes	----	----
No	0.852	0.679
Unemployment		
Yes	----	----
No	1.291	0.568
Food Stamps		
Yes	----	----
No	0.770	0.498
Welfare		
Yes	----	----
No	0.556	0.399
AFDC		
Yes	----	----
No	2.076	0.114
WIC		
Yes	----	----

No	0.617	0.233
SSI		
Yes	----	----
No	1.573	0.431
General		
Yes	----	----
No	1.026	0.956

Because there was a significant relationship in the cross-tabulation analysis, it would be best to explore these variables more and see how they interact on other levels. Considering the processes of applying for benefits and enrolling children in public school, there is likely some overlap, and this overlap is impacting the regression results. Because the MMP data set did not explore these variables further in the initial data collection process, no further testing can be conducted at this time.

D. Work & Wealth

The independent samples t-test analysis revealed that there is a statistically significant difference in the average hourly wage for immigrant workers (MD=1.59, p=0.0001, SE=0.16239). Undocumented workers are making about $6.44/hour while documented workers are making about $4.85/hour, not controlling for year There is a statistically significant difference in the average number of months worked in a year (MD=1.549, p=0.0001, SE=0.1). Undocumented workers are working about 9 months a year while documented workers are working about 7 months a year. However, this is assuming that there are not equal variances, implying some sort of manipulation in the variable and its response categories. The same condition applies to the average amount of monthly savings (MD=22.45, p=0.0001, SE=6.211)

as undocumented respondents save about $139.65 a month and documented respondents save about $117.20 a month.

Table 13: Independent Samples T-test (Legal Status)

Variable	Mean Difference	p-value	Standard Error
Wage*	-1.59	0.0001	0.16
Hours	0.64	0.105	0.397
Savings*	-22.45	0.0001	6.211

Table 14 reveals further another independent samples t-test that was conducted to look at how American policy impacts work and wealth for immigrants. The work and wealth variables were compared over a period of five years before and after the following policies: IRCA (1986), NAFTA (1994), LIFE (2000), and presidential executive actions (2014, 2017). One limitation is that there is not information for all years of interest as the data ranges from 1982 to 2018, impacting the analysis for IRCA and President Trump's executive action in 2017. We see that there is a statistically significant difference in the average hourly wage for immigrant workers before and after IRCA (MD=-0.949, p=0.0001, SE=0.207). Before IRCA, the average wage was $3.47 an hour. After IRCA, the average wage was $4.42 an hour. While the difference in hours worked and savings were statistically significant, equal variances were not assumed, suggesting that the test is invalid by lacking the opportunity to explore those variances[7]. There is also a statistically significant difference in wages before and after NAFTA as immigrants made $4.91 before and $5.51 after. All other results are either not statistically significant or do not have equal variances.

[7] SPSS, the statistical software used in this analysis, automatically conducts a test for equal variance through the independent samples t-test. More information can be found here: https://libguides.library.kent.edu/SPSS/IndependentTTest#:~:text=Levene's%20Test%20for%20Equality%20of,an%20independent%20samples%20t%20test.

Table 14: Independent Samples T-test

Variable	Mean Difference	p-value	Standard Error
IRCA			
Wage	-0.949	0.0001	0.20
Hours*	-3.042	0.0001	0.86
Savings*	-43.23	0.0001	13.55
NAFTA			
Wage	-0.602	0.0001	0.13
Hours	-0.167	0.726	0.48
Savings*	-31.05	0.0001	7.26
LIFE			
Wage*	-1.26	0.0001	0.18
Hours*	0.45	0.439	0.59
Savings*	13.63	0.125	8.89
Obama			
Wage*	-1.97	0.002	0.63
Hours*	-2.95	0.001	0.881
Savings*	-96.82	0.0001	20.19
Trump			
Wage	-1.62	0.185	1.21
Hours	-2.38	0.107	1.47
Savings	54.48	0.139	36.78

*equal variances not assumed

In the multinomial logistic regression, the odds of being undocumented decreases (OR=0.98, p=0.0001, β=-0.021) as time goes on. As the average hourly wage increases, the odds of being undocumented decreases (OR=0.941, p=0.0001, β=-0.061). Workers here may be under a contracted visa, though we cannot know this for sure without further explanation drawn from the MMP ethnosurvey. As more months are worked in a year, the odds of being undocumented

decreases (OR=0.943, p=0.0001, β=-0.059). These results seem to be contradicting the results in the first independent samples t-test. Further testing and exploration of the survey and data collection should be conducted to understand the differences in tests and the impact of legal status and time on these work and income variables. Perhaps undocumented workers are reporting higher wages because of how they are paid, i.e. under the table and not taxed, compared to documented workers that may be getting formal paychecks with tax deductions from federal and state income taxes, impacting their hourly take-home wage. Or, undocumented workers are seeing greater deportations as American bureaucracy cracks down on the illegality of their situation and employs businesses to not hire undocumented workers.

Table 15: Multi-Logit Model Predicting Legal Status for Work and Wealth Variables

Variable	β	Odds Ratio	p-value
Hourly Wage (USD)	-0.061	0.941	0.0001
Hours Worked	-0.001	0.999	0.710
Months Worked	-0.059	0.943	0.0001
Monthly Savings (USD)	0.000	1.000	0.997

E. Limitations

Although there are obvious relationships occurring between these variables, the MMP did not ask all study questions every year. For example, health was not considered in the original study until 2000, impacting the analysis of the results before and after and why this study has not chosen to explore these variables over time. Time can also serve as inhibition here as year was not controlled for when examining these variables. Respondents growing older and experiencing inflation may impact the results discussed above. As discussed in Chapter IV, there is a lot of room for future studies to explore these areas more with the conduction of another survey.

Another limitation, as previously discussed, is seen in the work & wealth analysis. Because some of the results yielded results only when equal variances are not assumed, we can understand that there is great variability amongst the conditions, i.e. there is a greater variance in wages before Obama's executive action than after. Because the variability is statistically significant in some scenarios, it would be interesting to explore and discover what is causing that variability. It is likely that there is some other factor influencing these things. Using log data may yield more conclusive results as this data would control for the outliers. However, this study did not have the ability to do so and has accepted any and all limitations raised here and beyond.

V. Conclusion

This study has sought to examine the differences in experience between documented and undocumented workers and explore the relationship between modern American immigration policy and the work and wealth of Latinx immigrants. Though not all results are conclusive, this study has found significant relationships between legal status and health, assimilation, state benefits, work, and wealth. Many policy implications can be drawn from these results. Previous studies have shown that immigrants, especially those that are in the United States without some form of legal documentation, find themselves in precarious pitfalls that often worsen their situations more. The results have confirmed these studies as undocumented respondents in the Mexican Migration Project are forming less significant relationships with others and failing to build stronger connections that can benefit them in the workplace. As seen in Ponce's 2013 dissertation, immigrants often have to rely on only each other to advocate for themselves though conditions could be improved with a greater network. On the flip side, undocumented workers were, at times, earning more than documented workers and experiencing better health. These

results are unexpected and very interesting for future research and policy initiatives. If these results can be replicated in further studies and further proven, this would highlight a path towards new knowledge that challenges conventional theories on immigration and their economic mobility in the United States. If documented workers are making less than documented workers and experiencing a less than satisfactory life, then the legalization process is doing this community a disservice. We know that gaining citizenship in this country is a lengthy and costly process that requires years of hard work and dedication, and many live in a state of worry as they await their chance of becoming a citizen. If all of that was for nothing, then why bother in the first place? Unauthorized immigration would continue to increase, and we already see this as American immigration policy, despite its restrictive nature, has not yet reduced the amount of border crossings. Future immigration policy should be considered on an economic and humanitarian basis and include the contributions made by immigrants as they are working and earning here, and, subsequently, contributing to the social, cultural, and economic state of this country. If this country wants to remain a land of freedom and encourage a pursuit to happiness, then policy should be inclusive of immigrants and consider their well-being in order to streamline the citizenship process and ensure a more safe, healthy, and sustainable lifestyle in this country that does not continue a cycle of poverty and danger. Current times confound this possibility even more, but as long academics and activists continue to advocate for this population, they may be able to truly experience the American dream.

References

The 287(g) Program: An Overview. (2020, July 07). Retrieved August 13, 2020, from https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/287g-program-immigration

Camarota, S. A., & Zeigleron, K. (2014, September 24). U.S. Immigrant Population Record 41.3 Million in 2013. Retrieved August 13, 2020, from https://cis.org/US-Immigrant-Population-Record-413-Million-2013

CBP Through the Years. (n.d.). Retrieved August 13, 2020, from https://www.cbp.gov/about/history

Chinese Exclusion Act. (2018, August 24). Retrieved August 13, 2020, from https://www.history.com/topics/immigration/chinese-exclusion-act-1882

Durand, J., Massey, D. S., & Pren, K. A. (2016, July 1). Double Disadvantage: Unauthorized Mexicans in the U.S. Labor Market. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 666*(1), 78-90. doi:10.1177/0002716216643507

Enchautegui, M. (2014, March 1). Legalization Programs and the Integration of Unauthorized Immigrants: A Comparison of S. 744 and IRCA. *Journal on Migration and Human Security, 2*(1), 1-13.

Faux, J. (2013, December 9). NAFTA's Impact on U.S. Workers. Retrieved August 18, 2020, from https://www.epi.org/blog/naftas-impact-workers/

Gonzales-Baker, S. (1997). The ‘Amnesty’ Aftermath: Current Policy Issues Stemming from the Legalization Programs of the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act. *The International Migration Review, 31*(1), 5-27. doi:10.2307/2547255

Gonzalez, G. G. (2016). *Guest Workers or Colonized Labor? Mexican Labor Migration to the United States*. London: Routledge. doi:10.4324/ 9781315093338

Ibarra, A., Carlos, A., & Torres, R. D. (2018). *The Latino Question: Politics, Labouring Classes and the Next Left*. London: Pluto Press. doi:10.1111/wusa.12461

The Immigration Act of 1924 (The Johnson-Reed Act). (n.d.). Retrieved August 13, 2020, from https://history.state.gov/milestones/1921-1936/immigration-act

The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 (The McCarran-Walter Act). (n.d.). Retrieved August 13, 2020, from https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/immigration-act

Jiménez, T. R. (2007, September 1). Weighing the Costs and Benefits of Mexican Immigration: The Mexican-American Perspective. *Social Science Quarterly, 88*(3), 599-618. doi:10.1111/j.1540-6237.2007.00474.x

Kerwin, D. (2018, November 09). From IIRIRA to Trump: Connecting the Dots to the Current US Immigration Policy Crisis. Retrieved August 13, 2020, from https://cmsny.org/publications/jmhs-iirira-to-trump/

Massey, D. S., & Sánchez, M. (2012). *Brokered Boundaries: Creating Immigrant Identity in Anti-immigrant Times*. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation.

Massey, D. S., Durand, J., & Pren, K. A. (2016, July 1). The Precarious Position of Latino Immigrants in the United States. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 666*(1), 91-109. doi:10.1177/0002716216648999

Melendez, E., Rodriguez, C., & Figueroa, J. B. (1991). *Hispanics in the Labor Force*. Springer. doi:10.1007/978-1-4899-0655-7

Minkoff-Zern, L. (2018, February 23). Race, Immigration and the Agrarian Question: Farmworkers Becoming Farmers in the United States. *The Journal of Peasant Studies, 45*(2), 389-408. doi:10.1080/03066150.2017.1293661

Mexican Migration Project. (n.d.). Retrieved August 13, 2020, from https://mmp.opr.princeton.edu/home-en.aspx

Ness, I. (2010). *Immigrants, Unions & the New U.S. Labor Market*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press. doi:10.1177/1078087407309593

Obama, B. (2015, April 15). 2014 Executive Actions on Immigration. Retrieved August 13, 2020, from https://www.uscis.gov/archive/2014-executive-actions-immigration

Obinna, D. N. (2017, August 11). Ethnicity, Reception and the Growth of American Immigration. *Ethnic and Racial Studies, 41*(2), 171-188. doi:10.1080/01419870.2017.1360503

Ponce, A. (2013). War Against Migrants, Racial Violence in the United States: A Critical Ethnography of Mexican and Latino Day Labor. *UCLA Electronic Theses and Dissertations*.

Radford, J. (2019, June 17). Key Findings about U.S. Immigrants. Retrieved August 15, 2020, from https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/06/17/key-findings-about-u-s-immigrants/

Sanmiguel-Valderrama, O. (2013, September 1). Border Enforcement at Family Sites. *Latin American Perspectives, 40*(5), 78-92. doi:10.1177/0094582x13492957

Appendix

Figure 1: Hourly Wage of Immigrant Workers over Time

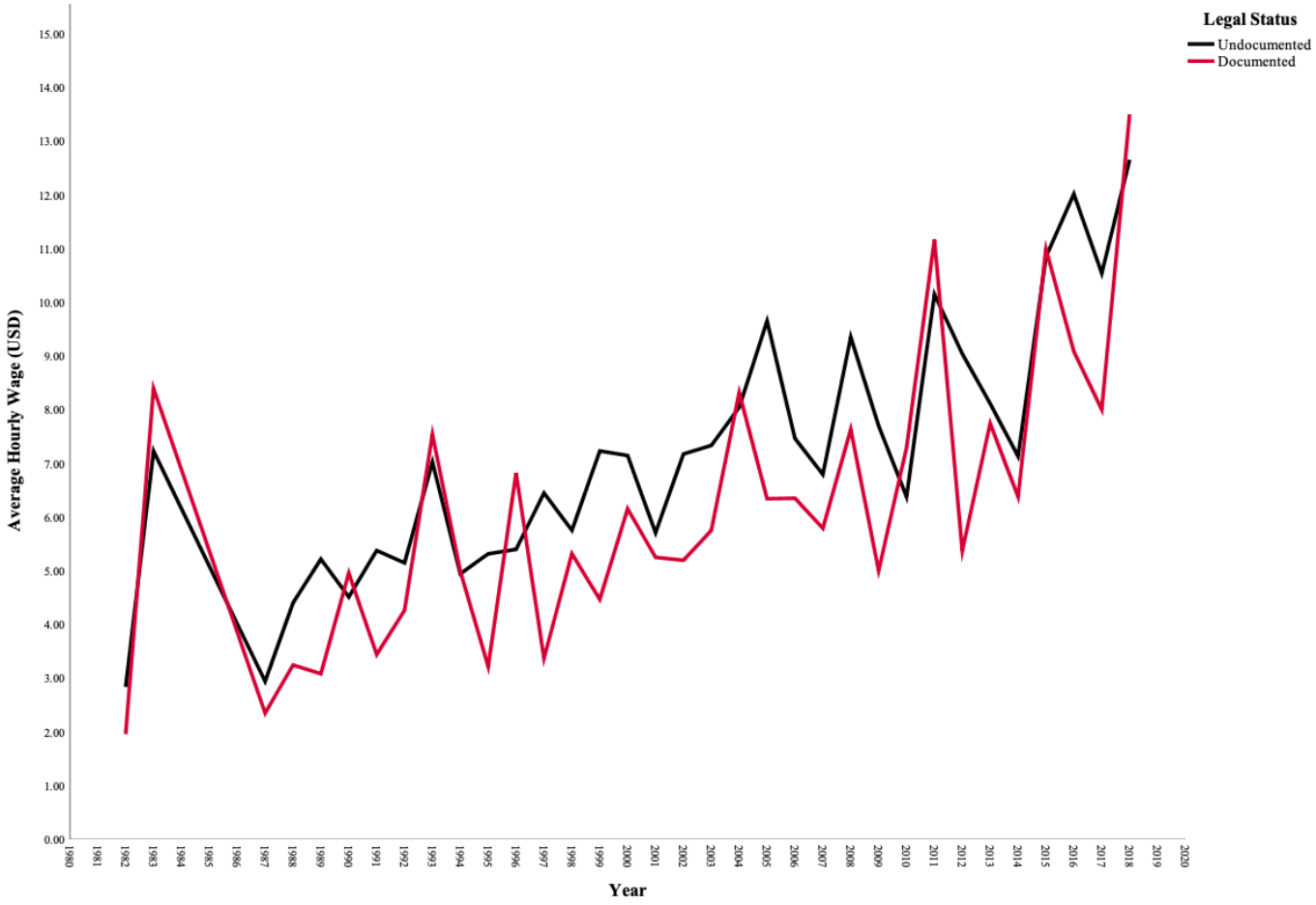

Figure 2: Weekly Hours Worked by Immigrant Workers over Time

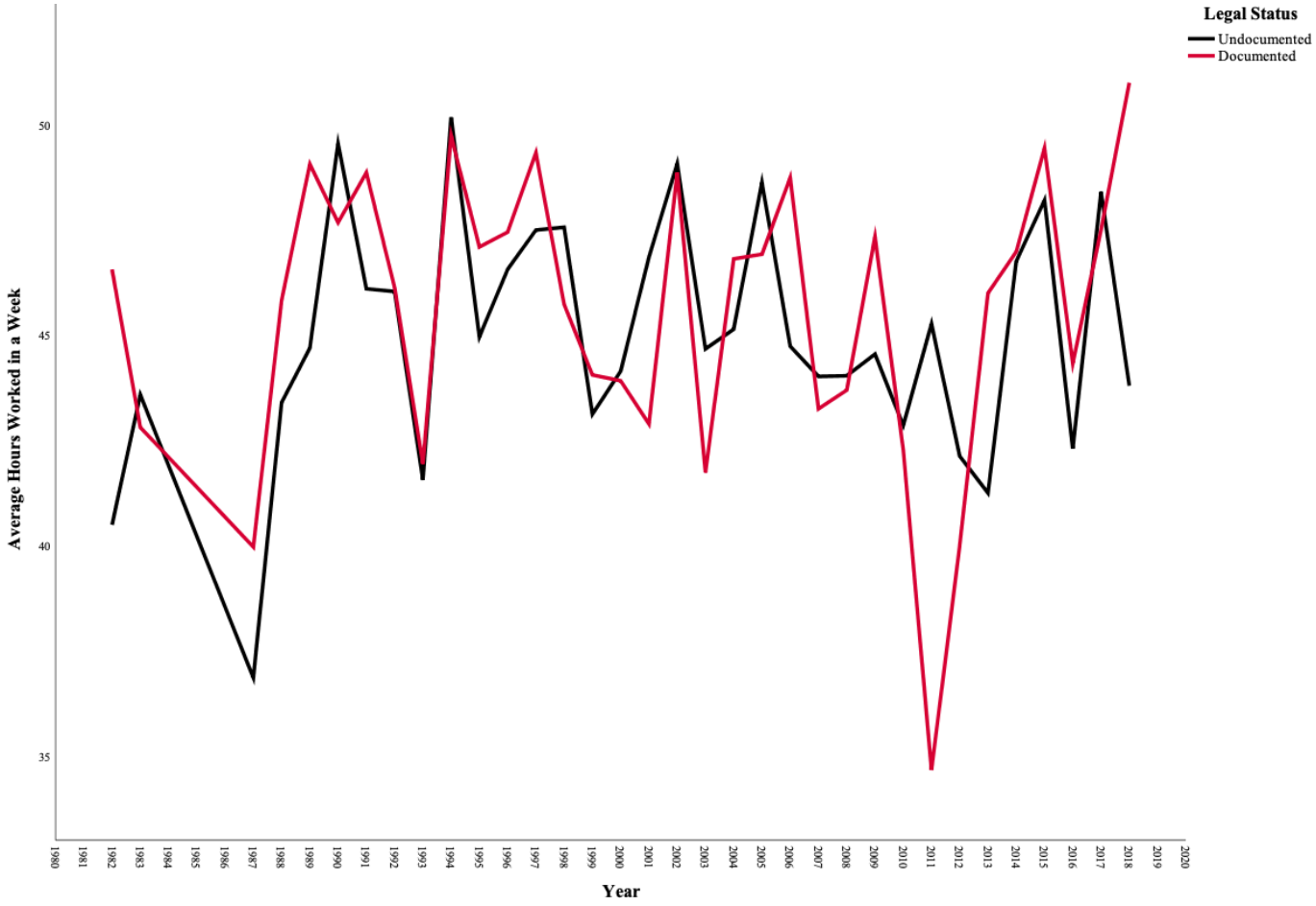

Figure 3: Average Monthly Savings of Immigrant Workers over Time