RICE UNIVERSITY

UNDOCUMENTED WORKERS IN HOUSTON'S CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

by

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ABSTRACT

The impetus to formulate immigration policy, recently evident in the Carter and Reagan Administrations, comes from a growing awareness —both public and private— of the phenomenon of illegal migration, which nowadays has emerged as a most pressing issue.

The same issue motivates the present study. The concern, however, is not with illegal migration at the national level, but rather at the local level specifically, undocumented workers in one of Houston's most powerful industries: Construction.

The purpose of this study is to provide an insight into the demographic characteristics, country of origin, employment patterns, wage and working conditions, public services participation, duration of stay and ties in the U.S., in order to assess the impact of undocumented workers gainfully employed in Houston's labor market. The current study is unlike previous studies which considered only apprehended aliens.

Undocumented workers in this sample were young, disadvantaged adults who came from Latinamerica to find employment. One out of three respondents had been in the U.S. for one or more years and their work had helped them to support at least one dependant in their homeland.

Undocumented workers had significantly less education than
their U.S. fellow workers and most of them had no technical training (the majority before coming to the U.S. had worked in agricultural and blue-collar activities).

Most illegals were unskilled or semi-skilled workers in their most recent construction job.

Undocumented workers prefer the kind of job that will allow them to earn the most money in the least possible time. By coming to Houston, the illegal worker encountered better job opportunities and less possibility of being detected by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) than if they had stayed near the border or in small towns.

The time of permanency for the majority of respondents is linked to their experience in avoiding detection and their ability to secure a job.

Knowing about these characteristics and the illegal workers' performance in the labor market provides important leads on their impact on U.S. society and in the formulation of a sensible immigration policy.

This study propose a major emphasis on continuous cooperation with those countries which constitute the major source of undocumented workers, to improve their economies and their capacity to control their migrant's outflow.
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CHAPTER I

UNDOCUMENTED WORKERS IN THE U.S.: THE BACKGROUND AND
THE PROBLEM

Introduction.

The undocumented migration into the U.S., particularly that originating in Mexico, has been an increasingly publicized phenomenon in recent years. The phenomenon has been described as: "An invasion of illegals" (Withmore 1976), "Silent Invasion" (Fitzhug 1976, Jensen 1976); "National Crisis" (New York Times 1974); "Burden of $13,000 Millions to the Tax Payer" (U.S. News and World Report 1976); and more recently, holding aliens responsible for taking jobs away from American citizens: "Watching Jobs go Elsewhere" (a report on illegal aliens, The Houston Chronicle 1981) and "Illegal Aliens Back on the job" (Newsweek 1982); etc. (1)

It seems that the time when undocumented migration is more evident is when there is a high unemployment level in the U.S. For instance, in the 1930's and after the Korean War, public campaigns resulted in massive deportation of thousands of Mexican nationals (Operation Wetback 1954). The reminders we recently hear with respect to undocumented immigrants have several recurrent themes:

a) Establishing a causality between high unemployment rates, especially among Hispanics, blacks and youths, and the presence
of undocumented workers in the U.S.

b) Giving a connotation of menace to the presence of illegal workers via official and news media reports.

c) Promoting legislation to control illegal immigration.

d) Promoting increases in the INS (Immigration and Naturalization Service) reinforcement aiming at increased detentions.

The recent escalation in apprehensions of illegal aliens, has increased public interest in the subject. There are demands for a well-articulated federal response to the issue, based upon more reliable data and more comprehensive assessment of the policy implications of this issue than have been available until now.

This thesis is an analysis of illegal aliens in the construction industry of Houston, Texas. Its main objective is to obtain a clear characterization of a sample of these workers in order to assess their potential impact on the labor market and to evaluate possible policy implications. Although the study itself has direct implications for a small segment of the U.S. economy, it is unusual since is based on an actual field survey of employed undocumented workers.

There are many inaccurate perceptions around the country regarding undocumented immigrants. Many of these inaccuracies are the
result of media exaggerations. Some misconceptions result from the fact that a good deal of public and academic research on illegal aliens has been based on data obtained from the INS files on apprehended individuals. The present study, by contrast, is based on the characteristics of individuals who are gainfully employed as well as a limited number of recently apprehended illegals who worked in construction at the time they were caught. It will therefore be possible to show how undocumented workers fit into the local economy of a major American city.

This study is comprised of four chapters. Chapter II contains an analysis of the major contributions of the literature on illegal aliens. A review of this literature will serve as the overall framework for the thesis. This chapter will summarize the main issues raised by this literature and assess the current state of the intellectual debate. An effort will be made to stress these issues which will be confirmed or contradicted by my survey results.

Chapter III contains an analysis and interpretation of current U.S. policy on illegal immigration. An attempt will be made in this chapter to relate prevailing policies to some of the misconceptions regarding illegal aliens.

Chapter IV presents a description and analysis of the field survey undertaken for this thesis. It gives information on the industry studied, the nature of the sample selected, the nature of the inquiry, the interviews, and the results obtained in relation to the migratory and job searching processes. An effort is made also to compare these findings with the findings of other researchers in the same areas.
Finally, Chapter V is a discussion of the policy implications of this study. Keeping in mind that we are dealing with a case study, it will nevertheless be instructive to determine the extent to which the findings of this study agree or disagree with the assumptions of current U.S. policy.
CHAPTER II

GENERALLY ACCEPTED CHARACTERISTICS OF UNDOCUMENTED WORKERS

Undocumented Mexican migration, because it accounts for the most part of the illegal immigration into the U.S., has received a great deal of the blame for unemployment, especially among youths and unskilled workers, for depression of wages and working conditions particularly in the secondary segment (2) of the labor market, and lately, for a strong impact on the use of social services and welfare programs participation. However, until recently, little was known about who the illegal immigrants were, their characteristics and their socio-economic role in the U.S.

This section reviews previous studies that have attempted to measure and investigate the illegal migration phenomenon in the U.S.

Although there is still no consensus regarding the impact of undocumented immigrants in these studies, there is a divergent set of the following issues:

1) Duration of stay.
2) Labor occupation.
3) Job displacement.
4) Impact on social services.
5) The overall effect on U.S. society.
Most researchers argue that illegal immigration is the result of wide international disparities in wages and employment opportunities (Piore 1977, J.F. Otero 1976, Diez-Canedo 1980) (3). Millions migrate to sell their labor and more will continue to migrate as long as these differences persist in the world.

The findings of many scholars (Piore 1977, Zazueta 1979, North and Houston 1976, Cornelius 1976, Diez-Canedo 1980, Bustamante 1979) (4) agree that it is not the poorest, or the marginal members of the community who migrate, but the most able, ambitious members who leave and seek greater economic and social opportunities outside their towns.

In general those who decide to migrate are the ones with a higher propensity to take risks, motivated mainly by the perceived inadequacy of employment and income, social inequalities, or political persecution in their home countries.

They are predominately young adults, poorly educated, mostly without technical experience and with little or no knowledge of English. The majority come from a rural background and have worked mainly in agricultural activities.

More recently however, some researchers (Grennes 1980, Conner 1982, Simon 1981) (5) claim to have found an increased proportion of skill-specific urban workers in the composition of the illegal flow of immigrants from Mexico to the U.S. They seem to be better educated.
compared to the rural migrant, with higher levels of skill and with a propensity to enter the labor market in large cities. They are much more aware of issues concerning human and civil rights due to better education and an urban background.

1. Duration of Stay

Research reveals a wide range in duration of stay of illegal workers, from a few days to several years depending on the study's location and the characteristic of the sample. There is a large and growing body of evidence which suggests that for a significant portion of the undocumented population, the range of the average duration of stay is of the order of 6 months to 2 years (North and Houston 1976, Cornelius 1978, Diez-Canedo 1982, CENIET 1979). Seasonal migration from some parts of Mexico has become a fairly regular part of the illegals' work pattern in the U.S. (6).

Cornelius' studies in Central Mexico indicated that the average duration of an illegal migrant's stay in the U.S. was from 6 to 8 months on their most recent trip. This corresponds with the results of North-Houston, who found that most Mexican aliens made multiple visits with an average stay of less than one year. A study on the Mexican side of the border by CENIET (Zazueta 1982) (7), also confirms the impression that the typical migrant from Mexico stays in the U.S. a relatively short time in each migration episode.

In general, when undocumented workers come alone, they are
more likely to stay briefly, to accumulate some savings and return home, than skill-specific illegal aliens, according to Grennes (1979)(8), who tend to be accompanied by family members and who expenses a significantly greater interest in permanent residence.

2. **Job Occupation**

Most undocumented workers, unlike native workers, who have permanent settlements in the community, are highly mobile and respond rapidly to wage differentials.

As migrants arrive in the city, they do not necessarily encounter great obstacles to their adaptation and success. They commonly tend to fill low-status, blue-collar jobs in construction, services, landscaping or agriculture, (Governor's Clements Texas Task Force 1982, Piore 1979, Bustamante 1979, Zazueta 1979) (9), such jobs are characterized by high turnover rates and casual employment.

However, Grennes (1979) (10), maintains that Mexican illegal migrants who possess higher and specific occupational skills find with increasing frequency non-marginal jobs in the same occupations. According to him, this happens, especially in northern cities, where the risk of being detected is less and the possibility of finding a better paid job is greater than in rural areas.
3. **Job Displacement**

This issue involves two different theories. On the one hand, there is a strong belief that undocumented workers take jobs which otherwise could go to U.S. workers (Ehrlich 1979, Briggs 1983, Grennes 1979, Otero 1975) (11). They also argue that competition for cheap labor tends to depress wages and working conditions in certain sectors of the economy, making desirable jobs undesirable, especially in the light manufacturing, food and beverage industries, services and the open shop sector of construction.

On the other hand, other researchers (Diez-Canedo 1980, Cronelius 1978, Piore 1979, Reubens 1983) (12) argue that by taking undesirable jobs, undocumented workers sustain primarily low-wage industries that would otherwise move outside of the country in pursuit of cheap labor or increase prices to maintain profit margins. These economists argue that undocumented workers usually represent an additional and not a substitute supply of labor in the U.S. economy.

4. **Impact on Social Services**

Until recently, most available data indicated that the undocumented workers do not place a substantial burden on the U.S. taxpayer by their use of social services or public income-transfer programs, and that the cost of services used was more than offset by their tax and social security contributions. More than two thirds of undocumented workers experienced wage deductions for federal

Approximately 4% of the illegal workers interviewed in studies by North, Bustamante and Cornelius admitted having ever received unemployment compensation; less than 4% declared having received social security benefits; 4% or less reported sending their children to public schools and only 8% had received public medical assistance.

The Houston polling firm of V. Lance Tarrance & Associates reported to former Texas Governor W. Clements's Task Force (1982) (14) that undocumented workers sampled in Texas did not function as a significant drain on tax dollars for the use of social services (welfare, food stamps, housing and medical assistance). The firm surveyed mostly Spanish-speaking undocumented workers (1,526) who held non-agricultural jobs in Texas. They arrived to the following results:

— Only 6% of illegals surveyed admitted that they had received food stamps.

— 2% said they had gotten housing assistance.

— 4% reported having received medical assistance.

— 1% declared having received welfare payments.
Less than 10% of illegal aliens in the state admitted having children in Texas public schools.

However, another point of view has been advanced in more recent studies dealing with the impact of illegal aliens in the welfare system. M. Teitelbaum (1980) offered shrewd observations on the inadequacies of the early data and analysis, and concluded that "Immigrants, both legal and illegal, cannot be blamed for the rapid increase in government expenditure on such services, but their impact also cannot be dismissed as trivial.* Use of such benefits by immigrants range from high to low, depending upon the benefit examined and the characteristics of the immigrant population...." (15).

In recent studies in the Los Angeles County, Heer (1982), Van Ardsol (1979) and Keely (1977) (16) indicated that some illegals are making extensive use of tax supported programs. They dealt with unapprehended illegals who are integrated members of society. The average length of stay reported by these immigrants was 4 years, and the main welfare services used were food stamps, maternity ward and emergency medical services.

Keely (1977) (17) found that in New York City, an extensive number of Haitians and Dominicans were applying for unemployment compensation and public schools for their children.

* Either those studies which assert that undocumented aliens seem to be a burden on Government social services or those who claim that illegals contribute much and require little from society are included.
Conner, in his controversial monograph of 1982, arrived at the following conclusion: "Later and sounder examination reveals high and increasing levels of welfare utilization by illegals..." (18).

Although Conner admits that his findings are not definitive, he claims that new evidence shows that illegal aliens make an average to heavy use of welfare services. Conner bases his arguments in two main points:

1. Previous data encompassed mainly male, young and healthy illegals or those recently apprehended by the INS, with low incidence of welfare utilization and high evidence of tax withholding. Conner claims that the composition of undocumented immigrants has changed in recent years to more family groups and more educated urban workers. These groups are more heavy users of welfare programs.

2. When an illegal alien has more than 4 years of permanency in the U.S., he is likely to be thoroughly integrated into society, he will have learned more English, and consequently he will be more acquainted with ways and means of dealing with U.S. institutions and its social service programs.

Regarding these points, Conner also found evidence that of all immigrants, those from Mexico are the most likely to be short-term visitors into the U.S. labor market. They usually come alone and are less likely to utilize welfare programs than non-Mexican illegal immigrants, who usually come accompanied by family members. The latter are expected to have the social skills needed to apply for income-transfer programs (19).
5. The Overall Effect on U.S. Society

There is a diversity of opinion of the U.S. national interest regarding the illegal alien issue, but even those who argue that the presence of illegal aliens in the U.S. labor market serves the public interest, also argue that the flow of illegal immigrants should be controlled. The reasons to impose such controls can be summarized as follows:

— Illegals increase job competition and depress wages and working conditions for low-skilled U.S. workers.

— Illegals may increase income inequalities between advantaged and disadvantaged people in the U.S.

— Illegals may increase political and ethnic tensions in many parts of the country.

— Illegals may strain bilateral relations between the U.S. and the sending countries.

However, even assuming that the presence of illegal workers does have a depressive effect on the unskilled segment of the labor market, it does not follow that, all things considered, illegal aliens' participation in the U.S. labor force is not in the best interest of some segments of the American society. Clearly, legal and illegal migrants would not continue to come if they were not responding to some
demand. Foreign labor is attractive to American business and industries for a number of reasons: foreign workers are cheaper, highly productive and industrious, harder to unionize and easier to exploit (20).

As we can see, the illegal immigration have not yet been fully ascertained. Even if these workers have a negative impact in some parts of the U.S. economy, illegal aliens themselves are not the only source of the problems encountered. A solution of the problem would required not only direct action aimed at stopping the illegal flow of aliens, but also indirect action aimed at repressing the pulling forces within the U.S. and accommodating that portion of illegal migration which is actually positive for the American economy.
CHAPTER III

THE ROLE OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION; CURRENT POLICIES

Pressures to address immigration policy have been recently evident in both the Carter and Reagan administrations. These pressures derive in part from a growing awareness—both public and private—of the problems of illegal immigration and its impact on the U.S. economy.

The objective of this chapter is to review current U.S. policy toward illegal immigration and to outline some of the proposals for new foreign worker programs and the control of the illegal immigration into this country.

During the last two administrations, numerous commission reports (The Select Commission on Immigration and Refugee Policy, 1978) congressional hearings and academic writings detailed both the rising number of illegal immigrants in the U.S. and the inadequate nature of the immigration and naturalization system to prevent it.

In 1977 President Carter submitted to Congress an Immigration Reform Program intended to reduce the increasing flow of illegals and to regulate the presence of millions of undocumented aliens already in the U.S. The following set of reform proposals was forwarded to Congress (21):
1) AMNESTY. Non-immigrants with continued residence for 5 years could change their status to permanent residency. This excluded the floating migrants who return to their countries frequently and for longer periods, as well as those who had engaged in criminal activities. All immigrants, including those with expired visas (except those with exchange or student status) who had been residing in the U.S. before January 1, 1977 could be eligible for temporary residence status for a five year period.

2) EMPLOYER SANCTIONS AND WORKERS' IDENTIFICATION. This would prohibit the employment of unauthorized aliens by establishing a series of civil and criminal penalties for violations. It also asks for a verifiable and tamper-proof form of identification for U.S. workers.

3) MORE EFFECTIVE LAW ENFORCEMENT. This would be achieved through the Fair and Labor Standards Act and Federal Farm Labor Contractor Registration Act which would provide better paid, higher health and safety standards for low-paid workers.

This proposal also calls for a substantial increase in manpower and financial resources for the INS, specifically for the control of the Southern border in an effort to reduce the influx of illegal immigrants.

4) ENCOURAGEMENT OF CONTINUOUS COOPERATION WITH OTHER GOVERNMENTS. With principal emphasis on those countries which constitute the greater source of undocumented aliens. The cooperation should be designed to
improve their economies and their capacity of controlling the traffic of immigrants.

Congress responded to Carter's proposals by establishing a study commission in 1978. The Select Commission on Immigration and Refugee Policy issued its comprehensive report in 1981. It concluded that the nation's immigration enforcement was out of control (22).

The Select Commission recommended the following policy alternatives as remedies of the illegal immigration's problem:

1) Increase border and interior law reinforcement against illegal aliens and persons who smuggle them into the country. Adequate funds should be made available to maintain high levels of aliens apprehensions, detentions and deportations, and to discourage early returns.

2) Employer sanctions should be enacted and enforcement of existing wage and working standards legislation should be increased.

3) A program to legalize the status of certain undocumented aliens already living in the U.S.

4) A permanent increase in the annual quota ceilings of legal immigration visas from 270,000 to 350,000.

The Select Commission specifically recommended against
including a foreign worker program among its multiple suggestions for reforms (23).

Today the Reagan administration is confronted by a series of possible misconceptions with regard to the illegal immigration problem which are the following:

— The rising cost of social service programs is blamed on illegal immigrants, especially public schools (Conner 1982, Van Ardsol & Heer 1979, Keely 1977) (24).

— The belief that illegals depress wages and displace legal workers (Briggs 1983, Grennes 1979, Ehrlich 1979) (25).

— Illegal immigrants cause unforseen increases in population, which in the long-run could endanger natural resources and the environment (Conner 1982, J. Tanton 1980) (26).

Facing these problems the Reagan administration supports the following proposals (27):

1) A bill that will punish employers who hire illegal aliens with civil penalties ranging from $500 to $1000 per violation. No new or modified form of identification was proposed in connection with employer sanctions.
2) Granting of special status to eligible aliens who were present in the U.S. since January 1, 1980 on a three year renewable temporary basis, with restriction on benefits and no family members allowed. After ten years of residence, these aliens could apply for permanent residency provided they have a minimal English proficiency.

3) Increase the annual quota ceiling for permanent migration from Mexico and Canada and re-structure the benefits for refugees and asylees.

4) The Reagan administration in 1981 recommended to Congress as a part of its immigration reform proposal, the establishment of an experimental foreign worker program with Mexico involving 50,000 persons.
CHAPTER IV

UNDOCUMENTED WORKERS IN HOUSTON'S CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY: A SURVEY ANALYSIS

The general purpose of this study is to examine the impact of illegal migration on Houston and surrounding areas. The case in study will involve the construction labor market, and will provide some insight into the characteristics and behavioral patterns of illegal workers who were actually employed in construction unlike previous studies which considered only apprehended aliens.

The survey was designed to ascertain the socio-economic determinants of illegal migration to Houston's open shop construction industry and to assess its impact on Houston's economy in the short run.

The idea was to compare the industry's undocumented workers with current stereotypes of illegal migrants in the U.S. in terms of time of permanency, family formation, employment patterns, wage and working conditions, tax and social security contributions and welfare program participation, among other issues.

I focused upon construction because of initial surveys that uncovered an unexpectedly large proportion of undocumented workers, mainly in the areas of refinery and highway construction, and in a smaller proportion in commercial and industrial construction which is
characterized as "open shop" (28).

Open Shop Construction in Houston.

"Open shop" is synonymous with non-union, whether it is a general contractor and/or subcontractor. Each open shop construction firm performs differently and utilizes labor according to its needs.

The major center of non-union construction activity is in the residential sector, primarily because of the small size and geographical dispersion of its jobs. The size of the project is definitely an important variable which determines the extent of open shops in the industry. Small commercial construction projects (under one million dollars), such as stores, professional buildings, service stations, etc., are also predominantly open shop.

On the other hand, larger projects such as major shopping centers, hospitals, universities, high rise office buildings, industrial plants, etc., are likely to be built by unionized labor. The reason for the open shop labor reduced penetration in industrial and commercial projects is that with the exception of a few giant firms (e.g., Brown and Root in Houston), open shop contractors tend to lack resources to undertake huge projects.

Highway and heavy construction are also more unionized than the residential sector, supposedly because they are insulated from open shop competition by the existence and administration of prevailing wage laws, especially the Bacon-Davis act. (29). However, in Houston, a
large segment of this sector is dominated by open shop contractors and subcontractors.

Texas in general is considered to be one of the most non-unionized states. Dallas and Houston, outside of their downtown areas, have become increasingly open shop (30), and Waco has become almost totally non-unionized in recent years.

Contract construction employed 143,200 workers in May 1981, which constituted 9.6 percent of those employed in greater Houston area (31). Over 54 percent of all dollars spent in construction were spent on union projects as compared with 46 percent on non union projects (32).

The private component of the Houston SMSA has grown much faster than has the public due to the extraordinary expansion of residential and commercial construction in the last 10 years.

Construction is an exceedingly competitive industry, especially in open shop, which is subject to the lowest bid in order to get a contract, and where wages are a large proportion of its costs. Labor demand tends to be exceptionally volatile, both cyclically and seasonally. Employment patterns in industrial firms fluctuate according to the size and number of contracts which each firm is able to obtain. For that reason, turn-over rates are higher than in other industries. When work falls off, employees are released and they are not always available when activities resume (33).
The major component of the construction labor force are skilled blue-collar workers; craftmen, foremen, machine operators, carpenters, etc. Unskilled and semiskilled workers are closer to 40-45 percent of the total, depending on the sector.

It is a system of functional specialization: a buyer engages a general contractor, who has the overall responsibility of the project; at the same time, he may engage specialized subcontractors to perform specific operation, such as wiring, plumbing, insulation, finishing, etc. This makes possible the rapid mobilization or termination of the job organization required by the change of volume in both demand and supply in the local labor market.

In open shop construction, the labor pool is more amorphous than in union construction. The adjustment in their employment patterns is less structured because the open shop constructor has practical reasons to go to greater lengths to keep his pool of workers steady. Therefore, in open shop construction versatility is the key. The worker has to be capable of performing a variety of tasks when ever needed.

Methodology.

A survey was personally administrated to 200 male undocumented workers who came from Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala, Ecuador, and the Caribbean and who worked for wages in construction activities in the Houston Area. The study design yields a sample of undocumented workers who are generally representative of all working illegal labor, including:
1. Commercial construction of stores, small shopping centers, office buildings and service stations.

2. Industrial construction of refineries, factories.

3. Residential construction of homes and apartment complexes.

4. Heavy and Highway construction of streets, freeways and bridges.

The survey was conducted over the period December 1981 — August 1982, at different construction sites around the Houston SMSA, with a large proportion of illegal aliens on their payroll. The sampling and interviews in this project were conducted separately. The following table shows the name and location, type of job done by the illegals, hourly wage rates and the percentage of illegal workers in each location.

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**TABLE IV.1**

A limited number of interviews (50), were also held at the INS Houston's headquarters to provide some insights into possible differences between apprehended and unapprehended illegals. To secure as high a level of cooperation and honesty as possible, all interviews were voluntary, and neither the name nor address of respondents was recorded.
### TABLE VI.1
CONSTRUCTION COMPANIES VISITED WITH LARGE PROPORTION OF ILLEGAL ALIENS ON THEIR PAYROLL
(December 1981 — August 1982)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME AND LOCATION</th>
<th>TYPE OF JOB DONE BY ILLEGAL ALIENS</th>
<th>WAGE RATE/ WORKING HOURS</th>
<th>No. OF WORKERS ON LOCATION/ % OF ILLEGALS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>RESIDENTIAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Park-Land Construction Co. (Weslayan Square)</td>
<td>Laborers</td>
<td>4 - 4.50 / 8 hrs.</td>
<td>100 / 40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brick layers helpers</td>
<td>4.75 / 8 hrs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cement finishers</td>
<td>4.35 / 10 hrs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Carpenter helpers</td>
<td>6.50 / 9 hrs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Floor tape</td>
<td>6.00 / 10 hrs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Foremen</td>
<td>10.00 / 10 hrs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- U.S. Home (Riverstown Condominium Westchase Area)</td>
<td>Laborers</td>
<td>4.25 / 10 hrs.</td>
<td>25 / 40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Carpenters</td>
<td>4 - 4.50 / 10 hrs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HIGHWAY</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- William Bros. Constrct. Co. (288 Alameda Bridge)</td>
<td>Ironers helpers</td>
<td>6 - 6.50 / 10 hrs.</td>
<td>25 / 50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Concrete finishers</td>
<td>5.50 / 10 hrs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Foremen</td>
<td>8.50 / 10 hrs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Austin Bridge Co. (Highway 45)</td>
<td>Laborers</td>
<td>4.50-4.75 / 10 hrs.</td>
<td>35 / 40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Concrete finishers</td>
<td>4.75 / 10 hrs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Brolon &amp; Williams Constrc. Co. (Highway I-10)</td>
<td>Laborers</td>
<td>4.25 / 10 hrs.</td>
<td>30 / 65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cement finishers</td>
<td>6.00 / 10 hrs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Machine operators</td>
<td>7.50 / 10 hrs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Continue)
Continue TABLE VI.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME AND LOCATION</th>
<th>TYPE OF JOB DONE BY ILLEGAL ALIENS</th>
<th>WAGE RATE / WORKING HOURS</th>
<th>No. OF WORKERS ON LOCATION / % OF ILLEGALS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>COMMERCIAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Malone Construction Co.</td>
<td>Cement fundation helpers</td>
<td>6.00 / 10 hrs.</td>
<td>50 / 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Richmond &amp; Walnut Bend)</td>
<td>Laborers</td>
<td>4.50 / 10 hrs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Brown &amp; Root</td>
<td>Laborers</td>
<td>3.80-5.50 / 10 hrs.</td>
<td>20 / 50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Rice University)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INDUSTRIAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Exxon Refinery</td>
<td>Insulators</td>
<td>10.80 / 10 hrs.</td>
<td>30 / 30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Baytown)</td>
<td>Plumber helpers</td>
<td>5.50 / 8 hrs.</td>
<td>(crew members)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Digging crew</td>
<td>5.00 / 10 hrs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Mission Constrc. Co.</td>
<td>Laborers</td>
<td>6.50 / 9 hrs.</td>
<td>200 / 5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Frito-Lay Rosenberg)</td>
<td>Cement finishers</td>
<td>6.50 / 9 hrs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Carpenter helpers</td>
<td>4.86 / 4 hrs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Trees Incorporate</td>
<td>Tree trimers</td>
<td>5.40 / 9 hrs.</td>
<td>300 / 50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Spanish-speaking interviewees answered detailed questions about their migration process: Incentives to migrate to Houston, method of entrance in the U.S., number of family dependents, plans of stay in the U.S., the amount of remittances sent home, number of apprehensions by the INS. We also detailed their experiences in Houston's labor market: Wages and working conditions, difficulties in finding a job, their former and current occupations, their participation in tax and social security payments and welfare system enrollment.

The completeness of the interviews and the frequency with which the respondents gave answers contrary to their self-interest suggest that the survey results can generally be regarded as reliable.

It is important for the reader to note that the sample includes only those who have succeeded in their migration attempt and job search. In this context, success means that the illegal alien has crossed the border, established himself in Houston and has successfully competed with other workers for a job. This study relates only to illegal aliens working in construction in the Houston area, and not to the overall illegal alien population. Therefore, caution is recommended in making generalizations from the data and conclusions which are offered here.

The questionnaire contained 45 questions classified to provide the following information:

(1) Characteristics of undocumented workers: country of origin, age,
education, skills, English-speaking ability and occupation in
country of origin.

(2) Respondents as family members: marital status, number of children,
number of dependents in country of origin and family ties in the
U.S.

(3) Illegal workers' immigration process to Houston: incentives to
come to Houston, entry technique, arrival, duration of stay in the
U.S., and number of trips back home, number of apprehensions and
the illegal network.

(4) Undocumented workers in Houston's labor market:

   a) Work history: number of jobs held since arrived in the
      the U.S., occupation in Houston and methods of finding a job.

   b) Most recent occupation in Houston construction Industry:
      wages per number of hours worked, average hourly wage dif-
      ferences between country of origin and the U.S., and remit-
      tances to their home country.

   c) The question of exploitation: illegals' perception of the
      working condition, other illegals in their work place and
      type of benefits obtained.

(5) The wage deductions and the illegals' participation in public
    programs:

   a) Social security, health insurance payments and income
tax withholdings.
b) Use of public services: hospitals and clinics, food stamps and welfare, public schools and unemployment insurance.

(6) Future ties to the U.S.: time planned of stay in the U.S. and legal procedure for those who seek residency or temporary work permit.

The design of the questionnaire was based on the following set of propositions:

1. Illegal immigrants initially fill jobs in the secondary sector (menial, low paid, unskilled, dead end jobs, with poor working conditions and job tenure insecure).

2. Most undocumented workers have few skills and are poorly educated. The majority have worked in agricultural or blue-collar occupations before migrating.

3. The majority of undocumented workers are young, healthy males usually separated from their families and with extensive family obligations.

4. Coming to a big city, the illegal worker encounters better job opportunities and lesser possibilities of being detected than staying near the border or in small towns.

5. The time of permanency for the majority of illegal workers is linked to their experience in avoiding detection and also their
ability to secure a job.

6. Most illegal workers prefer the kind of job that will allow them to earn the most money in the least possible time.

The survey sample was classified according to the following percentage of interviewed undocumented workers:

---

**TABLE IV.2**

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**Survey Results.**

"The success of migration is not measured by what skills or knowledge the undocumented worker may acquire, but by the amount of money he brings back home"

1. **Characteristics of the undocumented worker**

Knowing something about the characteristics of the illegal worker interviewed will provide some leads as to the respondents impact on society. Such knowledge will be helpful when considering alternative policies and strategies concerning these workers.

a) **Region of origin.**

The study group consisted of 157 Mexican illegal workers
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF CONSTRUCTION</th>
<th>UNAPPREHENDED ILLEGAL WORKERS</th>
<th>APPREHENDED ILLEGAL WORKERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>30.5%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highway</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>75.0%</strong></td>
<td><strong>25.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
which constituted 78.5% of the sample. 27 Salvadorians constituted
13.5% of the sample, and a smaller proportion, 4.0% came from Guatemala,
Ecuador, Trinidad and Nicaragua. (See map)

The major regions of origin of Mexican undocumented workers
are: San Luis Potosi (18.5%), Guanajuato (14.0%), Michoacan (10.8%) and
Zacatecas (8.3%).

TABLE IV.3

It seems that in these regions immigration to the U.S. is an
institutionalized phenomenon. Moreover, there are certain towns in
which migration to the U.S. is a tradition which has been passed from
generation to generation. Most of the members in these communities:
Cardenas (San Luis Potosi), Salamanca (Guanajuato), Rayon (San Luis Po-
tosi), Cotija (Michoacan), Ojo Caliente (Zacatecas) and Santa Rosa
Tejocote (Guanajuato); depend almost solely on the remittances sent back
from across the border.

b) Age and sex.

Most respondents were young male adults in their twenties
(34.0%) and their thirties (53.0%). Only a low percentage (13.0%) were
in their forties and fifties. The average age of this sample was 27.6
years old, compared with an average age of 30 for the male labor force
in construction.
TABLE IV.3
REGIONS OF MAJOR PROCEDURE OF RESPONDENTS INTERVIEWED
(December 1981 — August 1982)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region of procedence</th>
<th>Number of undocumented worker located</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>MEXICO</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Luis Potosi</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guanajuato</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michoacan</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zacatecas</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chihuahua</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuevo Leon</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hidalgo</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coahuila</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guerrero</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jalisco</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durango</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamaulipas</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morelos</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EL SALVADOR</strong></td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ECUADOR</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TRINIDAD Y TOBAGO</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NICARAGUA</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GUATEMALA</strong></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**78.5%**
c) Education, English-speaking ability and skills.

In this sample, respondents had less than a half of the education of the average U.S. civilian workers; an average of 5.2 years as compared with the U.S. 12.4 years of schooling. Respondents from Mexico have substantially less education, 0 to 6 years of schooling than non-Mexican respondents which averaged 6 to 12 years of schooling.

76.0% of the respondents could not speak English. Those who could speak some English, usually learned it during previous trips to the U.S. or from being here longer period of time, and were as well the most likely to have higher wages and job status (foremen, machine operator, insulators, etc.).

Despite their relative youth few respondents hold no job before entering the U.S. Only 10.0% declared never having had a job in their home countries, and usually consisted of those who had been students.

Respondents in general were more likely to be low skilled rather than skilled workers in their home land. 62.0% respondents reported to have been farmers, 12.0% were blue-collar workers and only 5.0% have been in construction before.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE BRACKET</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>from 15 to 20 years</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from 21 to 25 years</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from 26 to 30 years</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from 31 to 36 years</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from 36 to 40 years</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from 41 or older</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>200</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This table shows that those who had previously worked in agricultural activities were the least educated. Their years of schooling range from 0 to 6 years. They had also been paid one of the lowest wage rates ($1.26 per day) in their home towns.

Blue-collar and construction workers showed an increase in years of schooling from 3 to 11 years respectively. Those who came from urban areas were more likely to have skills and education of up to 12 years, and as a result received higher wages than those from rural areas.

2. Respondents as family members

Factors such as marital status and family obligations have a great deal to do with the motivation that carries one to the work place. As will be shown, the respondents had substantial family obligations which gave them great incentive to take chances, to migrate and to work hard.

a) Marital status and number of dependants.

Fifty five percent of the respondents were currently married and 45.0% were single. Although the incidence of single respondents is high in this sample, 92.0% of the respondents reported
TABLE IV.5

SELECTED GROUP OF ILLEGAL RESPONDENTS BY OCCUPATION IN THEIR COUNTRY OF ORIGIN, BY YEARS OF SCHOOLING AND BY WAGES

(December 1981 — August 1982)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Respondents (%)</th>
<th>Occupation in Country of Origin</th>
<th>Years of Schooling</th>
<th>Average of daily wage per occupation in Dollars as of 1976</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>62%</td>
<td>Farm workers</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>1.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Blue-collar</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Construction workers</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>1.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Truck drivers</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>1.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4%</td>
<td>Salesmen</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>2.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4%</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2%</td>
<td>Carpenters</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>2.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2%</td>
<td>Clerks</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>2.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1%</td>
<td>Plumbers</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>2.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1%</td>
<td>Miners</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>1.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1%</td>
<td>Painters</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1%</td>
<td>Maintainance</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>0.96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
substantial family responsibility, either in the U.S. or in their home countries, providing financial support to at least one family member. As a group, the respondents supported an average of 5.7 persons.

TABLE IV.6

TABLE IV.7

Mexican respondents were more likely to report having their families in their home countries than non-Mexican respondents. The proportion of respondents who reported having their families back home was 68.0%, only 8.0% had theirs in another U.S. city and a surprisingly high figure, 24.0%, reported having theirs in Houston. From those with a family in town, 37.0% acknowledged having one or more children.

3. Illegal workers' migration process to Houston

a) Incentives to come to Houston.

In the course of the interviews, respondents were asked what influenced their decision to come to Houston. The majority, 82.0%, came to Houston because they thought it had better job opportunities; 13.0% came seeking relatives or friends and decided to stay, and only 5.0% reported being offered a job before coming to Houston.
### TABLE IV.6

**MARITAL STATUS OF ILLEGAL ALIEN RESPONDENTS**  
**ACCORDING TO AGE DISTRIBUTION**  
(December 1981 — August 1982)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE BRACKET</th>
<th>% of Respondents</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Single</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Married</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from 15 to 20 years</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from 21 to 25 years</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from 26 to 30 years</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from 31 to 35 years</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from 36 to 40 years</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from 41 or older</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>54%</strong></td>
<td><strong>46%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE IV.7

**NUMBER OF ECONOMIC DEPENDENTS SUPPORTED BY ILLEGAL WORKERS INTERVIEWED**  
(December 1981 — August 1982)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Dependents</th>
<th>% of Respondents</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Single</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Married</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 to 3</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
<td>55.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 to 7</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
<td>30.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 to 11</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 or more</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>45.0%</strong></td>
<td><strong>55.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mexican illegals were more likely to come to Houston for economic reasons than were illegals from El Salvador and Nicaragua who came here mainly because of the prevailing political situation at home.

52.0% of the respondents came directly to Houston from their home towns, 48.0% came from other U.S. cities: San Diego, Los Angeles, Tucson, Brownsville, Austin, Dallas, El Paso, Free-Port, Corpus Christi, Forth Worth, Alvin and San Antonio.

b) Entry technique.

Entering this country illegally may be risky and dangerous, but for most it is not a lonely business. The border patrol reports that people cross the border generally in small groups, often including relatives or friends from the same community. Some cross the border by the river, others take their chances walking through the desert. There are those who hide in car trunks, trailers and other ingenious and dangerous places, often following paths used by others or with the help of a smuggler. Once they are on the other side of the border, the risks of being caught by the border patrol, getting cheated or even killed by the smugglers become greater.

Technically, the process of entering the country can be classified in the following categories:

— Visa abusers: 12.0% of the respondents, mainly students or tourist fall into this category, they decided to remain here after their visas had expired.
- Wet backs and alambristas: From the overall of the sample, 48.0% of the respondents can be classified in this category. It includes mainly Mexican nationals who crossed the Rio Grande or wire fences by themselves. These are usually undocumented workers who have made several successful entries in the past; they generally know the territory and INS check points or received some kind of help from the U.S. side of the border.

- Smuggled: A surprisingly large proportion of the sample, 40.0%, were willing to pay in order to get the assurance of being delivered safely on this side of the border (which sometimes is actually proved to be very hazardous and dangerous). This category is mainly first timers who did not have previous immigration experience and were not acquainted with the territory.

The cost of being smuggled into the country ranged from $100.00 to $1,200.00, depending on the distance the migrant wished to travel (Central Americans and Ecuadorians had the highest rate in the sample: $1,000.00 to $2,000.00). A river crossing and a drive to the nearest town could cost from $100.00 to $300.00, and a border crossing with a trip to Houston costs from $600.00 to $1,000.00.

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TABLE IV.8

TABLE IV.9
### TABLE IV.8
**COST OF BEING SMUGGLED FOR ILLEGAL RESPONDENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COST IN DOLLARS</th>
<th>No. OF RESPONDENTS SMUGGLED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>less than 100</td>
<td>4.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from 100 to 300</td>
<td>5.5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from 301 to 600</td>
<td>11.5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from 601 to 900</td>
<td>4.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from 901 to 1,200</td>
<td>11.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>40.0 %</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE IV.9
**AVERAGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE NUMBER OF ENTRANCES REGISTERED BY ILLEGAL RESPONDENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. OF ENTRANCES</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 to 3</td>
<td>77 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 to 6</td>
<td>14 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 to 9</td>
<td>3 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 or more</td>
<td>6 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>100 %</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
c) Arrival and duration of stay in the U.S.

In this category, respondents were asked how long, cumulatively, they had been in the U.S.

Most were not brand new arrivals, this accounted for 15.0% (less than six months), 24.0% had been in the country from six months to one year and 61.0% accumulated (not necessarily constantly) more than two years of stay in the U.S.

The respondents as a group had been in the country for an average of 3.5 years. By region of origin, the duration of stay was longer for non-Mexican illegals than for Mexicans, who were much more likely to travel in and out of the country every six to eight months.

\[
\text{TABLE IV.10}
\]

\[\text{d) Number of INS apprehensions.}\]

Mexican respondents in the study had on the average, approximately 3 times as many previous apprehensions as their non-Mexican counterparts.

When illegals were apprehended, those just freshly arrived to Houston (one month), whether they have held a job or not, claimed they would return to their countries for good. Other with more time in the
TABLE IV.10

HOW LONG CUMULATIVELY HAVE RESPONDENTS BEEN IN THE U.S.?

(December 1981 — August 1982)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DURATION OF STAY</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>less than 6 months</td>
<td>15 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 months to one year</td>
<td>24 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 years to 5 years</td>
<td>41 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 years to 7 years</td>
<td>12 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more than 7 years</td>
<td>8 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL** 100 % (200 respondents)
the country and better integrated into U.S. society contemplated the possibility of returning at the first opportunity they had.

TABLE IV.11a.

TABLE IV.11b.

e) The illegal network.

Questions were asked about the extent to which the respondents knew about, and interacted with other illegals. Undocumented workers were asked if they knew people from their home town who had been illegals in the U.S., if they met illegals after their arrival to Houston and if some of their co-workers were also illegals.

In general, most of the respondents (84.0%) admitted knowing illegals in their home town, 76.0% said that they knew or lived with other illegals in Houston. 70.0% would acknowledge the presence of several illegals as co-workers, 10.0% deny the fact and 20.0% simply said they did not know out of the desire not to harm fellow illegals.

The arrival and length of stay of undocumented workers in the U.S. is highly correlated to the contacts in their home town and the U.S., such as friends, relatives, future employers, etc.
Once they arrived here, they contacted someone who spoke Spanish and already knew the city. Later this person took them to the work sites. At the beginning they usually fill low-skill low-pay jobs, which are highly manual and characterized by high turnover rates. 84.0% found their actual job because of friends or relatives already working in the U.S., 9.0% asked the employer directly, 6.0% had the job offered by the employer and only 1.0% of the sample got the job through a public agency.

Most of them were able to get a job within a week by being around construction sites where acquaintances were working until there was a job opening.

60.0% said it was easy to find a job in Houston, especially in construction related work, 40.0% acknowledged having difficulty in job search taking 3 or more weeks to find a job. The general consensus was that they would take the first job available as long as they could earn some money; 71.0% of the respondents chose a job in construction because they were easy to obtain, 18.0% chose it because the pay was higher than in alternative jobs; 11.0% chose to work in construction because of their previous experience.

TABLE IV.12
TABLE IV.12

HOW LONG DID IT TAKE RESPONDENTS TO FIND A JOB IN HOUSTON?
(December 1981 — August 1982)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>less than a week</td>
<td>28.5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 2 weeks</td>
<td>31.5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 to 4 weeks</td>
<td>25.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more than a month</td>
<td>15.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0 %</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Undocumented workers in Houston's construction labor market

a) Work history.

Two thirds of the sample had worked for wages at the time they emigrated to the U.S., which tells us that the employment—unemployment issue was not primary in their decision to come. Low wages, high inflation rates and job seasonality were the major factors in their decision to emigrate to this country. Respondents in this study averaged 4.5 jobs held since their arrival in the U.S. over a 2 to 4 year period. Respondents who were 30 years of age and older were almost 3 times as likely to have been continuously employed since their arrival as illegals as were those aged 25 or younger.

Illegals' movements in the Houston construction labor market as well as the duration of their employment is positively correlated to the conditions of the Houston real estate market. (See Tables IV.12 and IV.13)

b) Most recent occupation in Houston's construction industry.

Undocumented workers in this group were mostly employed in unskilled occupations as laborers (39.0%), helpers (14.0%), cement-fundation helpers (15.0%), etc. These jobs require little training, are already available, easily acquired and generally transferable from one
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME WORKING IN CONSTRUCTION BY UNDOCUMENTED RESPONDENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(December 1981 — August 1982)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>less than 6 months</td>
<td>28 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 months to two years</td>
<td>47 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 years to 3 years</td>
<td>19 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more than 3 years</td>
<td>6 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>100 %</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
low skilled occupation to another.

Respondents who reported they had been in the U.S. for more than five years and spoke English held the most remunerative positions: as foremen, plumbers, insulators, machine operators, etc., these require more skills, knowledge of the trade, and management abilities.

| TABLE IV.14 |

As can be seen in Table IV.14, the type of construction with the best average wages were residential ($5.16) and industrial ($5.33), whereas highway and commercial averaged ($4.72).

At this same site (mostly in the commercial and highway sectors) 2/3's of the illegal respondents declared that they earned less per hour (a difference of $2.00 to $3.00 per hour) than comparably employed U.S. workers performing the same jobs. 22.0% of the sample reported they were paid the same wage rate as any other legal worker doing the same job, and 11.0% did not know the going rates.

| TABLE IV.15 |

Respondents in this study in general worked considerably longer hours, 45 to 50 hours per week, weather permitting than the average U.S. construction worker.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF CONSTRUCTION</th>
<th>% OF RESPONDENTS</th>
<th>AVERAGE WAGES / HOURS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>38 %</td>
<td>5.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highway</td>
<td>25 %</td>
<td>4.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>22 %</td>
<td>4.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>15 %</td>
<td>5.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL** 100 %
TABLE IV.15

MOST RECENT OCCUPATION HELD BY ILLEGAL RESPONDENTS, BY TYPE
OF ACTIVITY PERFORMED AND AVERAGE HOURLY WAGES

(December 1981 — August 1982)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF ACTIVITY</th>
<th>% OF RESPONDENTS</th>
<th>HOURLY AVERAGE WAGES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Laborers</td>
<td>35 %</td>
<td>4.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cement foundation helpers</td>
<td>15 %</td>
<td>5.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpenters</td>
<td>14 %</td>
<td>5.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ironmen</td>
<td>8 %</td>
<td>5.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brick layer helpers</td>
<td>6 %</td>
<td>6.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foremen</td>
<td>4 %</td>
<td>7.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roofers</td>
<td>2 %</td>
<td>5.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gardeners</td>
<td>2 %</td>
<td>3.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plumbers</td>
<td>2 %</td>
<td>4.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floor tape</td>
<td>2 %</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleaning</td>
<td>2 %</td>
<td>4.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insulators</td>
<td>2 %</td>
<td>8.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gas installors</td>
<td>1 %</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanic helpers</td>
<td>1 %</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machine operators</td>
<td>1 %</td>
<td>5.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL 100 %
Although the wage levels varied according to the duration, kind, and location of employment, there are no substantial wage differentials among the majority of the illegal respondents. However, when this wage level is compared with the earnings of respondents' occupations in their country of origin, we see substantial differences. Illegals, whose schooling and occupational skill were not as high as those of the Houston construction labor force, earned a significantly higher average hourly wage than they did in their country of origin. This is one of the main incentives for most respondents in their decision to emigrate to the U.S.

TABLE IV.16

c) Remittances to country of origin.

The majority of these respondents supported a large number of people in their countries. Mexican undocumented workers were the most likely to report supporting several family dependents back home. They also send their families a significant fraction of their incomes. With an average pay of $928.00 gross income a month, they sent an average of $200.00 a month to their homes.

Remittances from temporary migrants represent an important and sometimes the only source of income for their families. This flow of dollars provides relatives with a fund that represents the first stage toward a most prosperous life.
**TABLE IV.16**

DISTRIBUTION OF HOURLY WAGES OF ILLEGAL RESPONDENTS IN THEIR MOST RECENT JOB HELD IN THE U.S. AND THEIR LAST OCCUPATION HELD IN THEIR COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

(December 1981 — August 1982)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OCCUPATION IN COUNTRY OF ORIGIN</th>
<th>Average daily wage *</th>
<th>OCCUPATION IN U.S.</th>
<th>Average hourly wage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peasants</td>
<td>62% 1.26</td>
<td>Laborer</td>
<td>38% 4.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salesmen</td>
<td>4% 2.40</td>
<td>Brick layer helper</td>
<td>6% 6.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue-collar</td>
<td>2% 2.00</td>
<td>Carpenter</td>
<td>14% 5.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpenters</td>
<td>2% 2.33</td>
<td>Cement fund. helper</td>
<td>15% 5.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plumbers</td>
<td>1% 2.40</td>
<td>Ironmen</td>
<td>8% 5.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>5% 1.80</td>
<td>Roofer</td>
<td>2% 5.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truck drivers</td>
<td>5% 1.91</td>
<td>Gas installor</td>
<td>1% 4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerks</td>
<td>2% 2.23</td>
<td>Gardener</td>
<td>1% 3.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miners</td>
<td>1% 1.92</td>
<td>Foremen</td>
<td>4% 7.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painters</td>
<td>1% 1.50</td>
<td>Mechanic helper</td>
<td>1% 5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance</td>
<td>1% 0.96</td>
<td>Plumber</td>
<td>2% 4.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>4% -</td>
<td>Machine operator</td>
<td>1% 5.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Floor tape</td>
<td>2% 5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cleaning</td>
<td>2% 4.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Insulator</td>
<td>2% 8.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL** 100%

**TOTAL** 100%

* At the exchange rate of $26.00 mexican pesos per $1.00US of 1976.
d) The question of exploitation.

All respondents earned above the minimum wage of $3.35 per hour the time interviews were given. However, more than a half (67.0%) of respondents said that they were paid less than legal workers doing the same job, at least 2.00 to 3.00 dollars in wage rate difference.

None of the illegals in the sample acknowledged being paid workmen's compensation, and only a minority (15.0%) had received payment for sickness or accident. For instance, at the construction site on Beau¬mont Highway, an illegal worker was injured the day before. The manager refused to pay for any medical costs even though it was a job related injury. In case of complaints undocumented workers are immediately laid off or threatened with being reported to the INS (34).

Undocumented workers in this study group were asked if their employers were aware of their illegal status when hired; 79.0% of respondents claimed that their employers knew they were illegals, 21.0% of the sample maintained that their employers did not know or care about their illegal status.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>Married</th>
<th>Single</th>
<th>Sent Money</th>
<th>Did Not Send Money</th>
<th>Average Monthly Remittances</th>
<th>Average Wages</th>
<th>% of Their Monthly Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15 to 20</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>225.00</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>26.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 to 25</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>973.80</td>
<td>5.41</td>
<td>24.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 to 30</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>896.40</td>
<td>4.94</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 to 35</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>906.45</td>
<td>5.48</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 to 40</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1,027.00</td>
<td>5.71</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 to 45</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>871.20</td>
<td>4.84</td>
<td>32.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46 or more</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>955.80</td>
<td>5.31</td>
<td>45.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(December 1981 — August 1982)
TABLE IV.18
ILLEGAL RESPONDENTS DISTRIBUTED BY AGE, AVERAGE MONTHLY AND HOURLY WAGES IN HOUSTON AND THE PROPORTION OF THEIR INCOME SENT TO THEIR COUNTRY OF ORIGIN AND SPENT IN THE U.S.
(December 1981 — August 1982)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>Average Monthly Wages</th>
<th>Average Hourly Wages</th>
<th>Average Monthly Remitt.</th>
<th>Percentage of Monthly Income</th>
<th>FROM EACH HOURLY WAGES</th>
<th>Sent as remitt. to country of origin</th>
<th>Difference between minimum wage $3.75 and earned wage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15 to 20</td>
<td>855,00</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>225.00</td>
<td>26.3%</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>-0.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 to 25</td>
<td>933.80</td>
<td>5.41</td>
<td>242.31</td>
<td>24.9%</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>0.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 to 30</td>
<td>896.40</td>
<td>4.94</td>
<td>186.39</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>0.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 to 35</td>
<td>906.45</td>
<td>5.84</td>
<td>235.53</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 to 40</td>
<td>1,027.00</td>
<td>5.71</td>
<td>308.13</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 to 45</td>
<td>871.20</td>
<td>4.84</td>
<td>281.25</td>
<td>32.1%</td>
<td>4.86</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46 or more</td>
<td>955.80</td>
<td>5.31</td>
<td>450.00</td>
<td>45.2%</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>-1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At the same time, they were asked if they thought they were hired because of their illegal status; two thirds of the sample answered affirmatively.

When employers were questioned at the same sites if they would rather hire illegals instead of legal workers, they generally answered that although illegals were good workers they would give the job to the first person who applies for it. They seemed indifferent to the legal status of their employees as long as they performed the required production standards.

On the job, 95.0% respondents reported being treated like any other worker by their employers and U.S. co-workers. Only 5.0% reported bad treatment from their employer because of their illegal status.

5. Wage deductions and participations in public programs

Current discussions about illegal workers in the U.S. revolve around two issues: their presence in their labor market and whether they are —directly or indirectly— a drain on social services and income-transfer programs.

While this study provides some information on the direct impact of respondents on social services and income-transfer programs through asking direct questions about the use of public schooling and unemployment compensation, public hospitals and clinics, food stamps,
welfare benefits; this study can not ascertain their indirect impact on these programs. The data collected does not provide any information about the extent to which the undocumented workers of this sample occupied jobs that otherwise would go to U.S. workers and caused them to draw unemployment insurance benefits, or to rely on food stamps or welfare.

a) Wage deductions.

The great majority (73.0%) of respondents reported being paid by check, especially in the residential, commercial and industrial segments of construction. 27.0% reported being paid in cash, particularly, in highway and heavy construction.

Questions were asked about the relationship between their paychecks and income taxes and social security deductions withheld by their employers.

As expected, a higher proportion, 67.0% reported having such deductions. Moreover, about twenty percent also had deductions for medical insurance. Those who were paid in cash did not know if their employers withheld any proportion of their wages. They agreed in the beginning to a certain wage rate and this was the only thing the undocumented worker cared about. (See Table A)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No. of workers Interviewed</th>
<th>No. of workers who had income tax withheld</th>
<th>Average No. Dependents</th>
<th>Average hrs. worked weekly</th>
<th>Average wage/weekly</th>
<th>Average income tax withheld</th>
<th>Tax as % of gross income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of workers paid by check</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>$243.00</td>
<td>$11.00</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of workers paid in cash</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>$225.00</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>$468.00</td>
<td>$11.00</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
b) Use of social services,

This sample shows lower incidence of the use of public services and income-transfer programs than a U.S. citizen. 69.0% reported never having used any public social services.

Most respondents were healthy young adults with a low incidence of family starts and with expectations of a temporary stay in the U.S. A large proportion of these workers did not stay long enough in the U.S. labor market to collect social security benefits. Sometimes, they ignored potentially available benefits due to fear of detection by the INS if they should apply for such benefits and services.

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TABLE IV.19

These data suggest that the principal direct economic impact is on the labor market, but not on the U.S. government budget. Nevertheless, the foregoing analysis is based upon the questionnaire administered to a group of randomly selected undocumented workers working in Houston construction industries. It can not, therefore, be regarded as a reliable behavior indicator of the general illegal population. However, a high percentage of respondents in this study were making considerable contributions in the form of withholding in taxes and social security payments.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public hospitals and clinics</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collected unemployment compensation</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation of U.S. funded job training programs</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food stamps</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welfare payments</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have children in U.S. schools</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>31%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. Future ties to the U.S.

In this category, respondents were asked about their plans over the next few years or in the long-run; 75.0% replied that they were not planning to remain in the U.S. permanently, they only wanted to work here for a while, accumulate some savings to go back home. However, one half of them expressed a desire of eventually coming back and again working here a limited time. 25.0% of the respondents manifested the wish of staying to seek permanent residence (most of the respondents here were non-Mexicans).

---

TABLE IV.20

When answering the question how long did they originally planned to stay in the U.S., illegal respondents were not taking into consideration the possibility of detention and expulsion by the INS, voluntary return because of family problems, lack of employment in the U.S. or death. The average length of time they originally planned to stay in the U.S. was 2.8 years.

The following table shows the expected duration of stay for different age groups. It is difficult to draw a conclusion from this table because the sample does not cover a similar number of respondents in each age bracket.

---

TABLE IV.21
### TABLE IV,20

**ORIGINAL PLANNED TIME OF STAYING IN THE U.S. FOR UNDOCUMENTED RESPONDENTS**

(December 1981 — August 1982)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original plans of staying</th>
<th>Percentage of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 6 months</td>
<td>9.5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 months to one year</td>
<td>12.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 years to 4 years</td>
<td>43.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 years to 7 years</td>
<td>10.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanently</td>
<td>25.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0 %</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(200 respondents)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE IV,21

**PLANNED DURATION OF STAY DISTRIBUTED BY ILLEGAL RESPONDENTS' AGE**

(December 1981 — August 1982)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE BRACKET</th>
<th>% of Respondents</th>
<th>Time planned to stay in the U.S.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1-2  3-4  more Permanently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 to 25 years old</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>36  86  28  4  46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 to 35 years old</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>36  86  28  4  46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 to 45 years old</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>36  86  28  4  46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46 or more years old</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>36  86  28  4  46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>36  86  28  4  46</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Those who wished to stay permanently in the U.S. were asked about the reasons and the legal procedures they have been following to get legal residence. All agreed that in the U.S. they found better job opportunities and wages and a better standard of living. Only 10.0% of them however, had sought legal counseling to become residents. Others expressed a desire to marry an American citizen in order to obtain legal status, but in general they did not know what to do or how to get information about it.

Respondents were also asked what would they choose if they were given the possibility of legitimize their presence in the U.S. Most Mexican respondents (80.0%) favored the idea of a temporary work permit rather than the possibility of a permanent stay in the U.S. Unlike non-Mexican respondents who expressed their desire of obtaining legal residence in the future.
CHAPTER V

THE ROLE OF UNDOCUMENTED WORKERS IN HOUSTON'S CONSTRUCTION LABOR MARKET: PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This chapter considers the question of the labor market role of illegal workers and discusses their implications for U.S. manpower policy. In undertaking this task, our own survey results, INS records, and other available information are drawn upon. However, it is important for the reader to note that the lack of adequate data on illegal workers may render any such discussion speculative. Extrapolation from our results to the population of illegals working in the nation, therefore, requires judgement.

While the survey data are not sufficient to substantiate firm conclusions in considering the illegals' economic impact upon Houston's labor market, this case study contributes toward the addition of relevant information. The conclusions from the survey data are tentative but are also within the range of other recent results.

The characteristics and role of undocumented workers in Houston's construction labor market: Preliminary conclusions.

1. The main characteristics found in this sample agree with researchers' general perceptions about illegal aliens; they are young, economically disadvantaged adults who come from underdeveloped countries to find employment here.
2. Few respondents had some skill-specific training before coming to Houston, contrary to Grennes (1979) study in which he maintains that more educated urban workers are lured from Mexico to work in construction (35).

3. The Mexican respondents were considerably more likely to come here explicitly in search of job and higher earnings, whereas non-Mexican often respondents come to the U.S. also for political reasons. Once in Houston, Mexican remain more closely tied to their country.

4. Regarding the issue of duration of stay, the survey results support those of Cornelius (1980), North and Houston (1976), Bustamante (1979) and Diez-Canedo (1980) (36). The majority of Mexican respondents expressed their desire of a temporary stay of 2 or 3 years in the U.S., and they are likely to make multiple visits to their home towns when they have accumulated some savings. Mexican respondents also favored the idea of a temporary work permit rather than the possibility of a permanent stay in the U.S., unlike non-Mexican respondents who expressed their desire of obtaining legal residence. Overall most people wish to stay 2 to 5 years.

5. The majority of respondents in the sample held mostly unskilled, manual, low level jobs; working long hours as simple laborers. It was observed that these workers tend to look for jobs in gangs, and they are mainly hired at the beginning of the construction period and usually laid-off when the heavy, dirty work is finished and a more
technical phase of the project begins*. This supports the conclusion that these workers constitute mainly casual employment.

6. Illegal respondents in this sample have proved to be highly motivated to work hard and long hours due to the fear of sudden apprehension and deportation. Therefore, U.S. employers generally regard them as exceptionally productive workers.

7. More respondents as a group reported having taxes and social security payments withheld from their pay-checks than the number who admitted using tax-supported services (37). A small proportion reported having used public schools for their children and hospital services, but no evidence was found of them having received welfare benefits, unemployment compensation, housing subsidies or food stamps.**

8. On the average no depressed working conditions were found in jobs where illegals worked. (38). U.S. workers were paid accordingly with Houston area open shop construction wage rates, which were higher than their illegal counterparts for performing the same job (39). It is impossible to determine to what extent wage rates were depressed, if at all, due to the added supply of illegal workers.

---

**TABLE V.1**

---

*This pattern was observed especially in Residential and Industrial construction, mainly Refineries, in which groups of illegal workers, while waiting outside their gates, were hired for cleaning, digging and other menial jobs.

**Very low welfare benefits were available in Texas.
TABLE V.1

HOUSTON AREA OPEN SHOP WAGE RATES BUILDING CONSTRUCTION
(June 1983)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Craft</th>
<th>No. of Workers Reported</th>
<th>Weighted Average Hourly Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acoustical Ceiling Installers</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>$ 16.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Conditioning &amp; Heating</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technicians</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Tool Operator</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alarm Installers</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boilermakers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bricklayers</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>11.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caulkers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concrete Finishers</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>10.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drywall Hangers</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>10.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricians</td>
<td>426</td>
<td>9.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment Operators:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Backhoe / Loaders</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>9.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Crane / Dragline</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>12.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Dozer / Grader</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>9.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fence Erectors</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Engineers</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Sprinkler Fitters</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foremen</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>10.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foremen-in-Training</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glaziers</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrument Fitters</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insulators</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ironworkers (Rebar)</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>10.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ironworkers (Structural)</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>11.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laborers — Skilled</td>
<td>531</td>
<td>7.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laborers — Unskilled</td>
<td>594</td>
<td>6.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machine Operators</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marble Setters</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanics</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millwrights</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overhead Door Installers</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oilers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painters</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>9.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piledrivers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pipefitters</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pipelayers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plasterers</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plumbers</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>12.23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Continue)
Continue TABLE V.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Craft</th>
<th>No. of Workers Reported</th>
<th>Weighted Average Hourly Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Porcelain Repair</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>$10.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riggers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roofers</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>8.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roofers</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>8.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheet Metal Workers</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>10.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superintendents</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tape &amp; Float</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>12.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timekeeper</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallpaper Hangers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truck Drivers</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welders</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>10.86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In summary, illegal workers are likely to produce a combination of impacts upon this labor market:

— Illegals permit reductions in labor costs for several reasons: they do not get fringe benefits. In most cases health insurance is not provided, they sometimes are treated as casual labor so the employer avoids tax and social security payments. When illegal employees work longer hours they do not get statutory overtime compensation.

— Undocumented workers are docile, hard working, highly motivated to work long hours in order to earn the most money in the least possible time because of fear of sudden apprehension and deportation by the INS authorities.

— Illegals compete successfully with low-skilled legal workers. They have a better and more efficient network of information that helps them to be at the right place whenever they needed. They are highly mobile since most of them do not have permanent settlements in the community unlike legal workers.

— Regarding the issue that undocumented workers take away jobs from Americans, no definitive conclusion can be drawn from this study. However, a follow-up study made in conjunction with Marcus Hiles (40), who interviewed a smaller sample (50) of legal workers in Houston's Construction Industry, arrived at the following conclusions:
- 57% of the workers said that they got along 'good' with the Hispanics. 6% did not.

- When legal workers were asked if they felt they were fewer jobs available to Americans due to undocumented workers, 80% of those answered affirmatively.

- When asked if they knew other U.S. workers who would be willing to take the job of the undocumented worker, 64% said yes.

- 35% of those interviewed specifically mentioned that undocumented workers were hired because it was cheaper, 42% answered because they were good workers.

"As unemployment is rising in the construction industry it is understandable that there will be a growing division between the open shop workers and the undocumented workers. The attitude that everyone should have an equal right to work vanishes when you lose your job" (41).

Some of the contractors or subcontractors admitted that they hired undocumented workers as long as they possessed a social security card. They believed in 1981-82 that undocumented workers were not replacing U.S. workers because of the shortage of workers in the Houston area. They also mentioned that undocumented workers work hard
and that they were paid the same wage rate that they would have paid an American worker.

Policy Implications.

Considering the magnitude of the illegal alien problem in recent years, one of the first goals of U.S. domestic policy will aim to discourage illegal immigration by fortifying the U.S.—Mexican border and the INS resources, and by reducing the "pull" factors which attracts illegal immigrants to the U.S.:

1. Making sectors in the economy often filled by illegal more attractive to native workers, increasing wages and fringe benefits to attract more U.S. unemployed citizens.

2. Minimizing the degree of competition between nationals and foreign workers in industries with high demand for illegals. One way this could be achieved is by upgrading the information about job availability for U.S. workers.

3. Increasing unionization of job categories where illegals are common.

4. Encourage upgrading of jobs by providing investment via government incentives.
5. Fining employers who hire illegal workers.

These measures could tend to increase labor costs and will probably have some negative economic repercussions on particular industries, such as, services, construction, garment, food and beverage etc. Some of them are difficult and expensive to implement and could also be a source of discrimination against legal Hispanic-looking residents. Such policies also ignore the contributions that illegal workers make to the U.S. economy and their own countries. It also assumes that replacement for these workers could easily be obtained from domestic labor force without adverse economic effects.

From the economic perspective, the immigration problem involves the danger of a shortage or surplus of personnel (domestic plus foreign) relative to the demand or capacity of the economy to absorb them. The present study suggests that currently there are some vacancies in low-level occupations in the construction industry (due to the fact that it was relatively easy to obtain a job for the people interviewed), and it seems likely that this could be the case for other industries such as services, garment, food and beverage, agriculture, etc. Therefore, this kind of study should be carried out for these industries as well, before definitive immigration policy conclusions are formulated.

U.S. government policy also has to take into consideration that disparities between Latin America and the United States are not likely to disappear soon. This country will continue to act as a
magnet for people in search of employment and income opportunities. Therefore, the U.S. should attempt to provide technical and economic assistance to the sending countries to seriously promote job creation programs, particularly in labor intensive, small scale, efficient production for both domestic and foreign trade.
FOOTNOTES

(1) - Withmore, I. H. "Can we stop the Invasion of Illegal Aliens?". South Bend Tribune, Feb. 29, 1976.

"Marginal workers". Defines jobs in the secondary segment of the labor market as menial, low-paying, with little opportunity of advancement. These jobs connote inferior social status in the economy. p. 172.


II.


- Bustamante. (1979), p. 34.


- Piore. (1979), p. 73.


- Piore. (1979), p. 44.

- North. (1976), p. 73.


(17) Ibid. p. 52.


(23) Ibid. p. 45.

(25) - Briggs. (1983), p. 48,
   - Ehrlich. (1979), p. 34.


(28) This project is part of a larger study originated three years ago by economics professor Donald Yuddle. For more references, see Huddle Donald: "Undocumented Workers in Houston's Non-Residential and Highway Construction: A field survey", Unpublished paper, Rice University, Houston, Tx. 1982.


(33) However, there are some companies which save part of their labor force; their best workers, from one project to another.

(34) 15% of illegal workers interviewed claimed that they have been involved in similar circumstances. For more references also see: "Legal Workers in the Construction Industry: Analysis of Undocumented Workers' Effects on U.S. Workers", by Marcus Hiles. Unpublished paper. Rice University, Houston, Tx., 1982.

(35) Grennes, Donald A. "The Importance of Urban Mexican Workers in Re-evaluating U.S. Immigration Policy". Interior Report on research in progress. Trinity University, San Antonio, Tx, 1979. p. 4. The sample did not register any significant presence of these workers, however, they could be working in unionized construction, they seem to have low participation in open shop construction.


- Bustamante, Jorge. "Undocumented Migration to the U.S.". Centro de Estudios Internacionales del Colegio de Mexico, 1979. Mexico, D.F. p. 34.


(37) Although they reported income taxes and social security payments, the study does not take into consideration how many dependants they declared (illegals) or if they were treated as casual labor by the independent contractor.

(38) Hiles, Marcus. "Legal workers in Construction Industry: Analysis of Undocumented workers' effect on U.S. workers" Interior Report on Research in progress. Rice University, Houston, Tx. 1982. He conducted interviews to legal workers at the same site, the interviews of this survey were performed on the illegals counterparts.

(39) Most of the legal workers in the site were found to hold skill-specific jobs such as machine operators, foremen, plumbers, carpenters, etc., while few illegals held this type of jobs.

(40) Hiles, Marcus. Houston, Tx. (1982). This follow-up was made in the spring term of 1981 at the same time and sites this research was conducted.

(41) Ibid. p. 13
APPENDIX A

UNDOCUMENTED WORKERS IN HOUSTON'S CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY: QUESTIONNAIRE
LABOR SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE I: UNDOCUMENTED WORKERS IN HOUSTON'S CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY.

Date of interview ________________  Time ______
Place of interview ________________
How many workers at the site? ______

1. Name ___________  Age ________  Sex ________

2. What nationality are you?
   Country ________________  State ________________
   City ________________

3. Marital status
   Single ________  Divorced ________
   Married ________  Widowed ________

4. How many people you have to support economically? ________

5. Where, at present, are your family living?
   Houston ________  Another U.S. City ________
   (specify)
   Hometown ________  Don't know ________

6. If you have your family living with you, how many children were born here?
   ________  None ________
7. If you don't have your family with you now, do you plan to bring them here?
   YES ________  NO ________  Don't know ________

8. Which was your occupation in your hometown? ______________________

9. Why did you decide to come to U.S.?
   To get a job ________
   To visit relatives ________
   To seek a better life ________
   Other (specify) ______________________

10. Where did you first hear about a job in Houston?
    At your hometown ________  Traveling ________
    At your work ________  Other (specify) ______________________

11. How did you get here?
    a) legally ________  How? ______________________
    B) illegally ________  Wetback ________
       Coyote ________
       Alambrista ________

12. How many people in your hometown you know have emigrated to U.S.?
    less than 10 ________  40 to 60 ________
    10 to 20 ________  more than 60 ________
    20 to 40 ________  don't know any ________
13. How much did it cost you to get a job in Houston?

- less than $250 ________
- 250 to 300 ________
- 300 to 350 ________
- 350 to 450 ________
- more than 450 ________
- nothing ________

14. How long do you plan to stay?

- less than 6 months ________
- 6 months - 1 year ________
- 1 year - 2 years ________
- more than 2 years ________
- permanently ________
- don't know ________

15. How many times have you entered the U.S.? ________ times

16. Among them, how many times have you been apprehended by the INS?

_______ times.

17. How many trips have you made to your home (or country) since you got here?

_______ trips.

18. Before you came to Houston, where did you live? _______________

19. Why did you decide to come to Houston?

- Better job opportunities ________
- Looking for relatives or friends ________
- Wanted to visit ________
- Someone offered you a job ________
- Other reasons (specify) ____________________
20. a) When you got here, how long did it take you to find a job?
   less than a month ______
   1 - 2 months ______
   2 - 3 months ______
   more than 3 months (specify) __________________________

   b) How long did it take you to find this current job? ______

   c) How long do it take you to find a job like this when this is
      finished?
      ______

21. How long have you been working in U.S.?
   1 - 6 months ______
   7 - 1 year ______
   1 - 2 years ______
   more than 2 years (specify) ______

22. How many jobs have you held since you got to U.S.?
   1 - 3 ______
   3 - 5 ______
   more than 5 (specify) ______

23. How did you find this job?
   Public employment agency ______
   Private employment agency ______
   Friends or relatives in U.S. ______
   Employer recruited you ______
24. What kind of studies you have?

- Years of school
- Speak English
- What kind of skills
- Previous experiences in this kind of job
- Previous experiences in other jobs held in U.S.
- Other (specify)

25. Specify the kind of work that you make at your current job

26. Why did you choose to work in the construction field?

- High pay
- Easy to find
- Previous experience in this field
- Better opportunities of promotion
- Others (specify)

27. Do you feel is easy to find a job like this in Houston?

- YES
- NO
- Don't know
28. How many years have you worked for a wage?

   part-time ________ years
   full-time ________ years

29. a) If you have your family here, does your wife or children or other relatives work?

   YES ________   NO ________

   b) If so, how long have they been working here?

      1 - 6 months ________
      7 - 1 year ________
      more than a year (specify) ________

30. Did your employer know you were illegal when he hired you?

   YES ________   NO ________   Don't know ________

31. How much money do you earn in your current job?

   per hour ________
   per week ________
   per month ________
   per 2 weeks ________

32. How many hours do you work per day? ________

33. Did your employer deduct money from your salary?

   For hospital or medicare insurance ________
   Social security ________
Income Tax

Pays to the foreman

Others (specify)

None

34. If so, how many times have you used this public services?

Hospitals

Doctors

Public schools

Others (specify)

None

35. Do you use to work in gangs?

YES

Why? (is easy to find a job that way?)

NO

36. What kind of benefits you obtain in this job?

Job protection

Sick pay

Illness or accident compensation

Others (specify)

None

37. If your employer knew of learned you were illegal, how do you feel he treated you?

Badly because you were an illegal
About the same as any legal employee    ______
Better than any legal employee    ______
Employer did not know you were illegal ______

38. If employer knew you were illegal, did he pay you less than a legal employee for doing the same work?
   less than    ______
   more than    ______
   about the same ______

39. a) Do you know which is the minimum wage?    ______
    b) Did he pay you less than the minimum wage?
       less than    ______
       more than    ______
       minimum wage ______

40. Do you think your employer hired you because you were an illegal?
   YES ______  NO ______
   Did not know I was illegal ______

41. Are other illegals working with you?
   YES ______  If so, how many? ______
   NO ______  Don't know ______

42. About how many illegals have you meet in Houston? ______
43. About how much money you earn when you first came here?, and how much money you earn currently?

AT THE BEGinning: NOW:

per week ________ per week ________
per 2 weeks ________ per 2 weeks ________
per month ________ per month ________

44. How do you get paid?

Cash ________
Check ________
Money order ________
Other (specify) ____________________________

45. a) Do you send money to your country?

YES ________ NO ________

b) If so, how much usually?

20 to 50 ________ 100 to 200 ________
50 to 100 ________ more than 200 ________

c) How do you do it?

Postal money order ________
Money order bought in in a bank or elsewhere ________
Cash sent by mail ________
Cash sent by a friend ________
Personal check ________
Other (specify) ____________________________
46. a) Do you plan to stay permanently?

YES _______  NO _______  Don't know _______

b) If so, are you making efforts to legalize your situation?

YES _______  What kind? ______________________

NO _______

47. Would you rather work here or in your country:

a) By temporary work permit _______

b) By obtaining legal residence _______

Why?

Better life _______

Easier to find a job _______

Better paid _______

Better opportunities to improve _______

Other (specify) ____________________________
CUESTIONARIO II: ANALISIS DE MERCADOS DE TRABAJO EN EL CAMPO DE LA CONSTRUCCION.

Fecha ________________ Hora ________ Lugar ______________

Número de trabajadores ________

1. Edad ________ Sexo ________

2. ¿A qué nacionalidad pertenece?
   País ________________ Estado ________________
   Ciudad ________________ Provincia ________________

3. Estado civil
   Soltero ________ Divorciado ________
   Casado ________ Viudo ________

4. ¿Cuántas personas dependen de usted económicamente? ________

5. ¿Dónde vive su familia actualmente?
   Houston ________ Otra ciudad ________
   en E.U. ________
   En su país ________ No sabe ________
6. Si su familia vive con usted ¿cuántos hijos nacieron aquí? __________
   Ninguno

7. Si su familia no vive con ud., ¿planea algún día traerlos?
   SI __________   NO __________   No sabe __________

8. ¿Cuál era su ocupación en su lugar de origen? __________

9. ¿Por qué decidió venir a los E.U.A.?
   A buscar trabajo __________
   En busca de una vida mejor __________
   A visitar familiares __________
   Otro (especifique) _________________

10. ¿Dónde oyó por primera vez de un trabajo en Houston?
    En su ciudad o pueblo __________
    En su trabajo __________
    Mientras viajaba __________
    Otro (especifique) _________________
11. ¿Cómo entró al país?
   a) legalmente __________ ¿Cómo? ________________
   b) ilegalmente __________ Como espalda mojada __________
   Como alambrista __________
   Por medio de un coyote __________

12. ¿A cuántas personas conoce de su pueblo que hayan emigrado a E.U.?
   menos de 10 __________ de 31 a 50 __________
   de 10 a 20 __________ más de 50 __________
   de 21 a 30 __________ ninguna __________

13. ¿Cuánto tiempo planea ud. permanecer en E.U.?
   menos de 6 meses ________ más de 2 años ________
   de 6 meses a 1 año ________ permanentemente ________
   de 1 año a 2 años ________ no sabe ________

14. ¿Cuántas veces ha entrado a E.U.? ________

15. ¿Entre ellas, cuántas veces ha sido aprendido por la "migra"? ________

16. ¿Cuántos viajes ha hecho a su casa (o país) desde que está aquí? ________
17. Antes de venir a Houston ¿dónde vivía? ____________________

18. ¿Por qué decidió venir a Houston?

    Hay mejores oportunidades de encontrar trabajo __________
    Buscando parientes o amigos ________
    Deseaba conocer la ciudad ________
    Alguien le ofreció trabajo ________
    Otras razones (especifique cuáles) ____________________

19. a) Cuando llegó a Houston, ¿cuánto tiempo le llevó encontrar trabajo?

    Menos de una semana ________
    de 1 semana a 15 días ________
    de 15 días a 1 mes ________
    de 1 mes a 2 meses ________
    más de 2 meses (especifique cuánto tiempo) ________

b) ¿Cuánto tiempo le llevó encontrar este empleo? ________

c) ¿Cómo cuánto le llevará encontrar un trabajo como este cuando termine? ________

20. ¿Cuánto tiempo lleva ud. trabajando en E.U.?

    Menos de 6 meses ________
    de 7 meses a 1 año ________
    de 1 año a 2 años ________
    más de 2 años (especifique cuánto tiempo) ________
21. ¿Cuántos trabajos ha tenido desde que llegó a E.U.? ________

22. Si su familia vive con ud., ¿su esposa, hijos u otros parientes trabajan?

   SI __________ ¿desde cuándo? ________
   NO ________

23. ¿Cómo encontró este trabajo?

   Por una agencia de empleo pública ________
   Por una agencia de empleo privada ________
   Su jefe le ofreció empleo ________
   Por medio de amigos o parientes en E.U. ________
   Por medio de amigos o parientes en su país ________
   Usted le pidió empleo a su jefe directamente ________
   Por medio de un anuncio en los periódicos ________
   Por otros compañeros de trabajo ________
   Otros (especifique) ________________________________

24. ¿Qué tipos de estudios posee usted?

   Años de escuela ________ habla inglés ________
   Preparación técnica (especifique) __________________
   Experiencia previa en este tipo de trabajo ________
   Experiencia previa en otros trabajos mantenidos en E.U. ________
   Otros (especifique) ________________________________
25. Especifique qué clase de trabajo hace actualmente

26. ¿Por qué escogió un trabajo en el campo de la construcción?
   Paga alta
   Fácil de encontrar
   Ha tenido experiencia previa en este campo
   Mejores oportunidades de ascenso
   Otras (especifique)

27. ¿Ud. cree que es fácil encontrar un trabajo como este en Houston?
   SI
   NO
   No sabe

28. La persona que lo contrató ¿sabía que ud. era ilegal?
   SI
   NO

29. ¿Cuánto dinero gana en este trabajo?
   por hora
   semanalmente
   mensualmente

30. ¿Cuántas horas trabaja por día?
31. La persona que lo emplea ¿deduce dinero de su salario por los siguientes motivos?

Por seguro médico
Por seguro social
Por impuestos sobre su salario
Por pagos al capataz
Otros (especifique)
No le deduce nada

32. Si le han deducido parte de su salario, ¿cuántas veces ha usado los siguientes servicios públicos?

Hospitales ________ veces
Asistencia pública ________ veces
Escuelas públicas ________ veces
Otros (especifique cuáles) ________________ veces
Ninguno ________

33. ¿Le han dado recibos por deducirle dinero de su salario?

SI ________  NO ________

34. Usualmente ¿trabaja en grupo o cuadrillas?

SI ________  ¿Por qué? __________________________
NO ________
35. ¿Qué tipo de beneficios obtiene de su trabajo?

Recibe paga por enfermedad

Tiene compensación por accidentes

Es un trabajo seguro

36. ¿Si la persona que lo contrató sabía que ud. era ilegal, cómo siente que lo trató?

Mal, porque ud. era ilegal

Igual que cualquier otro empleado legal

Mejor que cualquier otro empleado legal

No sabía que ud. era ilegal

37. ¿Si la persona que lo contrató sabía que ud. era ilegal, le pagó

Menos que a otro empleado legal

lo mismo que a otro empleado legal

más que a otro empleado legal por hacer el mismo trabajo?

38. a) ¿Cuál es el salario mínimo que se paga por hacer este trabajo?

b) Le pagan a ud. menos que el salario mínimo?

más que el salario mínimo?

el salario mínimo?
39. ¿Ud. cree que la persona que lo empleó lo hizo porque sabía que era ilegal?

SI __________
NO __________
No sabía que era ilegal __________

40. ¿Hay otras personas como ud. trabajando ilegalmente?

SI __________ ¿como cuántas? __________
NO __________
No sabe __________

41. ¿Cuánto ganaba en su país antes de venir a E.U.? ________
¿Cuánto dinero ganaba cuando llegó por primera vez a E.U.? ________

42. ¿Cómo le pagan?

Al contado __________
Con cheque __________
Con orden de pago __________
Otro (especifique) _______________________

43. De su salario ¿envía dinero a su país? SI _______ NO _______
Si es así ¿cuánto dinero envía usualmente?

de 20 a 50 dólares __________
de 51 a 100 dólares __________
de 101 a 200 dólares __________
más de 200 dólares __________
¿Cómo envía el dinero a su país?

Orden de dinero postal

Orden de dinero comprada en un banco u otro lado

Efectivo enviado por carta

Efectivo enviado con un amigo o pariente

Cheque personal

Otro (especifique)

44. ¿Piensa radicar permanente en E.U.?

SI _________ NO _________ No sabe _________

Si contestó afirmativo, ¿está haciendo algún trámite para legalizar su situación?

SI _________ ¿cuáles? __________________________

NO _________

45. ¿Preferiría ud. trabajar aquí:

a) temporalmente (con un permiso temporal de trabajo) _________

b) permanentemente (obteniendo la residencia) _________

¿Por qué? Se vive mejor _________

Es más fácil encontrar trabajo _________

Mejores oportunidades de mejorar _________

Mayor sueldo _________

Su familia vive aquí _________

Otras razones (especifique) __________________________
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