

RESEARCH
PAPER



**Illegal Mexican Migration
& the United States/Mexico Border:
The Effects of Operation Hold the Line
on El Paso/Juárez**

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CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION	5
II. THE OPERATION AND ITS CONTEXT	7
OPERATION HOLD THE LINE	7
THE METROPOLITAN CONTEXT	11
LEGAL NONIMMIGRANT BORDER CROSSINGS	13
III. EFFECTS ON ILLEGAL FLOWS	17
APPREHENSIONS DATA	19
BRIDGE CROSSING DATA	26
CONCLUSIONS	37
IV. EFFECTS ON BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES	37
BUSINESS LEADER RESPONSE	38
SALES	39
CITY SALES AND USE TAX COLLECTIONS	42
LABOR MARKET	43
TOURISM	46
BUS RIDERSHIP	46
ACCIDENTS	47
JUÁREZ BUSINESS ACTIVITIES	48
CONCLUSIONS	50
V. EFFECTS ON EDUCATION, BIRTHS AND SOCIAL SERVICES	51
EDUCATION	51
BIRTHS	57
WELFARE UTILIZATION	63
EFFECTS IN JUÁREZ	64
CONCLUSIONS	65
VI. EFFECTS ON CRIME AND RELATED INDICATORS IN EL PASO	65
LOCAL PERCEPTIONS AND EXPECTATIONS	65
TRENDS AND THE MAGNITUDE OF CRIME IN EL PASO	68
SERIOUS CRIME	73
GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF CRIME	81
JUVENILE OFFENDERS AND THE RACIAL/ETHNIC DISTRIBUTION OF ARRESTS	82
COST OF CRIME	84
OTHER MEASUREMENTS	87
CONCLUSIONS	92
VII. COMMUNITY & ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTS IN EL PASO	93
PUBLIC OPINION	93
MEXICAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY	94
HUMAN RIGHTS	99
JOB SATISFACTION AMONG BORDER PATROL AGENTS	103
CONCLUSIONS	107
VIII. EFFECTS ON ILLEGAL BORDER CROSSERS IN EL PASO AND JUÁREZ	107
BEFORE OPERATION BLOCKADE	107
THE BORDER CROSSING CARD	109
EFFECTS AND RESPONSES	117
IX. SUMMARY	123
FINDINGS	123
ASSESSMENT	124
POLICY IMPLICATIONS	126
REFERENCES	129

Tables

1. REQUIREMENTS FOR PROCESSING APPLICATION FOR CROSSING CARD -16-
2. A TYPOLOGY OF MEXICAN BORDER CROSSERS IN EL PASO/JUÁREZ -18-
3. AVERAGE MONTHLY LINEWATCH AND NONLINEWATCH APPREHENSIONS & ENFORCEMENT HOURS BY SECTOR GROUPING, FYs 1993-1994 -22-
4. LINEWATCH AND NONLINEWATCH APPREHENSIONS PER HOUR BY SECTOR GROUPING, FYs 1993-1994 -22-
5. TIME SERIES REGRESSION RESULTS FOR MONTHLY LINEWATCH AND NONLINEWATCH APPREHENSIONS ON ENFORCEMENT HOURS & POST-OPERATION DUMMIES BY STATE SECTOR GROUPINGS -25-
6. LEGAL STATUS CATEGORIES OF MEXICAN COMMUTER WORKERS -27-
7. CATEGORIES & ESTIMATED NUMBERS OF COMMUTERS -28-
8. ESTIMATED NUMBERS OF MEXICAN COMMUTER WORKERS RESIDING IN CIUDAD JUÁREZ -29-
9. TRENDS IN NORTHBOUND & SOUTHBOUND PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS ON THE PASO DEL NORTE & STANTON STREET INTERNATIONAL BRIDGES -31-
10. POST-BLOCKADE CHANGES IN DIFFERENCE & RATIO BETWEEN NORTHBOUND & SOUTHBOUND PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS, PASO DEL NORTE & STANTON STREET INTERNATIONAL BRIDGES -32-
11. NORTHBOUND & SOUTHBOUND PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS -33-
12. RATIO OF OBSERVED TO EXPECTED SOUTHBOUND PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS, PASO DEL NORTE & STANTON STREET INTERNATIONAL BRIDGES -35-
13. RATIO OF OBSERVED TO EXPECTED NUMBERS OF NORTHBOUND PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS, PASO DEL NORTE INTERNATIONAL BRIDGE -36-
14. PERCENT CHANGES IN REPORTED GROSS SALES IN THE RETAIL TRADE INDUSTRY: ZIP CODES IN EL PASO -41-
15. PERCENT CHANGES IN SALES TAX ALLOCATIONS -42-
16. PERCENT CHANGES IN SALES TAX ALLOCATIONS -43-
17. JOB ORDERS TAKEN BY TEXAS EMPLOYMENT COMMISSION, EL PASO COUNTY -44-
18. MEAN NEW JOB ORDER LISTINGS FOR EL PASO TEXAS EMPLOYMENT COMMISSION SELECTED WEEKS -45-
19. UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IN EL PASO COUNTY -46-
20. HOTEL OCCUPANCY RATES IN EL PASO -47-
21. AUTOMOBILE-PEDESTRIAN ACCIDENTS: EL PASO BORDER HIGHWAY -49-
22. CHANGES IN ENROLLMENT, SELECTED SCHOOLS: EL PASO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT -54-
23. SCHOOL ENROLLMENTS IN NINE EL PASO COUNTY ISDs -55-
24. SCHOOL ENROLLMENT & PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS CLASSIFIED AS ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED -56-
25. DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDING, 1992-1993 -57-
26. HISPANIC BIRTHS IN EL PASO COUNTY -59-
27. THOMASON HOSPITAL STATISTICS -64-
28. NUMBER OF OFFENSES REPORTED TO THE POLICE PER 100,000 POPULATION FOR 40 U.S. CITIES SIMILAR IN POPULATION SIZE TO EL PASO RANKED BY TOTAL CRIME INDEX -70-
29. AVERAGE ANNUAL PERCENT CHANGES IN CRIME RATES PER 100,000 POPULATION FOR 49 U.S. CITIES RANKED BY PERCENT CHANGE IN TOTAL CRIME RATE -72-
30. REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF VIOLENT & PROPERTY CRIME INDEXES: U.S. METROPOLITAN STATISTICAL AREAS -74-
31. MAJOR CRIME TRENDS IN EL PASO -75-
32. CRIMES REPORTED TO THE EL PASO POLICE DEPARTMENT BY MONTH -76-
33. ESTIMATES OF POST-OPERATION EFFECT ON MAJOR CRIME FOR FOUR MODELS OF TREND & SEASONALITY -78-
34. DIFFERENCES IN AVERAGE ARREST RATES FROM EL PASO BY RACE/ETHNICITY & AGE CATEGORY -83-
35. VARIOUS MEASURES OF COST OF CRIME -85-
36. TOTAL APPREHENSIONS OF ILLEGAL ALIEN ADULTS BY SANTA FE RAILROAD POLICE OFFICERS -87-
37. APPREHENSIONS OF PEOPLE ATTEMPTING TO IMPORT DRUGS -89-
38. AMOUNTS OF SEIZURES OF DRUGS AT BRIDGES BY U.S. CUSTOMS SERVICE -90-
39. SEIZURES OF ILLEGAL AGRICULTURAL GOODS AND CARGO -90-
40. HUMAN RIGHTS-RELATED INCIDENTS REPORTED, EL PASO SECTOR -102-
41. TYPES OF ABUSE -102-
42. COMPARISON OF CHARACTERISTICS OF ILLEGAL BORDER CROSSERS, NONCROSSERS, & CROSSERS WHO POSSESS THE BORDER CROSSING CARD -110-
43. TYPES OF FALSE DOCUMENTATION ATTEMPTED BY MEXICAN CROSSERS, BRIDGE OF THE AMERICAS -116-

Figures

1. NUMBER OF OF LINEWATCH APPREHENSIONS -23-
2. EL PASO POSTAL ZIP CODES -40-
3. HISPANIC BIRTHS IN EL PASO COUNTY -60-
4. NON-HISPANIC BIRTHS IN EL PASO COUNTY -61-
5. HISPANIC BIRTHS IN EL PASO COUNTY BY YEAR -62-

I. Introduction

On September 19, 1993, Silvestre Reyes, the Chief of the El Paso Sector of the Border Patrol of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service [INS], launched Operation Blockade along a twenty-mile stretch of the U.S./Mexico border between El Paso and Juárez. Renamed Operation Hold the Line three weeks later (to avoid the negative connotations associated with the word “blockade”), the initiative represented an effort to cut off illegal migration from Mexico into El Paso (and through El Paso into the United States). As such, it involved a major shift in strategy on the part of the El Paso sector Border Patrol. Previously the Border Patrol had allowed relatively unhindered movements across the river, concentrating on the subsequent interception of crossers who had already entered the city, including those who were trying to move inland at major transportation arteries (roads, railroad lines, and airports). While the old strategy took advantage of the rugged, arid terrain around El Paso that makes it difficult for long distance migrants to move to other destinations once they have entered, it allowed easy access to El Paso for substantial numbers of undocumented Mexicans who were not intent on migrating on to other destinations. The new strategy, however, by saturating the border between El Paso and Juárez with agents, was intended to curtail both local and long-distance illegal migration.

This research examines the workings and effects of Operation Hold the Line, starting with its inception in late September 1993 and running through April 1994, the latest release date for relevant data as of the writing of this report. The main goal of the Operation was to slow illegal flows. In the words of the Border Patrol, “Operation Hold the Line’s main mission is to prevent . . . undocumented aliens from crossing illegally” (Reyes 1994). Hence, the first objective of this study is to assess the extent to which a slowdown in such flows has been achieved. The second major goal of the study is to determine the social and economic effects of the Operation on El Paso/Juárez. This is not only crucial for determining the extent to which the Operation is achieving its primary mission, but it is also fundamental for developing rough overall assessments of the Op-

eration. Without knowing its consequences, it would be difficult to tell if the Operation has been working in the ways it was intended, not to mention hard to render an overall judgment about the balance of positive and negative consequences that it might be generating.

The study’s ultimate objective, which is to discern the larger significance of the Operation for issues pertaining to U.S. immigration and immigrant policy, has several implications. First, it means consequences must be assessed for both El Paso and Juárez. If apparently positive effects in one community are accompanied by seemingly negative effects in the other, then focusing on only one side of the border could give misleading impressions about the overall effects on two cities tied by a symbiotic (if at times uneasy) relationship. Obviously each city’s home country retains sovereignty over its side of the border. But equally clearly, if one city gains at the expense of the other, hardship and disequilibrium may result, with attendant implications both for the kinds and numbers of Mexicans wanting to migrate to the United States and for the kind of reception migrants encounter when they arrive.

Second, different persons cross the border between Juárez and El Paso for different reasons, which means that there are several different types of border crossers. Generalizations about one type of flow may not apply to another type. Thus, Operation Hold the Line may have affected (and may be affecting) these different kinds of crossers in varying ways. It is critical to examine initiatives like Operation Hold the Line within a framework that from the very beginning takes into account this possibility. This conceptualization of multiple kinds of border crossers provides not only a multidimensional framework for examining the workings and effects of Operation Hold the Line, but one that also holds the promise of leading to new ways to assess the effectiveness of border control policies and strategies.

Third, and relatedly, an adequate interpretation of the effects of Operation Hold the Line must consider a multiplicity of outcomes. For example, an interpretation that seemingly explains changes since the inception of the Operation in apprehension sta-

tistics but not in hospital admissions and births, for example, is less useful than one that explains both. The strategy used examines a wide range of consequences that might be thought to be associated with the Operation. This offers the advantages of both greater comprehensiveness of coverage and an increased likelihood of discerning the Operation's effects. Whereas individual pieces of evidence may not provide enough basis for reaching firm conclusions, many different pieces of evidence taken together carry greater weight and provide a stronger basis for research conclusions, especially if these generally point in the same direction.

Certain theoretical and methodological considerations have implications for the strategies followed in this research. Theoretical notions about the U.S./Mexico border consist of implicit and explicit ideas people hold and articulate about the structure and functioning of economic and social relationships in the relevant regions of both countries. Different theories influence thinking about the kinds of immigration (and other) policies that various observers believe are most needed in a post-NAFTA environment. Views that give overriding emphasis to the border as a mostly geographic boundary between sovereign states tend to highlight divergences in state interests and the need for policies that protect these, just as views that give predominant weight to the border as an area in which northern Mexico and the southwestern United States are inextricably tied together tend to highlight convergences in state interests and the need for policies that foster further integration (Bean, Vernez & Kelly 1989; Weintraub 1990).

The theoretical view used here combines elements of both of these. It is akin to perspectives that see the border as a complex mixture of both integrating and differentiating processes that are often in tension with one another (Lowenthal & Burgess 1993). Policies that would either only increase legal crossings or only restrict illegal crossings risk oversimplifying the complexities involved in border dynamics. As shown below in the case of the U.S./Mexico border in general, and in the case of Operation Hold the Line in particular, legal and illegal migration are not only connected by virtue of U.S. immigration

policy and border control strategies, they also often appear to substitute for one another. This examination of Operation Hold the Line thus seeks to assess its effects on both illegal and legal crossings, as well as to discern the implications of these for various policy options concerning both legal and illegal immigration and nonimmigrant crossings at the U.S./Mexico border.

Methodologically, this research relies on both quantitative and qualitative evidence to develop an assessment of the Operation. The former includes official statistics that provide a basis for ascertaining the representativeness, scope, and magnitude of the Operation's effects. Border crossing and apprehensions data, police and crime data, birth and hospital data, education and school attendance statistics, and sales tax and general sales data were examined. The qualitative evidence is obtained from ethnographic fieldwork and in-depth interviews that provide information about motivations and processes not always revealed in official statistics; over four months the research team conducted interviews with nearly two hundred persons, including both local and federal government officials in both El Paso and Juárez, as well as numerous other persons at border crossing sites and other locales in both cities. The objective of the study is thus to combine the lessons from both qualitative and quantitative data into an interpretation of what has been happening in El Paso/Juárez as a result of the onset and continuation of Operation Hold the Line.

The monograph is organized into nine chapters. After the introduction, the second is a description of Operation Hold the Line, together with a discussion of the geographical and metropolitan context within which the Operation has taken place. The third examines evidence about the curtailment of flows as indicated by border crossing and apprehensions data. The fourth examines effects on business and economic activity, and the fifth analyzes effects on education, births and social services. The sixth presents an examination of the effects of the Operation on crime rates and other indicators of illegal or disruptive behaviors. The seventh details effects on community and public opinion. The eighth chapter focuses on the Operation's consequences for Juárez

and the people living there, paying special attention to the experience of obtaining and using Border Crossing Cards. The ninth provides an overall assessment of the Operation's effects, together with discussion of the implications of the study's findings for immigration and border crossing issues.

II. The Operation and Its Context

This chapter presents a brief description of the Operation, followed by a discussion of the wider metropolitan and border crossing context within which the Operation began and continues to the present day. Two aspects of context are particularly important: the geographic and urban structural features of the larger El Paso/Juárez metropolitan area that both constrain and compel certain kinds of migration patterns; and the policies governing legal nonimmigrant border crossings between Juárez and El Paso, together with their implementation, that structure the interrelationship between legal and illegal migration in the region. Thus, understanding the effects of the Operation necessitates both an awareness of the circumstances under which legal crossings take place and a recognition that these can often influence illegal crossings.

Operation Hold the Line

Operation Blockade was launched on Sunday, September 19, 1993. Conceived by Silvestre Reyes, Chief Patrol Agent for the El Paso Sector of the United States Border Patrol, the Operation represented a major change in strategy for controlling the border in the El Paso sector. The previous emphasis had been on apprehending suspected illegal aliens once they had crossed the border. The new concept was to enhance linewatch operations by maintaining a high profile along a stretch of approximately twenty miles of border in the metropolitan El Paso area. The goal was to discourage the unregulated flow of illegal migration of individuals from Mexico into El Paso and the United States by stopping people before they crossed the border (Martin 1993).

Shortly after his appointment in July, 1993, Chief Reyes submitted plans for Operation Blockade to Headquarters, U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service [INS], suggesting that the border could be controlled with an aggressive, high-profile interception strategy. INS approved the expenditure of \$300 thousand for the operation, primarily to fund overtime payments. The Operation was launched shortly after midnight on September 19, when 130 agents and 3 maintenance crews were deployed to saturate the line along the river and to begin repairing holes in the border fence. More than 400 of the El Paso Sector's 650 Border Patrol agents were deployed 24-hours-per-day, 7-days-per-week along the border. Agents were withdrawn from such other duties as employer sanctions, traffic checks, and support positions, to double the number of agents stationed along the border. Prior to the initiation of Operation Blockade, the Border Patrol had concentrated less on illegal migrants crossing the border and more on tracking them down and arresting them after they crossed and as they moved on to other destinations. The new Operation was designed mainly to curtail illegal crossing. Other major goals of the Operation, according to Chief Reyes, were to reduce crime, panhandling, and street vending in downtown El Paso and to remove agents from situations that sometimes not only led to the accidental harassment of Mexican Americans in El Paso, but also placed agents at risk of personal injury.

The blockade took a three-pronged approach. First, a line of Border Patrol agents was established in full view of the border. Parked in their distinctive, signature-green Chevrolet Suburbans on the levee roads along the Rio Grande from border monument number one in the west to the Ysleta headgates in the east, the agents, through the sheer force of numbers, were intended to deter potential illegal border crossers. Agents were stationed close enough together to have visual contact with other agents on either side of them. Some were as close as fifty yards and others as far apart as one-quarter mile, depending on the terrain. Agents were instructed to apprehend and detain illegal border crossers and to call for assistance and reinforcements as required. Con-

centrations of agents were particularly heavy at the most common border penetration locations, such as railroad bridges and shallow points in the river.

Second, four helicopter patrols were established and operated during the three-week blockade. Airborne agents maintained radio contact with agents on the ground to coordinate deterrent efforts.

Third, the 9-mile stretch of the border fence in the downtown El Paso area along the Rio Grande River, which had numerous holes and was breachable in some 125 locations, was repaired. The holes in the fence were closed at the start of Operation Blockade; the agency effected rapid repairs as new holes were created by migrants trying to cross the border.

A week prior to initiating the Operation, Chief Reyes informed Mr. Alfred Giugni, El Paso INS District Director of the impending operation. The INS District Office is responsible for controlling border crossings at ports of entry. To strengthen bridge traffic-screening capabilities in El Paso, Mr. Giugni requested additional manpower from the INS regional office in Dallas. A team of one coordinator, nine immigration inspectors, and one K-9 drug-sniffing dog and handler was dispatched for the initial three weeks of the Operation. INS agents at border-crossing points of entry were instructed to inspect documents of individuals passing through inspection stations more thoroughly than previously. As a result of the closer inspections, some 443 Mexican Border Crossing Cards [BCCs] (INS forms I-186/I-586) were seized in the first thirty days. Some were confiscated because they were counterfeit, while others were carried by unauthorized holders or by people who were thought to be crossing the border to work illegally.

The initiation of Operation Blockade produced a diversity of reactions. The Operation was widely covered by both the U.S. and Mexican media, and in general the response in El Paso was favorable. Radio call-in polls in El Paso reported overwhelmingly positive reactions with levels of support running higher than 90 percent. The national news media ran numerous stories praising the Operation. A *Time* Magazine article quoted Mayor Larry Francis: "The

rampant criminal problems in our downtown are gone," and Fred Morales, from the Chihuahuita barrio, said "The stabbings and shootings are down to zero" (Woodbury 1993). On the *MacNeil/Lehrer News Hour* on November 23, Doris Meissner, the newly appointed Commissioner of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, said of the Operation: "It's been a very successful program from an enforcement standpoint. . . . because it has prevented illegal immigration from occurring." In California, officials called for a similar program along their state's southern border (Pinkerton 1993). Many other similarly positive reactions were reported.

In Juárez, however, reactions were more negative. For example, an interview with the *presidente municipal* (mayor) of Juárez, Francisco Villarreal, Abelardo Escobar, the *secretario del ayuntamiento*, and Jose Albert Silva, the *director del gobierno* revealed that the mayor had first learned of Operation Blockade in the press. He felt that the U.S. authorities should have notified their counterparts and local government officials on the Mexican side before launching the Operation in September 1993. Although he opposed the Operation from the start as an "unfortunate, discriminatory, and unjust measure," Villarreal felt that fewer problems would have resulted had consultation with the Mexican side been pursued:

A lot of it has to do with the way it was done. The way they chose was terribly unfortunate. We have a good relationship with Mr. Reyes [the Border Patrol chief]. He has been here several times, but this was something different. . . . If you go about things the right way it is very easy to find a common objective. Actions that converge upon the same thing. But they didn't give us that opportunity, but rather presented the blockade as adversaries.¹

He also added that as mayor of Juárez, he had no objection to the Border Patrol's enforcement of U.S. laws, but only to what he saw as the disrespectful and inconsiderate way in which the new enforce-

¹ All direct quotes in this section are translated from Spanish.

ment strategy was implemented. Like other Juárez citizens and business leaders interviewed, Mayor Villarreal was particularly concerned by statements—made by Chief Reyes and later repeated in the press—that associated undocumented Mexicans with crime in El Paso. He noted the lack of U.S. efforts to cooperate with the appropriate authorities in Juárez before acting unilaterally. He also said the implication that Mexican nationals are responsible for downtown El Paso's crime problems is especially rankling to Juárez residents given the numerous disturbances caused by drunken El Paso revelers on the streets of downtown Juárez:

You can't associate crime with Mexican crossers. Whether it's true or not. But if even if it is true, you don't bring it up publicly! Nobody can say that Mexican delinquents go to El Paso. Why don't we talk about the American delinquents who come over here to get drunk before going home? Because I have no reason to say it. I have to see what can be done about it first. At three o'clock in the morning, the people coming out of the bars are pure Americans—children and adolescents that come over here just to raise hell. Why should I broadcast that? I need to call across the border to my counterpart to see what we can do about it.

Mr. Escobar added that if all the *illegales* that had been prevented from crossing into El Paso were in fact *delinquentes*, then Juárez would have experienced a sharp rise in petty crime. It did not. Instead, he noted, it experienced a boom in street vending by persons who before the Operation sold their wares in El Paso.

Like many Juárez citizens who spoke with us, the city officials were critical how INS officials treated legal Mexican border crossers at the ports of entry. Mr. Escobar discussed the fear and intimidation that the INS inspector confiscation of Border Crossing Cards [BCCs] provoked among Juárez residents:

One important thing about the checking of the Border Crossing Cards. A lot of our people in Juárez work here and cross over

to El Paso to shop, or for other activities. It takes a lot of effort for them to get their crossing card. When officials on the bridges put pressure on them, people get nervous. They're afraid that they're going to have their card taken away. This provoked a kind of psychosis in the community. Especially among the most humble people, the ones who can least defend themselves. If one of these officials is hostile towards me, and demands to know where I'm going, and what I'm going to do in El Paso, this is going to upset me, even if I'm not going to do anything bad. And many people don't know exactly what their rights are or how the official is supposed to act, and these people don't know how to stand up for themselves in such a situation. So when they started inspecting crossers so aggressively, a lot of people just stopped going to El Paso because they were afraid.

At the same time, the mayor and the other officials emphasized that the tolerance of illegal crossing for so many years by the Border Patrol led many Juárez residents not to bother to apply for the Border Crossing Card. They also thought it undermined the legitimacy of the U.S. authorities in the minds of many Mexican border residents. Mr. Escobar described the situation on the international bridges before Operation Hold the Line:

Before the Operation, for many years, the people of Juárez went to El Paso, oftentimes illegally. Some through the river, others even over the bridge! On the Bridge of the Americas you could be waiting in line to be inspected, and on the left hand side of the bridge, that other side, you could see people walking north right through [illegally] into the United States, just fifty meters away from the official inspection point. And there we'd be, right on the bridge, and we'd watch—I don't know how the Border Patrol let this happen—we'd watch people walk through, with strollers, with children, with bags. And here you are in line to enter, asking yourself, "How is this possible?" Here they're asking

you, “Where are you going? What do you intend to do in the United States?” A series of aggressive questions. And I’m here in line, my passport in hand, and I’m not bringing in any contraband. And watching the people walk right on through on the other side, freely. Then all of a sudden the Border Patrol shuts off this “unofficial” entry into El Paso, you know? That was tolerated for years. It wasn’t that it was hidden, it was tolerated.

The concern felt by Juárez residents after the blockade began came in large measure, these officials agreed, from the overnight shift from evident tolerance of illegal crossing by Mexicans on the part of the Border Patrol, to zero tolerance. Moreover, the Border Patrol’s historical tolerance of illegal border crossing had resulted in many families in Juárez becoming dependent upon goods and incomes brought back by family members who crossed illegally into El Paso.

On October 2, after more than 800 hours of overtime costing more than \$250 thousand, Operation Blockade ended. By the time the money to fund payments of overtime compensation had been expended, Chief Reyes had decided to continue the operation indefinitely because of its apparent success in curtailing illegal flows into El Paso. He re-assigned agents from the interior of the El Paso Sector² to work the extreme ends of the line and continue the operation. The strategy continued to be implemented, now renamed Operation Hold the Line because the military-sounding term “blockade” had offended community leaders in both El Paso and Juárez. Chief Reyes was further able to augment his core cadre of agents by requesting through Border Patrol headquarters the temporary reassignment of northern border sector personnel. Thus far, agents from sectors in Maine and Washington have been detailed to augment the El Paso sector on thirty-day assignments. In a long-term action, Attorney General Janet Reno announced on February 9, 1994,

² The El Paso Sector includes two counties in West Texas and all of New Mexico, an area of 125 thousand square miles and 289 miles of border.

that fifty additional agents would be hired and assigned to the El Paso Sector to further support implementation of the strategy.

On October 10, 1993, in an extension of the strategy, the Border Patrol also proposed building a wall dividing Sunland Park, New Mexico from Rancho Anapra, Chihuahua, a poor squatter settlement on the outskirts of Juárez and a favorite illegal crossing point for Mexicans that is so easy to traverse that Border Patrol agents refer to it as the “Anapra port of entry.” The squatter settlement at Anapra is not served by the Juárez water or sewage system; residents of Sunland Park have for years given water to their neighbors across the line by running garden hoses across the border. Many residents of Anapra have shopped, worked, and even gone to church in Sunland Park. It is virtually impossible, especially at night, to prevent illegal crossings, and the Border Patrol believed that building a wall would be necessary to control illegal crossing there. Hence, Silvestre Reyes announced his intention to construct a 2.8 kilometer steel wall on the slopes of Mount Cristo Rey in the Sunland Park area.

This action was immediately dubbed “the border’s own Berlin Wall” in the Mexican press. The proposal to build a wall also drew an immediate response from the governor of the state of Chihuahua, of the *Partido de Acción Nacional* [PAN], who denounced the idea as “part of the environment of hostility that has arisen on the border,” adding that the wall “will not stem the flow of undocumented migrants.” Further, he called on Mexicans to “abstain from shopping in El Paso, Texas, during this Christmas season.” The governor’s call for a boycott was backed immediately by such business organizations such *Cámara Nacional de la Industria de la Transformación* [CANACINTRA] and *Cámara Nacional del Comercio* [CANACO], whose spokespersons talked of possibly reviving “Operation Dignity,” a public “buy Mexican” campaign of the past to convince Juárez residents to refrain from shopping in El Paso. The call for a boycott, however, was not supported by the city government, also controlled by the PAN.

The consul general of Mexico in El Paso, Texas, Armando Ortiz Rocha, called the proposed wall,

“unfriendly, inopportune and imprudent” and “an unjustifiable aggression.” Other organizations expressing opposition to the wall included both the Hispanic and Greater El Paso Chambers of Commerce, some human rights and Latino civil rights organizations, as well as Mayor Larry Francis of El Paso. Bruce King, the governor of New Mexico also weighed in, saying that the wall would send an “unfriendly message” at exactly the wrong time, during the ongoing negotiations on the North American Free Trade Agreement [NAFTA]. Also, on Friday, October 10, the mayors of both El Paso and Juárez had confirmed their participation in a series of cultural and artistic events that were planned under the rubric of “Day of Unity: We are all *Fronterizos*.” The culmination of “Day of Unity” was to have been the signing by city officials and civic leaders from both cities of a “good neighbors convention” at the international line on the “Free Bridge” connecting the United States and Mexico. The signing ceremony was canceled at the last minute to protest the wall proposal. The Juárez mayor declared his opposition in an official statement, as did Mayor Francis of El Paso, who said the wall “would send the wrong message,” a view shared by Congressman Ron Coleman.

The Metropolitan Context

The nature of the El Paso/Juárez metropolitan area must be understood to appreciate fully the constraints facing the Operation. El Paso’s unique geographical location has played a vital role in its social, economic, and political development. The city lies in extreme west Texas, at an elevation of 3,762 feet. To the east lies the west Texas desert, while to the west lie the Rocky Mountains. El Paso is connected to the rest of the United States by air (an international airport), rail (three major railroads), and highways, but the city remains nonetheless somewhat isolated because of the long distances that must be traveled to reach other population centers. Although El Paso lies along U.S. Interstate 10, a main cross-country highway that connects the Atlantic Coast at Jacksonville, Florida, to the Pacific Coast at Los Angeles, vast distances must be covered to reach other major cities: to the west, Phoenix is 400 miles, San Diego 725 and Los Angeles 790; to the east lies

San Antonio (560 miles), Dallas (625 miles), Houston (750 miles), and New Orleans (1100 miles). El Paso also straddles the Pan American Highway, which connects Nome, Alaska to Tierra del Fuego at the southern tip of South America. Albuquerque, New Mexico, lies 275 miles to the north, along U.S. Interstate 25. Ciudad Chihuahua lies 240 miles to the south of Juárez on Mexican National Highway 45.

El Paso, with a population in 1990 of about 600 thousand persons, is the largest U.S. city on the Mexican border and the twenty-sixth largest city in the United States. Juárez, with a 1990 population of about 800 thousand persons, is the fourth largest city in Mexico. The juxtaposition of the two cities has led to dense economic and social ties between the residents of El Paso and Juárez. During the Prohibition Era, two prominent Kentucky distilleries relocated plants to Juárez and several El Paso bar owners moved south. Tourism flourished as numerous associations decided to hold conventions in the city. During World War II, the establishment of training facilities led to a military build-up that, in turn, resulted in extensive border crossings. The disparities between U.S. and Mexican divorce laws led to continued growth in El Paso’s tourist industry during the 1940s through the 1960s as many U.S. citizens lodged and dined in El Paso while arranging their divorces in Juárez. Finally, the *maquiladora* [assembly plant] industry has grown and been significantly influenced by the economy and laws of both countries (Hirsch 1987; Martinez 1994).

The legacy of El Paso’s past is a multicultural, bilingual, international city of more than one-half million people. Nearly 69 percent of the population claim Mexican origin. Both English and Spanish are spoken regularly. According to the 1990 U.S. Census, English is spoken by 85 percent of the people, while 64 percent of the people speak Spanish (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1993). Many families can trace their ancestry to settlers who came to the Paso del Norte region hundreds of years ago. This history has resulted in a feeling of community that often transcends the international boundary. The population includes Caucasians, African-Americans, Native Americans, Asians, and Pacific Islanders, and the

international flavor of the city has been enhanced by resettlement of Vietnamese refugees and the presence of foreign military personnel. However, the city's predominant tenor derives from its heritage as an Old West town on the Mexican border.

The large populations relative to other border towns, the geographic isolation from other parts of the United States and Mexico, and the cross-border familial relationships between people in both cities have resulted in a special relationship between El Paso and Juárez. Relatives visit back and forth, residents regularly cross the border to shop for items either not found in their home city or to take advantage of lower prices in the other city. On Halloween, Mexican children routinely cross into El Paso to "trick or treat" (except in 1993, when INS port of entry inspectors denied entry to those without Border Crossing Cards) (Conely & Parra 1993).

That relationship notwithstanding, tensions have arisen in the past. The problems of air quality and pollution sources are prime examples of strains that have developed between the cities. Past incidents also include the arrest of an El Paso policeman and the seizure of his police car when he entered Mexico after pursuing an auto theft suspect (Ivey 1992a, 1992b) and the shooting of a nineteen-year old El Pasoan, allegedly by a Juárez police officer (Olvera 1992b). The implementation of Operation Hold the Line certainly raised concerns in Juárez, spawning anti-American protests and a proposed boycott on shopping in El Paso. Nevertheless, as tensions have arisen between the cities over the years, efforts to respond with a sense of cooperation and joint venture have been common. Air quality is a major concern in El Paso, and it is adversely affected by pollutants from Juárez. An El Paso/Juárez International Air Quality Management District has been proposed for the purpose of resolving many of those problems (Negrón 1993). Various official and unofficial agencies and groups meet periodically to improve relations and work on joint projects. The two city councils have met in joint session (Jauregui 1992); the chambers of commerce work together on tourism and economic development issues (Hamann 1993; Townsend 1992), and local officials coordinate with federal officials to facilitate international coop-

eration (Townsend 1991).

Economically, El Paso is a relatively poor city, with more than 25 percent of its population living below the official poverty line (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1993). Per capita income falls 30 to 35 percent below the state of Texas average (Institute for Manufacturing and Materials Management 1991). The federal government is the major employer in the region. Three major military installations—Fort Bliss, White Sands Missile Range, and Holloman Air Force Base—lie within 100 miles of El Paso and supply the city and region with a large number of jobs and significant economic activity. The military base populations, which include military personnel, their dependents, civilian employees, civil servants and defense contractors, number about 95 thousand. Additionally, more than 15 thousand retired military live in the region. The economic impact of this military presence was nearly \$1.3 trillion in 1990 (Institute for Manufacturing and Materials Management 1991). Other federal agencies, such as the Immigration and Naturalization Service, Border Patrol, Customs Service, also have an economic impact on the region (Institute for Manufacturing and Materials Management 1991).

Tourism is the second largest source of revenue for the city. The *maquiladora* industry provides jobs and money to El Paso as well. At one time there were as many assembly plants in El Paso as there were in Juárez (Institute for Manufacturing and Materials Management 1991). However, as productivity and skill levels increased in Mexican plants, the perceived need for plants on the U.S. side declined. Currently about five thousand El Pasoans either support maquiladoras in El Paso or work in Juárez plants. *Maquiladoras* are the second largest generator of foreign exchange (behind petroleum) in Mexico. A great deal of commercial development on both sides of the border is financed by Texas banks and holding companies. El Paso banks are said to hold hundreds of millions of dollars from Mexican depositors (Hirsch 1987; Martínez 1994).

El Pasoans shop in Juárez, and Juárezenses shop in El Paso (Resendiz 1993). The Greater El Paso Chamber of Commerce estimates Mexican shoppers account for more than \$1 billion dollars a year in El Paso

retail sales. After the 1982 peso devaluation, retail sales fell 42 percent in El Paso (Institute for Manufacturing and Materials Management 1991). One Juárez businessman is establishing a company to help finance loans to facilitate Mexican purchases of automobiles in El Paso. Currently, according to some El Paso car dealers, Mexicans account for up to 10 percent of their sales, but most pay cash because of the difficulties of arranging loans internationally (Olvera 1992a). Mexican capital also plays an increasingly important role in the El Paso economy. The Westin Hotel in downtown El Paso was recently purchased by the Mexican El Camino Real chain, for example, and the Cielo Vista Mall is owned by investors from Chihuahua City.

Geographical and climatic conditions combine to funnel migrants into, rather than around, El Paso. The rugged terrain and desert conditions provide little respite for weary foot travelers. The climate of the region can be harsh. Summers are hot and dry. Temperatures regularly climb above 100 degrees during the summer, and annual rainfall is less than 10 inches. Winters can be equally harsh, with cold temperatures exacerbated by high winds. Water is a scarce commodity. Another factor that funnels migrants into El Paso is that only in the city can one find ground and air transportation. Consequently, immigration officials conduct random vehicle checks and patrol the airport, bus terminals, and train depots for illegal migrants. Railroad tracks run within fifty feet of the border west of El Paso outside Sunland Park, New Mexico. Anapra, the Mexican squatter settlement immediately across the border from Sunland Park, is situated within 100 yards of the tracks and is a staging area for migrants and others to hop west-bound freight trains.

Legal Nonimmigrant Border Crossings

The harsh terrain around El Paso, the generally long distances to other cities, and the lack of sufficient numbers of agents, help to account for the prior Border Patrol strategy of emphasizing interception of undocumented migrants after entry rather than deterrence before entry. This strategy allowed relatively easy entry into the city on the part of illegal

crossers not intending to move on to other locations. The new strategy, by contrast, seeks to discourage all illegal crossers whether their destinations are local or some distance from El Paso. But what kinds of crossers are most affected by the new strategy? This requires understanding who is *not* affected, that is, understanding who can cross legally and under what circumstances. Federal immigration law, as given in Title 8 of the *Code of Federal Regulations*, has established many different categories of nonimmigrant visas for foreign citizens who wish to visit the United States on a nonpermanent basis. Nearly all of these categories require the visitor to be the bearer of a valid passport from his/her country and to apply for the visa at a U.S. consulate in that country. Such persons can, of course, enter the country legally.

There are also other categories of persons who can enter legally. One category of nonimmigrant visa is the Mexican Border Crossing Card [BCC]³ held by thousands of Mexican citizens residing in Ciudad Juárez and other Mexican border cities. Bearers of the BCC, which has no expiration date, are entitled to admission to the United States “as a border crosser or nonimmigrant visitor for a period not to exceed 72 hours to visit within 25 miles of the border” (CFR, Title 8, § 235.1). The BCC may be issued to Mexican residents by officers of the INS at official U.S. ports of entry located on the southern border. A recipient of the BCC need not bear a valid Mexican passport but may instead present proof of his/her Mexican residency by presenting a valid Mexican Form 13, also known as the *pasaporte provisional* (CFR, Title 8, §212.6). As is the case with any other nonimmigrant visa, applicants for the BCC must demonstrate that they do not intend to abandon their Mexican residence in favor of residence in the United States and that they do not intend to seek employment in the United States (CFR, Title 8, §1184 (b)). As is the case with any visa, whether immigrant or nonimmigrant,

³ The Border crossing card is known by several names to Juárez residents: *pasaporte local*, *mica*, and *permiso de cruce*. The BCC is not to be confused with the *tarjeta verde* [green card] held by legal permanent residents of the United States, or with the *pasaporte provisional* (or Mexican Form 13), which is one of the documents applicants must present in order to be issued a BCC.

applicants for the BCC must demonstrate that they are “not otherwise inadmissible” to the United States (CFR, Title 8, §212.6), i.e., that they are not members of a class of “excludable aliens” under CFR, Title 8, §1182 and have not broken any other U.S. immigration laws.⁴

The existence of the BCC both reflects and facilitates the historical economic and social integration of border “twin” cities like Ciudad Juárez and El Paso. Juárez residents who possess the BCC use it to pass freely back and forth between El Paso and their city to conduct all sorts of personal affairs—to shop, pay social visits, change currency, deposit money in U.S. banks, attend cultural and sporting events, receive medical services (including to give birth), go out to eat. Many also use the BCC to conduct business—to meet with business or trading partners, purchase supplies, deliver orders of goods produced or assembled in Mexico, use communications, financial, or repair services, and, in some cases (illegally), to go to work. The city of El Paso is economically dependent upon Mexican nationals for dollars spent on personal consumption as well as other kinds of business transactions in El Paso, both of which serve to integrate the economies of the United States and Mexico. Without the free, legal, and routine cross-border movement of thousands of Mexican nationals facilitated on a daily basis by the BCC, the El Paso economy clearly would be adversely affected. While no current figures on the number of Juárez residents who hold the BCC are available,⁵ it seems safe to say that most of the millions of legal border

⁴ An additional requirement, although it does not seem to be specified in the *Code of Federal Regulations*, is that the applicant be a resident of a Mexican border city. Mexican nationals residing in cities in the Mexican interior may be awarded multiple entry, nonimmigrant visas with similar privileges and limitations as the BCC, but these visas must be issued by a U.S. consulate and be stamped on a valid Mexican passport. As a practical matter, this is sensible: the BCC is a wallet-sized card designed to be carried at all times by persons who cross the border routinely; residents of Mexican interior cities would seem to have less need for such a special document.

⁵ Because the BCC is issued without a fixed date of expiration, it is difficult to know how many valid BCCs are currently in circulation.

crossings made by Mexican nationals between Juárez and El Paso each year are made by BCC holders.⁶

Both the BCC and the Mexican Form 13 are issued free of charge to the applicant. There is no legal limit on the number of BCCs that may be issued. Given the apparent ease of meeting the requirements, the lack of a prohibitive charge for processing documents, the fact that as many people may be issued the BCC as apply for it, and its obvious utility to the bearer, why would anyone choose to cross the border illegally when it appears to be easy to cross legally? One reason is that, while the BCC can be used to cross the border legally, it does not confer the right to obtain employment in the United States. Illegal workers often do not wish to expose themselves to possible detection by U.S. immigration authorities who inspect entrants at official ports of entry to the United States. Moreover, many long- and short-term residents of Juárez have little hope of obtaining a BCC and must resort to illegal border crossing if they wish to avail themselves of opportunities for consumption and employment on the U.S. side of the border.

A second, and probably more significant, reason is that obtaining a BCC can be a time-consuming and complicated process. Many border residents are unable to obtain the BCC because of the way the INS interprets its legal mandate to determine which applicants for admission to the United States are eligible for nonimmigrant visas (CFR, Title 8, §1184 (b)) and which applicants belong to classes of excludable aliens (CFR, Title 8, §1182). The law grants a great deal of discretion to the INS at every level of its hierarchy, from the Commissioner, to District Directors, to port of entry Inspectors in making these determinations. For most practical purposes the answers to these questions hinge on whether the applicant, in the estimation of the INS, is financially

⁶ In 1993, 5,891,625 northbound pedestrian and 15,466,202 northbound vehicle crossings were made across the border into El Paso. Figures are not kept regarding the nationality or place of residence of crossers, however. Nonetheless, it seems safe to say from qualitative observation that the majority of crossers, both vehicular and pedestrian, are Mexican residents.

solvent. Applicants who are financially solvent, based on their employment or their assets, are thought to be less likely to be immigrants posing as temporary visitors to the United States. Their solvency helps to demonstrate their claim of eligibility for a nonimmigrant visa such as the BCC. It also helps demonstrate they do not belong to the three classes of excludable aliens: (1) paupers, professional beggars, or vagrants; (2) persons seeking to enter the United States to perform skilled or unskilled labor; and (3) persons who are likely to become “public charges” (CFR, Title 8, §1182 (a)).⁷ INS officers, according to the relevant statutes, may require entrants to answer questions regarding their solvency or present written documentation thereof (CFR, Title 8, §1225 (a)). Failure on the part of applicants to provide such answers/evidence at the time of application constitutes sufficient grounds for denying issuance of the BCC. Failure to provide such requested information to an INS officer when using the BCC for entry can result in its confiscation and revocation.

There is a high degree of consistency among the Brownsville, Laredo, and El Paso district ports of entry in the documents that applicants for the BCC must present to demonstrate their Mexican residency and financial solvency, although BCC application and issuance administrative procedures vary from district to district. In El Paso, the INS distributes mimeographed fliers in Spanish at the ports of entry at Ysleta, the Bridge of the Americans, and the Paso del Norte Bridge that list the documents BCC applicants are required to present. An English translation of this flier is presented in **Table 1**. All applicants for the BCC must present either a valid Mexican passport or a provisional passport known as the Form 13. In practice, most BCC applicants obtain the Form 13 from the *delagación* of the Mexican federal government next to the Paso del Norte Bridge in downtown Juárez. The Form 13 is issued free of charge to all applicants who present two photographs and the required documents, which include a valid birth certificate and two proofs of residency issued

⁷ Other classes of excludable aliens are not terribly common in the general population: the mentally retarded; the insane; drug addicts; convicted or confessed criminals; polygamists; prostitutes; etc.

at least six months prior to the time of application, from among the following:

- Receipts from gas, electricity, and telephone bills, or title to land;
- Proof of Mexican Social Security registration;
- Voter registration card;
- Driver’s license;
- Rent receipts.

In addition to the Form 13, the INS, in its flier, asks applicants to bring with them utility receipts in their name to demonstrate further their Mexican border residency.

To demonstrate financial solvency, the INS asks BCC applicants who are employees to present original pay stubs demonstrating their employment over the last twelve months, a letter from their employer verifying their employment, as well as proof of Mexican Social Security registration and bank account statements. Business people, professionals, farmers, and ranchers must similarly document stable sources of income or assets. Children and the elderly must demonstrate solvency based on the income/assets of the persons who support them. Upon obtaining their Form 13 and getting together the documentation requested for proving Juárez residency and financial solvency, BCC applicants line up at 4:00 A.M. on Wednesday mornings on the Mexican side of one of the bridges spanning the Rio Grande to cross to the INS port of entry office and request an application appointment with an INS officer the following week. If the INS officer approves their application at the time of that appointment, applicants are issued a temporary BCC which they may begin to use immediately to enter the United States. They may then pick up their permanent BCC in approximately six months at the Bridge of the Americas port of entry.

In sum, a number of obstacles must be overcome to obtain legal border crossing cards. Many Juárez residents think they are not able to satisfy the INS desire for documentation of their employment and income and self-select themselves out of the application process. [The reasons for this are discussed in more detail in Chapter VIII.] Long waits in line on

Table 1.

REQUIREMENTS FOR PROCESSING APPLICATION FOR CROSSING CARD (PASAPORTE LOCAL)

- A. Form 13, or a valid provisional or international passport.
- B. Two individual, color photographs, 3/4 profile, untouched, with the right ear uncovered, against a white background, for each applicant (regardless of age).
- C. If the person applying for the permit does not work, the person supporting him/her must come to this office and personally present documents demonstrating his/her employment (economic solvency).
- D. All applications for permits are processed individually, regardless of the age of the applicant. Dependent children of any age must present their birth certificates, 2 photos, and must also appear in this office; they must also present the documents listed above with letter "A," and bring with them the person who supports them economically.
- E. Women may no longer bring children with them to be added to their MICA. Children must appear with the requirements mentioned above in letter "D".

PROOF OF RESIDENCY: Receipts in your name for electricity, water, telephone, gas, etc.!!!

REQUIREMENTS TO PROVE ECONOMIC SOLVENCY

1. EMPLOYEE/WORKER—You must present paycheck stubs, or receipts for salary or payroll (photocopies are not acceptable) for an entire year. A letter from your employer on official stationery that indicates how long you have been working, if the position is permanent, and the salary you receive. Social Security Card, bank account, or savings account. Any other evidence that you judge to be important for demonstrating your economic solvency.
2. BUSINESSPERSON—You must present your City License, annual receipts for taxes collected by the federal government, receipts for business purchases, taxpayer ID number, bank account, Social Security registration, and a copy of the list of employees officially on your payroll.
3. FARMER/RANCHER—You must present the title(s) to your land, tax receipts, taxpayer ID number, cédula cuarta, official registration of your crops from the Agency of the Secretariat of Agriculture and Ranching with official seals, plus the registration of your cattle brand, if you are a rancher.
4. PROFESSIONAL—City license, tax receipts, bank account, credit cards. Professional ID card.
5. STUDENT—You must present your student ID and a letter from your school showing that you study there year-round. In addition, the person who supports you economically must come to this office with the documents mentioned above with regard to his/her employment (economic solvency).
6. OTHER APPLICANTS—Those persons not mentioned above, for example pensioners and older persons may present the person who supports them economically or whatever else they consider pertinent to their economic solvency.

PLEASE NOTE: Whether or not your application is approved by the inspector who interviews you depends in large measure upon the presentation of all the documents mentioned above.

workdays to be issued the Form 13, a night-time and early-morning wait on the bridge to be given an application form and appointment date, and a third wait on the appointed day in the INS port of entry office all help to deter applicants who have doubts about their likelihood to be approved for permission to cross the border.

Moreover, the INS only processes a fixed maximum number of applications per year, although in principle there is no limit on the number of BCCs that may be issued. According to the chief inspector at the Paso del Norte port of entry, before the Operation began, his staff processed a maximum of 250 individual BCC applications per week.⁸ From the start of the Operation through the month of October 1993, the number of applications processed was increased to 750 per week to handle an expected rise in demand for new or replacement BCCs as a result of the new border control strategy. In November, the *status quo ante* was resumed. The reason for this limit, according to INS officials, is that they lack sufficient resources to process more BCC applications without increasing the backlog of applications they receive for legal permanent residence. This accounts for the long and, in the past, often unruly queues formed on the Mexican side of the international bridges on the nights before the INS gives out BCC interview appointments. The cap also makes it impossible to gauge the true demand for the BCC on the part of Juárez residents.

The phenomenon of illegal border crossings in El Paso thus cannot be divorced from the issue of how Juárez residents become legal border crossers. The inconvenience of obtaining the necessary documents, BCC eligibility criteria that deter many people who in principle might qualify, the need for processing more BCC applications per year, and the previous allowance of relatively easy entry into El Paso of illegal crossers all combined prior to the Operation to encourage illegal crossings. Other factors discussed below also encourage illegal crossings. Thus,

⁸ Many applications are to replace lost or damaged cards or to issue cards with photos that better reflect a person's current appearance. Further, the number of individual applications processed is somewhat less than the number of application interviews conducted, as INS inspectors typically interview entire families together.

given that many persons have reasons to want to cross the border, given the deterrents that exist to obtaining BCCs in order to cross legally, and given that the Border Patrol's first line of defense was easily penetrated, many Juárez residents chose to make routine illegal crossings (while many more simply abstained from the opportunity). Such crossings helped to create the appearance that the Border Patrol had lost control of the border in the El Paso district and provided much of the impetus for launching Operation Hold the Line.

III. Effects on Illegal Flows

The major reason for conceiving and implementing Operation Hold the Line was to curtail illegal entry into El Paso (and through El Paso into the United States). This chapter seeks to ascertain the degree to which that objective has been achieved. Given the interconnection between legal and illegal border crossings in El Paso, it also seeks to gauge the Operation's effects on legal crossings. As noted above, understanding the effects of the Operation on border crossings requires a recognition that there are many different reasons for crossing and that either legal or illegal means may be used to achieve various crossing objectives. This means that it is useful to consider a taxonomy of different kinds of crossers. Just as it has been useful to consider different kinds and national origins of illegal entrants to the United States in estimating the magnitude of stocks and flows of illegal migrants (Bean, Edmonston & Passel 1990), so, too, is it useful to consider different kinds of crossers to assess the effects of Operation Hold the Line on El Paso/Juárez.

Two major distinctions among kinds of crossers are important at the outset: between legal and illegal crossers; and between long-distance and local migrants (or crossers). When combined with certain other characteristics of crossers, these distinctions yield eight possible kinds of crossers (see **Table 2**). One (illegal long-distance labor migrants) consists of persons who cross illegally with the intention of moving on to other destinations in the United States to find work. A second (illegal crossers/illegal work-

Table 2.

A TYPOLOGY OF MEXICAN BORDER CROSSERS IN EL PASO/JUÁREZ

Type	<u>Crosses</u>		<u>Works in El Paso</u>			<u>Other Legal Activities in El Paso</u>			<u>Criminal Activities in El Paso</u>
	Legally	Illegally	Legally	Illegally	Doesn't work	Shopping	Social Visits	Services	
Illegal Long-Distance Labor Migrants		+			+				
Illegal Crossers/ Illegal Workers		+		+		+	+	+	
Local Juvenile Crossers		+			+		+		+
Legal Crossers/ Illegal Workers	+			+		+	+	+	
Illegal, Nonlabor Crossers		+			+	+	+	+	
Legal Temporary Crossers	+				+	+	+	+	
Legal Crossers/ Legal Workers	+		+			+	+	+	
Lives in El Paso Illegally	+		+		+	+		+	

ers) consists of persons who cross illegally to seek work or to set up street vending operations. A third (local juvenile crossers) consists of persons (mostly teenage males) who cross illegally to hang out, have a good time, or just have the experience of crossing. Much of the petty vandalism often attributed to migrants may be committed by this type of crosser. A fourth (“legal crossers/illegal workers”) consists of persons who cross legally using *mica* cards (the local resident commuting card) but who work illegally as maids, gardeners, or other kinds of workers in El Paso. A fifth (illegal nonlabor crossers) consists of persons who cross illegally to engage in some nonwork-related activity, including shopping, visiting friends and relatives, and seeking medical services. A sixth (legal temporary crossers) consists of persons who cross legally (using the *mica* card) to pursue a similar variety of legal activities. A seventh (legal crossers/legal workers) consists of U.S. citizens living in Juárez, or legal long-distance labor migrants, for example. An eighth (illegal residents) consists of persons who live illegally in El Paso and cross into the United States illegally upon returning from visits with friends and family in Mexico.

Operation Hold the Line can affect different types of crossers differently. Long distance labor migrants, who for example, may be strongly motivated to find a way to enter despite any increased efforts at deterrence, may have been inconvenienced but not substantially deterred by Operation Hold the Line. To determine if such crossers seek simply to go around the end of the line outside of El Paso or cross into the United States at other points along the border where surveillance is less intense, month and sector-specific apprehensions data were analyzed. To see if persons crossing illegally to work in El Paso may have changed their crossing patterns and the duration of their stays as a result of the Operation, daily and weekly data on northbound and southbound bridge crossings were looked at. In both cases, the different effects on different kinds of crossers were considered.

Apprehensions Data

To assess whether the occurrence of some event or the change in some policy or strategy (such as the

change in border control strategy that accompanied Operation Hold the Line) affects some outcome variable, it is useful to examine data that permit comparisons of the key variables designed to be affected by the change in time periods before and after the change. Such comparisons provide approximations of natural experiments, but because one can never be sure that factors other than the one of interest are not accounting for postevent changes in the variable of interest, they have been termed “quasi-experiments” (Campbell & Stanley 1966). Such quasi-experimental designs have been usefully employed to study the effects of the 1986 Immigration and Reform Act [IRCA] on changes in illegal flows (Bean, Edmonston & Passel 1990; Donato, Durand & Massey 1992).

To assess whether illegal flows into El Paso were curtailed by Operation Hold the Line, U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service apprehensions data, which are counts of the number of times persons entering the country illegally are apprehended by the Border Patrol or other INS enforcement personnel within a given period, were examined. The primary research strategy was to develop and estimate the parameters of a statistical model that incorporates post-Operation dummy variables, as well as time trend, seasonal, and enforcement effort variables, that might be thought to influence variation in apprehensions across months. Estimates of coefficients for post-Operation dummy variables were used to infer whether the variation in illegal flows had been affected by the Operation.

Some observers suggest that such data are not particularly useful because some persons are apprehended more than once; others imply that such data, when multiplied by a factor to take into account the number of crossers going unapprehended, indicate the number of illegal aliens residing in the country who entered at the border. One view totally rejects apprehensions data; the other accepts them at face value. While apprehensions data have well-known limitations, they provide a reflection—although only a partial one—of the volume of illegal crossings and are particularly useful for indicating periodic changes in the number of such crossings, especially to the extent that it can be assumed over time that there is

a fairly constant relationship between crossers and apprehensions (Espenshade 1990).

The total number of INS apprehensions occurring in a given year results from activities undertaken by both the Border Patrol, the main enforcement arm of the INS, and the Investigations Unit, the entity responsible for interior operations. Most of the illegal aliens apprehended in the United States are arrested by the Border Patrol; most are caught near the U.S./-Mexico border; and most entered the United States without inspection by the INS. Data for FY 1992 are instructive (U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service 1993). First, of the 1.26 million apprehensions made in that year, 1.22 million were credited to the Border Patrol; the remaining 46 thousand to the investigations unit. Second, the INS is divided for administrative purposes into four regions and thirty-three districts. Five of these districts touch the 1,900-mile southern border with Mexico (El Paso, Harlingen, and San Antonio in the state of Texas; Phoenix in Arizona; and San Diego in California). Together, these five districts accounted in 1992 for nearly 98 percent of all aliens deported or required to depart. Third, 97 percent of all apprehensions in 1992 involved aliens who entered the country without inspection (a majority of illegal aliens, however, are visa-overstayers rather than persons entering without inspection (Bean, Edmonston & Passel 1990). The small remaining fraction of apprehensions consisted of persons who entered with fraudulent documentation, or who entered legally but subsequently violated the terms of their visa by, for example, accepting unauthorized employment or overstaying the length of their visa (Levine, Hill & Warren 1985).

There are two types of INS Border Patrol apprehensions at the U.S./Mexico border—linewatch and nonlinewatch. The former result from time spent guarding the border against smuggling and illegal entry of aliens. They include apprehensions by Border Patrol agents engaged in surveillance, tower watch, foot, horseback or vehicle patrol, as well as other operations designed to prevent illegal entry. As implied by the nature of the activity, nearly every linewatch apprehension (roughly 97 percent) is of a person apprehended trying to enter the United

States without appropriate entry documents. Nonlinewatch operations involve several kinds of activities, including farm and ranch checks, traffic checks, transportation checks, city patrols, and other activities.

In examining linewatch and nonlinewatch apprehensions, the former may provide a somewhat better basis than the latter for assessing changes in the flow of illegal migrants over a given period of time for two reasons. First, linewatch apprehensions occur very close to the border and do not involve the different kinds of enforcement activities that are involved in nonlinewatch apprehensions and are thus less likely to fluctuate over time as a consequence of changing Border Patrol enforcement strategies (North 1988; Bean, Vernez & Keely 1989).

Second, only about one out of every seven nonlinewatch apprehensions occur at entry, unlike almost 98 percent of linewatch apprehensions. One-fourth of nonlinewatch apprehensions are of persons who have been in the country four days or longer, with the numbers varying considerably depending upon the method of apprehension. This fraction tends to be even higher in the case of all categories of nonlinewatch activity except traffic and transportation checks. The change over time in nonlinewatch apprehensions may reflect changes in the stock of illegal immigrants, in enforcement strategies, and in the flow of undocumented migrants. Variations may also occur because of changes in the number of linewatch apprehensions (i.e., the more successful the Border Patrol is in catching persons upon entry, the fewer numbers will be at risk of being apprehended as a result of nonline-watch activities).

Information on changes in the number of Border Patrol linewatch and nonlinewatch apprehensions thus provides a partial basis for assessing whether the monthly number of illegal southern border crossings into the United States (or the magnitude of the flow of undocumented migrants) has changed since Operation Hold the Line began. This change was assessed using time-series analyses of linewatch and nonlinewatch apprehensions data from FY 1989 through April of FY 1994. To be most useful for

assessing the degree to which Operation Hold the Line has affected the nature and degree of illegal border crossings into the United States, apprehensions data must be “freed” of other factors that influence their magnitude, including those that have nothing to do with the Operation; it is necessary to control for the influence of time trend, seasonal factors, enforcement effort, and serial correlation.

Moving from West to East, the U.S./Mexico border is divided into nine Border Patrol sectors—San Diego, El Centro, Tucson, Yuma, El Paso, Marfa, Del Rio, Laredo, and McAllen. As of the date of this writing, data were obtainable on only apprehensions and enforcement hours through April for FY 1994. **Table 3** shows the average monthly values for both linewatch and nonlinewatch apprehensions and enforcement hours for the first seven months of FYs 1993 (October 1992–April 1993) and 1994 (October 1993–April 1994). The latter period encompasses almost the entire time of Operation Hold the Line, which began in late September 1993. At this point only data for the first seven months of FYs 1993 and 1994 were examined to ensure that comparison of the same months across the two years, a strategy necessitated by the strong seasonal pattern of illegal flows (and thus apprehensions) into the United States (Bean, et al. 1990).

The average gross number of apprehensions along the entire U.S./Mexico border declined by nearly 12,000 per month from FY 1993 to FY 1994 (from about 66,300 to about 54,500 per month). Most of this decline occurred because of the sharp drop in the El Paso sector (see second line, **Table 3**), where apprehensions dropped by more than 10,000 per month. The dramatic effects of Operation Hold the Line can also be seen in the steep drop evident for the post-Operation months in **Figure 1**. Thus, as measured in these terms, Operation Hold the Line clearly has reduced the number of linewatch apprehensions in the El Paso sector substantially and, by implication, the flow of illegal crossers into the United States.

The patterns for enforcement hours and nonlinewatch apprehensions also indicate, however, that this may have occurred to some extent at the price

of nonlinewatch apprehensions. Prior research has shown that both linewatch and nonlinewatch apprehensions vary directly with enforcement hours (Bean, Edmonston & Passel 1990; North 1988), a relationship that derives from the enforcement strategy followed by the Border Patrol of trying to intercept aliens after entry. Thus, the results shown in **Table 3** indicate that, except in the El Paso sector, apprehensions generally go up when enforcement hours rise and generally decline when hours drop. The Operation Hold the Line change in strategy, however, turned this relationship upside-down. By stationing agents at the border to prevent illegal entries before they occur, fewer apprehensions are made because fewer illegal crossings occur. Thus, while linewatch enforcement hours more than doubled during the Operation in comparison to the same months of the previous year (from 32 thousand per month to almost 67 thousand per month), apprehensions in the El Paso sector dropped to less than one-fourth of their previous level.

It is also the case that the increase in linewatch hours at the border was achieved in part by reassigning agents, resulting in the 42.8 percent decline in nonlinewatch enforcement hours in the El Paso sector (from about 41,000 per month in FY 1993 to about 23,400 per month during FY 1994, when Operation Hold the Line was in force). Given that fewer illegal aliens were getting through the initial line to begin with, nonlinewatch apprehensions declined disproportionately (by 70.6 percent). However, some of the decline in nonlinewatch apprehensions is undoubtedly due to the shift from nonlinewatch to linewatch activities.

That Operation Hold the Line reduced apprehensions is also revealed in an examination of changes in the number of apprehensions per hour (**Table 4**). From the same months in FY 1993 to the Operation months in FY 1994, the number of apprehensions per hour in the El Paso sector declined by 87 percent (from 0.45 per hour to 0.06 per hour). A smaller decline (about 50 percent) occurred in the case of nonlinewatch apprehensions. In all other groupings of sectors except California, and in the case of both linewatch and nonlinewatch apprehensions, the average number per hour increased slightly. This sug-

Table 3.

**AVERAGE MONTHLY LINEWATCH AND NONLINEWATCH APPREHENSIONS
AND ENFORCEMENT HOURS BY SECTOR GROUPING,
FISCAL YEARS 1993-1994 (FIRST SEVEN MONTHS)**

A. Linewatch	Hours		Apprehensions	
	FY 93	FY 94	FY 93	FY 94
	(000s)	(000s)	(000s)	(000s)
Entire U.S./Mexico Border	214.9	261.1	66.3	54.5
El Paso Only	32.0	66.9	14.3	3.9
All but El Paso	182.9	194.2	52.0	50.6
Arizona	34.4	37.1	4.9	6.8
California	76.9	80.9	37.3	32.3
Texas (-El Paso)	71.6	76.3	9.8	11.5

B. Nonlinewatch	Hours		Apprehensions	
	FY 93	FY 94	FY 93	FY 94
	(000s)	(000s)	(000s)	(000s)
Entire U.S./Mexico Border	170.0	145.8	27.6	23.9
El Paso Only	40.9	23.4	6.8	2.0
All but El Paso	129.1	122.4	20.8	21.9
Arizona	16.8	18.3	3.4	4.8
California	38.1	35.0	8.3	7.7
Texas (-El Paso)	74.2	69.1	9.1	9.4

Source: Immigration and Naturalization Service, Statistics Division

Table 4.

**LINEWATCH AND NONLINEWATCH APPREHENSIONS
PER HOUR BY SECTOR GROUPING,
FISCAL YEARS 1993-1994 (FIRST SEVEN MONTHS)**

	Linewatch		Nonlinewatch	
	FY 93	FY 94	FY 93	FY 94
Entire U.S./Mexico Border	.309	.209	.162	.164
El Paso Only	.447	.058	.166	.085
All but El Paso	.284	.261	.161	.179
Arizona	.142	.183	.202	.262
California	.485	.399	.218	.220
Texas (-El Paso)	.137	.151	.123	.136

Source: Immigration and Naturalization Service, Statistics Division

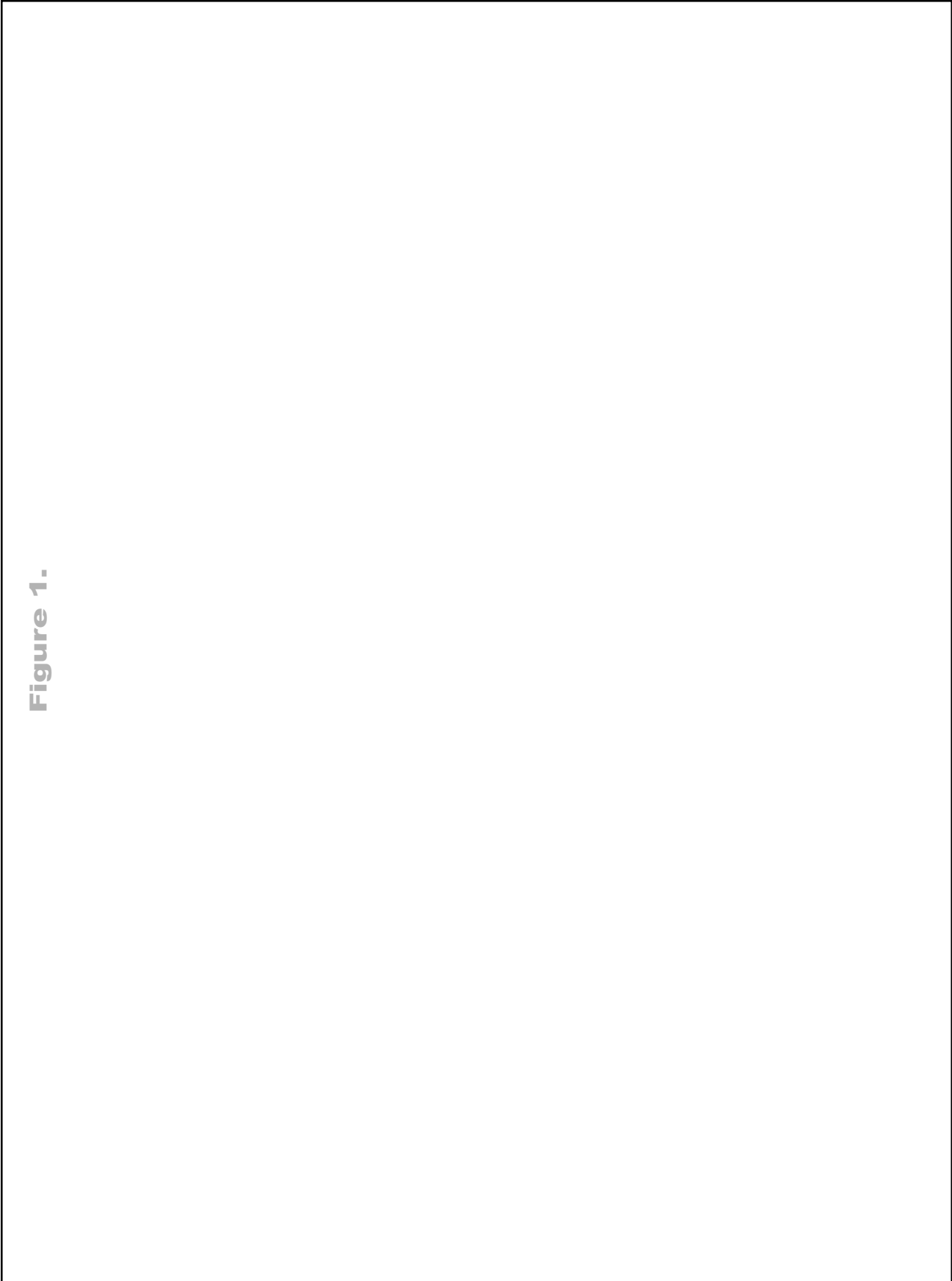


Figure 1.

gests that illegal flows might be increasing in sectors outside the El Paso corridor although, as noted below, analyses that control for additional variables are required before this hypothesis can be assessed more fully. The numbers for California, however, behave somewhat differently than those for other sectors, perhaps because of the slump in the California economy over the past three years and because of the January 1994 Los Angeles earthquake that undoubtedly affected the flow of illegal migrants, at least in the short term.

As suggestive as these results are, they are limited because they are gross figures that do not control fully for time trends in apprehensions, seasonal factors, enforcement hours, and serial correlation. Even though the above comparisons of apprehension statistics before and after the Operation seek to adjust for seasonal variations by comparing the same months of FYs 1993 and 1994, they are based on only one year's pre-Operation experience. (The strong seasonal pattern of apprehensions is evident in **Figure 1**.) Moreover, they do not remove the effects of long-term trends. To control better for time-trend and seasonality, time-series analyses were undertaken of monthly linewatch and nonlinewatch apprehensions data beginning with FY 1989 and running through April 1994, a total of sixty-seven months. Because ordinary least squares estimates with time-series data typically exhibit serial correlation in the residuals, we estimate the effects of the independent variables with a procedure that adjusts for serial auto-correlation (SPSS 1993). Tests for first and higher-order terms indicated that a first-order auto regressive term was sufficient to capture the serial correlation (Pyndyck & Rubinfeld 1991). The models are estimated for various border sector groupings (all sectors, all but El Paso, El Paso alone, the Arizona sectors, the California sectors, and the Texas sectors excluding El Paso). Independent variables are included for long-term trend (measured as the month in the series), seasonality (measured as dummy variables for months in the year, with December deleted from the model), enforcement hours (measured as monthly linewatch or nonlinewatch hours respectively), and dummy variables for two post-Operation periods, the first four months after the Operation (October-January) and the following

three months (February-April). The post-Operation dummy variables thus measure the average monthly increase or decrease in linewatch (or nonlinewatch) apprehensions for the early or late Operation period compared to the average in the five preceding fiscal years, net of the effects of seasonality, time trend, serial correlation, and enforcement hours.

The results of such models can help answer several questions. First, the findings for the El Paso sector are relevant to the assessment of the extent to which Operation Hold the Line reduced illegal flows into the El Paso sector beyond any changes associated with the influence of other factors. The time-series results thus provide a stronger basis for making this assessment than the single-year comparisons discussed above. Second, the findings for sectors other than El Paso are relevant to assessing the extent to which rumors might have spread throughout Mexico that the crackdown was being extended to other sectors, thus exerting a deterrent effect on illegal migration flows into other sectors besides El Paso. If this had occurred, one would expect to observe declines in apprehensions (especially linewatch apprehensions) immediately after the Operation, with these declines dissipating as such a shakedown period moved to its termination. Third, the findings are relevant to the assessment of the extent to which net illegal flows into sectors other than El Paso have been increasing over time, perhaps as a result of the diversion of long-distance labor migration from El Paso to other sectors.

The results of the time-series regressions are shown in **Table 5**. Coefficients are shown here only for enforcement hours and for the early and late post-Operation periods. Coefficients for the other variables (the time trend variable and the seasonal dummies) are omitted to improve clarity of presentation. The first column shows the results for the entire U.S./Mexico border. It indicates that in the first four months of the Operation, linewatch apprehensions—net of time trend, seasonality, enforcement hours, and serial correlation—were down by a small amount for the entire border. In the next three months net apprehensions increased considerably—by more than 2,700 per month. Comparison of columns two and three indicates the extent to which El

Table 5.

TIME SERIES REGRESSION RESULTS FOR MONTHLY LINEWATCH
AND NONLINEWATCH APPREHENSIONS ON ENFORCEMENT HOURS
AND POST-OPERATION DUMMIES BY STATE SECTOR GROUPINGS
(FISCAL YEARS 1989-1994)

A. Linewatch

Independent Variables	Entire Border	El Paso Only	All But El Paso	Arizona	California	Texas (-El Paso)
Enforcement Hours	.189	.068	.189	.064	.281	.139
Early Operation	-233.6	-7803.3	2164.8	84.0	1870.6	296.9
Late Operation 2753.7	-7032.7	3314.7	1473.7	1898.4	574.1	
Intercept	1169.6	714.5	-196.2	4.5	-199.1	-359.7
R2	.419	.602	.395	.337	.352	.498
N	67	67	67	67	67	67

B. Nonlinewatch

Independent Variables	Entire Border	El Paso Only	All But El Paso	Arizona	California	Texas (-El Paso)
Enforcement Hours	.201	.174	.205	.202	.226	.138
Early Operation	-41.2	-1456.4	781.6	-464.4	752.6	510.8
Late Operation -2027.3	-2375.6	-1430.1	-248.6	-645.8	-454.6	
Intercept	-1017.2	-104.5	-1021.2	-264.8	-343.2	-218.6
R2	.548	.670	.520	.430	.435	.405
N	67	67	67	67	67	67

Paso and the rest of the border sectors contributed to this overall pattern. While net monthly apprehensions were steeply reduced in El Paso, net apprehensions increased across all other sectors. In short, some of the decrease in apprehensions that occurred in El Paso appears to have been offset by increases in other sectors.

A comparison of the early and the late post-Operation effects indicates that the deterrent effect of the Operation on apprehensions appears to lessen as more time elapsed. Comparing the late to the early period effects in El Paso indicates that the decrease in net apprehensions lessens (although it remains substantial), falling from a decrease of about 7,800 to a decrease of about 7,030, a decline of almost 10

percent. At the same time, however, increases occurred in the Arizona, California, and Texas sectors. Proportionally, these were especially large in Arizona. By the late period (February-April), nearly one-half of the El Paso decline was offset by increases elsewhere that were occurring net of time trend, seasonal factors, and differences in enforcement hours. Net apprehensions increased in the post-Operation period, even though gross apprehensions decreased somewhat, indicating that the gross decreases observed in California would have been even greater had the California figures not been pushed upward (net of time-trend, seasonality, enforcement hours, and serial correlation) in the post-Operation period.

Thus, net apprehensions were up throughout the post-Operation period in California, and they were up substantially more in Arizona late in the period. These patterns are consistent with the belief that part of the illegal flow from throughout Mexico to the United States (probably long-distance labor migration) tends to get routed through two major ports of entry, El Paso and Chula Vista. If one of these ports is closed off, some of this flow may be diverted to the other port. Thus, while net linewatch apprehensions were down substantially in El Paso, they were up in California. Another part of the illegal flow is probably more regionalized, perhaps with respect to both the origins and destinations of migrants. With the El Paso port of entry closed down, some of this flow gets diverted to the most geographically proximate sectors (Arizona), and a lesser portion to the next most proximate sectors (Texas). These sectors showed an increasing number of apprehensions moving from early to late in the Operation. Thus, overall, the Operation appeared to continue to depress flows into El Paso as time elapsed (although at a decreasing rate), but nearly one-half of this decrease was offset by increases in flows over time to other sectors (at an increasing rate in the Arizona and Texas sectors).

In nonlinewatch apprehensions (**Table 3**), the most notable pattern is a decline during the late post-Operation period in the cases of all sector groupings. There are two plausible explanations: first, it is possible that the below average levels of apprehensions in the months right after the blockade means that there were fewer illegal migrants around in subsequent months to be apprehended in nonlinewatch locations; second, as nonlinewatch enforcement hours fell in the later months, there were probably disproportionately fewer apprehensions may have taken place because so few agents were pursuing illegals. Thus, the numbers of apprehensions may have dropped to a greater degree than did the number of hours. More research will be required to ascertain whether, and to what degree, these explanations are correct, or whether there is some other explanation.

Bridge Crossing Data

Mexican commuter workers are one of the major groups of border crossers who have been affected by Operation Hold the Line. Commuter workers live in Juárez but regularly cross the border to work in El Paso or in other nearby communities in Texas and New Mexico. They may cross daily, weekly, or less frequently depending upon the terms of their employment in the United States and whether they maintain residences on both sides or only on one side of the border. The legal status of these Mexican commuters in the United States varies. For analytical purposes, it is useful to classify commuters into four legal-status categories:

U.S. citizens: Mexican residents who were either born in the United States or who became naturalized citizens at an earlier point in their lives. These persons may choose to live in Mexico for a variety of reasons, including family ties, cultural preferences, and a lower cost of living in Juárez. As U.S. citizens, they have the legal right to both enter the United States and find employment here.

Work-permit holders: Mexican residents who have a visa that permits them to seek employment in the United States. This group includes legal permanent residents of the United States who maintain a residence in Mexico. Like U.S. citizens, members of this group legally enter the United States. These commuters are sometimes referred to as green carders.⁹

Border Crossing Card holders: Mexican residents who have been issued a special nonimmigrant visa by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service that allows them to enter the twelve-mile strip of the United States along the Mexican border for periods of up to seventy-two hours for purposes of tourism, shopping, and conducting other kinds of personal business. Holders of the Border Crossing Card [BCC]

⁹ See Martinez' *Border Boom Town* for an historical discussion of Juárez "green card" workers (Martinez 1975). Also, see North's (1970) Department of Labor report on Mexican commuter workers.

sometimes cross the border into the United States legally in order to work illegally.¹⁰ The Border Crossing Card is known by several names in Juárez, including *pasaporte local*, *mica*, and *permiso de cruce*.

Undocumented commuters: Mexican residents who lack any kind of passport or visa that grants them the right either to enter or work in the United States. These commuters cross the border illegally, either away from legal ports of entry or with false documents, and may work illegally as well.

Table 6 summarizes these categories of commuter workers and classifies them by legal status with regard to entry and employment. No institution in the United States or Mexico regularly collects data on Mexican commuter workers. It is therefore impossible to make precise estimates of the number of persons in each commuter category. We attempt a rough estimate of the size of each category by taking the results of three separate data collection ef-

forts conducted on the Mexican side of the border between 1987 and 1990 and imputing these findings to the 1993 Juárez population.

To estimate the size of each commuter category requires an estimate of the size of the economically active population of Juárez in 1993. According to the 1990 Mexican Census of Population and Housing, the total population of the *municipio*¹¹ of Juárez was 798,499 persons. According to census reports, the economically active population¹² of Juárez in 1990 was 286,683. Between 1970 and 1990, the total population of Juárez grew at an annual rate of 3.2 percent. If that rate of growth remained constant, and if we assume, for practical purposes, that the growth rates for the total population and the economically active population were approximately equal, by the end of 1993 we would expect the total population of Juárez to be 877,900 persons, and the economically active population to be 315,351.

¹⁰ Under situations of easy illegal border-crossing (as seems to have been the case prior to Operation Blockade), some BCC holders may in fact enter the United States illegally, away from legal ports of entry, for several reasons: a) to avoid paying bridge tolls; b) to minimize detection as illegal workers and confiscation of their BCC; or c) to avoid long bus rides from outlying areas of Juárez to official ports of entry to the United States, as in the case of residents of Rancho Anapra who regularly walked across the 100 yards of desert separating them from Sunland Park, New Mexico.

¹¹ The term *municipio* in Mexico corresponds roughly to county in the United States. It is the closest equivalent to the U.S. census designation metropolitan statistical area that is reported by the Mexican statistical agency INEGI.

¹² Those persons fifteen years of age or older who were employed or seeking employment at the time the census was taken.

Table 6.

LEGAL STATUS CATEGORIES OF MEXICAN COMMUTER WORKERS

Commuter	Enters United States		Works in United States	
	Legally	Illegally	Legally	Illegally
U.S. Citizen	+		+	
Work Permit	+		+	
BCC Only	+			+
Undocumented		+		+

The Mexican statistical agency, *INEGI*, conducts a quarterly urban labor market survey similar to the United States Current Population Survey. Questions included in the survey, the *Encuesta Nacional de Empleo Urbano [ENEU]*, ask respondents where they worked during the preceding week. In the fourth quarter of 1989 (the latest data available), *ENEU* results indicated that 4.8 percent of the economically active population had worked in the United States in the week preceding the survey. In other words, 4.8 percent of the working people in Juárez at the end of 1989 commuted from their residences in Juárez to jobs in the United States at least once a week. If we assume that the proportion of working people in Juárez with jobs in the United States remained constant through 1993, we arrive at an estimate of 15,137 cross-border commuter workers residing in Juárez at the time of Operation Hold the Line.

Lamentably, the *ENEU* survey does not include a classification of commuter workers by their legal status in the United States. To our knowledge, only one survey has ever been conducted in Juárez that collected this information. In 1987, the *Colegio de la Frontera Norte*, a research institute based in Tijuana, Baja California, conducted the *Encuesta Socioeconómica Anual de la Frontera [ESAF]*,¹³ which collected a wide range of data on 605 households in Juárez, including the legal status of commuter workers. Results of the

¹³ The *ESAF* was optimistically named; rather than being conducted annually, it was conducted only once.

ESAF with regard to commuters were reported in an article published by Tito Alegría (Alegría 1990) in the journal *Frontera Norte*. Alegría's first finding of interest was that 6 percent of Juárez workers were either U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents of the United States; 48 percent had a border crossing card or other type of visa that allowed them to enter the United States legally, but not to work in the United States; and 46 percent had no type of permit to enter the United States legally. If we apply these percentages to our estimate of the economically active population residing in Juárez in 1993, we obtain the results displayed in **Table 7**.

Alegría also reported that of the persons identified by the *ESAF* as cross-border commuter workers,

- 38 percent were U.S. citizens;
- 24 percent had visas that allowed them to work in the United States;
- 33 percent crossed the border legally with a BCC to work in the United States; and
- 5 percent were undocumented both for entry and work in the United States.

Because Alegría reports neither the raw frequency counts of these categories of commuters nor the standard errors of his estimates, we are unable directly to ascertain the confidence interval (plus/minus x percentage points) surrounding each estimate. We assume, however, that the confidence intervals are rather large, since the raw frequency

Table 7.

CATEGORIES AND ESTIMATED NUMBERS OF COMMUTERS

Category of Commuter	%	Est #
U.S. Citizen	38	5,752
Work Permit	24	3,633
Border Crossing Card Only	33	4,995
Undocumented	5	757
Total	100	15,137

Derived from: Alegría (1990); Mexican Census of Population and Housing (1990).

count for each category of commuter must be small, given the number of households in the sample and what we know from the *ENEU* about Juárez worker participation in the U.S. labor market.

To calculate the confidence intervals indirectly, assume that, on average, each household in the sample contained 5 persons, giving an n of 3,025 (the average household size for Juárez in the 1990 census). Assume further that 35.9 percent of these 3,025 persons, or 1,087, were economically active (the percent of the total 1990 Juárez population that was economically active). Finally, assume that 4.8 percent of these 1,087, or 52 persons, worked in the United States at least once during the week prior to the survey (the percent of the total economically active population working in the United States given by the *ENEU*, 4th quarter, 1989). Choosing a confidence level of 0.05, we can then say that:

- Between 25 and 51 percent of cross-border commuters were U.S. citizens;
- Between 12 and 36 percent held work permits;
- Between 20 and 46 percent had only the BCC; and
- 11 percent or less were undocumented.

Applying these intervals to our earlier estimate of a total of 15,137 cross-border commuter workers residing in Juárez at the time of the Operation, we obtain the estimates of numbers of different kinds of commuters displayed in **Table 8**. While these esti-

mates are admittedly rough, based as they are on several assumptions, they nonetheless provide a number of insights for understanding the nature of cross-border work commuting by Juárez residents and the size of potential impacts of the Border Patrol's new deployment strategy upon different kinds of commuters.

Qualitative field work on both sides of the border in El Paso-Ciudad Juárez led to formulation of several related hypotheses regarding the overall effects of Operation Hold the Line on illegal border crossing and illegal employment of Juárez residents in El Paso.

Hypothesis One. Illegal crossings by Juárez residents have been reduced, but not eliminated.

Hypothesis Two. The number of illegal crossers residing in Juárez has been reduced less than the number of illegal crossings.

Corollary Two. Illegal crossers who live in Juárez and work in El Paso have extended their stays in El Paso to minimize their risk of apprehension while attempting illegal northbound crossings.

Hypothesis Three. Legal crossers who live in Juárez and work illegally in El Paso have continued to do so, but some have begun to cross less frequently in order to minimize the risk of losing their Border Crossing Cards.

Table 8.

ESTIMATED NUMBERS OF MEXICAN COMMUTER WORKERS RESIDING IN CIUDAD JUÁREZ

Commuter	% of Commuters		# of Commuters	
	Upper Limit	Lower Limit	Upper Limit	Lower Limit
U.S citizen	51	25	7,720	3,784
Work Permit	36	12	5,449	1,816
BCC Only	46	20	6,963	3,027
Undocumented	11	-	1,665	-

Derived from: Alegria (1990); ESAF (1987); Mexican Census of Population and Housing (1990).

Hypothesis Four. The Operation has initially discouraged both legal and illegal crossings from Juárez, but after the first few months legal crossers have begun to return to El Paso in numbers comparable to before the Operation began. Illegal crossings have also crept back towards earlier levels after the first month of the Operation.

This section examines these hypotheses by analyzing changes in the patterns of pedestrian border crossings on the Paso del Norte and Stanton Street International Bridges.¹⁴ These two bridges carry the bulk of pedestrian border crossings in the El Paso area. Pedestrians may cross the border both northbound and southbound on the Paso del Norte Bridge, and southbound only on the Stanton Street Bridge. Every day, thousands of Juárez residents walk northbound on the Paso del Norte Bridge into downtown El Paso's "Golden Horseshoe," the commercial district in the city that most strongly caters to Mexican customers. This section is known as the Golden Horseshoe because of the path that the multitudes of Mexican shoppers tend to follow: north up Santa Fe or Oregon Streets, right on one of their several cross streets, and then south on Stanton Street to cross back into Juárez over the Stanton Street Bridge. Pedestrian crossers pay a toll of 50 cents to the Mexican government to cross north on the Paso del Norte Bridge, and 25 cents to the city of El Paso to cross south on either one of the bridges. It was on these bridges that disturbances occurred in the first days of Operation Blockade as Mexican commuters and several political organizations blocked traffic in protest of the INS confiscation of some commuters' BCCs.

Pedestrian crossing are recorded northbound by the U.S. Customs Service, and tallies are available by day, month, and year. Similar southbound figures are generated by the turnstiles counting toll-payers for the city of El Paso. Pedestrian crossing counts are the best measure of the legal movement of persons back and forth across the border; while counts of passenger vehicles are also available, no actual passenger counts are made either northbound or

southbound. In principle, average monthly northbound and southbound pedestrian crossings should roughly equal one another, although in practice there are usually more northbound than southbound pedestrian crossings in any given month, a pattern that Operation Hold the Line does not seem to have changed much.¹⁵

What kinds of changes in pedestrian crossing patterns might result from Operation Hold the Line? Before the Operation began, it was common for undocumented crossers who lived in Juárez to cross the Rio Grande northbound illegally—by boat or wading, or by walking across one of the bridges in one of the southbound lanes—but then return to Mexico by walking across one of the bridges legally since they had nothing to fear by doing so.¹⁶ One change, then, is that if Operation Hold the Line substantially reduced illegal crossings, the gap between northbound and southbound crossings would widen somewhat following the Operation's initiation. **Table 9** presents time-trend data on northbound versus southbound crossings by month, from

¹⁵ Many factors may account for the frequent "deficits" in southbound crossings. Commuter buses running between Juárez and El Paso (the "Red Bus" service that was halted indefinitely as of February 8, 1994) were obliged to discharge passengers on the Paso del Norte Bridge to walk through the U.S. Customs and Immigration checkpoint, and these commuters were thus counted as pedestrian crossers. Going southbound across the Stanton Street Bridge, these bus passengers were not counted as pedestrians, since they did not pass through the City of El Paso's pedestrian toll booth. Also, for some time before the Operation began, it was a common practice for package-laden shoppers to wait at the vehicle toll booths on the Stanton Street Bridge in hopes of hopping in the back of the next willing pickup in order to simultaneously avoid paying the 25 cent toll and carrying their loads across the border by hand. Some northbound pedestrian crossers may get rides back across the border in the vehicles of friends, relatives, and employers who live in El Paso. Mexican immigrants may enter the United States at the Paso del Norte port of entry and then stay permanently in the United States. Many other explanations are plausible; all are untested.

¹⁴ The Paso del Norte Bridge is also known as the Santa Fe Bridge. The Stanton Street Bridge is also known as the Lerdo Bridge, after Avenida Lerdo that it connects with El Paso's Stanton Street.

¹⁶ Mexican authorities would obviously have no quarrel with their return. U.S. authorities would only be thankful that their job—to return illegal crossers to Mexican soil—was being done for them.

Table 9.

TRENDS IN NORTHBOUND AND SOUTHBOUND PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS ON THE PASO DEL NORTE AND STANTON STREET INTERNATIONAL BRIDGES (BY MONTH)

Month & Year	Northbound	Southbound	North minus South	North/South
Apr 92	460,967	439,794	21,173	1.05
May 92	497,347	449,162	48,185	1.11
Jun 92	423,481	404,504	18,977	1.05
Jul 92	354,716	415,192	(60,476)	0.85
Aug 92	524,700	429,434	95,266	1.22
Sep 92	349,313	404,077	(54,764)	0.86
Oct 92	399,702	437,198	(37,496)	0.91
Nov 92	576,198	395,545	180,653	1.46
Dec 92	649,898	480,318	169,580	1.35
Jan 93	417,110	380,537	36,573	1.10
Feb 93	420,966	365,531	55,435	1.15
Mar 93	390,277	404,283	(14,006)	0.97
Apr 93	410,073	407,452	2,621	1.01
May 93	448,310	413,630	34,680	1.08
Jun 93	382,864	384,193	(1,329)	1.00
Jul 93	482,963	424,288	58,675	1.14
Aug 93	450,269	411,060	39,209	1.10
Sep 93	367,563	367,638	(75)	1.00
Oct 93	438,910	323,691	115,219	1.36
Nov 93	385,829	343,317	42,512	1.12
Dec 93	514,472	452,689	61,783	1.14
Jan 94	407,386	361,622	45,764	1.13
Feb 94	446,663	373,472	73,191	1.20
Mar 94	559,403	n/a	n/a	n/a

Source: El Paso Department of Traffic and Transportation, US Customs Office, El Paso District

April 1992 through March 1994. The north minus south difference went from 39,209 in August 1993, the last full month before the Operation began, to 115,219 in October 1993, the first full month after the blockade. In contrast, in the same months of 1992, the difference declined. Whereas in August 1992 there were 95,266 more northbound than southbound crossings, in October 1992 there were 37,496 fewer northbound than southbound crossings. This change in pattern tends to confirm a finding supported by several kinds of evidence: Operation Hold the Line is effective in stopping a substantial number of illegal northbound crossings in the immediate term.¹⁷

¹⁷Wider fluctuations than this have occurred in the recent past, for example, the change between October and November 1992.

Table 10 summarizes changes in the monthly relationships between northbound and southbound pedestrian crossings that resulted from Operation Hold the Line. On average, before the blockade there were 8 percent more northbound than southbound crossings; in the months after the blockade there were, on average, 19 percent more. Calculated on an average daily basis, the difference between northbound and southbound crossings grew from 1,163 to 2,256, an increase of 1,093, due almost entirely to a reduction in southbound crossings. The postblockade averages presented in **Table 10** mask important differences between months, however, overstating the lasting impacts of the blockade. As **Table 9** indicates, the postblockade average difference is pulled up by the dramatic spike in the north-south difference and ratio in October 1993. By

Table 10.

POSTBLOCKADE CHANGES IN DIFFERENCE AND RATIO BETWEEN NORTHBOUND AND SOUTHBOUND PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS, PASO DEL NORTE AND STANTON STREET INTERNATIONAL BRIDGES

Measure	Preblockade Average*	Postblockade Average*	Change in Average
Ratio of northbound to southbound monthly crossings	1.08	1.19	+0.11
North minus south monthly difference	34,880	67,694	+32,814
North minus south daily difference	1,163	2,256	+1,093

*Excludes crossings during month of September 1993. Operation Blockade began on September 19 and resulted in disruptions in bridge traffic that make September data incomparable with other months.

Source: El Paso Department of Traffic and Transportation, US Customs Office, El Paso District

November, however, the difference and ratio between northbound and southbound crossings dropped to about August 1993 levels. From November 1993, through February 1994, northbound crossings were, on average, only 15 percent higher than southbound crossings, essentially the same level as July 1993, before the blockade. During the same four-month period the previous year, northbound crossings were, on average, 27 percent higher than southbound crossings.

These findings regarding the differences and ratios between north and southbound pedestrian crossings pre- and post-Operation tend to support two of our hypotheses above: hypothesis one, that illegal crossings by Juárez residents have been reduced, but not eliminated; and hypothesis two, that the deterrent effect of the Operation decreases over time. Immediately after the blockade, we see the expected reduction in southbound crossings relative to northbound, but this effect seems to diminish significantly over time. Such a result conforms to what illegal crossers told us about the Operation: in the first month following the blockade, crossing was difficult to impossible, but border crossing became easier in subsequent months.

Another effect of the Operation one might expect based on public reaction on both sides of the border,

is a reduction in both northbound and southbound pedestrian crossings compared to the same months of the year prior to the Operation. Northbound crossings were down 4 percent and southbound crossings were down 10 percent after the blockade, as compared with the same period in the previous year. On the other hand, northbound crossings in the period April-August, 1993, before the blockade, were also down 4 percent compared with the same period in 1992. **Table 11** gives a clearer picture of how the blockade affected northbound crossings in both the short- and somewhat longer-term. October, 1993 northbound crossings were up 10 percent over 1992, but this may reflect the return of an unusually large number of shoppers and commuters deterred from crossing in the first days and weeks of the Operation in September to take care of affairs in El Paso that had been left unattended. Northbound crossings were down 33 percent and 21 percent in November and December, respectively, from the year before, lending considerable credence to the claims of downtown merchants in El Paso that traffic into their stores during the Christmas shopping season was down considerably. By January 1994, however, northbound pedestrian crossings were back up to their level of the previous year, and in February and March they surpassed the levels of the previous year. As **Table 11** also indicates, southbound crossings exhibit a similar pattern of sharp

Table 11.

NORTHBOUND AND SOUTHBOUND PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS
(April 1992-March 1994)

A. Paso Del Norte International Bridge				
(Northbound)				
Month	1992-1993	1993-1994	1993 minus 1992	1993/1994 or 1994/1993
Apr	460,967	410,073	(50,894)	0.89
May	497,347	448,310	(49,037)	0.90
Jun	423,481	382,864	(40,617)	0.90
Jul	354,716	482,963	128,247	1.36
Aug	524,700	450,269	(74,431)	0.86
Sep	349,313	367,563	18,250	1.05
Oct	399,702	438,910	39,208	1.10
Nov	576,198	385,829	(190,369)	0.67
Dec	649,898	514,472	(135,426)	0.79
Jan	417,110	407,386	(9,724)	0.98
Feb	420,966	446,663	25,697	1.06
Mar	390,277	559,403	169,126	1.43
B. Paso Del Norte And Stanton Street International Bridges				
(Southbound)				
Month	1992-1993	1993-1994	1993 minus 1992	1993/1992 or 1994/1993
Apr	439,794	407,452	(32,342)	0.93
May	449,162	413,630	(35,532)	0.92
Jun	404,504	384,193	(20,311)	0.95
Jul	415,192	424,288	9,096	1.02
Aug	429,434	411,060	(18,374)	0.96
Sep	404,077	367,638	(36,439)	0.91
Oct	437,198	323,691	(113,507)	0.74
Nov	395,545	343,317	(52,228)	0.87
Dec	480,318	452,689	(27,629)	0.94
Jan	380,537	361,622	(18,915)	0.95
Feb	365,531	373,472	7,941	1.02
Mar	403,974	404,283	309	1.00

Source: El Paso Department of Traffic and Transportation, US Customs Office, El Paso District

decline soon after the Operation begins, after which they creep back up to comparable preblockade levels by January 1994.

These results tend to support hypothesis four, that the Operation initially discouraged legal border crossings, but that some of this effect diminished over time. It does appear, however, that declines in pedestrian border crossing were most pronounced during the Christmas shopping season, presumably hurting businesses in downtown El Paso that de-

pend upon purchases made by Mexican cross-border shoppers.

According to reports in the *El Paso Times* and repeated to us by INS inspectors on the Paso del Norte Bridge, following the blockade in September 1993, there was a strong surge in legal pedestrian border crossings on the bridges, as well as an increase in the presentation of false or otherwise invalid border crossing documents. The reasons for this were thought to be that many persons who formerly

crossed the border illegally, were suddenly attempting to cross legally, either by using valid documents they had hitherto chosen not to use or by presenting fraudulent or invalid documents. While it is true that many more persons walked north into El Paso on the Paso del Norte Bridge in October 1993, than did in September 1993, the number in October was lower than it had been in August 1993, before the blockade began. In addition, northbound pedestrian crossings in October 1993, were up only 10 percent over the previous October, an increase far exceeded by the 36 percent jump seen between July 1992 and July 1993, also before the Operation. Thus, the apparent post-Operation surge in northbound crossings may derive from routine crossings that were interrupted in the early days of the Operation, creating a pent-up demand to cross once some semblance of normality returned on the bridges. As already noted above, northbound pedestrian crossings in November and December were sharply down from the year before, not supporting the notion that many persons who hitherto had crossed illegally began to cross legally after the Operation began.

In addition to changes in the difference and ratio between northbound and southbound crossings, and an immediate overall decline in pedestrian border crossing, we expected some changes in crossing by day of week following the Operation. There are several reasons for this. First, the Operation led to a decrease in pedestrian traffic into Juárez, particularly at night.¹⁸ U.S. citizens feared harassment by Mexicans angered by the Operation and stayed away in the initial months. U.S. military forces stationed at Fort Bliss were prohibited by their commanders from going to Juárez from the time the Operation began until mid-February 1994. Thus, one would expect Friday (evening) southbound crossings and Saturday (early AM) crossings to be down somewhat, as well as Saturday (evening) and Sunday (early AM) crossings to be reduced.

Second, if closer scrutiny of the validity of crossing documents by INS officers on the Paso del Norte

¹⁸ CONACO, the official Mexican Chamber of Commerce, has produced a report decrying the negative impact that the Operation has had on restaurants, bars, and nightclubs in Juárez (See Chapter IV for more detail).

Bridge discouraged pedestrian visits to the United States (as seems to have been the case, at least initially), one would expect crossings to be disproportionately reduced on Saturdays, since Saturdays are heavy shopping days in downtown El Paso and shopping is a less necessary trip than going for employment or business.

Third, both legal and illegal crossers who work in El Paso report that their principal strategy for coping with increased surveillance at the border is to reduce the number of times they cross and increase the number of nights they spend in El Paso. Those working illegally, but crossing with their BCC, reduce crossings to reduce the chances of having their crossing documents confiscated. Those crossing illegally do so less frequently to minimize their risk of being detained by the Border Patrol, a risk that greatly increased since the Operation began. One would thus expect to see increased southbound pedestrian bridge crossings on Saturdays, as persons who have stayed over to work in El Paso during the week return to Juárez. Similarly, one might also expect some increase in northbound bridge crossings on Sundays, as persons working in El Paso attempt to cross the bridge at an hour when they are less likely to be suspected of going to work than, say, if they were crossing early Monday morning.

The next two tables summarize the results of a kind of “shift-share” analysis conducted of pedestrian bridge crossing patterns. We compared southbound crossings on different days of the week, postblockade, by month in 1993-1994 with crossings during the same period in 1992-1993. The same was also done for northbound crossings. The ratios that appear in **Tables 12** and **13** were calculated as follows. Total crossings in a given month were apportioned to different days of the week as if they were evenly distributed by day, so that as many crossings occur on a Friday, say, as do on a Sunday. The number of crossings generated for a given day of the week is the expected number of crossings for that day in that month. We then divided the actual number of crossings that occurred by the expected number to produce the ratios in the tables. If crossings were evenly distributed by day, the value of each ratio would be 1.00. We interpret the ratio obtained for

southbound pedestrian crossings on Fridays in October 1992 as meaning that “17 percent more southbound crossings were made on Fridays than one would expect simply on the basis of the number of Fridays in the month.” Of interest in our analysis are the changes in these ratios for the same month of the year prior to the Operation and during the Operation. **Table 12** indicates, for example, that Fridays in October 1993, lost a slight share of total southbound crossings for the month as compared to 1992. Instead of there being 17 percent more Friday southbound crossings than expected, there were only 15 percent, a decline in share of two percentage points.

What changes in patterns of crossing by day of week were observed following the Operation? In the first two months, southbound (October and November of 1993 versus the same two months of 1992) , and in the first three months northbound (October through December), Saturday pedestrian crossings decline sharply relative to other days of the week (See **Table 12** for southbound and **Table 13** for northbound figures). Saturday’s share of southbound crossings was down 42 percentage points in November from the year before, and northbound its share declined by 73 percentage points. Meanwhile, the share of pedestrian crossings in both directions

Table 12.

RATIO OF OBSERVED TO EXPECTED SOUTHBOUND PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS,
PASO DEL NORTE AND STANTON STREET INTERNATIONAL BRIDGES
(BY DAY OF WEEK)

Month & Year	Friday	Saturday	Sunday/Holiday	Weekday
Oct 92	1.17	1.54	0.65	0.87
Oct 93	1.15	1.40	0.67	0.93
Nov 92	1.42	1.86	0.50	0.95
Nov 93	1.23	1.44	0.69	0.97
Dec 92	1.10	1.33	0.57	1.03
Dec 93	1.10	1.53	0.57	1.00
Jan 93	1.23	1.45	0.58	0.96
Jan 94	1.18	1.51	0.64	0.96
Feb 93	1.28	1.49	0.66	0.94
Feb 94	1.20	1.60	0.69	0.93

Change in Ratios

Month	Friday	Saturday	Sunday/Holiday	Weekday
Oct	-0.02	-0.14	0.02	0.06
Nov	-0.20	-0.42	0.19	0.03
Dec	0.01	0.20	0.00	-0.03
Jan	-0.05	0.06	0.06	0.01
Feb	-0.08	0.10	0.02	-0.01

Source: El Paso Department of Traffic and Transportation

Table 13.

RATIO OF OBSERVED TO EXPECTED NUMBER OF NORTHBOUND
PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS, PASO DEL NORTE INTERNATIONAL BRIDGE
(BY DAY OF WEEK)

Month & Year	Friday	Saturday	Sunday/Holiday	Weekday
Oct 92	1.18	1.54	0.78	0.84
Oct 93	0.99	1.16	0.62	1.07
Nov 92	0.88	1.88	0.71	0.97
Nov 93	1.30	1.14	0.67	1.02
Dec 92	0.94	1.38	0.63	1.03
Dec 93	0.77	1.23	0.70	1.11
Jan 93	1.19	1.31	0.68	0.98
Jan 94	1.11	1.61	0.81	0.90
Feb 93	0.85	1.49	0.53	1.05
Feb 94	0.95	1.19	0.84	1.01

Change in Ratios

Month	Friday	Saturday	Sunday/Holiday	Weekday
Oct	-0.19	-0.39	-0.16	0.23
Nov	0.42	-0.73	-0.04	0.05
Dec	-0.17	-0.15	0.07	0.08
Jan	-0.08	0.30	0.13	-0.08
Feb	0.10	-0.30	0.31	-0.04

Source: US Customs Office, El Paso District

captured by the Monday-Thursday weekday period¹⁹ rose in the first two months following the Operation, when compared with the previous year. This decline in both directions on a prime downtown shopping day and increase in both directions on days in the work week are consistent with the hypothesis that, immediately following the Operation, unnecessary pedestrian crossings (to shop, pay social visits,

¹⁹ Fridays are unlike other weekdays for several reasons. Some persons working during the week in El Paso may return to Juárez on that day. Youth, military personnel, and other groups also tend to cross the border southbound on Friday to go out for the evening. Large numbers of other persons may walk back and forth across the bridges on Friday as they would on any other work day. Friday is therefore an ambiguous case, similar to Monday-Thursday in some ways, and to Saturday in others. Postblockade changes in Friday's share of crossings in both directions, not surprisingly, show no clear pattern.

etc.) were discouraged relative to more necessary crossings (to work, for example). This finding accords with the other finding above that overall pedestrian bridge crossings declined substantially during the peak Christmas shopping season after the blockade.

After the first two months of the Operation, Saturday's share of southbound pedestrian crossings rose relative to the previous year (**Table 12**). This change in pattern suggests that over time, both legal and illegal crossers who worked illegally in El Paso responded to the Operation by reducing their number of crossings and extending their number of nights spent in El Paso during the work week, thus supporting corollary two of hypothesis two and hypothesis three above. It also tends to support hypothesis two itself, that the number of illegal cross-

ings has been reduced more than the number of illegal crossers. Additional support for hypothesis three can be found in that, after the first two months of the Operation, Sunday's share of northbound crossings increases strongly relative to the previous year, suggesting that legal crossers who work illegally in El Paso may be crossing north in greater numbers on Sundays to have the purpose of their visit less subject to scrutiny and challenge by INS inspectors at the port of entry.

A final cautionary note: a shift-share analysis serves primarily to improve observation of changes in a patterned social phenomenon; it does not indicate the causes of the changes observed. Thus, the interpretations offered here are tentative. Their likely validity, however, is enhanced by the fact that they accord with other pieces of qualitative and quantitative evidence. Also, the changes observed were not dramatically large, which should come as no surprise, however, since our best estimates indicate that the number of Juárez residents working illegally in El Paso is small relative to the combined working populations of the two cities. A change in the behavior of less than two thousand illegal crossers/illegal workers and less than seven thousand legal crossers/illegal workers, not all of whom will respond similarly to the Operation and not all of whom use the Paso del Norte and Stanton Street pedestrian bridges to return to Mexico, is unlikely to produce radical changes in pedestrian crossings that number in the hundreds of thousands per month. By the same token, the changes observed, while perhaps not dramatic, are not subject to statistical probability error, since they are counts of all legal pedestrian crossings on these bridges. They are not estimates based on a sample of crossers. Consequently, we have no doubt that crossing patterns have indeed changed in the ways observed here.²⁰ When combined with qualitative reports obtained from government officials and residents on both sides of the border, these data provide a more complete picture of the effects of Operation Hold the Line on people's behavior related to the international boundary dividing El Paso and Juárez.

²⁰ Unless, of course, the counts supplied to us by either the Customs Service or the City of El Paso were themselves erroneous.

Conclusions

Several major conclusions about the effects of the Operation on illegal flows and legal/illegal border crossings are suggested by the findings that emerge from the analyses of INS apprehensions and bridge crossings data presented in this chapter. First, the Operation seems to have sharply reduced illegal flows into El Paso. Second, this decline appears to be diminishing the longer the Operation lasts. Third, a substantial amount of long-distance labor immigration appears to have been diverted to other ports-of-entry on the U.S./Mexico border. Fourth, legal crossers/illegal workers and illegal crossers/illegal workers appear to have extended the duration of their stays in El Paso and changed the daily pattern of their crossings to minimize the risk of detection/document confiscation. The Border Patrol in El Paso has said that, prior to the Operation, about 60 percent of persons apprehended were Juárez residents whose destination was El Paso and 40 percent were persons headed for other U.S. destinations. The results presented in this chapter suggest that the Operation's greatest effect has been to deter or make more difficult illegal crossings by short-term migrants residing in Juárez. Also, the late post-Operation increases in apprehensions outside the El Paso sector are about 45 percent of the decline in apprehensions in the El Paso sector, which suggests that long-distant labor migration has moved elsewhere. We return to these conclusions below after analyses of other data and examination of other situations thought to have been influenced by the Operation. These additional analyses help determine the degree to which these initial conclusions can be embraced with greater confidence or must be viewed as hypotheses contradicted by other evidence.

IV. Effects on Business and Economic Activities

Within days of its implementation, many members of the El Paso business community stated their opposition to Operation Hold the Line. Hostility to

the Operation rose as it appeared that sales were being lost to a combination of the interruption of traffic into the city from Juárez and the “Buy Mexican” campaign proposed by the governor of the State of Chihuahua, and such Mexican business organizations as *Cámara Nacional de la Industria de la Transformación* [CANACINTRA] and *Cámara Nacional del Comercio* [CANACO]. Business leaders declared in open meetings, at city hall and in the media that the Operation was having a significantly negative impact on the economic activity of the city by preventing or discouraging Mexican patrons from crossing the border to shop. As it has been estimated that as much as 40 percent of all purchases in the retail sales industry in the city are made by consumers from Mexico (Institute for Manufacturing and Materials Management 1991), anything that interfered with consumer access to El Paso stores could reasonably have a major impact on the city’s economic stability. In order to assess the real impact of the Operation on local business activity, the research team interviewed leaders of the El Paso and Juárez business communities, analyzed data from the Texas State Comptroller’s Office on sales tax receipts and sales by zip code area, and examined data on the local labor market, hotel occupancy, bus ridership, and auto accidents in El Paso.

Business Leader Response

The top officials of the Greater El Paso Chamber of Commerce [GEPCC], the El Paso Hispanic Chamber of Commerce [EPHCC], and the El Paso Downtown Development Association [DDA] were interviewed separately regarding the effects of the Operation both on their members specifically and on the El Paso business environment in general. The leaders of the three organizations expressed similar positions regarding the Border Patrol’s new strategy for policing the border. None of the leaders expressed any objection in principle to the redeployment of Border Patrol agents to the frontline border. Rather, they complained about the implementation of the Operation by the federal authorities, which they believed was done without regard for its effects on the local community.

First, they objected that the Operation was launched without warning. They felt that they should have been consulted prior to the redeployment of agents so that they could have minimized any negative impacts on business in El Paso and avoided alienating Mexican customers of El Paso businesses. Having spent many years developing close working relationships with the Juárez and Chihuahua City business communities, they were hard pressed to convince their counterparts across the Rio Grande that they did not receive advance notice of the Operation. Representatives of the GEPCC, EPHCC, and DDA requested meetings with officials from the INS/Border Patrol and Customs Service subsequent to the Operation to promote better communications and understanding between the federal authorities and the local communities. These meetings continue to take place, but leaders of each organization expressed doubts as to whether the meetings would lead to greater INS/Border Patrol sensitivity to their concerns in the future.

Second, they objected to the conceptualization and naming of the INS operation as a “blockade,” and its implementation as a “crackdown” attempting to “seal” the border. Leaders of each of the business organizations maintained that “perception is reality,” especially when most people get their information from the news media and not from direct experience with events. They complained that the overnight presence of dozens of armed Border Patrol agents at the river and on the international bridges gave the appearance of a military blockade of the border. This image, once transmitted by the news media to people in Mexico, provoked widespread fear and resentment, even on the part of many people who had legal authorization to cross the border. A blockade, these leaders argued, is what the United States did to Cuba and Iraq and implies both a ban on movement of persons and a prohibition against trade and commerce. A blockade on Mexico, a friendly and close neighbor and ally of the United States, could be taken as an affront to Mexicans. This came at a particularly sensitive time, just six weeks before the Congressional vote on NAFTA and in the middle of the El Paso business community’s promotion of the El Camino Real Corridor, an economic alliance among Mexican and American cities

stretching from Chihuahua City to Santa Fe, New Mexico. The president of the GEPCC complained that having pictures of “armed guards and steel walls” associated with El Paso in the national media has made it harder to convince companies to locate in El Paso. All three organizations expressed reservations about the construction of any new walls along the border and the use of such military forces as the National Guard to aid the Border Patrol in Operation Hold the Line.

Third, leaders of all three organizations expressed concerns about the treatment of Mexican holders of border crossing cards by INS personnel on the international bridges both during the initial stages of the Operation and subsequent to its conversion to Operation Hold the Line. They received reports from their members that Mexican customers had been subjected to “undue and aggressive” interrogation by INS agents on the bridge, had been turned back at the gate when they were deemed to have insufficient funds to shop, and had their valid border crossing cards confiscated when they failed to answer questions to INS inspectors’ satisfaction. The president of the GEPCC and the chairman of the board of the EPHCC each recounted the experiences of Mexican business people they knew, one of whom had owned a business in El Paso for many years, who had been turned back at one of the international bridges after presenting documents they had used for years to cross legally. Making it more difficult to enter the United States for Mexican nationals who have a legal right to do so inevitably hurts business in El Paso, these leaders argued. In each interview, the same observation was made: the federal government had managed to produce additional funds to mount the blockade, but had made no funds available to facilitate legal border crossings by Mexicans. One way this could be done, the business leaders felt, would be to streamline what they see as the current lengthy and expensive bureaucratic process for obtaining Border Crossing Cards.

In terms of the effects of the Operation on the businesses of their members, the leaders of all three organizations reported that they had heard no complaints from members that they had lost any Mexican employees who regularly commuted from Juárez

or that any of these employees had been prevented from getting to work in a timely fashion. With regard to the impact of the Operation on sales, there was consensus that the businesses most affected were those retail stores in what is known as the “Golden Horseshoe” in downtown El Paso (South of I-10), which serve many Mexican pedestrian bridge-crossers, and that businesses that could only be reached by car or bus from the border (i.e., those not within walking distance from the river) were less affected. The leader of the DDA reported that although Christmas season sales in 1993 appeared to have been better for the El Paso downtown merchants than they were in 1992, they might have been better still were it not for a “buy Mexican” campaign launched by Juárez retailers to exploit nationalist resentment against the blockade on the part of Mexican consumers. In any event, the DDA leader maintained, the bounce-back in sales in November and December of 1993 did not make up for the losses incurred downtown in September and October, a claim that corresponds fairly well to observations based on zip-code retail sales and to pedestrian bridge-crossing data.

Sales

Gross retail sales are reported to the State Comptroller’s Office quarterly. The Research Division provided quarterly reported gross sales data for the retail trade industry for each zip code (**Figure 2**) in El Paso through the end of the fourth quarter of calendar year 1993. **Table 14** shows the percent change in reported gross sales for each zip code area in 1993, comparing each quarter with the same quarter in 1992. El Paso experienced a 5.5 percent increase in reported gross sales in the retail trade industry for the year. The fourth quarter experienced a 3.8 percent increase, the lowest change of any quarter. Only six of the eighteen zip code areas in El Paso showed a decline in the fourth quarter (the quarter in which the Operation occurred), although eight showed an overall annual decline. The overall increases for both quarter and year are heavily influenced by the increases for the quarter and year that occurred in one zip code (79925). That area, containing the international airport and a large shopping mall, accounted for 29.4 percent of the annual gross reported sales in the

Figure 2.

El Paso Postal Zip Codes

retail trade in El Paso and 31.7 percent during the fourth quarter.

Initial complaints about loss of business due to Operation Hold the Line came from business people in the downtown districts. The available data appear to support their contention. Of the six zip code areas that showed a decline in the fourth quarter of 1993 versus the fourth quarter of 1992, four are close to the city's center. Zip code 79901 comprises the downtown district of El Paso south of Interstate 10 and includes the area at the foot of the Paso del Norte Bridge. The area includes the city's civic center and contains the shopping district that serves those Juarenses who walk across the bridge. This area accounted for 10.4 percent of total reported gross retail sales in the city during 1993. Reported gross sales declined by 3.6 percent in that area during the fourth quarter of 1993 versus the fourth quarter of 1992. Other downtown areas include zip code area

79902 (north of Interstate 10), zip code area 79903 (north of Interstate 10 and east of zip code area 79902), and zip code area 79905 (which includes the district at the foot of the Bridge of the Americas). For those four zip code areas combined, fourth quarter gross reported sales in the retail trade industry declined by a total of 8.2 percent. Because of their central location and proximity to the border, complaints that the Border Patrol's operation hurt business in the area appear justified. However, each of those four areas also reported declines in gross sales in 1993 from the comparable period in 1992. Of the twenty-two reported periods of declining sales during 1993, ten were reported by those four zip code areas. Other zip code areas (79907, 79915, and 79922) also are bordered on the south by the Rio Grande but are not downtown. All showed increases in the fourth quarter of 1993 versus the fourth quarter 1992.

Table 14.

PERCENT CHANGES IN REPORTED GROSS SALES IN THE RETAIL TRADE INDUSTRY
ZIP CODES IN EL PASO (1993)

Zip Code	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Total
79901	0.5	1.2	4.6	3.6	0.4
79902	12.9	13.7	2.1	11.9	3.6
79903	6.5	12.8	2.7	0.7	2.6
79904	3.4	6.4	5.1	5.2	0.8
79905	20.5	2.0	4.8	21.1	2.1
79906	25.2	17.3	4.3	2.4	13.7
79907	8.8	5.7	2.7	0.1	4.1
79908	25.7	38.3	2.2	13.8	2.4
79912	13.0	12.2	9.5	15.7	12.8
79915	10.6	16.4	5.5	14.1	14.2
79922	15.8	11.0	4.9	18.6	6.8
79924	2.0	4.3	1.8	0.8	2.2
79925	8.4	5.4	4.7	10.2	7.4
79930	2.1	1.7	3.4	1.6	0.4
79932	18.3	3.7	4.9	11.6	9.7
79934	47.6	12.1	5.7	3.6	14.2
79935	14.8	5.5	5.4	14.2	1.1
79936	22.0	18.4	6.9	3.2	13.8
Total	8.4	4.5	5.8	3.8	5.4

Source: Texas State Comptroller's Office, Research Division

City Sales and Use Tax Collections

Analyzing collections of city sales taxes is another useful way of evaluating the effects of Operation Hold the Line on El Paso's economy. In Texas, the State Treasurer collects sales tax revenues for all taxing entities in the state—state, city, county, and metropolitan transit authorities. Business people forward tax receipts from customers depending on a formula that includes the taxpayer's average monthly revenue. Quarterly sales tax payments are due in the months of February, May, August, and November. The State Treasurer remits to each taxing entity its portion of the tax receipts in a monthly allocation. This amount, remitted by the State Treasurer to each city, roughly represents the amount of city sales tax collected during a given time frame. Taxpayers do not always forward their tax receipts on time and the resulting penalties and interest payments are also included in the monthly allocation figures. While these may alter the data somewhat, they should have little effect on the overall assessment of economic activity.

City sales tax remittances allocated to each city each month are directly related to taxes, penalties, and interest payments received by the State Treasurer. Thus, allocations for February, May, August, and No-

vember are generally significantly higher than for the remaining months. They do not indicate periodic surges in economic activity, and adjustments must be made for their presence. **Table 15** shows the percent change in sales tax allocations for selected cities in Texas for the past three years. The last row shows the percent change in sales tax allocations to all the cities in the state. From 1992 to 1993, sales taxes allocated to El Paso increased by 8.4 percent as compared to an 11.1 percent increase for all cities in the state. However, allocations to El Paso have been below the state average in five of the past six years.

Table 16 compares the percent change in sales tax allocations for selected cities in Texas for October through April during the past three years. During the period since Operation Hold the Line began, i.e., October 1993 through April 1994, sales taxes allocated to El Paso increased by 8.7 percent over the same period in the previous year. This compares to a 12.3 percent increase in sales tax allocations for all cities in Texas during the same observation period. Over the past four such observation periods, El Paso's allocations have lagged behind the state, on average, three out of four times. Thus, while the Operation appears to have exerted a negative effect on downtown business activity, it does not appear to have influenced overall business sales negatively in the larger metropolitan area.

Table 15.

PERCENT CHANGES IN SALES TAX ALLOCATIONS
(ANNUAL CHANGES)

	1990-1991	1991-1992	1992-1993
Austin	9.8	7.7	14.1
Brownsville	5.4	5.6	21.0
Corpus Christi	5.9	6.1	7.8
Dallas	1.3	4.7	7.9
El Paso	6.5	5.9	8.4
Fort Worth	0.8	3.8	8.0
Houston	5.6	0.1	5.6
Laredo	16.2	12.7	8.7
McAllen	15.2	19.0	8.1
San Antonio	6.5	6.7	11.3
State of Texas	9.2	7.1	11.1

Table 16.

PERCENT CHANGES IN SALES TAX ALLOCATIONS
(OCTOBER THROUGH APRIL CHANGES)

	1990-1991	1991-1992	1992-1993	1993-1994
Austin	89.3	5.8	14.5	11.9
Brownsville	6.3	7.5	12.7	15.7
Corpus Christi	97.1	1.8	9.0	10.9
Dallas	82.6	2.8	8.4	9.2
El Paso	7.4	6.6	5.7	8.7
Fort Worth	79.2	2.7	5.8	12.5
Houston	92.7	0.6	2.8	6.3
Laredo	13.6	13.8	12.4	8.1
McAllen	60.5	31.2	12.1	6.9
San Antonio	8.2	3.6	10.2	11.2
State of Texas	10.9	5.6	9.5	12.3

Source: Texas Comptroller's Office, Tax Allocation Division

Labor Market

Many people suggest that undocumented migrants entering El Paso to obtain work take jobs away from El Paso residents. If this is true, and if the Operation has been successful in stopping undocumented migrants from entering El Paso, one would expect to see an increase in the number of new job postings after the implementation of Operation Hold the Line. This would particularly be true in the kinds of jobs thought to be filled by illegal migrants: primarily positions in the services, machine trades, benchwork, and structural work occupation groups.

One measure of economic activity in the community is the number of new job order postings recorded each week through the Texas Employment Commission [TEC]. Part of the TEC mission is to assist unemployed persons in their job searches. Many organizations, in both the private and public sectors, notify the local Texas Employment Commission office when jobs become available. Employers seeking persons to fill specific job openings submit job orders to TEC, which, in turn, matches legal U.S. residents who are seeking employment to those job openings. A significant rise in job orders placed by employers with the Employee Services unit of

the TEC's office in El Paso is another way in which an increased demand for legal employees in El Paso could be reflected.

To assess the effect of the Operation, the Texas Employment Commission's El Paso Office collected data on new job postings for fifty-nine weeks from January 7, 1993, through May 18, 1994. **Table 17** presents the number of job orders received from employers during the reporting weeks for jobs in the services, machine trades, benchwork, and structural work occupation groups. It also shows total job orders for all nine occupation groups. These data do not cover every week during the period nor do they cover a sufficient period to allow for time-series analysis, but they do provide a rough estimate. As can be seen, the TEC received no obvious surge in placement of job orders following implementation of the Operation, as might have been expected had large numbers of illegal workers suddenly been removed from the El Paso work force. For the week of September 23, 1993, the first week of the Operation, new job order postings increased 1 to 5 percent in the four occupation groups shown; however, new postings dropped in all four groups the following week.

Table 17.

JOB ORDERS TAKEN BY TEXAS EMPLOYMENT COMMISSION, EL PASO COUNTY (BY WEEK)

Date	Services	Machine Trades	Benchwork	Structural Work	Total
01/07/93	60	27	28	25	280
01/14/93	70	22	30	28	287
01/21/93	71	23	33	33	319
01/28/93	67	23	42	38	316
02/05/93	68	29	46	33	320
02/12/93	69	34	66	35	356
02/18/93	83	29	55	32	364
02/24/93	97	40	59	46	433
03/04/93	94	40	57	39	420
03/11/93	105	46	57	33	433
03/17/93	113	41	52	42	467
03/24/93	102	47	65	48	486
04/08/93	136	51	65	59	574
04/15/93	121	49	63	63	528
04/22/93	134	46	59	49	532
04/29/93	136	48	61	53	576
05/06/93	130	58	67	62	593
05/14/93	148	55	59	62	580
05/21/93	156	52	60	52	559
05/27/93	154	50	78	65	591
06/11/93	147	53	89	58	615
06/18/93	149	52	91	58	603
08/12/93	147	71	68	96	636
08/20/93	129	71	75	94	630
08/26/93	131	69	69	90	627
09/02/93	122	73	58	83	595
09/10/93	106	68	57	91	576
09/16/93	98	64	58	77	552
09/23/93	101	66	61	78	557
09/30/93	98	65	51	53	541
10/08/93	98	52	49	87	535
10/15/93	82	57	37	87	505
10/22/93	78	60	50	77	507
10/29/93	78	50	33	74	462
11/04/93	74	37	35	53	405
11/12/93	82	41	34	47	404
11/19/93	75	49	31	47	423
11/24/93	92	45	26	46	402
12/03/93	88	42	39	43	398
12/10/93	83	38	31	45	380
12/23/93	85	38	34	46	392
12/30/93	90	32	30	41	364
01/06/94	96	33	39	38	382
01/14/94	108	33	43	53	419
01/21/94	108	32	44	51	431
01/28/94	109	38	29	51	396
02/11/94	88	38	32	43	425
02/18/94	82	48	34	39	421
02/24/94	72	46	34	35	373
03/11/94	84	61	44	54	460
03/18/94	94	58	40	46	463
04/01/94	100	58	42	56	496
04/08/94	98	58	48	58	483
04/14/94	100	61	54	42	481
04/21/94	128	54	46	52	280
04/28/94	105	58	46	57	266
05/05/94	113	49	40	57	259
05/12/94	97	50	42	56	245
05/18/94	110	43	34	60	247

Source: Texas Employment Commission, El Paso Office

Table 18 shows the mean number of new job order postings for the four occupation groups and the total prior to and after the implementation of Operation Hold the Line, as well as the means for the entire data set. As can readily be seen, the mean number of new job order postings after implementation of the Operation declined in three of the four occupation groups after the Operation was implemented. Only in the machine trade occupation group did the mean number of new job order postings rise, and then only by 1.3 percent. The incompleteness of the available data limits analysis; however, it would appear that the operation has had little, if any, impact on the formal labor market in El Paso. It is more likely that the fluctuations observed in the data are due to changes in economic conditions or effects of the business cycle. It may be that many Juárez residents who work illegally in El Paso do so not for formal companies, but rather for private individuals and informal enterprises in various kinds of domestic service—lawn maintenance, gardening, housecleaning, daycare, and construction. Employers of illegal workers, to the extent that they are not formal companies, may not tend to use the TEC job order service.

If the number of Juárez residents working illegally in El Paso were very large, if such persons were performing jobs vital to the local economy that were seen as desirable by legal U.S. residents, and if Operation Hold the Line made it impossible for a substantial number of those working illegally before the Operation to continue to do so afterwards, one would expect the demand for labor from U.S. residents to rise measurably after the Operation began.

One way in which increased demand for U.S. resident labor could manifest itself would be in a decline in the local unemployment rate in the months following the blockade. **Table 19** gives monthly unemployment figures for El Paso County from 1989 through the end of 1993. As can be seen, no substantial, unseasonable rise or fall in the unemployment rate took place after the Operation started in late September 1993. The post-Operation average unemployment rate of 10.6 percent is identical with both the average rate for the months January-August from 1989 through 1993 and for the months October-December from 1989 through 1992.²¹

Our field work and review of the relevant quantitative data available in El Paso/Juárez indicate that the proportion of Juárez residents working illegally in El Paso before the blockade was probably relatively small and that most of them worked in domestic service, as street vendors, or for construction contractors at rates of pay not attractive to most legal U.S. residents. As noted above, while the Operation has reduced illegal crossings, it has not entirely eliminated them. Moreover, part of the reduction in illegal crossings may be due to people extending their stays on the El Paso side so as to continue working while commuting back and forth less frequently. Finally, most of the Juárez residents working illegally in El Paso cross the border legally with a Border Crossing Card and thus have not been

²¹ We exclude the month of September from these comparisons of the average unemployment rate because of the temporary disruptions that occurred in cross border traffic in the first days of Operation Blockade.

Table 18.

MEAN NEW JOB ORDER LISTINGS FOR EL PASO TEXAS EMPLOYMENT COMMISSION
SELECTED WEEKS

Means	Services	Machine Trades	Benchwork	Structural Work	Total
Preimplementation	112.3	47.5	59.5	55.1	494.6
Postimplementation	93.4	48.1	39.7	53.9	448.7
Combined means	102.4	47.8	49.1	54.5	470.5

Source: Texas Employment Commission, El Paso Office

Table 19.

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IN EL PASO COUNTY
(BY MONTH AND YEAR)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1989	11.0	10.8	9.7	10.1	8.9	10.8	10.8	10.6	9.6	11.1	9.5	10.2
1990	9.7	12.1	9.6	10.2	10.7	10.8	10.7	10.3	11.0	9.7	12.2	11.3
1991	12.0	10.6	10.9	11.4	10.5	10.0	10.9	10.1	10.1	11.3	10.5	10.1
1992	12.3	11.4	10.7	10.6	10.5	11.9	10.5	9.4	10.6	9.7	10.8	10.8
1993	11.7	11.3	9.3	9.6	9.3	10.9	10.3	9.3	9.5	10.6	10.3	11.0

Source: Texas Employment Commission, El Paso office

prevented from working by the Operation, which seeks mainly to curb illegal crossings, not illegal employment. Thus, the lack of any sign of a substantial impact of the Operation on the El Paso labor market is perhaps not surprising.

The legalization provisions of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 are also likely to have had an impact on the employment and wages of undocumented Mexican workers in the El Paso area (Sorensen & Bean 1994). In the late 1980s, many Mexicans living and working illegally in El Paso legalized their status through the INS amnesty program. Thus hundreds of maids, gardeners, farm workers, nannies, mechanics, and others who formerly worked illegally continued on in their jobs as legal workers. According to the leader of the *Union de Trabajadores Agrícolas*, an El Paso farm worker organization, most farm workers in the area now are legal residents. According to this source, most growers and ranchers have no incentive and thus refuse to hire undocumented workers. In El Paso's Plaza San Jacinto, interviews at bus stops with a number of immigrant women working as housecleaners uncovered that they were not Juárez commuter workers, but legalized El Paso residents. It is likely, then, that the legalization of many of the El Paso area's undocumented workers may have dampened any labor market effects that Operation Hold the Line otherwise might have had.

Tourism

Although there was some initial concern over the potential impact of the Operation on tourism in El

Paso, that concern appears to have rapidly waned. Tourism is the second largest industry in El Paso, and one would have expected a decline in hotel occupancy rates if tourism were appreciably affected. **Table 20** shows monthly hotel occupancy rates from January 1990 through May 1994. The rates dropped from September 1993 through February 1994 compared to the same months in the previous year. However, occupancy rates have been declining over the past three years. The major exceptions, in July and August 1993, were due to state and regional meetings held in El Paso during those months.

Conversations with El Paso Tourist Bureau employees suggest that factors other than Operation Hold the Line were at work and, in their judgment, were more likely to have influenced tourism and hotel occupancy than the Operation. A major factor appears to be the declining budget of El Paso Tourist Bureau. Advertising is a prime factor in inducing people to visit the city. Another factor may have been the nationwide trend in recent years for shorter vacations, which means that tourists tend to stay closer to their home areas. El Paso draws on the northern plains states and the Midwest for much of its tourism trade. Because of its distance from those areas, El Paso may be experiencing the effects of the general trend and the unwillingness of tourists to spend extra time on the road.

Bus Ridership

We also received ridership data from representatives of both Sunland Metro (the local bus company) and Greyhound Corporation in El Paso. Neither

Table 20.

HOTEL OCCUPANCY RATES IN EL PASO
(January 1990-May 1994)

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
January	71.0	70.3	68.1	67.7	65.2
February	74.2	76.0	71.8	74.4	72.2
March	76.6	78.4	78.0	71.3	74.4
April	75.0	74.6	76.4	71.9	76.7
May	76.4	76.0	75.0	70.9	74.7
June	81.0	80.1	77.2	74.7	
July	79.5	77.5	75.9	79.1	
August	79.3	74.6	73.1	85.4	
September	67.9	72.2	74.0	70.0	
October	70.6	73.7	71.5	68.8	
November	67.5	67.9	66.9	65.3	
December	70.7	69.7	66.0	65.7	

Source: El Paso Tourist Bureau

company noted any appreciable change in ridership following the launching of Operation Hold the Line. Greyhound notes that it makes little sense for undocumented Mexicans to attempt to leave El Paso on its buses because Border Patrol personnel routinely board buses at highway checkpoints on the way out of town to check riders' documents. About one or two undocumented persons a month are removed from Greyhound buses as a result.

That Sunland Metro ridership was not affected by eliminating the crossing of undocumented Mexicans seems to indicate that few undocumented residents of Juárez were using the Sunland Metro system to get to work in El Paso. Conversely, it also suggests that the majority of the Mexican domestic workers employed in El Paso are (1) either U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents who choose to reside in Juárez while working in El Paso, or (2) holders of Border Crossing Cards who enter the United States legally in order to work illegally. At the downtown San Jacinto Plaza we ascertained that many Mexican women queued up every morning to board Sunland Metro buses headed for outlying parts of El Paso. Thus, the Operation does not appear to have halted the employment of domestic workers from Juárez.

Accidents

One alleged side effect of Operation Hold the Line was improved safety along Loop 375, the "Border Highway" that extends from the Paso del Norte Bridge in downtown El Paso to the Zaragoza Bridge. This stretch of highway parallels the Rio Grande and is an obstacle to illegal border crossers. Having crossed the river, migrants are faced with crossing this high-speed, limited-access, four-lane divided highway, a main traffic artery bringing El Pasoans from the east into the downtown area. Prior to the Operation, migrants were known to run across the road, dodging oncoming traffic. Border Patrol agents were stationed along the levee between the river and the highway as part of the Operation Hold the Line strategy. This placement of agents virtually eliminated border crossings in that area. Several interviewees cited the reduction in highway congestion caused by border crossers and the consequent reduction in highway accidents and fatalities.

A Texas Department of Public Safety search of its official record of automobile-pedestrian traffic accidents January 1, 1989 through May 1993, along the border highway from Santa Fe Street at the foot of the Paso del Norte Bridge and Zaragoza Avenue, which extends from the Zaragoza Bridge, found thirty-four reports involving thirty-six pedestrian injuries.

Table 21 provides information about each of those reported accidents. Two involved El Paso residents, one with a non-Hispanic surname. Twenty-one of the pedestrians were residents of Juárez, eight were from the interior of Mexico, and the residences of five were undetermined. Ten of the accidents resulted in fatalities. In one accident, two pedestrians were killed. In another accident a mother carrying her one month old baby was injured and the child was killed.

While there have been no automobile-pedestrian accidents reported on Loop 375 since May 1993, there is insufficient data to determine what effect, if any, Operation Hold the Line has had. In spite of the suggestion that automobile-pedestrian accidents were frequent occurrences, there have been no more than 8 in any one year, and the average is fewer than 6.5 per year.

Juárez Business Activities

We interviewed several leaders of the three major business organizations in Juárez: the *Cámara Nacional de Comercio* [CONACO], the *Cámara Nacional de la Industria de la Transformación* [CANACINTRA], and *Desarrollo Económico de Juárez*. Of the three, only *Desarrollo Económico* is not officially sponsored by the national government. We asked for their views on Operation Hold the Line in general and its effects on the economy of Juárez in particular. There was general consensus in both their views on the Operation and its effects on the Juárez economy.

First, all three viewed the Operation as an unnecessary affront to Mexicans and the antithesis of the good neighbor policy that they and their counterparts in El Paso had been trying to develop over the years with such joint projects such as the creation of the *El Camino Real* trade corridor. Manuel Ochoa, the leader of CONACO, placed particular emphasis on the interdependence of the two cities, commenting that “the two are not just twin cities, but Siamese twin cities, sharing the same digestive system.” The other leaders concurred that what was damaging to Juárez was also damaging to El Paso and that federal authorities in Mexico City and Washington often failed to appreciate this local reality. Each busi-

ness leader expressed resentment of the portrayal in the press of Mexican illegal crossers as a criminal element and of the INS officials’ treatment of legal Mexican crossers as criminal suspects. Each knew of business people or their employees who had experienced harassment and other difficulties at the hands of INS officials on the bridges in the first days after the Operation began, though they acknowledged that treatment of Mexican entrants subsequently improved. They emphasized that Mexicans who crossed into El Paso illegally were “productive people who go there to work, not to steal,” in the words of Mr. Ochoa. While the leaders did not question the Border Patrol’s right to enforce the laws of the United States, they did object to the way in which the Operation was undertaken: as a surprise, action that fomented animosity between Mexicans and U.S. citizens.

Second, all three business leaders concurred that the negative publicity surrounding Operation Hold the Line led to steep drops in business among restaurants, bars, nightclubs, and shops in downtown Juárez that catered to U.S. tourists. A press release issued by CONACO shortly after the Operation’s implementation described its impact:

On September 19, 1993, the Immigration and Naturalization Service of the United States of America, acting through the Border Patrol, El Paso District, under the command of Silvestre Reyes, implemented what was named “Operation Blockade,” with the goal of reducing the flow of undocumented persons across the international boundary separating Juárez and El Paso. Parallel to this, a negative publicity campaign towards Ciudad Juárez was undertaken by the U.S. press which warned U.S. citizens of the risks they faced upon visiting this border city and exposing themselves to a situation of lack of public order and police abuse. The effects of this were felt immediately in the form of a drop in visitors from El Paso, who were even less disposed to come upon seeing the long lines going back into El Paso occasioned by the scrupulous inspections being realized by immigration and customs agents.

Table 21.

AUTOMOBILE-PEDESTRIAN ACCIDENTS
EL PASO BORDER HIGHWAY (L375)
(JANUARY 1989-May 1993)

	Date	Day	Time	Gender	Age	From	Fatality
1989	Jan 5	Thur	7:15 PM	female	21	Durango	X
				female	25	Durango	X
	Apr 7	Fri	12:45 PM	male	16	Juárez	
	May 20	Sat	11:38 PM	male	33	El Paso	
	Jun 14	Wed	6:20 PM	male	17	Juárez	
	Jul 14	Fri	2:30 PM	male	25	Chiapas	
	Aug 13	Sun	11:30 PM	male	25	Juárez	
	Oct 29	Sun	12:30 PM	female	unk	Juárez	
	Dec 15	Fri	5:50 PM	male	27	Juárez	
	1990	Jan 23	Tues	7:45 AM	male	22	Juárez
Apr 13		Fri	7:05 PM	male	29	Juárez	
May 13		Sun	2:05 PM	male	23	Juárez	
May 19		Sat	7:35 PM	male	22	Juárez	
Jul 12		Thur	2:00 PM	male	25	Juárez	
Aug 17		Fri	5:53 PM	female	21	Durango	
Sep 8		Sat	2:05 PM	male	20	Juárez	
Dec 21		Fri	3:30 PM	male	31	Juárez	
1991		Mar 11	Mon	10:42 AM	female	21	Juárez ²²
				male	1 mo.	Juárez	X
	Apr 27	Sat	10:05 AM	male	31	El Paso	X
	May 29	Wed	8:53 AM	male	30	Juárez	
	Jul 1	Mon	12:15 PM	male	unk	unk	X
	Nov 27	Wed	6:30 AM	male	47	Juárez	X
	Dec 20	Fri	5:50 PM	male	unk	unk	X
1992	Jan 14	Tues	3:50 PM	male	33	Durango	
	May 16	Sat	10:50 PM	male	33	Juárez	X
	Jul 21	Tues	9:00 PM	female	30	Juárez	X
	Aug 14	Fri	7:55 PM	male	unk	unk	
	Aug 17	Mon	3:23 PM	female	50	Torreon	
	Sep 23	Wed	7:40 PM	male	22	Luvianos	
	Dec 2	Wed	6:25 PM	male	26	Juárez	X ²³
	Dec 4	Fri	12:10 PM	male	25	Juárez	
	1993	Jan 21	Thur	1:15 PM	female	37	Durango
Mar 16		Tues	5:15 PM	male	37	Juárez	
May 2		Sun	6:05 PM	male	unk	unk	
May 3		Mon	4:00 PM	male	unk	unk	

Source: Texas Department of Public Safety

²²Woman was carrying the baby. Two witnesses with the woman accompanied her to the hospital. The woman, baby, and witnesses were all illegal aliens.

²³Blood-Alcohol Content was 0.23.

CONACO's Department of Economic Studies conducted a survey of thirty restaurants, eight discotheques, eighteen bars, and twenty-two hotels located on streets in the city's tourist area, and asked each to estimate how much their business was up or down in number of customers entering their establishments since the Operation and reported:

- Discotheques experienced a 38 percent reduction in clientele, on average;
- Bars experienced a 74 percent reduction; and
- Restaurants and hotels each experienced a 45 percent reduction in customers immediately following the blockade.

At the same time, CONACO acknowledged the limitations of its survey:

We are conscious of the fact that it is difficult to make a precise quantitative evaluation of the repercussions of the Operation. Furthermore, several other situations come into play such as: old problems of public security, traffic, taxi drivers, street vendors and beggars, and police, as well as the gradual loss of the tourist sector's ability to attract visitors contraction of economic activity in the country as a whole, as a consequence of measures taken by the Mexican government in 1992 to decelerate the economy and reduce inflation to one digit; and the economic difficulties faced by the United States and that impact us directly.

In other words, the Juárez tourist business was already hurting before the Operation began, and the other problems plaguing it make it difficult to gauge the Operation's effects after its first few weeks. None of the three business leaders we interviewed felt that other sectors of the Juárez economy had been materially harmed, and none, save for those appearing in the CONACO report quoted above, had received complaints from their members reporting specific business problems generated for them by the Operation.

Conclusions

The implementation of Operation Hold the Line may have affected the economic activity in central areas of the city negatively; however, its impact apparently was not felt much in other parts of the city. Comparing the reported gross sales in the retail trade industry in El Paso during the fourth quarter 1992 to the fourth quarter 1993, the city showed a 3.8 percent increase overall. As this is the lowest percent increase of any quarter during the year, it is not unreasonable to believe that Operation Hold the Line had some negative influence. The decline in the downtown area was almost certainly due in part to a combination of factors related to the Operation, including a reduced flow of undocumented border crossers, delays of documented border crossers at the ports of entry (because of either more stringent inspections or protests on the Mexican side), anti-American sentiment and the "Buy Mexican" campaign, and general concern by Mexican residents about crossing into El Paso to shop. However, other factors, including the condition of the Mexican economy, may have played a role. It is difficult, therefore, to determine to what extent Operation Hold the Line affected retail sales in El Paso during its first three months of operation.

Comparison of city sales and use tax data do not suggest that Operation Hold the Line had any significant impact on the overall economy of the city. El Paso has about 3.5 percent of the state's population. Receipts from city sales and use taxes in El Paso constitute about 2.5 percent of the state's total revenue from those sources, reflecting the area's economic conditions. Over the past six years these percentages were relatively constant. El Paso's trailing behind the state's average growth is more likely due to national and global factors than to Operation Hold the Line. Comparisons of labor market data, hotel occupancy rates, and bus ridership information also provide little evidence to indicate that the Operation had much overall effect, although downtown businesses may have been affected. Business leaders' complaints, except in the case of downtown businesses, thus appear to have been exaggerated and largely unfounded.

V. Effects on education, Births and Social Services

This chapter examines the effects of Operation Hold the Line on school enrollments, registered births in El Paso County, births in Thomason Hospital (the only hospital in El Paso County providing indigent health care), and welfare programs in El Paso. Examination of these factors is important because of the widespread perception that illegal migrants are attracted to U.S. border communities because they can receive free social and health services there. If these types of flows were large to begin with, and if the Operation has slowed the flow of these persons crossing the border, we should see some evidence of this in the form of fewer persons receiving social and health services after than before the Operation. This chapter also reports what was learned about the effects of the Operation on the delivery of social services in Juárez, although the information we were able to obtain was quite limited.

Education

There has been considerable discussion about the impact of illegal immigration upon the United States' educational system. Studies of the costs of educating the children of illegal immigrants find that this expense is one of the highest, if not the highest, associated with illegal immigration (Clark & Passel 1993; Huddle 1993). For some observers, this expenditure is viewed as a sound investment in the nation's future. However, for others such children are seen as "free riders" because their parents often do not shoulder a proportionate share of state and local taxes used to finance education, even though they pay a substantial amount of federal taxes. In communities along the U.S.-Mexico border, an important issue is the extent to which Mexican children cross the border to attend schools free, especially middle and high schools, as free public education in Mexico extends only through sixth grade. Thus, it has been argued that if the Border Patrol were able successfully to stem the flow of illegal migrants into the United States and of children crossing the border from Mexico to attend school, the

burden on local taxpayers would be greatly diminished. An important part of assessing the impact of the Operation thus involves determining how the Operation affected the El Paso schools.

At the outset, the distinction between Mexican residents and illegal immigrants must be clarified. These two groups are often lumped together during the debate over school financing, as well as debates over such issues as medical care, but they are two very distinct groups, each of which has a different impact on U.S. immigration and immigrant policy. One group consists of Mexican residents who send their children to El Paso for free public schooling, thus violating laws dealing with both public education and immigration policy. The other group consists of immigrants who enter the country illegally and settle. This group is violating immigration, but not education, laws. While we are not condoning the violation of any law, for the present discussion it is important to understand the differing nature of the violations committed by each group.

El Paso is a multicultural city with a large Hispanic population. Approximately 70 percent of the city-county population is Hispanic. There are nine independent school districts [ISDs] in El Paso County, two of which are in the city itself. In the Fall 1993-1994 school term, 64,141 students were enrolled in the El Paso ISD, and 49,398 were in Ysleta ISD. Hispanics constituted 74.3 percent of the enrollment in El Paso ISD and 83.2 percent in Ysleta ISD. The remaining seven ISDs enrolled 33,758 students, of whom 90.2 percent were Hispanic.

While the public argument rages over the free rider issue, a combination of legal restrictions and funding limitations have prevented school districts from eliminating illegal immigrant and border crossing students from their enrollment rosters. The free-rider perception notwithstanding, the U.S. Supreme Court [*Plyler v. Doe*, 457 U.S. 202, 102 S.Ct. 2382 (1982)] declared that the age and residence of the student or the residency of the student's parent(s) are the sole criteria for admission to public schools. Further, under federal guidelines, residency requirements have been declared inapplicable when a child is declared homeless. Therefore, school administra-

tors are prohibited from asking applicants their nationality or immigrant status. To conform with that ruling, the 72nd Texas Legislature amended Section 21.031 of the Texas Education Code relating to the admission of children to the public school system so that under current law, the only requirement to attend a public school in Texas is residency within that school's district. Consequently, the distinction discussed above between Mexican residents and illegal immigrants plays a key role in education policy because it is not a more serious violation of state and federal law for a student who resides in Mexico to fraudulently enroll in an El Paso area school than it is for a student who is a resident of another school district within the county.

Since residency is the key requirement for school enrollment, the issue for school district administrators has become one of determining the actual residency of the prospective student. To prove residency, an applicant must submit some form of documentation that reasonably assures the school district's administrators that the student does reside within the district. Acceptable documentation includes utility bills, rent receipts, and notarized statements by landlords confirming a person's residency. The various forms of acceptable documentation are evidently easy to obtain. Anecdotal evidence suggests that documents can be obtained through the black market if not from friends or relatives, so the task of confirming a student's residency declaration with absolute certainty is nearly impossible. As in most jurisdictions around the country, families frequently move into and out of neighborhoods, which makes keeping track of who lives within the district boundaries a daunting task. Changing residency from one school district to another is prohibited by Texas law only in cases where the primary purpose for moving is either to participate in extracurricular activities or to evade court-ordered desegregation plans.

School districts have standard procedures for reviewing and accepting applications for enrollment. When an individual applies to a district for admission of a student, the district's administrative staff reviews the application. Applications which appear irregular are investigated prior to admission. However, although the required documents appear to be rela-

tively easy to obtain, there is rarely a reason to challenge an application in which the appropriate documentation is properly presented. Some apparent irregularities, such as a student's having a different surname from that on the documentation, are often easily explained. Because of concern over fraudulent enrollments, each district has a system for ensuring the residency status of its enrolled students. Each campus administration identifies students it believes are not district residents. Identification may be based on attendance records, tips received from other students or parents, or some other means. District officials investigate, and if it is determined that a student is not a resident, the school's principal takes action to disenroll the student. The administrative and investigative staffs, however, are small for the size of the enrolled school population. Therefore, it is difficult to ensure that no nonresident students are enrolled in a district. During the 1992-1993 school year, less than 1 percent of the students in the El Paso ISD were determined to be fraudulently enrolled in the district. Students and their parents have the legal right to appeal an unfavorable ruling through the school system to the president of the school board and through the court system; however, according to school officials, appeals are rare because decisions to disenroll a student are usually based on fairly substantial and irrefutable evidence.

There is no legal way to determine accurately the number of residents of Mexico who are enrolled as students in the El Paso and Ysleta school districts. Essentially, there are three options available to Mexican residents who wish to enroll their child in a school in the El Paso area. Option one is to have the child live in Mexico and commute daily. Option two is to send the child to live with friends or relatives in El Paso during the school year, returning home to Mexico at varying intervals. Option three is to obtain the necessary documentation and pay tuition to enroll the child in either a private school or in an El Paso ISD school.²⁴

²⁴ Unlike other area school districts, nonresident students may legally enroll in El Paso ISD schools by paying tuition.

The school administrators and teachers interviewed for this study considered option one less common than option two because of the inconvenience, expense, and hazards inherent in crossing the border. One might speculate that daily student-crossers are more likely to be older, higher grade-level students. Some option two student-crossers might choose to return to Mexico every weekend, while others might only return to Mexico during extended school holidays such as Christmas. This foster homelike arrangement is not an uncommon practice in Mexican culture and is facilitated in El Paso/Juárez because many Mexican families have members living on opposite sides of the border. Option three is clearly a choice only for more affluent Mexicans.

These three options result in five possible groups of student-crossers. The first group consists of students who enter the United States surreptitiously, lacking appropriate legal-entry documentation. Group two consists of daily student-crossers who enter through a port of entry using a legal entry document, such as the Border Crossing Card. Although the BCC is not intended to be used for this purpose, it is possible for a child to enter the country through a port of entry every day without being stopped. Groups three and four consist, respectively, of undocumented and documented student-crossers who live in the foster homelike circumstances. The possession or nonpossession of legal-entry documents may or may not determine the frequency of crossings during the school year. Group five consists of those student crossers with legal border crossing documents who attend school legally in the United States (e.g., University of Texas-El Paso students with student visas or tuition-paying parochial school students).

Closing the border under Operation Hold the Line might have affected each group differently. We hypothesized that those without documents would be most affected, as the new strategy was designed to prevent people from crossing the border at locations other than the legal points of entry. It appears that long lines, delays, and fear of having one's documents confiscated may have prevented some Mexican residents with legal border crossing documents from crossing during the first weeks of the Opera-

tion for such legitimate purposes as shopping and visiting relatives. Nevertheless, while those with documents who used them to cross after the Operation began may have been inconvenienced by long lines, they should have been minimally affected.

Clearly, students without documentation should have faced more significant challenges from Operation Hold the Line. Those who were crossing the border daily without benefit of papers (group one) should have been most affected. Since the Operation began on Sunday morning, some of those in group three may have been in Mexico for the weekend and would have been affected along with the daily crossers. Both groups would have experienced delays in crossing and may have been stopped altogether. However, we heard reports that crossers can evade the Border Patrol, although to do so sometimes means circumnavigating the line. On the other hand, those in possession of legal-entry documentation (groups two, four and five) and those in group three who were on the U.S. side of the border on September 19th, should have been unaffected.

If the Operation was successful in preventing undocumented students from crossing, then daily attendance would have dropped in proportion to the number of student crossers. While a few interviewees recalled some attendance irregularities during the first few weeks of the Operation, records from the El Paso ISD and Ysleta ISD schools do not indicate a significant change in enrollment subsequent to implementation of Operation Blockade. In El Paso ISD, enrollment dropped by 193 students from one week prior to implementation to one week after implementation, three tenths of one percent (.003) of the school district's population and compares to a 112-student drop over the analogous period for 1992.²⁵ **Table 22** shows changes in enrollment for selected schools (near the border) during the two periods of observation.

²⁵ Comparison was made of 1993 enrollment at the end of the fourth week of classes (Sept. 9) versus enrollment at the end of the sixth week of classes (Sept. 24) and was contrasted with 1992 enrollment at the same time of the school year (Sept. 17-Oct. 2).

Two schools virtually adjacent to the border showed larger changes. Enrollment at Bowie High School declined by 204 students during that two-week period in 1993 versus a decline of 18 students during the same period in 1992. The net difference is a decline of 186 students. By comparison, the remaining 9 high schools in the El Paso ISD went from a decline in enrollment of 130 students in the observed period of 1992 to a decline of 124 students in the 1993 observation period. That indicates that 6 fewer students left El Paso ISD high schools in the observed period of 1993 than occurred during the same period in 1992. Enrollment at Guillen Middle School changed from an increase of 66 students in 1992 to a decrease of 6 students during the critical period in 1993, a net negative change of 72. The 10 remaining middle schools in the district saw the 1992 decline of 54 students reduced in 1993 to 17 students, a net positive change of 37.

In contrast to Bowie High School and Guillen Middle School, elementary schools along the border experienced smaller changes in enrollments. Hart Elementary School, virtually next door to Guillen Middle School, showed a 1 student gain during the two-week period around the Operation versus a 5 student gain during the comparable period in the previous year. Aoy and Roosevelt Elementary Schools, each within three blocks of the foot of the Good Neighbor Bridge in downtown El Paso, showed enrollment increases in the 1993 study period that exceeded increases during the comparable 1992 period. Total enrollment for all El Paso ISD elementary schools increased by 24 students during the 1992 observation period versus an increase of 158 students during the 1993 period. The difference in gain between the two periods (158 - 24 = 134), when combined with the high school and middle school figures, resulted in a total (negative) change of 81 students between the two periods for the entire

Table 22.

CHANGES IN ENROLLMENT, SELECTED SCHOOLS
EL PASO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

	Chng		Chng			Chng	
	9/17/92	10/2/92	1992	9/9/93	9/24/93	1993	92-3
Bowie HS	2,055	2,037	-18	2,074	1,870	-204	-186
Other 9 HS	14,777	14,647	-130	15,431	15,307	-124	6
Total HS	16,832	16,684	-148	17,505	17,177	-328	-180
Guillen MS	1,023	1,089	66	1,020	1,014	-6	-72
Other 10 MS	10,362	10,308	-54	11,453	11,436	-17	37
Total MS	11,385	11,397	12	12,473	12,450	-23	-35
Alamo EM	406	398	-8	407	411	4	12
Aoy EM	740	741	1	735	739	4	3
Burleson EM	709	719	10	656	659	3	-7
Clardy EM	946	953	7	960	966	6	-1
Hart EM	806	811	5	821	822	1	-4
Roosevelt EM	368	358	-10	385	386	1	11
Other 51 EM	30,837	30,856	19	31,217	31,356	139	120
Total EM	34,812	34,836	24	35,181	35,339	158	134
Grand Totals	63,029	62,917	-112	65,159	64,966	-193	-81

Source: El Paso Independent School District, Research & Evaluation Division

school district. Data from **Table 22** also suggest that those students who cross the border daily, or at least on a regular basis, to attend classes illegally may be older, higher grade-level students. The large changes occurred at the high school and middle school level; there was little change in the elementary schools.

The changes that occurred have induced El Paso ISD administrators to declare that the district lost approximately five hundred students districtwide as a result of the Border Patrol's operation, possibly as many as one thousand, based on annual projections of the growth in enrollment. While losses based on projections are hypothetical, actual changes in enrollment are known to have occurred. **Table 23** shows school enrollments in each of the nine ISDs in El Paso County for the 1992-1993 and 1993-1994 school years, based on figures provided at the end of October each year. While each of the other school districts recorded an increase in enrollment, El Paso ISD is the only district where enrollment declined (by 110 students). While that is only 0.2 percent of the school district population, the percent change is not what is significant. What is critical is that El Paso ISD is the only district where enrollment declined and that Clint and San Elizario, the two districts immediately to the east of the end of the Operation line also showed gains. Those figures

indicate that the Operation caused a small shift in school enrollments.

In Ysleta ISD, enrollment remained virtually unchanged around the time the Operation was implemented. During the week prior to the establishment of Operation Blockade (Sept. 13-17), the attendance rate in Ysleta ISD schools was 95.4 percent. During the first week the strategy was in place (Sept. 20-24), the attendance rate was 95.7 percent. School administrators in Ysleta ISD, mindful of the border situation, observed a decline in attendance immediately following the Christmas vacation. However, average daily attendance returned to normal within a week. Some administrators attributed the temporary decline in the attendance rate to parents taking their children for extended Christmas vacations. Numerous El Pasoans visit relatives in Mexico during Christmas vacation and the timing differences between the two jurisdiction's vacation periods often causes attendance fluctuations at the beginning of the new year.

Although school districts are partially funded by local taxes, state and federal governments subsidize local school systems from other tax revenues as well. It is widely believed that local property taxes constitute the main source of revenue for school districts. However, state sales taxes and federal income taxes

Table 23.

SCHOOL ENROLLMENTS IN NINE EL PASO COUNTY ISDs

	1992-93	1993-94	Change	% Change
Anthony	752	753	1	0.1
Canutillo	3,897	4,151	254	6.5
Clint	4,819	5,323	504	10.5
El Paso	64,251	64,141	-110	-0.2
Fabens	2,537	2,572	35	1.4
San Elizario	2,538	2,876	338	13.3
Socorro	16,757	17,614	857	5.1
Tornillo	448	469	21	4.7
Ysleta	49,273	49,398	125	0.3
Totals	145,272	147,297	2,025	1.4

Source: Texas Education Agency

also support school systems. Each school district receives funding assistance from the state and federal governments based on the average daily attendance figures submitted by the school districts. In Texas, as in many states, each independent school district imposes an *ad valorem* tax on real property to support its operations, and since the 1986-1987 school year, the average level of local tax rates has risen by 81 percent statewide. As many observers note, both legal and illegal immigrants pay taxes. Illegality of one's residency status does not absolve one of paying taxes. Being in the United States illegally does not prevent one from buying or renting a house, apartment, or other place to live. Home owners and renters (through their landlords) pay property taxes regardless of their immigration status, and residents, both legal and illegal, pay sales taxes on purchases of goods and services.

In an attempt to ensure equality of education throughout the state, funding from state and federal sources is distributed asymmetrically, the intent being that economically disadvantaged districts should receive higher percentages of funding assistance. Each El Paso County school district receives a percentage of state and federal funding in excess of the statewide average for assistance because the county

has a relatively high percentage of economically disadvantaged students in its population. **Table 24** lists 1992-1993 school year enrollments for each of the nine independent school districts in El Paso County and shows the percentage of economically disadvantaged students within each district. Nearly 63 percent of the county's students are classified as economically disadvantaged, as compared to 43.6 percent for all students within the state. The smaller districts have even higher high percentages of economically disadvantaged students, particularly San Elizario (96.2 percent) and Tornillo (97.3 percent). These higher percentages justify the provision of such special services as free lunch programs that mean higher costs for the school district and, subsequently, a greater requirement for funding assistance from the state and federal governments.

Table 25, which shows each school district's total funding for school year 1992-1993 and displays the budgeted revenue distribution for each of El Paso County's nine independent school districts, shows each public school district in El Paso County received at least two-thirds of its annual funding from a combination of the state and federal governments for the 1992-1993 school year. By comparison, the mean statewide distribution of state and federal

Table 24.

SCHOOL ENROLLMENT AND PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS CLASSIFIED AS ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED
(1992-1993 SCHOOL YEAR)

District	# of Students	% of Students Econ Disadv	Total
Anthony	752	77.3	581
Canutillo	3,897	69.8	2,720
Clint	4,819	72.8	3,508
El Paso	64,251	60.8	39,065
Fabens	2,537	83.0	2,106
San Elizario	2,538	96.2	2,442
Socorro	16,757	65.2	10,926
Tornillo	448	97.3	436
Ysleta	49,273	59.6	29,367
County Total	145,272	62.7	91,150

Source: Texas Education Agency

funding for school districts was 48 percent (41 percent state and 7 percent federal). There is no intent to suggest that school districts knowingly and willfully allow nonresidents to enroll fraudulently. School districts appear to be conscientious in their efforts to identify individuals attempting to fraudulently enroll their children and to disenroll those students found to be fraudulently enrolled. Nevertheless, the method of funding schools and the benefits to the community of universal education provide no incentive for schools to be aggressive in seeking out and eliminating nonresident students.

In summary, the Operation may have exerted a small depressing effect on school enrollments. Whatever the number of Mexican students who were enrolled, however, few students seem to have been crossing the border illegally on a routine and frequent basis to attend school. Thus, any problems of free-rider-ship that exist in the El Paso school system have more to do with the schools' inability to make accurate determinations of students' permanent residency status than of their border crossing status. More research on the longer-term effects of the Operation that examines the data for the calendar year 1994, which was unavailable, is needed.

Births

Regardless of the status of entry into the United States, Mexican residents use health care services in El Paso, including some who do so in order to establish U.S. citizenship for their newborn. The mayor estimates that \$30 million is spent by El Paso's taxpayers to service the education and health needs of nonresident migrants and for law enforcement services because of crimes committed by nonresident migrants. Health officials believe the health problems of the area go beyond the cost of providing services for nonresidents. The county is one of the poorest in the nation and has an extremely high proportion of Women, Infants, and Children Program [WIC] clients largely because of the conditions in extralegal settlements called *colonias*. The county has an estimated 350 *colonias* with about 68 thousand residents. Many exist without proper housing, sewage, water, or electricity due to a combination of poverty levels among the *colonia* residents and the state's restrictions on county regulation. Officials believe the conditions in the *colonias* constitute a serious health risk to the entire population of the county.

Table 25.

DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDING, 1992-1993

District	Funding (\$000)	% from State Gov't	% from Local Gov't	% from Fed Gov't
Anthony	3,874	64	26	10
Canutillo	19,821	69	19	12
Clint	20,832	80	15	5
El Paso	284,601	55	33	12
Fabens	11,698	76	10	14
San Elizario	11,064	85	7	8
Socorro	84,045	75	19	6
Tornillo	2,998	74	17	9
Ysleta	236,403	67	23	10

Source: Texas Education Agency

Conditions are potentially worsened by circumstances in Juárez, which has no sewage treatment system and where access to adequate housing, potable water, and electricity is limited in most of the city. The effects of industrial air pollution and toxic waste disposal on water quality are increasingly making health hazards worse over time. El Paso Health officials, who occasionally see such diseases as typhoid, tuberculosis, and dysentery that are rare or nonexistent in most other parts of the United States, believe a major health catastrophe in the El Paso-Juárez area is possible, particularly given the amount of commuter traffic between the two cities.

Like schools, hospitals and clinics are prohibited by law from asking questions about citizenship or immigration status. While they may request information about the residential addresses of those seeking services, they do not have the resources to verify the accuracy of the information given. They cannot refuse anyone seeking emergency treatment regardless of their place of residence. While they may charge for such services, their ability to actually collect from both nonpaying nonresidents and residents is negligible.

With regard to the issue of Mexican women giving birth in El Paso, the city demographer, who has constructed a database of all residential addresses in the county and matched those with information provided on birth registration forms, reports that 70 percent of addresses given on birth registration forms do not match any real address in El Paso,²⁶ a discrepancy believed to result from the relative ease with which Mexican residents can obtain services from such facilities as Thomason General Hospital. For a series of articles for the *El Paso Times*, Emily Jauregui posed during the latter stages of her pregnancy in June 1993 as a Mexican citizen attempting to have a baby in El Paso. She found *coyotes* to smuggle her across the Rio Grande and take her to the hospital or clinic of her choice, health care work-

²⁶ Some of the discrepancies are due to minor errors in recording. A sample of records to determine the number that are actually false addresses as opposed to minor discrepancies in spelling, zip code, etc., could be useful in determining a count of those that actually indicate nonresident status.

ers to assist her in filling out forms when she pretended not to speak English, and other expectant mothers in waiting rooms able to provide her with information as to how to apply for welfare benefits (Jauregui 1993a, 1993b).

El Paso County had 17,553 registered births in 1993, a rate that implies that more than 6 percent of all women from the age of 1 to 105 would have had to give birth in any given year if they were all residents of the county (or about 12 percent of all women 15-44 years of age). Such a fertility rate would be extremely high. Some of the deliveries may be for people in surrounding counties, but many are presumed to be for Mexican residents wanting to establish U.S. citizenship for their children. For many years, pregnant Mexican nationals have entered the United States to give birth. Some commentators contend that these women are taking advantage of available health care, while others argue that the reason is to ensure that their children will be born American citizens. Jauregui (1993a) compiled a list of reasons given by Juárez women for having their children born in the United States:

- Better educational and job opportunities are available for a child who is born a U.S. citizen;
- Medicaid, for those who qualify, can pay the full cost of the delivery and postnatal care;
- The Women, Infants and Children program provides free milk, juices and other food for children through age five;
- As a citizen, the child will not be deported from the United States and, many women believe, the mother will generally be ignored by U.S. Border Patrol agents;
- With American children, a family with legal residency has better access to public housing and other social programs.

One method of evaluating the effectiveness of Operation Hold the Line is to analyze birth data to determine if there has been a change in the number of Hispanics born in El Paso County since the Operation's inception. If the Operation has been successful in preventing women from crossing the border illegally to give birth, the numbers of Hispanic births should have declined. Before any de-

cline in Hispanic births during the final four months of 1993 can be confirmed as resulting from Operation Hold the Line, seasonal patterns in Hispanic births that suggest that the fall months typically show decreases compared to summer months must be taken into account.

Birth data for El Paso County, provided by the Texas Department of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics, are available through December of 1993, although the 1993 database is considered only 90-95 percent complete as of this writing. **Table 26** shows the number of Hispanic births per month during the years 1991-1993. **Figure 3** and **Figure 4** graphically represent the data for each ethnic group registered.²⁷ While the seasonal pattern with respect to Hispanic births is clear, no such pattern appears to exist among the non-Hispanic groups. For Hispanic births (**Figure 3**), the number of births tends to rise from January through August, the peak month for Hispanic births

in each of the three years analyzed. The number of births then declines through November, rises in December, and declines in January; the cycle then repeats itself. **Figure 4** represents the data for non-Hispanic births. There is no discernible seasonal trend. As is apparent from **Table 26** and **Figure 3**, there is a systematic trend upward in the annual number of Hispanic births within the county. This is expected based on the trend in population growth.

Figure 5 compares Hispanic births over the three-year observation period. The pattern of declining numbers of births from August through November holds for each year; however, there is a sharper decline in births from September to October 1993, than in the previous two years. Also, comparing the same months from 1991 to 1992 to 1993, almost all showed increases except the post-Operation months. This combination of monthly increases followed by virtually no monthly change or decline suggests that Operation Hold the Line may have deterred pregnant Mexican nationals from crossing into El Paso for the period of time covered by these data. The decline in December 1993 may also be the result of incomplete data. Unfortunately for this

²⁷ Because the number of Hispanic births is such a large percentage of the total birth count, two graphs are presented. Graphing all data together would have resulted in a scale of such magnitude that the patterns of non-Hispanic birth data would not have been discernible.

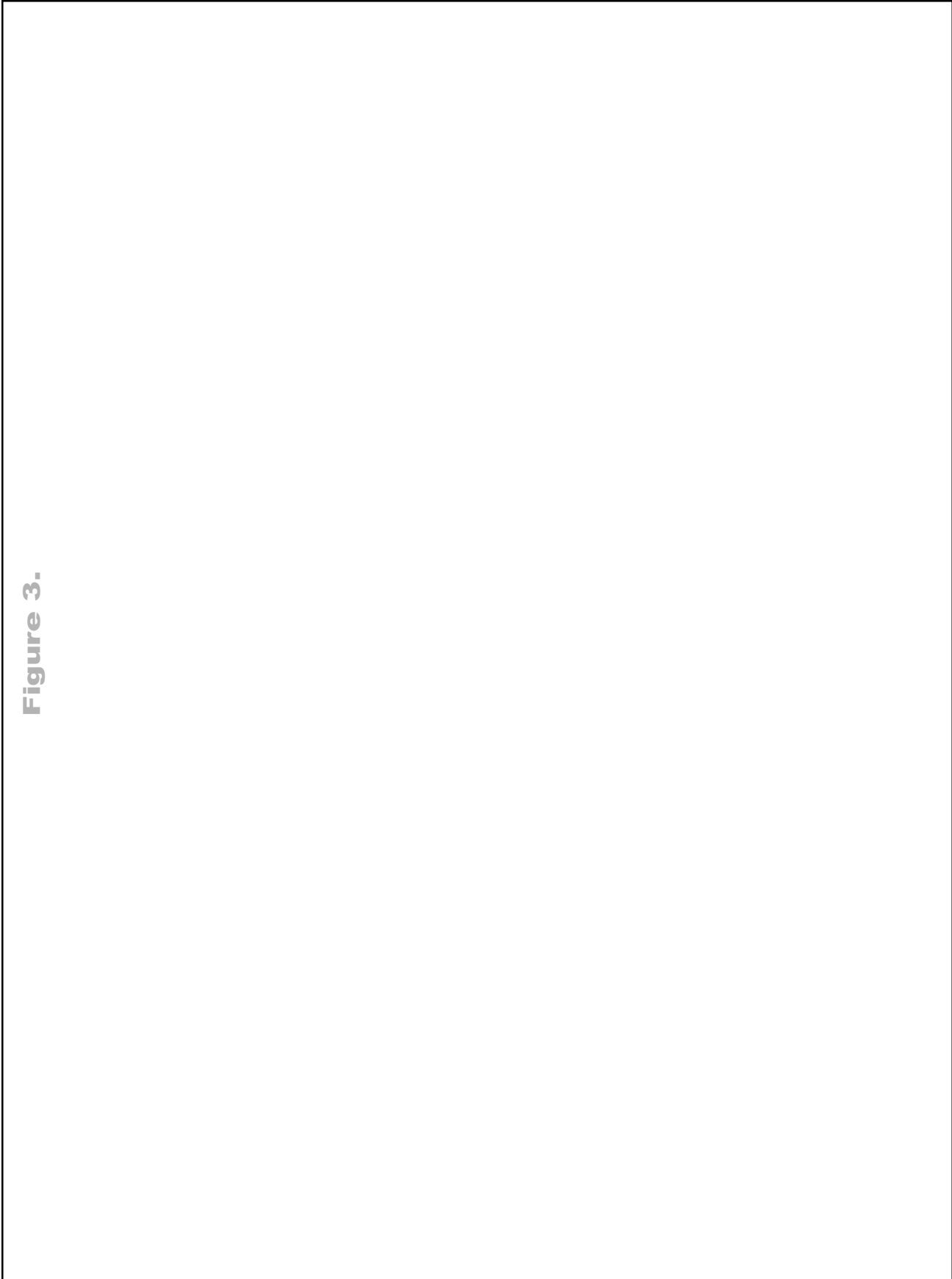
Table 26.

HISPANIC BIRTHS IN EL PASO COUNTY
(1991-1993)

	1991	1992	1993
January	1,101	1,103	1,129
February	1,024	1,134	1,120
March	1,043	1,134	1,215
April	1,062	1,109	1,191
May	1,186	1,134	1,267
June	1,145	1,242	1,268
July	1,221	1,318	1,385
August	1,291	1,381	1,396
September	1,246	1,305	1,382
October	1,232	1,328	1,261
November	1,231	1,258	1,133
December	1,214	1,282	1,074
Total	13,898	14,701	14,946

Source: Texas Department of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics

Figure 3.



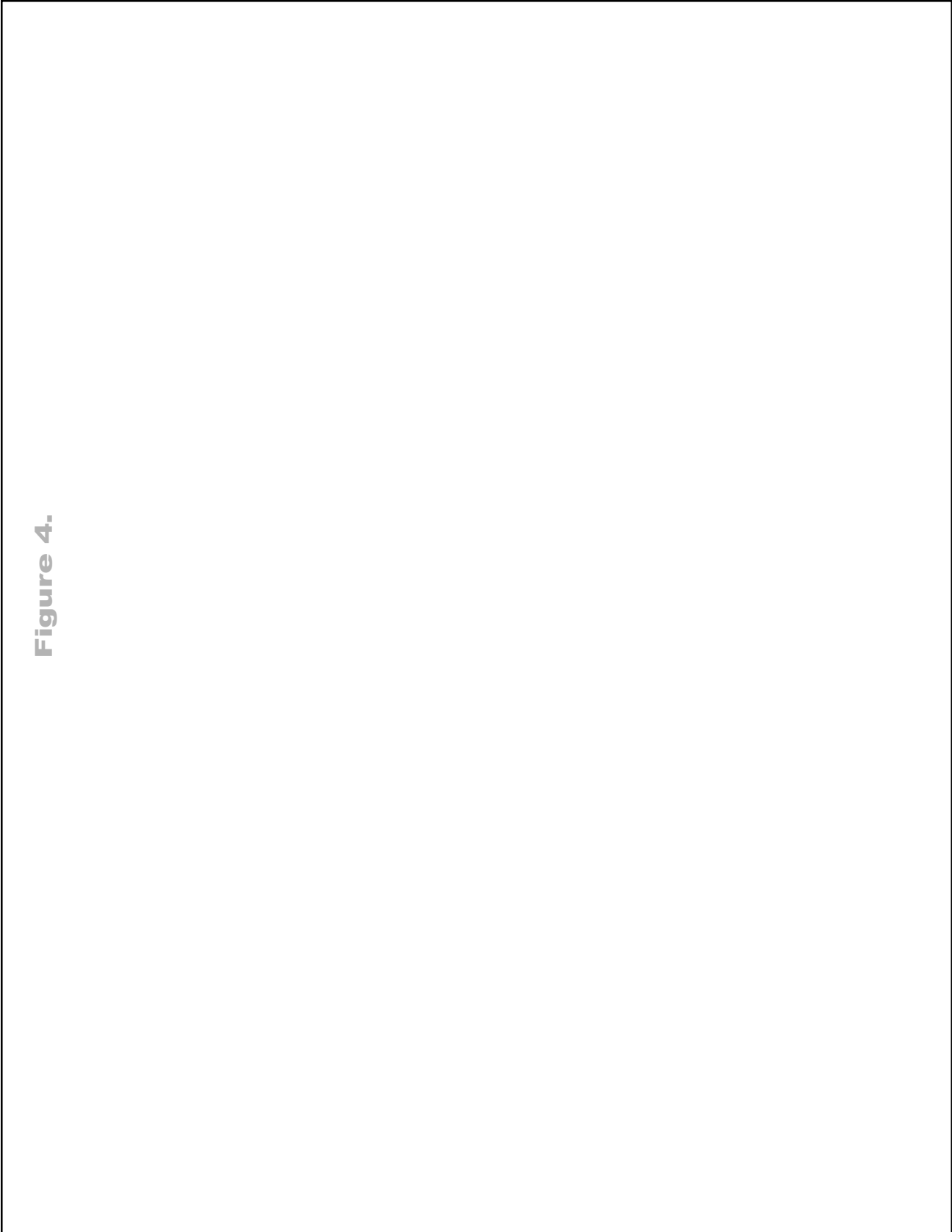
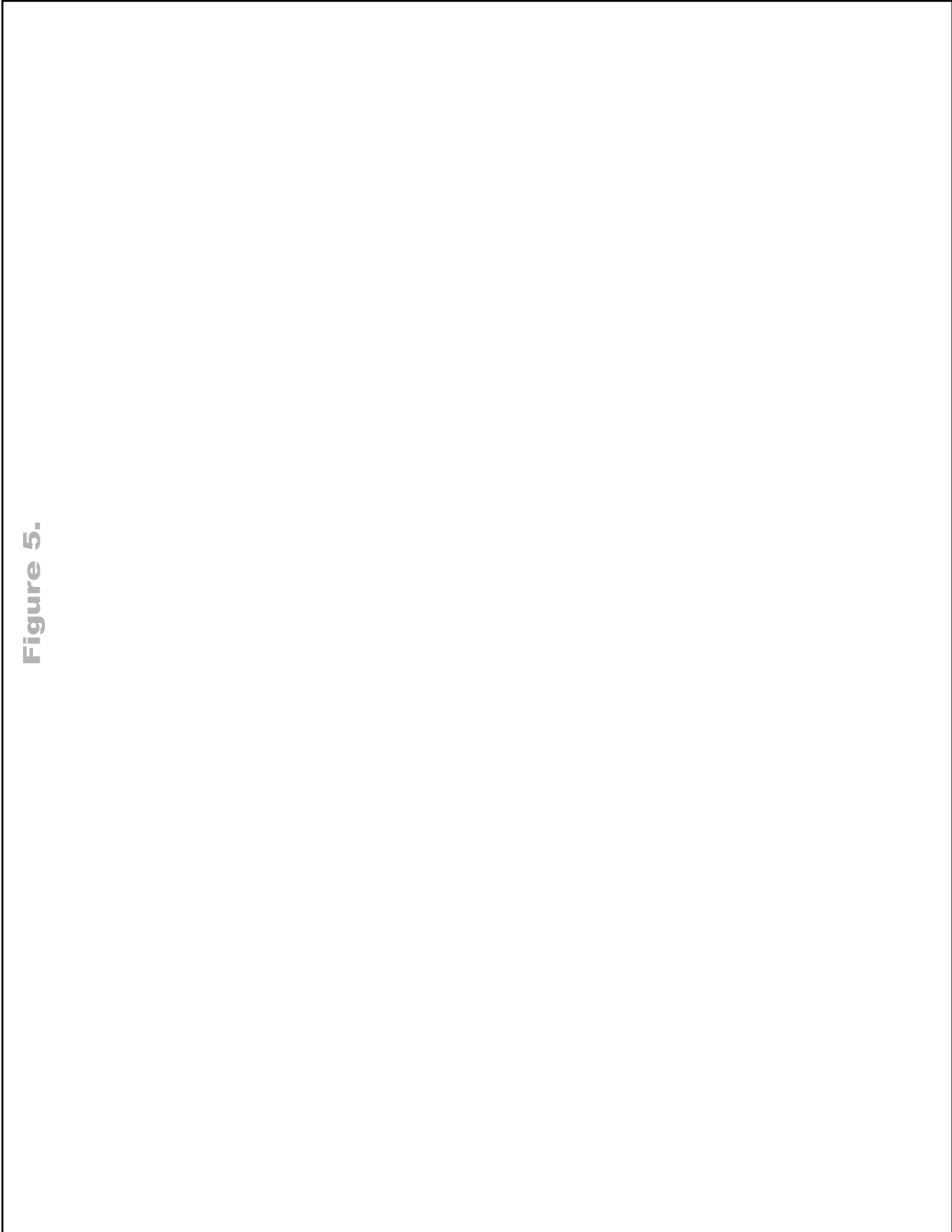


Figure 4.

Figure 5.



analysis, complete Health Department data for this month is not expected to be ready until July-August 1994. Because of the 90-95 percent completion rate of the data, one would still not expect the final count of Hispanic births to rise to the level of previous Decembers, but one cannot be certain.

What do data on deliveries in Thomason General Hospital reveal? **Table 27** shows the average daily use of Thomason Hospital for a twenty-nine month period, including the post-Operation months of October 1993 through May 1994., indicating an upward trend in the pre-Operation period for the hospital population followed by a downward trend after the Operation began in the twenty-first month in the series. The pattern was similar for all five of the measures in the table including deliveries. The decline in the number of deliveries can be estimated by computing the linear trend in deliveries during the pre-Operation period and projecting those estimates for the post-Operation period. Using this technique, the daily average of 18 deliveries for the post-Operation period is 3.8 deliveries per day lower than expected, which is a decline of 17.6 percent below expectations. We also followed an alternative three-step procedure, the first step of which was to estimate the regression of deliveries on the other measures using the pre-Operation data. The correlation between admissions and deliveries is 0.972, and that is all that is required to estimate the regression equation: $\text{Deliveries} = -7.66 + .442 * \text{Admissions}$ for the period September 1992 through September 1993. The equation provides a good predictor for the post-Operation period as the mean residual is only .03 for the eight-month period.

The second step involved estimating the linear trend on admissions prior to the Operation and using the trend to predict admissions in the post-Operation period had the trend continued. These projections are included in the last column of the attached table. The projected daily admission levels are then entered into the above regression equation in the third step to obtain the estimated deliveries for the post-Operation period. These estimates and the difference between estimates and observed deliveries are also given in the table. This approach yields a shortfall of 2.7 deliveries per day on average (13 percent

lower than expected), which is less than, but consistent with the above estimate based on linear trend for deliveries (an estimated decline of 3.9 per day on average). Thus, irrespective of how the estimate is calculated, births come out lower than one would have thought at Thomason General Hospital after the Operation. Interestingly, the shortfall increases the further one goes into the post-Operation period.

In summary, examination of data on both registered births from El Paso county and on deliveries from Thomason Hospital point to the same conclusion: births appear to have declined since the Operation began. Further, these declines occur in the cases one would most expect if the Operation were preventing some women from crossing the border illegally to give birth, namely in the case of women of Mexican origin (whose births are labeled Hispanic births by the Health Department) and in the case of deliveries at Thomason General Hospital. However, the declines are not very large and are based on only a few months of data. More research on this issue as more time passes is clearly needed.

Welfare Utilization

During the initial week of Operation Blockade it was thought that the workload might have dropped at some of the El Paso offices of the Texas Department of Human Services [TDHS] because a large number of recipients caught in Mexico and unable to cross the border could not reach TDHS offices to obtain services. To explore this possibility the El Paso Regional Director of TDHS requested an analysis of the workload at each of the offices in El Paso County for the week of September 20 through September 24, 1993.

The evaluation proceeded in two steps. First, each program manager submitted data on the numbers of TDHS clients failing to keep their appointments [FKAs] for certification or recertification for food stamps, Aid to Families with Dependent Children [AFDC], or Medicaid during that week. This initial investigation indicated no marked difference in workload compared to the same period in other months. Second, three offices (Mills, Stanton, and Clint) were selected for further study due to their

Table 27.THOMASON HOSPITAL STATISTICS
(JANUARY 1, 1994 - MAY 22, 1994)

	Year	Population	% Occupancy	Admissions	Emerg Visits	Deliveries
January	1992	241.5	67.3	57.9	125.2	
February	1992	237.5	66.1	56.7	135.3	
March	1992	243.4	67.8	58.0	142.8	
April	1992	236.8	66.0	59.5	145.3	
May	1992	218.2	60.8	54.2	142.4	
June	1992	241.6	67.2	62.3	144.6	
July	1992	254.2	70.8	62.8	136.8	
August	1992	233.1	64.9	59.5	143.4	
September	1992	239.4	66.7	60.5	151.2	19.1
October	1992	250.6	69.8	61.0	147.7	18.8
November1992	256.0	71.3	62.2	131.9	19.3	
December	1992	255.1	71.1	58.4	136.0	18.7
January	1993	236.9	66.0	56.5	151.3	17.0
February	1993	247.7	69.0	59.1	158.2	18.3
March	1993	247.5	69.0	55.4	162.6	16.4
April	1993	256.2	71.4	60.1	163.8	19.1
May	1993	254.1	70.8	61.1	155.3	19.3
June	1993	258.7	72.1	59.7	153.1	19.2
July	1993	264.6	73.7	67.9	156.1	21.9
August	1993	271.2	75.6	65.9	151.0	21.5
Sept 1-18	1993	258.7	72.1	61.8	160.2	20.6
Sept 19-30	1993	259.2	72.2	69.4	161.7	22.7
October	1993	251.6	70.1	63.5	146.5	20.1
November1993	255.8	71.3	60.4	142.5	18.9	
December	1993	251.6	70.1	60.9	144.0	18.7
January	1994	251.7	70.1	60.5	158.8	16.9
February	1994	238.9	66.6	55.6	148.6	17.3
March	1994	238.7	66.5	55.8	146.2	18.2
April	1994	217.2	60.5	52.5	154.5	16.9
May 1-22	1994	223.3	62.2	55.7	149.6	16.9

Source: Thomason General Hospital

relatively large numbers of FKAs. All cases in which clients failed to keep their appointments from September 17-September 24, 1993 [no explanation is given for the change in the time period] were the subject of home visits by TDHS employees to determine the reason for their absence. Out of 2,325 appointments scheduled, 405 persons failed to keep appointments in the three offices. Of these, 304 either had scheduled new appointments or otherwise resolved their missed appointments before home visits began. This left 101 cases to be investigated. U.S. residency of the applicant was confirmed in all but four cases. In these, the head of household was unable to return from Juárez, Mexico, because of the

Operation, although the exact reasons for this are not evident from the report.

Effects in Juárez

According to our interviews with Juárezenses, the city of Juárez generally does not appear to have felt any serious increased demand for social services since the Operation began. Reasons for this include:

- The number of illegal crossers now prevented from working in El Paso is small relative to the total Juárez population;

- Illegal crossers live in many different neighborhoods throughout the city;
- Many families have several members in the work force, and it is not typical for all of these to work in the United States.
- Public welfare assistance in Juárez is only minimally available to begin with and people in need don't expect government assistance and, therefore, haven't sought it since the blockade began.

Conclusions

Operation Hold the Line has had a small effect on the delivery of social services in El Paso. With regard to enrollment of children of Mexican residents in the El Paso city school system, it is quite likely that most either have legal border-crossing documents or live with relatives or friends during the school year in the district in which they attend school. These children would not have been significantly affected by the Operation as it primarily discourages people, meaning those without documentation, from crossing the border at other than the official ports of entry. Second, since illegal immigrants who now permanently live in El Paso are residents of their school districts, their children would have been unaffected by the Operation as well.

The Operation had positive side effects on the education system, however. One, cited by virtually every administrator and teacher interviewed, was the increased sense of safety in the school environment, particularly in schools directly adjacent to the border. Prior to implementation of Operation Hold the Line, border-crossers frequently used school grounds, such as at Bowie High School, Guillen Middle School, and Aoy, Roosevelt, and Hart Elementary Schools, to evade Border Patrol agents. School administrators often observed border-crossers loitering around school buildings and playgrounds, changing clothes on school property, and leaving bags of wet clothing behind. Educators, for reasons of safety, often restricted the children from using school grounds. Border Patrol agent chases of illegal border-crossers through the streets of the neighborhoods in which the schools are located often made the streets unsafe

for the passage of school children. Since the Operation began, these types of problems have been almost entirely eliminated, resulting in a more secure and less dangerous environment.

With regard to health care, there appears to have been a small effect as well. The change in the population, admissions, deliveries, and emergency visits at the county's hospital (Thomason General) since Operation Hold the Line began suggests a discernible impact. Data on registered births suggest a small depressing effect of the Operation. Data from the TDHS analysis of workload study, however, indicate the Operation had a virtually no impact on the workload of TDHS offices in El Paso County during September 17-24.

VI. Effects on Crime and Related Indicators in El Paso

Local Perceptions and Expectations

The first stage of the analysis of the potential impact of Operation Hold the Line on crime in the El Paso area consisted of interviews with law enforcement and city officials in February 1994. The intention was to take advantage of local knowledge and expertise to suggest guiding questions if not hypotheses to explore in the empirical analyses. Not all the views we encountered were universally shared and not all received support in the data examined. A composite of those first impressions would include the following:

The crime rate in El Paso was thought to be high, especially for property crime in general, and for motor vehicle theft in particular, but less so for violent crime. The high crime rate was seen as due to:

- The region's relatively poor economic conditions;

- The city's proximity to a larger and substantially poorer population on the Mexican side of the border where there is a market for stolen property exploited by criminal entrepreneurs on both sides of the border; and
- The relatively low ratio of law enforcement officers to population for a city the size of El Paso.

None of our respondents seemed to overstate the problems that the border presents to law enforcement agencies. The border is a problem but it is not the only, or necessarily the most critical, problem for crime control.

The crime rate was seen as escalating dramatically in recent years and as such, perceived as "getting out of hand" in spite of the best efforts of local law enforcement agencies. Increases in crime were viewed as due to:

- El Paso's own urban growth, much of which has been spawned by migration from Mexico at a pace that makes it difficult for the community to respond adequately to its needs, with community resources all the more stressed because of the additional pressures of dealing with a large illegal and/or nonresident population;
- Increased population pressures in Juárez, which remains a relatively poor community compared to El Paso and in which both the access to community services (health, education, and welfare, for example) and the opportunities for predatory criminal activity are greater;²⁸ and
- As is the case in other large, poor, urban communities, conditions in Juárez that create a large population at risk for criminal

activity, many of whom seek opportunities in El Paso, particularly young males and professional criminals (a broad class that seems to include car thieves, drug dealers, prostitutes and others who provide illicit services in the informal economy of the two communities).

Some members of the high-risk population were seen as undoubtedly entering the United States illegally on occasion, thus adding to the problems of El Paso. However, illegals were not seen as the only problem for law enforcement. Most of our respondents took care to point out that they did not believe that all illegals were criminals, or that all criminals entered the United States illegally, or that the Mexican population across the border was culturally more prone to crime than the El Paso population. The preferred interpretation was based on economic conditions.

To the extent any of our respondents were willing to make an estimate of its likely effect, most thought the primary impact of the Operation was on young male offenders and other inexperienced or unprofessional offenders. Those in Juárez who are in crime as a business were thought to be much more adaptable over the long term in dealing with obstacles to crossing the border and more likely to use legal methods to gain entry for illegal purposes. There is a prevailing view that the professional criminal often has official connections that facilitate his criminal activity—connections on both sides of the border.²⁹

²⁸ No other countries that share a common border have a larger disparity in economic conditions than is the case for Mexico and the United States. Juárez and the Mexican state of Chihuahua are relatively better off than other places in Mexico, but they are extraordinarily poor by U.S. standards.

²⁹ Some misunderstandings about how Mexican law operates may also contribute to a critical view of Mexican authorities from an American perspective. Stolen goods that have entered the country are seized as contraband, for example, and available for state and personal use in Mexico until ownership is settled in court. See Miller (1987) for a commentary on motor vehicle theft in this regard. In spite of a Mexican-U.S. agreement on stolen vehicles that is supposed to prohibit the practice, the custom of using such vehicles for official and personal use remains, and the sight of a Mexican official driving around in a vehicle known to have been stolen in the United States raises more than a few eyebrows among U.S. authorities.

Thus, the Operation might be hypothesized to have a direct, immediate, and, if it can be sustained, long-term effect on:

- Young, male offender residents of Juárez;
- Minor or petty, rather than serious, crime;
- Opportunistic and less-organized, rather than planned or organized, criminal activity;
- Property, rather than violent, crime; and
- Crime in the central downtown parts of El Paso (Police Districts 31-36 and nearby Districts 51-56) that are closely located to the more accessible legal and illegal routes for crossing the border, the area of the greatest cross-border traffic and where the informal economy has been most visible in the past.

The Operation might also have an indirect impact on more serious crime to the extent that law enforcement resources can be redirected from the downtown area to impact teams, gang taskforces, and the like. Eventually this may have an effect on the patterns of serious property crime and on violent crime among young, male offenders regardless of the offender's origins. The more mature and experienced offender is expected to be a constant problem. Indeed, most respondents seemed to believe that both the Operation and any changes in law enforcement strategies they might initiate in response may have only short-term effects. None of the interviewed law enforcement officers doubted the capacity of the serious offender to adapt to changing conditions, particularly as law enforcement resources are stretched thin even in the best of times. Moreover, none believed that chronic offenders are so specialized that an effective crackdown in one area would put them out of business forever. For example, an effective blitz on burglary or motor vehicle theft would be expected to result in a burgeoning larceny-theft rate.

A number of incidents have strained relations among law enforcement personnel on the two sides of the border in recent years. Some observers may believe

that the border is a seamless boundary running through a single city, but the cities of Juárez and El Paso appear to be a long way from operating in that manner at the administrative level, perhaps no less the case with respect to law enforcement issues than with health, education, and other shared problems in the two communities. Although none of the officials interviewed reported negative views about the Border Patrol Operation, no one believed that the Operation would improve relations with their counterparts on the Mexican side or that it would facilitate cross-border law enforcement activity.

We do not have data that pertain to all of the issues derived from the interviews. Some of the issues raised require time series data that would extend into the future and others require primary data gathering beyond the project's resources. The points listed above give a fair representation of the initial reaction of a segment of the law enforcement community in the El Paso area concerning the impact of the Border Patrol's Operation on local crime. The expertise reflected in those comments makes them worth considering as they stand. However, we have reformulated those perceptions into six guiding hypotheses to shape our research strategy:³⁰

1. The crime rate in El Paso is high due to its proximity to a large and relatively poor Mexican city, particularly with respect to property crime.
2. The crime rate has been increasing in recent years, in part because of the increasing population pressures El Paso shares with Juárez and in part because of the predatory behavior of some illegal entrants to the United States. To the extent the flow of illegals has been uncontrolled, the opportunities for a small, predatory subclass to engage in criminal activity in El Paso have increased.

³⁰ All of the agencies contacted were extremely cooperative in facilitating our access to information. We are particularly grateful to the Data Processing personnel of the El Paso Police Department, the El Paso City Demographer, and the El Paso County Sheriff's Office.

3. Young, male, poor residents of Juárez constitute a high risk population for some types of criminal activity, mostly in regard to gang activity, minor offenses, and property crime.
4. To the extent that it curtails the illegal entry of the population at risk, the Border Patrol's strategy should have an immediate impact on property offenses and minor crime that should continue over the long term.
5. The largest immediate effect of the Border Patrol's effort will be felt in the downtown areas of El Paso (police districts 30-36 and 50-56).
6. The Operation's initial effects on serious crime may be short-lived as chronic offenders adapt to the new conditions. The Operation may have a long-term effect on violent and more serious crime if it is sustained and if law enforcement agencies are able to redirect resources into those areas as a result of sustained curtailment of the more numerous petty offenses that plague the community.

Trends and the Magnitude of Crime in El Paso

The ratio of law enforcement officers to population in El Paso is low relative to other cities of comparable size in the United States (1.55 per 1,000 population in 1992 compared to 2.76 per 1,000 for 63 cities of 250,000+ population).³¹ In 1980, the figure was 1.56 per 1,000 in El Paso and 2.73 per 1,000 in 56 cities of 250,000 or more population. The difference between El Paso and other cities seems to remain constant over time. However, the choice of these particular times as bases for determining differences masks increases and decreases in between, a extremely important point in assessing crime trends in general and for assessing speculations about El Paso trends as reported in the press during the months before this study.

If the ratio for El Paso remained constant from 1980-

1992, any increase in crime rates could not be attributed directly to a deterioration in law enforcement manpower, the only easily accessible measure of law enforcement. If it were constant, the low ratio of law enforcement personnel to population in El Paso might be a factor in accounting for a high rate of crime but not for variations in rates over time.³² We might conclude then that, in spite of rapid, urban growth and migration, legal or otherwise, the number of law enforcement officers has kept pace with population growth, and changes in crime rates must be due to such other factors as increases in the size of the population at risk for criminal behavior because of lax border control.

The data present a different picture. As our interview respondents indicated, law enforcement numbers, and presumably law enforcement effectiveness, declined during the 1980s to a low of 1.31 per 1,000 population for the City of El Paso in 1988. Only in recent years has the ratio climbed back to the 1980 level.³³ For nine of the thirteen years in the period, the El Paso ratio of police manpower to population hovered around 50 percent of the national average. At the same time, of 120,432 foreign born residents in El Paso in 1990, 35 percent entered the country during the 1981-1990 decade, more than half of whom entered after 1985.³⁴ INS apprehension data suggest that illegal entry into the United States also increased substantially at the turn of the decade. Differentiating between the effects on crime rates of variations in law enforcement manpower and qualitative changes in the population is beyond the capabilities of the data at hand, although it is clear that increases in the serious crime rate outpaced both population growth and enforcement manpower in the past decade.

³² Clearly a larger city may be qualitatively more difficult to police than a smaller city and that may also account for deteriorating conditions in spite of constant police manpower. However, an independent measure of the qualitative difference would have to be introduced into the analysis.

³³ The 1990 ratio may be partly an artifact of the census undercount for El Paso for that year (18 thousand according to the *U.S. Census Post Enumeration Survey*).

³⁴ *U.S. Census of Population, 1990*; data provided by El Paso City Demographer.

³¹ Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Uniform Crime Reports, 1992*.

Myths and Nonmyths about High Crime Rates. Irrespective of the presumed increase in criminogenic conditions, perceptions of the city's high crime rate are more myth than reality. The city's rates for serious, especially violent, crime³⁵ are relatively low compared to cities of comparable size. El Paso's total crime rate ranks thirtieth among the forty U.S. cities of comparable size in 1992 (**Table 28**). El Paso ranks thirty-first among the forty cities in motor vehicle theft, and is above the mean for the forty cities only on larceny-theft (ranking thirteenth but within 10 percent of the mean for all cities). The murder rate is little more than one-third of that for all the cities and 12 percent lower than the national average. We were told that only one police officer has been feloniously slain in the line of duty in El Paso since 1957. Few other cities of comparable size would average less than one officer killed per decade during that period.

Some law enforcement officials attribute the low rate of violent crime in El Paso, in part, to a relatively low propensity for crime in the Hispanic population, particularly for violent crime. Apparently the murder rate in Juárez is comparable to that of El Paso and a fraction of the rate in large metropolitan areas of the United States. Hispanic offenders are perceived to be less likely to be armed than Anglo or African-American offenders, although that may be less the case in recent years, particularly as weapons become more accessible economically among

³⁵ Murder and non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny-theft, and motor vehicle theft are the seven categories of serious crime used by the Federal Bureau of Investigation as the major indicators of criminal activity and trends. The seven categories are assumed to be the crimes most likely to be reported to the police, although, with the exception of murder and possibly motor vehicle theft, they tend to be underestimates of the actual number of offenses as reported in victimization surveys for example. See O'Brien (1985) and Biderman and Lynch (1991) for a description of the history, procedures, strength and weaknesses of the Uniform Crime Reporting system, crime victimization surveys, and alternative measures.

young offenders involved in gang activities throughout the city.³⁶ Other officials attribute the low crime rates to an effective crime control strategy using impact teams that concentrate on repeat offenders and on crime in specific areas of the city. For example, the rate of reported burglaries declined by 55 percent from 1988 to 1993 after a repeat offender program was introduced by the El Paso Police Department specifically to deal with that offense.

The local myth that El Paso is a high crime city is sustained in part by comparisons of El Paso with national Metropolitan Statistical Area [MSA] data or such data for other Texas MSAs, but such comparisons are misleading. MSAs are heterogeneous units. U.S. southern border cities tend to be more urbanized than other U.S. cities (87 percent of the population in the El Paso MSA lived in the city in 1992, two times the 43 percent national average for all MSAs).³⁷ Urban areas have both more opportunities for criminal activity than rural areas and larger populations at risk due to the social and economic con-

³⁶ American impressions of high rates of violent behavior in Mexico seem largely based on reports about Mexico City, which has an exceedingly high rate of violent crime according to Interpol statistics.

³⁷ The El Paso MSA is one of the most urbanized in the nation. Only four other MSAs have more urbanized populations, and three of those are in Texas including the border city of Laredo which has the highest rate in the nation (92 percent). Personal and ethnographic accounts of crime in the border region often illustrate differences in the nature and style of criminal activity compared to other metropolitan centers in the United States. Those differences, some of which are quite striking to those who are unaccustomed to life in the informal economy, may also lead to false impressions about the magnitude of crime. Visibility and difference say nothing about magnitude, and that, in part, may account for the apparent fear of crime in the El Paso area. Street vendors and panhandlers may be a nuisance to some, but they do not present the same danger to public safety as burglars or bank robbers.

Table 28.

NUMBER OF OFFENSES REPORTED TO THE POLICE PER 100,000 POPULATION FOR 40 U.S. CITIES
SIMILAR IN POPULATION SIZE TO EL PASO RANKED BY TOTAL CRIME INDEX (1992)

	Population	Total Crime Index	Crime Index Rank	Violent Crime Index	Property Crime Index	Murder	Forcible Rape	Robbery	Aggravated Assault	Burglary	Larceny- Theft	Motor Vehicle Theft
Miami, FL	401529	17488	1	3731	13757	34.2	73	1890	1734	3232	8195	2330
Atlanta, GA	410876	17347	2	3859	13488	48.2	153	1417	2241	3180	8251	2057
St Louis, MO	483975	14800	3	3291	11509	57.4	87	1226	1920	3056	6359	2094
Fort Worth, TX	755517	14135	4	2019	12116	32.9	113	750	1123	3074	6905	2136
Charlotte, NC	572822	12591	5	2312	10278	24.2	88	748	1452	3072	6606	600
Kansas City, MO	408951	12475	6	2855	9620	34.0	128	1019	1674	2845	4952	1823
Oakland, CA	369707	12455	7	2626	9828	42.7	108	1194	1281	2297	5519	2011
Fresno, CA	513487	12112	8	1460	10653	22.0	55	842	540	2562	4549	3542
Seattle, WA	643028	12001	9	1345	10657	11.0	65	473	796	1697	7547	1413
Baltimore, MD	492672	11927	10	2885	9042	44.3	99	1623	1119	2157	5389	1496
Washington, DC	535655	11398	11	2832	8566	75.2	37	1266	1454	1820	5198	1548
Portland, OR	465262	11266	12	1831	9435	10.0	107	586	1128	1912	5798	1725
Oklahoma City, OK	367376	11177	13	1400	9777	13.4	104	404	878	2476	5991	1310
Minneapolis, MN	493928	11103	14	1643	9461	15.9	159	815	653	2466	5624	1370
Austin, TX	663899	10944	15	589	10355	7.6	61	300	221	2109	7301	944
Jacksonville, FL	441162	10510	16	1739	8771	18.5	107	544	1069	2456	4991	1324
Tucson, AZ	678385	10413	17	1021	9392	9.9	91	229	691	1608	6755	1029
San Francisco, CA	445405	10195	18	1821	8373	15.6	53	1102	651	1576	5111	1687
Sacramento, CA	628865	10017	19	1220	8797	11.7	62	606	540	1907	4755	2135
New Orleans, LA	301200	9988	20	1982	8007	55.2	57	1058	812	2172	4028	1807
Memphis, TN	373791	9849	21	1553	8296	28.0	109	849	566	2589	3605	2101
Boston, MA	643017	9846	22	2038	7808	12.7	94	832	1099	1522	4294	1992
Nashville, TN	377345	9687	23	1628	8058	17.5	97	518	996	1989	5071	998
Albuquerque, NM	514771	9467	24	1536	7931	10.5	73	364	1089	2168	5040	723
Wichita, KS	505008	9123	25	889	8234	9.7	82	432	365	2102	5217	916
Columbus, OH	386086	9054	26	1093	7961	17.6	106	558	412	2336	4543	1083
El Paso, TX	454255	9044	27	1088	7956	8.2	51	301	728	1429	5513	1014
Cincinnati, OH	373842	8840	28	1567	7273	13.3	131	620	802	1912	4786	573
Toledo, OH	458132	8714	29	934	7780	12.7	109	448	364	1809	4750	1221
Milwaukee, WI	383102	8669	30	983	7686	22.7	80	674	207	1360	4111	2215
Cleveland, OH	750885	8284	31	1662	6622	30.6	166	861	603	1753	2773	2096
Pittsburgh, PA	811342	8210	32	1202	7008	11.8	59	800	332	1391	3444	2173
Tulsa, OK	544940	8208	33	1335	6872	8.8	98	358	870	2147	3449	1277
Denver, CO	402573	8155	34	1076	7078	19.3	89	366	602	1806	3632	1641
Long Beach, CA	338126	7934	35	1555	6379	23.3	49	804	678	1696	3264	1418
Las Vegas, NV	423836	7353	36	888	6464	14.6	58	532	284	1524	3850	1091
Indianapolis, IN	375053	7260	37	1380	5880	17.8	110	437	816	1640	3185	1055
Mesa, AZ	405116	7026	38	682	6344	3.0	40	98	542	1481	4030	833
Virginia Beach, VA	589000	5216	39	285	4931	5.7	38	151	91	916	3729	286
San Jose, CA	309955	4906	40	669	4237	5.3	55	152	457	835	2934	467
Mean	487347	10230		1663	8567	21.9	87	706	847	2052	5026	1489
State of Texas	17623000	7058		806	6252	12.7	53	253	488	1523	3907	822
United States	255082000	5660		758	4903	9.3	43	264	442	1168	3103	632

Note: Murder includes nonnegligent manslaughter in all tables throughout this chapter. The violent crime index is sum of murder, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. The property crime index is the sum for burglary, larceny-theft, and motor vehicle theft. The total crime index is the sum for all seven categories of serious crime.

Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation, Uniform Crime Reports, 1992

ditions that nurture crime. To illustrate using the MSAs for which data is available for 1992:

	El Paso MSA	Border MSAs ³⁸	Texas MSAs	U.S. MSAs
Density (population per square mile)	584	369	251	334
Population under 18 years of age (%)	33	31	27	26
Per capita income (\$)	10,008	13,281	15,342	15,342
Unemployment rate (% of labor force)	10.2	5.5	6.4	5.5
% of population in central cities	87	62	59	43
Number of MSAs	1	14	17	261

Any comparison of differences in crime rates among MSAs would have to consider differentials in such risk factors. Even a comparison between El Paso and other Texas cities is misleading because, among the eight Texas cities of 250 thousand population or more, only Houston and Arlington have lower crime rates than El Paso, and even those differences are slight (Federal Bureau of Investigation 1992).³⁹

The perception that young males disproportionately contribute to serious crimes rates is well grounded according to Uniform Crime Report data on arrests.⁴⁰

³⁸ These include all MSAs within approximately 100 miles of the U.S.-Mexican border in Arizona, California, New Mexico, and Texas.

³⁹ We have yet to locate the figures, but we are told that the number of people deported for criminal violations per year is less than 1,000, most for drug offenses. Given the millions of serious crimes committed per year, that is not a large number, although it tells us nothing about the institutionalized population.

⁴⁰ See Sutherland, Cressey & Luckenbill (1992, Chapter 8) for age specific arrest rates in the United States.

Given the concerns expressed to us about increasing gang activity and youth crime in El Paso and the proximity to a large and substantially poorer community across the river, we expected to find that the city would be above the national average on such figures. That seems not to be the case. Contrasting El Paso's 1993-1994 arrest rate for juveniles (as a percent of all arrests) with national figures for 1989, we find:

Percent of all arrests of persons under 18 years of age.

	El Paso (1993-1994)	United States ⁴¹ (1989)
Murder	5.6	12.3
Forcible rape	8.4	15.4
Robbery	13.1	23.0
Aggravated assault	10.2	13.3
Burglary	19.7	31.9
Larceny-theft	20.4	28.7
Motor vehicle theft	6.4	40.9
Total	13.6	27.3

Unless there has been a dramatic downturn in juvenile arrests nationwide over the past few years, it would appear that El Paso's juvenile problem is proportionately less than the situation in most other metropolitan areas in the United States. If youth from Mexico are adding to the crime problem in El Paso, it is not apparent in the data for serious offenders.

Although El Paso crime rates are relatively low compared to other cities, the total crime rate for serious offenses increased 41 percent in El Paso from 1982 to 1992 (Table 29). The population increased 17 percent but the total number of serious crimes increased 65 percent, with most of the increase due to larceny-theft and motor vehicle theft. The total crime rate for El Paso grew faster than any of the other forty-eight cities of comparable size identified in Table 29. Of the forty-eight cities listed, only Virginia Beach, Virginia, had a total crime rate lower than El Paso's in 1982. It is this rapid increase that

⁴¹ Sutherland, Cressey & Luckenbill (1992:155, derived from Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Crime in the United States*, 1989:188).

Table 29.

**AVERAGE ANNUAL PERCENT CHANGES IN CRIME RATES PER 100,000 POPULATION
FOR 49 U.S. CITIES (1982 TO 1992) RANKED BY PERCENT CHANGE
IN TOTAL CRIME RATE**

	Population 1982	Population 1992	Mean Annual Percent Change	Total Crime Rate 1982	Total Crime Rate 1992	Mean Annual Percent Change	Crime Index Rank 1982	Crime Index Rank 1992	Viol. Crime Rate 1982	Viol. Crime Rate 1992	Mean Annual Percent Change	Prop. Crime Rate 1982	Prop. Crime Rate 1992	Mean Annual Percent Change
El Paso TX	458429	535655	1.68	6419	9044	4.09	48	31	856	1088	2.71	5564	7956	4.30
Jacksonville FL	590957	663899	1.23	7641	10510	3.75	40	19	955	1739	8.22	6686	8771	3.12
Newark NJ	334414	277544	-1.70	10817	14624	3.52	12	5	3201	3500	0.94	7616	11124	4.61
Atlanta GA	441103	410876	-0.69	12914	17347	3.43	6	2	2377	3859	6.23	10537	13488	2.80
Baltimore MD	798175	755517	-0.53	9134	11927	3.06	23	12	2090	2885	3.80	7044	9042	2.84
Arlington TX	173821	272037	5.65	6573	8489	2.92	47	35	349	756	11.64	6224	7733	2.43
Austin TX	370331	483975	3.07	8590	10944	2.74	31	18	414	589	4.23	8176	10355	2.66
Nashville TN	462507	514771	1.13	7612	9687	2.73	41	27	702	1628	13.19	6910	8058	1.66
OklahomaCity OK	425093	454255	0.69	8985	11177	2.44	25	16	1008	1400	3.88	7977	9777	2.26
FortWorth TX	412661	465262	1.27	11421	14135	2.38	8	6	1188	2019	7.00	10233	12116	1.84
KansasCity MO	451397	441162	-0.23	10080	12475	2.37	18	8	1491	2855	9.15	8590	9620	1.20
Charlotte NC	320119	408951	2.77	10305	12591	2.22	16	7	1281	2312	8.05	9024	10278	1.39
Milwaukee WI	645231	643017	-0.03	7106	8669	2.20	44	34	557	983	7.66	6549	7686	1.74
Miami FL	365506	373791	0.23	14473	17488	2.08	1	1	2726	3731	3.69	11748	13757	1.71
Tampa FL	292551	291920	-0.02	13171	15803	2.00	3	3	1961	3379	7.23	11210	12424	1.08
New Orleans LA	579338	505008	-1.28	8541	9988	1.69	32	24	1485	1982	3.34	7056	8007	1.35
Pittsburgh PA	425814	373842	-1.22	7025	8210	1.69	45	38	1262	1202	-0.50	5759	7008	2.17
Memphis TN	659913	628865	-0.47	8476	9849	1.62	34	25	1153	1553	3.47	7322	8296	1.33
Seattle WA	507643	544940	0.73	10519	12001	1.41	14	11	1009	1345	3.33	9511	10657	1.20
Corpus Christi TX	248791	267601	0.76	9130	10317	1.30	24	21	793	937	2.06	8337	9360	1.23
Minneapolis MN	376704	377345	0.02	9891	11103	1.23	20	17	1127	1643	4.57	8763	9461	0.80
St Louis MO	455362	402573	-1.16	13206	14800	1.21	2	4	2211	3291	4.88	10995	11509	0.47
Albuquerque NM	344962	401529	1.64	8469	9467	1.18	35	28	771	1536	9.93	7698	7931	0.30
Birmingham AL	288037	277407	-0.37	10650	11735	1.02	13	13	1001	2215	12.12	9648	9520	-0.13
Washington DC	631000	589000	-0.67	10411	11398	0.95	15	14	2123	2832	3.34	8288	8566	0.34
Fresno CA	226300	367376	6.23	11102	12112	0.91	10	10	964	1460	5.14	10138	10653	0.51
Norfolk VA	271076	269347	-0.06	7723	8407	0.89	39	36	876	1005	1.47	6846	7402	0.81
SanFrancisco CA	708278	750885	0.60	9685	10195	0.53	21	22	1640	1821	1.11	8045	8373	0.41
Columbus OH	563680	643028	1.41	8744	9054	0.36	29	30	769	1093	4.21	7974	7961	-0.02
Mesa AZ	157634	301200	9.11	6813	7026	0.31	46	45	447	682	5.25	6365	6344	-0.03
Wichita KS	285665	309955	0.85	8876	9123	0.28	27	29	593	889	4.98	8283	8234	-0.06
Toledo OH	355355	338126	-0.48	8509	8714	0.24	33	33	674	934	3.85	7835	7780	-0.07
Oakland CA	355868	386086	0.85	12180	12455	0.23	7	9	1857	2626	4.14	10322	9828	-0.48
Tucson AZ	349165	423836	2.14	10289	10413	0.12	17	20	838	1021	2.19	9451	9392	-0.06
Cincinnati OH	383975	369707	-0.37	8772	8840	0.08	28	32	980	1567	5.98	7792	7273	-0.67
Indianapolis IN	462657	493928	0.68	7508	7260	-0.33	43	44	938	1380	4.70	6570	5880	-1.05
Virginia Beach VA	268887	405116	5.07	5406	5216	-0.35	49	48	240	285	1.87	5166	4931	-0.45
Long Beach CA	374974	445405	1.88	8361	7934	-0.51	37	41	1200	1555	2.96	7162	6379	-1.09
Tulsa OK	376599	375053	-0.04	8722	8208	-0.59	30	39	718	1335	8.60	8004	6872	-1.41
Sacramento CA	288446	383102	3.28	10817	10017	-0.74	11	23	1036	1220	1.78	9781	8797	-1.01
Louisville KY	300404	274312	-0.87	7568	6796	-1.02	42	47	853	1082	2.69	6715	5714	-1.49
Portland OR	369796	458132	2.39	13005	11266	-1.34	5	15	1753	1831	0.44	11252	9435	-1.61
Cleveland OH	573994	513487	-1.05	9569	8284	-1.34	22	37	1635	1662	0.16	7934	6622	-1.65
StPaul MN	273187	278762	0.20	8936	7676	-1.41	26	42	749	940	2.54	8187	6737	-1.77
Colorado SpringsCO	218958	296124	3.52	8428	6819	-1.91	36	46	612	521	-1.49	7816	6299	-1.94
Boston MA	567785	572822	0.09	13040	9846	-2.45	4	26	1932	2038	0.55	11108	7808	-2.97
LasVegas NV	424252	678385	5.99	9927	7353	-2.59	19	43	1054	888	-1.57	8873	6464	-2.71
Denver CO	517638	492672	-0.48	11393	8155	-2.84	9	40	953	1076	1.29	10439	7078	-3.22
SanJose CA	659903	811342	2.29	7847	4906	-3.75	38	49	548	669	2.21	7299	4237	-4.20
Mean	416211	448958	1.14	9485	10201	0.77			1183	1650	4.27	8302	8551	0.38

Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation, Uniform Crime Reports, 1982, 1992.

must give rise to the local concern about rising crime. The increase has been dramatic relative to the previously low base, but El Paso still remains in the lower end of the spectrum for cities of comparable size. The reasons for the increase in crime rates in the El Paso area during the 1980s remain unclear. It should be possible to develop a data set that allows an assessment of changes in the urban context that led to such rapid increases in crime rates. Clearly, in-migration flows and the source of such flows should be included in such an analysis.

Myths about the Criminogenic Border Condition.

Disregarding its relative position, why is the crime rate in El Paso as high as it is? One argument might focus on the criminogenic conditions El Paso shares in common with other U.S. cities. It is quite another thing to argue that the proximity to the border exacerbates those conditions. **Table 30** presents the results of regression analyses on violent crime and property crime for 244 MSAs. The first eight variables in the list (percent of the MSA population that lives in the urban area to percent of the labor force unemployed) provide crude indicators of urban conditions that are known to have high correlations with crime rates and have relatively straightforward interpretations. Percent black, percent Hispanic, and the ethnic/racial homogeneity index provide indicators of variations in the racial/ethnic mix of MSAs. The last three variables assess the variation in crime rates due to an MSA being located within 100 miles of the U.S.-Mexican border or in Texas (if not on the border) or in another border state (Arizona, California, or New Mexico). A negative value for the coefficients indicates that a variable is associated with a decrease in the crime rate, a positive value indicates that a variable is associated with an increase in the crime rate.

In general the results indicate that, when urban conditions are held constant, the percent Hispanic has a negative relationship with violent crime but nearly as high an impact as percent black on the property crime index. More importantly, the border effects, statistically speaking, are all negative for violent crime and largely so for property crime. If the data suggest anything about the border's impact on crime, it is that crime is lower on average in border areas

than in other U.S. cities when the characteristics of the urban population are held constant. As indicated above, we do not have the resources required to look at the potential border effects on variations in crime rates over time when changes in urban conditions are held constant. The result of the synchronic analysis is quite clear however. If there is anything particularly criminogenic about the border, it is not reflected in the data, and that tells us a great deal about the difficulty of basing understanding purely on local perceptions, myths, and impressions, which necessarily have a limited basis for comparison spatially, if not temporally.

Serious Crime

The Reality of Recent Trends in El Paso. The trend for property crime in El Paso in recent years has been downward. The trend is quite evident in the annual percent change in rates presented in panel (B) of **Table 31**. The property crime index has been declining since 1990, burglary since 1988, and larceny-theft since 1989. Motor vehicle theft went down in the early part of the 1990s, and robbery may have started to decline just prior to the onset of the Border Patrol's Operation. The experience in El Paso mirrors a national trend in declining crime rates, particularly with respect to property crime. See panel (C) **Table 31** for a comparison of the most recent national data available. Clearly, an attempt to assess the magnitude of the effect of the Operation on crime in El Paso would have to take recent trends into consideration.

The last row of panel (B) **Table 31** gives crime projections for 1994 based on the October 1993 to February 1994 post-Operation period, disregarding seasonal variations and assuming that low values for that period will be sustained throughout the year. This provides the most hopeful scenario of an Operation effect based on current data. The negative swings are substantial, in double digits in most cases. However, each of the indicators has at least one double digit swing in an earlier time period. Nevertheless, the pattern appears impressive. Three out of the four violent crime indicators are down, but that also occurred in 1982-1983, 1984-1985, and 1986-1987. Similarly, three of the four property crime

Table 30.REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF VIOLENT AND PROPERTY CRIME INDEXES:
U.S. METROPOLITAN STATISTICAL AREAS (1992)

	Predictor Variable	Criterion Variable	
		Violent Crime Index	Property Crime Index
X1	Percent urban	-0.32	12.42
X2	Population size	44.35	197.63
X3	Population density	0.09	0.25
X4	Police officers per 1,000 population	0.01	-0.13
X5	Percent 18+ years of age	22.58	-3.31
X6	Percent of school age enrolled	-0.10	-1.14
X7	Per capita income	0.01	0.18
X8	Percent unemployed	60.57	139.47
X9	Percent black	5.11	20.41
X10	Percent Hispanic	-2.46	16.54
X11	Homogeneity index	-10.72	-30.44
X12	Border MSA	-73.09	-39.47
X13	Texas MSA	133.72	1.24
X14	Border State	-264.24	-1379.47
Constant		-743.88	3297.37
RSQ		0.51	0.43
n		244	237
Mean		660.22	5199.71
Standard deviation		347.21	1499.96

Notes: The Homogeneity Index (X11) is a measure of racial/ethnic homogeneity varying from 0 to 100; the higher the value, the more homogeneous the population. It is the observed standard deviation for percent white, black, other race, and Hispanic divided by the theoretical maximum standard deviation for a percentage distribution with four categories. X12-X14 are dummy variables with a value of one if a city is in a category and zero otherwise. The categories are mutually exclusive with border MSA, Texas MSA, and other border state MSA being classified in that order. Cell entries for predictor variables are unstandardized regression coefficients.

Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Uniform Crime Reports, 1992*; U.S. Census of Population, 1990.

indicators show substantial declines, but that, too, occurred in 1981-1982, 1982-1983, and all three were down in recent years, 1990-1991 and 1991-1992. In 1990-1991, the number of offenses known to the police declined by 7,233. Our best estimates for the likely 1993-1994 decline range between 5,873 and 7,750. The most optimistic figure is not likely to be much larger than the drop experienced four years ago. Thus the current patterns in the Operation period (October 1993-February 1994) are not without precedent in the pre-Operation period. There

was also another prior period in which six of the seven indicators declined from one year to the next: 1982-1983. It seems premature to claim, then, that the 1993-1994 shifts are unprecedented in the recent history of the community. The fact that current patterns are not unique raises doubts about the impact of Operation Hold the Line on crime in El Paso unless the observed differences are substantially larger than prior swings.

Observations on the Post-Operation Period. The

Table 31.

**MAJOR CRIME TRENDS IN EL PASO
(1980 to 1993)**

A. Annualized Crime Rates (Offenses Reported To The Police Per 100,000 Population)

	Popula- tion	Crime Index Total	Violent Crime Index	Property Crime Index	Murder	Forcible Rape	Robbery	Aggravated Assault	Burglary	Larceny- Theft	Motor Vehicle Theft
1980	425122	6366	661	5705	12.7	51	195	402	1474	3675	556
1981	442677	6613	793	5820	7.9	46	197	542	1613	3743	465
1982	458429	6419	856	5564	8.9	48	203	596	1570	3507	486
1983	471749	6190	906	5284	7.0	38	183	678	1563	3260	460
1984	465748	6455	801	5654	5.2	38	225	533	1547	3525	582
1985	474870	7096	771	6325	4.6	38	209	519	1686	4045	594
1986	483925	7806	978	6827	9.5	41	215	713	1899	4394	534
1987	494954	8501	875	7626	5.1	44	196	630	2113	4969	544
1988	501544	10165	898	9266	6.2	48	217	627	2425	5856	986
1989	515607	10623	916	9707	8.0	47	221	640	2214	6447	1046
1990	515342	11239	992	10248	6.6	50	268	668	1856	7298	1094
1991	526339	9630	1067	8563	9.3	50	282	725	1726	5787	1050
1992	535655	9044	1088	7956	8.2	51	301	728	1429	5513	1014
1993 ^a	544236	8794	1252	7567	8.6	55	297	891	1091	5377	1099
1993-94 ^b		8042	881	7161	8.8	43	255	575	873	5508	780

B. Annual Percent Change in Crime Rates, 1980-94

1980-81	4.1	3.9	19.9	2.0	-37.8	-9.7	1.0	34.7	9.4	1.8	-16.4
1981-82	3.6	-2.9	7.9	-4.4	13.1	3.2	3.3	9.9	-2.6	-6.3	4.5
1982-83	2.9	-3.6	5.9	-5.0	-21.8	-21.5	-9.8	13.9	-0.4	-7.0	-5.2
1983-84	-1.3	4.3	-11.6	7.0	-26.3	0.1	23.0	-21.5	-1.0	8.1	26.4
1984-85	2.0	9.9	-3.7	11.9	-10.1	1.4	-7.2	-2.5	9.0	14.7	2.0
1985-86	1.9	10.0	26.9	7.9	105.2	7.3	2.7	37.3	12.6	8.6	-10.1
1986-87	2.3	8.9	-10.5	11.7	-46.9	8.1	-8.8	-11.6	11.3	13.1	1.9
1987-88	1.3	19.6	2.6	21.5	22.4	9.1	10.8	-0.5	14.8	17.8	81.2
1988-89	2.8	4.5	2.0	4.8	28.7	-3.1	1.8	2.1	-8.7	10.1	6.1
1989-90	-0.1	5.8	8.3	5.6	-17.0	6.3	21.3	4.3	-16.2	13.2	4.6
1990-91	2.1	-14.3	7.6	-16.4	41.1	1.4	5.2	8.7	-7.0	-20.7	-4.0
1991-92	1.8	-6.1	1.9	-7.1	-11.8	0.9	6.6	0.4	-17.2	-4.7	-3.4
1992-93 ^a	1.6	-2.8	15.1	-4.9	4.7	7.5	-1.1	22.4	-23.6	-2.5	8.4
1993-94 ^b		-8.6	-29.6	-5.4	2.3	-22.0	-14.3	-35.5	-20.0	2.4	-29.0

C. Annual Percent Change in Crime Rates, 1991-92

El Paso	-6.1	1.9	-7.1	-11.8	0.9	6.6	0.4	-17.2	-4.7	-3.4
U.S. Cities of Comparable Size	-3.5	1.0	-4.1	-3.4	-2	2.3	0.2	-7	-4.2	2.5
United States	-4.0	-0.1	-4.6	-5.1	1.2	-3.3	2	-6.7	-3.9	-4.2

a = Based on Pre-Operation Months (September 1991 - September 1993)

b = Based on Projections from Post-Operation Months (October 1993 - February 1994)

Sources: Federal Bureau of Investigation, Uniform Crime Reports, 1980-92; El Paso Police Department, 1991-94

Table 32.

CRIMES REPORTED TO THE EL PASO POLICE DEPARTMENT BY MONTH
(SEPTEMBER 1991 - FEBRUARY 1994)

A. Number of Crimes in Post-Operation Period

	Crime Index Total	Violent Crime Index	Property Crime Index	Murder	Forcible Rape	Robbery	Aggravated Assault	Burglary	Larceny- Theft	Motor Vehicle Theft	Simple Assault
Oct-93	3650	424	3226	2	12	132	278	435	2493	298	1063
Nov-93	3711	439	3272	6	26	118	289	356	2512	404	975
Dec-93	3581	336	3245	4	20	97	215	397	2489	359	959
Jan-94	3468	351	3117	3	17	81	250	368	2355	394	877
Feb-94	3030	388	2642	2	22	99	265	314	1975	353	806

B. Monthly Averages for Specified Periods

Pre-Operation Period

Oct 91-Feb 92	3957	393	3564	4.0	21	121	247	706	2445	412	821
Mar 92-Sep 92	4065	502	3563	4.0	24	131	343	671	2434	458	982
Oct 92-Feb 93	4007	474	3532	3.0	21	133	317	530	2512	490	942
Mar 93-Sep 93	4010	571	3439	4.1	25	138	404	505	2444	490	1102

Post-Operation Period

Oct 93-Feb 94	3488	388	3100	3.4	19	105	259	374	2365	362	936
<u>Entire Period</u>	3940	476	3464	4	22	127	322	573	2444	447	965

C. Average Monthly Percent Change in Number for Specified Periods

Pre-Operation Period

Oct 91-Feb 92	-3.2	-1.6	-3.3	4.7	0.6	1.9	-2.6	-6.9	-1.7	-3.9	-0.7
Mar 92-Sep 92	2.3	3.8	2.1	60.4	5.3	0.0	6.4	0.7	2.1	6.1	2.7
Oct 92-Feb 93	-3.2	-3.1	-3.1	-45.0	1.0	1.9	-4.0	-7.8	-2.7	2.6	-2.0
Mar 93-Sep 93	1.4	4.4	1.0	57.6	6.6	0.4	7.0	4.8	1.4	-3.2	4.2

Post-Operation Period

Oct 93-Feb 94	-5.1	-6.1	-4.7	8.3	11.6	-2.9	-6.6	-10.1	-3.9	-0.6	-6.4
<u>Entire Period</u>	-1.1	0.1	-1.2	25.4	5.1	0.3	1.0	-2.9	-0.6	0.4	0.1

Source: El Paso Police Department

El Paso Police Department provided us with a two and one-half year period of monthly returns that they submit to the Texas Department Public Safety as part of the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Procedure.⁴² Summaries of these data for the seven index crimes are presented in **Table 32**. Panels (A) and (B) give means and average percent changes in the number of offenses known for specified periods. In particular, the October 1993 to February 1994 period provides the five-month averages for each of the crime index counts for the post-Operation period to contrast with earlier periods. The patterns are consistently down for the post-Operation period. But are the differences so unusual that a claim can be made for an Operation effect? Some simple arithmetic provides a partial answer.

Overall, there are 519 fewer offenses reported on average for each month during the post-Operation period (October 1993 to February 1994) than for the same period one year earlier (3499 - 4007 = 519, or a 13 percent decline from the October 1992-February 1993 period). Multiplying that figure by 12 gives the expected reduction in the total number of offenses for an entire year (6228). However, note that the decline in the total crime rate was from 11,239 in 1990 to 9,630 in 1991 (see **Table 31**), a 14 percent decline over 1 year. Since both figures are based on number of offenses per 100,000 population, multiplying each by the respective population estimate for that year and dividing by 100,000 gives the number of offenses, 59,919 for 1990 and 50,686 for 1991, a difference of 7,233 for the year or an average of 603 per month, a 14 percent larger reduction per month than the 519 reduction during the post-Operation months.⁴³ This analysis is not elegant, but it is instructive. Larger downturns in the crime rate have been observed in El Paso in recent years than were observed during the first five months of the

⁴² At the time of this writing, data should be available for the months of March-June 1994. Analysis of the additional four months plus monthly data going back at least as far as January 1990 would eliminate much of the random noise in the time series and allow greater confidence in the outcome of the analysis than is possible with the current data set.

⁴³ A simpler strategy, of course, is to go to the Uniform Crime Reports for those years and read the figures presented in the tables.

Border Patrol's Operation. It is not clear that the earlier downturns in the crime rates were noticed or that local law enforcement agencies received any kudos for those prior shifts.

A Technically Rigorous Approach with Equally Ambiguous Results. Just as it is too early to credit Operation Hold the Line as an essential element in any border city's crime control strategy, it is also too early to be dismissive. Multivariate statistical procedures are available to analyze trends over time. Estimates of effects can depend on the length of the available time series and the trend line that is used to make forecasts, but the process is technically and theoretically sounder than best guesses based on contrasts for only two points in time. **Table 33** contrasts the results for four different models that take into consideration trends over time as well as seasonal variations in the seven major crime rates. The analysis is based on monthly reports of offenses reported to the El Paso Police Department, and the models differ only in terms of the time periods used to estimate the trends and seasonal effects. The estimated effects during the post-Operation period are fairly consistent throughout the analyses.⁴⁴

Based on the pre-Operation data only, each model estimates a linear trend and the last two models include estimates of seasonal trends. These estimates are then used to forecast the number of offenses for the post-Operation months. Differences between the predicted and observed number of offenses for the post-Operation period would indicate the extent to which the post-Operation data could not be estimated by prior trends (or by trends and seasonal effects in Models III and IV). These differences are provided for each category of crime in

⁴⁴ Interrupted time series procedures were used with estimates based on the pre-Operation periods for Models I - III. Common modeling procedures were considered in terms of ARIMA analysis as was the case for the apprehensions data considered elsewhere in the report. A first order autoregressive structure was controlled for in four of the seven categories of crime in the Model I data. The result of all that effort is that, no matter which approach is used to model the effects of trends and seasonal variations in the offenses reported to the police, the findings are similar, with declines in most of the offense categories during the post-Operation period that are independent of trends and seasonal variations.

Table 33.

ESTIMATES OF POST-OPERATION EFFECT ON MAJOR CRIME
FOR FOUR MODELS OF TREND AND SEASONALITY

	Model I Long Term Trend Effect	Model II Medium Term Trend Effect	Model III Short Term Trend + Seasonal Effect	Model IV Short Term Trend + Seasonal Effect
Estimates Based on Period from:	1980-1993	1988-1993	Sep 91-Sep 93	Sep. 91-Feb 94
A. RSQ for Trend and Seasonal Effects				
Murder	0.04	0.01	0.56	0.54
Forcible Rape	0.29	0.07	0.36	0.38
Robbery	0.70	0.39	0.37	0.53
Aggravated Assault	0.48	0.32	0.84	0.74
Burglary	0.02	0.77	0.88	0.84
Larceny-Theft	0.73	0.11	0.56	0.55
Motor Vehicle Theft	0.81	0.15	0.48	0.47
B. Regression Coefficients for Trend				
Murder	0.01	0.02	-0.03	-0.03
Forcible Rape	0.06*	0.09	-0.06	-0.11
Robbery	0.52*	0.91*	-0.36	-1.24
Aggravated Assault	1.23*	3.00*	2.15*	-1.06
Burglary	-0.46	-10.39*	-4.28*	-3.73*
Larceny-Theft	9.10*	-4.80*	6.72	2.60
Motor Vehicle Theft	2.45*	1.60*	1.81	-2.37
C. Differences Between Observed and Predicted Offenses for the Post-Operation Period				
Murder	-0.5	-0.7	0.2	0.1
Forcible Rape	-4.4*	-5.1	-1.8	-0.6
Robbery	-32.5*	-39.9*	-31.6	-10.5
Aggravated Assault	-95.8*	-126.6*	-115.6*	-38.5
Burglary	-257.6	-77.4*	20.1*	6.7*
Larceny-Theft	-278.9*	-40.9*	-148.3	-49.4
Motor Vehicle Theft	-141.8*	-130.7*	-150.5**	-50.2
Violent Crime	-133.2	-172.3	-148.8	-49.5
Property Crime	-678.3	-249.0	-278.7	-92.9
Total Crime	-811.5	-421.3	-427.5	-142.4

* Probability < .10

** Probability < .15

Note: Negative differences in panel C indicate a decline in crime rate beyond that predicted by trends or seasonal variations prior to the Operation.

Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation, Uniform Crime Reports, 1980-92; El Paso Police Department for 1991-94 monthly crime report data.

panel (C) of **Table 33** for each model.⁴⁵ As was the case in the inelegant analyses presented earlier, if the differences are negative, they indicate the magnitude of the decline in offenses that cannot be attributed to trend and/or seasonal variations. If the differences are positive, they indicate the magnitude of the increase over what would have been expected given trends that started before the Border Patrol Operation began.

- Model I estimates the trend for each category of crime over the long term starting with the 1980 data and running through September 1993. As rates had been increasing over the majority of the period considered and declining only in recent years, this model probably exaggerates the apparent effects of the Operation.
- Model II estimates trend focusing on the medium term, from 1988, the year that seemed to initiate a sequence of downturns in the property crime rate, through September 1993.
- Model III estimates trend in the short term, from September 1991 through September 1993, and uses the monthly data to estimate seasonal effects.
- Model IV uses the entire short term series of thirty months from September 1991 through February 1994, again with seasonal estimates. Model IV would minimize the observed effect during the post-Operation period.

Using a long-term trend (Model I) does seem to exaggerate the post-Operation statistical effect on property crime rates. This is not surprising since we had observed a recent downturn in both burglary and larceny-theft.⁴⁶ Using the entire series

⁴⁵ Panel (A) gives the squared multiple correlation coefficient and indicates how well the trend line and seasonal variables predict the number of offenses for each month throughout the time period. The regression coefficients for trend in panel (B) indicate whether the trend is rising or declining during the specified period.

⁴⁶ A cubic model provides a better fit for that curve, but that degree of elegance is probably not justified by the data or by any theoretical reasoning underlying such a model for this data.

(Model IV) minimizes the post-Operation effect and provides a lower bound. Although the differences may not be statistically significant, the overall pattern in Model IV is consistently down for most violent and property offenses. Thus, the minimum case still exhibits a downturn for the post-Operation period. With the exception of burglary, the estimates for the other two models are extremely consistent. The bottom line is that when short-term trend and seasonal factors are controlled, overall crimes rates are down by more than 420 per month on average, and both aggravated assault and motor vehicle theft in particular are down more than could be explained by previous trends.

Below are the results for total crime index for the five post-Operation months using a model that relies on the period from 1990 to estimate recent trends and seasonal patterns. The observed number of offenses for each month is decomposed into the number of offenses predicted by the trend, the expected number of offenses to be added or subtracted from the trend component given seasonal variations observed in the series, and a remaining component that cannot be explained by either trend or seasonal variation. Thus, there were 3,650 offenses in October 1993; 3,758 were expected given the declining trend since 1990. The month of October is typically up 66 offenses over the trend. Trend plus seasonal component give a predicted number of offenses for the month: 3,824. The observed value (3,650) minus the predicted value (3,824) gives the remainder. The observed value was 174 offenses lower than would have been predicted by trend and seasonal variations alone. It is the magnitude of that remainder that should tell whether there is something unusual happening. The total for the five-month period, 407 fewer offenses committed or 81 fewer per month on average, is smaller but consistent with the other medium to short-term models considered.

The total number of offenses were a bit higher two years earlier, but the declines that were not predicted by trend or seasonal effects (the remainder) in the five month period in 1991-1992 (down 162 offenses per month) were twice those observed in the first five months of the post-Operation period (down 81 offenses per month). Given the consistency of these results, it is difficult to say that some-

Summary of trend analysis results for the post-Operation period:

Month	Observed number of offenses	Number predicted by trend	Seasonal component	Predicted Number	(Observed-Predicted) Remainder
Oct	3,650	3,758	66	3,824	-174
Nov	3,711	3,735	-146	3,589	122
Dec	3,581	3,711	-127	3,584	-3
Jan	3,468	3,689	-128	3,561	-93
Feb	3,030	3,666	-377	3,289	-259
Total	17,440	18,559	-712	17,847	-407
Average	3,488	3,712	-142	3,569	-81

Summary of trend analysis results for a five-month period two years earlier (1991-1992 using the same estimates for trend and seasonal components as for the post-Operation period:

Month	Observed number of offenses	Number predicted by trend	Seasonal component	Predicted Number	(Observed-Predicted) Remainder
Oct	4,173	4,307	66	4,373	-200
Nov	4,071	4,284	146	4,139	-68
Dec	3,916	4,261	-127	4,134	-218
Jan	3,872	4,238	-128	4,110	-238
Feb	3,752	4,215	-376	3,839	-87
Total	19,784	21,305	-710	20,595	-811
Average	3,957	4,261	-142	4,119	-162

thing extraordinary is happening with respect to serious crime due to the Operation.

These results are suggestive, not definitive. The time series is too short, particularly for the post-Operation period. Nevertheless, the results are indicative. At least to this point in time, it appears that the Border Patrol's strategy may directly or indirectly have some impact on serious crime in the El Paso region. Several criteria would have to be met to provide a persuasive case that those who gain illegal entry into the United States or who are nonresident in the United States contribute disproportionately to the rate of serious crime in border cities and that the Operation is having a direct effect on serious crime in El Paso:

- The declines in the crime rates would have to be unprecedented, which is not the case at present;
- If not unprecedented, the declines would have to be larger than those previously experienced, which is not the case at present;

- The declines would have to be sustained significantly below levels that could be expected by recent trends and seasonal patterns, as yet not the case;
- Variations in the rates of crimes along the border should vary in proportion to the illegal flow along the border (we have insufficient information to speak to that issue);⁴⁷
- Direct information on citizenship, residence status, and entry status on apprehended offenders

⁴⁷ We attempted a preliminary analysis of the relationship between INS apprehensions and offenses known to the police after the effects of trend and seasonality had been removed from both. There is a small statistical relationship between aggravated assault and total INS apprehensions: for every 200 increase (or decrease) in apprehensions, the number of assaults increases (decreases) .5 in the detrended series. The series we have on arrests is too short to remove seasonal effects, but, again, there is a modest statistical relationship between aggravated assault and the detrended INS apprehension totals: an increase of 1.4 arrests for every 100 INS apprehensions. A longer time frame is needed to tease out the possibility of a relationship worth pursuing, particularly given the prospect of lagged effects between apprehensions and offenses.

should demonstrate a declining contribution after the Operation's inception to the arrest rates of individuals who are noncitizen, nonresident, and without legitimate entry into the country (we have no information that addresses this issue.

Geographic Distribution of Crime

Distribution of Arrests. Public perception in El Paso is dominated by a view that the crime problem has been getting worse, and the evidence presented above supports that view over the long-term, although some property crime rates appear to have declined in recent years. Some of the past increase may have been due to changes in the age and sex distribution of the resident population and in changing economic and social conditions in the area. During the 1980s much of the city's growth has been affected by migration patterns due to its proximity to a large Mexican population across the border, and many people believe that undocumented aliens are the source of the increase in serious crime in El Paso and that the increasing number of undocumented aliens is due to the U.S. government's inability to control the border. This impression probably is bolstered in part by the unusually low recovery rate for motor vehicle theft in the city⁴⁸ and by the number and dollar value of motor vehicles stolen in the United States that have been recovered south of the border by the FBI in cooperation with Mexican law enforcement agencies.

The serious criminal activity in the city is disproportionately located in City Representative District 8, which follows the U.S.-Mexico border throughout the south and west side of the city of El Paso and

includes the main bridge crossing points in the downtown area.⁴⁹ In the first nine months of 1993, 41 percent of all felony arrests in the city occurred in that district. When the arrest data are linked with census information on municipal regions, the central area has the highest arrest rates as expected. Some contributing factors are easy to identify. Both per-capita income and median family income in the central region are about two-thirds of those for the entire city. The central area has a younger population and a higher proportion of residents twenty-five years or older with less than a ninth grade education. By these measures, the economic and social status of the population is worse than for the city as a whole. The central area also has a high proportion of Hispanic residents, although some parts of the area have an even a higher proportion with similar economic status, older perhaps, but more poorly educated, and substantially lower arrest rates on all measures except prohibited weapons offenses.

Distribution of Complaints. In addition to serious crime, we were told that a great deal of highly visible petty criminal activity (e.g., vandalism, shoplifting and other petty theft, prostitution, minor drug offenses, aggressive panhandling and begging, and illegal street vending) also has been concentrated in the central downtown district. The Border Patrol's operation may have had only a small effect on major crime, but many observers apparently think the community is safer now than before.

The public view may be shaped by the reduction in petty offenses in the downtown area, much of which apparently involves youthful offenders. That view is supported by the reduction in incoming complaint calls monitored by the El Paso Police Department over an eight-week period when the Operation first

⁴⁸ El Paso's recovery rate was about 43 percent in the 12 months before Operation Hold the Line began compared to about 60 percent for Texas cities (see Miller 1987 for a comparison between Texas cities and motor vehicle theft in border cities in the mid-1980s). The recovery rate in El Paso increased to 64 percent in the five months after the Operation started. Although the annual motor vehicle theft rate remained fairly constant at about 500 per 100,000 population, the recovery rate for El Paso declined from about 81 percent in 1976 to about 40 percent from 1986. Since that time, the rate of thefts has doubled with no appreciable increase in recoveries.

⁴⁹ Police districts 31-36, 42, 44, 51, and 54. There are six other police districts on the border scattered through four city representative districts.

⁵⁰ A sharp reduction in 911 calls and accidents in week eight suggest that a seasonal variation may account for the reduction observed in some of the categories in that week as neither would be expected to go down so precipitously. The number of alarms, silent and audible combined, provide an automatic measure of variation in property crime that tended to decline during the eight-week period independent of law enforcement activity.

began.⁵⁰ Most of the reduction in incoming calls came from the downtown police districts and occurred in all categories with the surprising exceptions of shoplifting, prowlers, and sex offenses, as some of our respondents led us to believe these offenses were among the first to decline. The decline in the proportion of all petty offenses and nuisance complaints coming from the downtown area substantiates the impression that some of the population at risk, most probably youthful offenders, have been turned back at the border. The data may reflect some seasonal variation during the period of the study undertaken by the El Paso Police Department as well, but the initial impact appears to confirm most expectations.

The early impact on minor crime is substantiated by the activity reports of the Anthony Police Department to the west, the Horizon City Police Department to the east, and the University of Texas at El Paso Police Department (near the Mexican border in the southwest corner of the city). Apparently Mayor Francis was sufficiently impressed by the reduction in minor crime observed in the early stages of the Operation to shift sixty-five police officers from the downtown area into a newly established gang task-force. He appears confident enough about the Operation's long-term prospects that he has invested community resources in a cleanup campaign for the downtown area to revitalize economic activity in that part of the city.

On other fronts, federal authorities indicate that criminal alien cases appear to have declined since the Operation began; bridge apprehensions (mainly drug trafficking) have increased; river apprehensions are down; and criminal activities have increased on the perimeters of the Border Patrol's Operation (near Fabens, Texas to the east and New Mexico to the west). They have no illusions that major drug traffickers will not be able to adapt successfully to the new situation.

Juvenile Offenders and the Racial/Ethnic Distribution of Arrests

We examined the arrest rates of juvenile offenders for serious crime, contrasting the differences in

monthly average number of arrests for the post-Operation period with the same five-month period one year earlier. Again, this type of contrast ignores any trends that may have been present prior to the onset of the Operation and can only identify contrasts that may be consistent (or inconsistent) with expectations about the Operation's potential effect on crime. The underlying causes of the differences remain uncertain. In particular we have no direct information on the citizenship or resident status of offenders.

Although the number of juveniles processed for all offenses, including serious crime, increased by 23.5 percent compared to the same period one year earlier and the number referred to court increased by 40.3 percent, the number of arrests for serious offenses were down for both violent crime and property crime (the numbers in individual categories of offense are too small to be meaningful with the exception of aggravated assault and larceny-theft, both of which are down on the previous year's figures). The results suggest a significant decline in juvenile involvement in serious crime. The difference cannot be explained by less vigilance on the part of the police department given the substantial increase in the number of juveniles being turned over. But, there is a perplexing caveat. Juvenile arrests for serious offenses did not decline disproportionately as might be expected. The proportion, 4.2 percent of all arrests for serious crime involving juveniles, was up marginally compared to the same period one year earlier. The number of arrests of adult offenders, most probably young adults, must have declined in tandem.

From our respondents' comments, we would expect juvenile arrests to be down for minor offenses, disproportionately so for Hispanics to the extent their entry to El Paso has been restricted by the Operation. **Table 34** identifies the contribution to changes in average arrest rates of seven categories of crime by race, ethnicity, and age group. Reading from right to left in the top row, there were sixteen fewer arrests for major violent crimes on average October 1993 to February 1994 compared with the same five-month period one year earlier (October 1992 to February 1993). Juvenile arrests declined by nearly nine

Table 34.

DIFFERENCES IN AVERAGE ARREST RATES FROM EL PASO
BY RACE/ETHNICITY AND AGE CATEGORY
(OCTOBER 1993 TO FEBRUARY 1994 MONTHLY AVERAGE -
OCTOBER 1992 TO FEBRUARY 1993 MONTHLY AVERAGE)

Type Of Crime	White < 18 Yrs	White 18+ Yrs	White Total	Black < 18 Yrs	Black 18+ Yrs	Black Total	Hispanic < 18 Yrs	Hispanic 18+ Yrs	Hispanic Total	Total < 18 Yrs	Total 18+ Yrs	All Categ
Major Violent	-1.4	-1.2	-2.6	-0.4	-2.0	-2.4	-6.8	-4.2	-11.0	-8.6	-7.4	-16
Major Property	-9.4	-2.2	-11.6	0.8	-1.2	-0.4	-24.0	-38.8	-62.8	-32.6	-42.2	-74.8
Minor Violence	4.8	4.8	9.6	1.0	2.0	3.0	2.0	8.2	10.2	7.8	15	22.8
Minor Property	1.6	.4	2.0	-0.2	0.2	0.0	-2.2	4.4	2.2	-0.8	5	4.2
Vandalism	9.2	4.4	13.6	1.0	1.6	2.6	35.4	2.6	38.0	45.6	8.6	54.2
Prohibited Weapons	0.2	-1.4	-1.2	0.6	-1.0	-0.4	3.6	1.8	5.4	4.4	-0.6	3.8
Sex Offenses	7.5	-2.4	5.1	0.0	-1.4	-1.4	-1.1	-17.5	-18.6	6.4	-21.3	-14.9
Drug Offenses	1.8	-4.8	-3.0	0.9	-2.8	-1.9	9.7	-34.6	-24.9	12.4	-42.2	-29.8
Public Order Offenses	7.2	-21.2	-14.0	-0.1	-4.8	-4.9	8.2	-150.8	-142.6	15.3	-177	-161.5
Total	21.5	-23.6	-2.1	3.6	-9.4	-5.8	24.8	-228.9	-204.1	49.9	-261.9	-212.0
<u>Juvenile Status Offenses</u>												
Curfew Violations	9.6			2.4			48.6			60.6		
Runaways	3.8			2.2			10.2			16.2		
Total	13.4			4.6			58.8			76.8		

Source: El Paso Police Department

per month and adult arrests by seven per month. Arrests of Hispanics for major violent crimes were down eleven per month, which is more than the decline for blacks and white non-Hispanics combined. The number declined more for young Hispanics (by about seven per month) compared to adults (about four per month).

Such a result is consistent with expectations about the Operation's effect on young Hispanics. That is not the case for any other category. Arrests tend to be down generally more for older than younger offenders in all race/ethnic categories and for older Hispanics more than any other group. Arrests for minor property offenses and minor violence increased, and arrests for vandalism increased considerably for young Hispanics. Arrests for sex, drugs, and public order offenses are down for adults in all race/ethnic categories and especially for adult Hispanics. There is a juvenile effect, particularly for Hispanics, but more for serious than minor crime. There is an Hispanic effect relating to minor crime, but more for adults than juveniles.

The evidence supports the thesis that juvenile offenders are being restrained with respect to serious crimes, Hispanics more than blacks or white non-Hispanics, but possibly as an outcome of the additional resources available for the gang taskforce. There is little support in the arrest data for the sort of effects predicted by our respondents in terms of the role age group plays. There is considerable support for the notion that public nuisance activities may be down with the possible exception of vandalism, but juvenile offenders appear less responsible for the downturn than was anticipated although the effect of young adults is obscured in this analysis.

Cost of Crime

We also examined data relevant to assessing changes in the cost of crime. With the exception of forcible rape, burglary, and larceny-theft, the police clearance rates increased in the October 1993 to February 1994 period compared to the same period one year earlier (Table 35, panel A). Clearance rates for motor vehicle theft more than doubled. Thus, not only are most offenses down compared to a year earlier, the

apprehension rates improved for some violent and property offenses. This may suggest that the redirection of police resources from minor and petty offenses to more major crimes was fruitful, or it may be a trend that started some time ago; we do not have sufficient data to resolve the issue, and it would be useful to know whether there was a similar pattern during the 1990-1991 downturn.

The cost of crime to the community involves more than property losses, but property losses, a visible measure of changing conditions, were down during the post-Operation period in all major categories: robbery, burglary, larceny-theft, and motor vehicle theft (Table 35, panel B). Equally important, both the value and the percent of property recovered increased. The patterns are too consistent to ignore and are consistent with the hypothesis that crime control, as measured by property losses, improved during the post-Operation period. Again, in the absence of a longer time series,⁵¹ it is not clear whether the recent declines can be attributed to indirect or direct effects of the Border Patrol's activities or to trends in law enforcement effectiveness begun before the Border Patrol shifted its strategy.

Most of the property lost to criminal activity in the region comes from motor vehicle theft (70 percent of the total value of stolen property in the October 1993 to February 1994 period). That, and the rise in motor vehicle theft of 138 percent from a low of 460 motor vehicle thefts per 100 thousand population in 1983 to a high of 1094 per 100 thousand by 1990, probably accounts for the community perception that motor vehicle theft is high. It is no solace to those whose cars go missing to learn that the motor vehicle theft rate is low relative to communities of comparable size in the United States. In 1992 El Paso ranked thirty-first in motor vehicle theft among the forty cities of comparable size (Table 28).⁵²

⁵¹ In particular the series should include the period around the time of the previous large downturn in 1990-1991.

⁵² See Miller (1987) for a comparison of trends in motor vehicle theft among border cities in Texas and for a description of how border theft rings operate and the responses of law enforcement agencies on both sides of the border.

Table 35.

VARIOUS MEASURES OF COST OF CRIME

A. Monthly Average Clearance Rates (Percent)

Period	Total Crime	Violent Crime	Property Crime	Murder	Forcible Rape	Robbery	Aggravated Assault	Burglary	Larceny-Theft	Motor Vehicle Theft	Simple Assault
Oct 92 - Feb 93	16.7	37.1	14.0	68.0	53.5	24.4	41.3	11.8	15.1	11.3	47.1
Mar 93 - Sep 93	15.9	35.6	12.6	99.5	47.2	27.3	37.5	11.0	13.8	8.4	49.5
Oct 93 - Feb 94	18.4	42.4	15.4	95.0	44.7	33.0	45.1	11.8	14.3	26.0	49.5
Percent Change ^a	9.8	14.2	10.1	39.7	-16.5	35.5	9.3	0.3	-5.3	130.9	5.1

B. Value of Stolen Property

	Robbery (\$ '000)	Burglary (\$ '000)	Larceny-Theft (\$ '000)	Motor Vehicle Theft (\$ '000)	Value of Property Stolen (\$ '000)	Percent Property Recovered (\$ '000)	Percent of Value Recovered
<u>(A) Monthly Average</u>							
Oct 92 - Feb 93	80.00	619.60	631.20	3070.8	4402.20	1421.40	32.29
Mar 93 - Sep 93	258.86	467.71	531.57	2870.1	4129.29	1314.86	32.17
Oct 93 - Feb 94	54.40	420.00	610.40	2591.2	3676.00	1539.00	42.07

Percent Change ^a

Oct 92 - Feb 93 to							
Oct 93 - Feb 94	-32.00	-32.21	-3.30	-15.6	-16.50	8.27	30.29

(B) Average Value Per Incident (\$)

Oct 92 - Feb 93	602	1169	251	6264	1201
Mar 93 - Sep 93	1876	926	218	5859	1154
Oct 93 - Feb 94	518	1123	258	7166	1147

Percent Change ^a

Oct 92 - Feb 93 to					
Oct 93 - Feb 94	-13.9	-3.9	2.7	14.4	-4.5

C. Cost of Motor Vehicle Theft

	Vehicles Stolen		Vehicle Recovery			Average Value Stolen (\$)	Average Value Recovered (\$)	Percent Vehicles Recovered	Percent Value Recovered	Percent Vehicles Recovered Elsewhere	
	(Number)	Value (\$ '000)	Value (\$ '000)	Recovered Locally	Recovered Elsewhere						Total Recovered
<u>Monthly Average</u>											
Oct 92-Feb 93	490.2	3070.8	1344.6	167.6	50.2	217.8	6264.4	6173.6	44.7	44.1	23.1
Mar 93-Sep 93	489.9	2870.1	1233.7	150.4	56.0	206.4	5859.1	5976.5	42.0	43.2	26.3
Oct 93-Feb 94	361.6	2591.2	1370.8	134.2	95.8	230.0	7165.9	5960.0	63.8	53.5	41.9

Percent Change ^a

Oct 92-Feb93 to											
Oct93-Feb 94	-26.2	-15.6	1.9	-19.9	90.8	5.6	14.4	-3.5	42.6	21.4	81.4

D. Minor Property Offenses

	Number of Incidents				Value of Property Stolen (\$'000)				Average Value per Incident (\$)			
	Residential Burglaries	Larceny-Theft < \$50	Pickpocket/Purse Snatching	Shop-Lifting	Residential Burglaries	Larceny-Theft < \$50	Pickpocket/Purse Snatching	Shop-Lifting	Residential Burglaries	Larceny-Theft < \$50	Pickpocket/Purse Snatching	Shop-Lifting
<u>Monthly Average</u>												
Oct 92 - Feb 93	372.0	1661.4	33.6	630.8	456.0	109.7	5.8	38.5	1198.1	72.3	170.1	61.1
Mar 93 - Sep 93	356.9	1674.1	21.3	554.7	337.3	29.2	4.4	33.5	936.5	17.4	215.3	63.7
Oct 93 - Feb 94	277.4	1673.2	14.2	647.4	307.6	29.0	1.6	34.9	1112.2	17.2	116.3	53.4

Percent Change ^a

Oct 92 - Feb 93 to												
Oct 93 - Feb 94	-25.4	0.7	-57.7	2.6	-32.5	-73.6	-71.9	-9.4	-7.2	-76.2	-31.6	-12.7

a = Percent calculated from Oct 92 - Feb 93 to Oct 93 - Feb 94.

Source: El Paso Police Department

It should come as no surprise that our data bear out local perceptions of the decline of motor vehicle theft in the early part of the post-Blockade period. Both the number of vehicles stolen and the total value of the community's loss are down compared to the same period one year earlier (**Table 35**, panel C). About 43 percent of vehicles were recovered in the year prior to the Operation compared to 60 percent in the five-month period after the Operation began. About 43 percent of the total value stolen⁵³ was recovered in the prior year compared to 53 percent during the post-Operation period. From 1983, the recovery rate for stolen vehicles in El Paso was low compared to other cities (the recovery rate is about 60 percent for Texas cities, see Miller 1987), the difficulty of tracking culprits across the border being the perceived explanation for this low recovery rate. The FBI does recover some vehicles through its liaison with authorities in Mexico, but we are told that the recovered vehicles are often stripped and substantially reduced in value. The data indicate that both the recovery rate and the value of recovered vehicles increased during the post-Operation period, but, paradoxically, the average value of recovered vehicles has been declining steadily in recent years. That the number of vehicles recovered from outside the community has nearly doubled in a short period may be testimony to statewide and regional efforts to become more effective in dealing with motor vehicle theft.

As indicated above, some law enforcement officials hypothesize that the Border Patrol's new strategy reduces minor and unreported crime, the nuisance activities of at risk juveniles and young adults, by making it more difficult for young males to enter the United States from Juárez. They may be less likely to have the required documentation to get through the regulated entry points. To the extent that this type of flow has been reduced, the results should be reflected in minor criminal offenses.

Although residential burglaries are not minor crimes by any standard, we have added them to a list of such petty crimes as minor theft, purse snatching, and shoplifting presumed to be committed by

⁵³ \$35.4 million, up from \$10.6 million in 1986 according to Miller (1987).

younger offenders (**Table 35**, panel D). We assume greater expertise would be required to burglarize a commercial establishment, where the returns may be greater but so are the risks of detection from security systems.

The incidence of residential burglaries and purse-snatching/pick pocketing complaints is dramatically lower in the post-Operation period compared to the same months one year earlier, as is the total value of losses and the average property loss per incident (**Table 35**, panel D). Both minor larceny-theft, where the stolen property is valued less than \$50, and shoplifting incidents did not vary much in terms of total number during the two five-month periods contrasted in **Table 35**, although the total value and the average value per incident both declined.⁵⁴

The number of commercial burglaries were down even more than residential burglaries during the two periods (38.9 percent). Although commercial burglaries showed a similar drop in total value of property lost as in residential burglaries, the average loss per incident increased by 12 percent, to \$1,164 per incident on average, surprisingly similar to the residential burglary average (\$1,112). Major larcenies (property losses over \$50) decreased by 19 percent but the value per incident increased 37 percent (the total value increased by 12 percent).

In the absence of any information on earlier trends, the data are consistent with the hypothesis that both major and minor property crime declined somewhat during the post-Operation period relative to the situation one year earlier. Whether the decline is due to the Border Patrol's success in curtailing the entry of the at risk population or to the efforts of law enforcement agencies is speculative from this data alone. The total decline in such incidents is exclusively due to the change in the number of burglaries and motor vehicle thefts, both of which have received particular attention from local law enforcement agencies in recent years, and with some effect in recent years prior to the Operation.

⁵⁴ We are mystified why the average value per incident is greater than \$50 (\$66) from October 1992-February 1993 for incidents that are supposed to be valued at \$50 or less and suspect either an accounting or a classification error may be at fault.

Other Measurements

Railroads. In addition to being served by major airlines and highways, El Paso is connected to other parts of the country by three major rail systems, the Santa Fe Railroad, the Southern Pacific Railroad, and the Union Pacific Railroad. While providing transportation for the shipment of goods both into and through the city, they unintentionally also provide transportation for migrants. If Operation Hold the Line successfully reduced the numbers of illegal migrants entering the country near El Paso, then it should have reduce the numbers of illegal migrants trespassing on railroad property. Data provided by the Santa Fe Railroad suggest such a reduction; the numbers of illegal migrants caught by the railroad's police department significantly declined since the Operation was implemented.

Apprehensions and arrests of illegal migrants across the entire Santa Fe Railroad system declined since

Operation Hold the Line was implemented.⁵⁵ **Table 36** displays the number of illegal migrant adults apprehended systemwide by the Santa Fe Railroad from January 1, 1992, through May 26, 1994. The table shows that apprehensions increased for comparable months from 1992 to 1993. Since the operation's implementation, apprehensions of illegal migrant adults by Santa Fe Railroad police are down dramatically. Systemwide, between January 1 and May 27, 1994, Santa Fe Railroad police officers apprehended 1,407 illegal migrant adults, compared to 3,047 during the same period in 1993, a 53.8 percent decrease. Apprehensions of illegal migrant juveniles and arrests of illegal migrants by Santa Fe Railroad police declined by 38.2 percent (from 89 to 55) and 49.9 percent (from 2,612 to 1,309), respectively.

The available data do not provide the numbers of illegal migrants apprehended/arrested in El Paso

⁵⁵ An apprehended illegal migrant may or may not be arrested. The Santa Fe Railroad police record an arrest when the apprehending officer turns the alien(s) over to either the Border Patrol or local authorities. In areas where there is no Border Patrol or where local authorities refuse to take trespassers into custody (because of jail overcrowding due to more serious crimes), railroad police officers warn the illegal migrants and release them.

Table 36.

TOTAL APPREHENSIONS OF ILLEGAL MIGRANT ADULTS BY SANTA FE RAILROAD POLICE OFFICERS

	1992	1993	1994
January	359	400	205
February	504	598	212
March	469	615	301
April	468	613	375
May	617	821	314
June	517	797	
July	720	588	
August	791	1095	
September	545	509	
October	473	120	
November ³³¹	110		
December	268	130	
Total	6062	6396	1407

Source: Santa Fe Railroad Police Department

by month. Therefore, to compare the number of illegal migrants apprehended/arrested in El Paso during the post-Operation implementation period to analogous months in the pre-Operation period, one must extrapolate. In 1993, 47.9 percent (3,047 of 6,396) of the illegal migrant adults apprehended by the Santa Fe Railroad police were caught between January and May 1993. (For ease of discussion, the proportion of apprehensions/arrests in January-May to those for the full year is henceforth referred to as the JM ratio.) Assuming the JM ratio for 1993 holds true for 1994, one can project that approximately 1,191 illegal migrant adults will be apprehended in El Paso in 1994, a 76.0 percent decrease from 1993.⁵⁶ Thirty-four illegal migrant juveniles were apprehended during the January-May 1994 time. Assuming the 1993 JM ratio for illegal migrant juvenile apprehensions of 53.0 percent holds for 1994, one can project a total of 64 illegal migrant juvenile apprehensions in El Paso during 1994, a 57.8 percent decrease from the previous year. A similar projection based on the 1993 JM ratio for illegal migrant arrests in El Paso by Santa Fe Railroad police reveals a predicted 73.1 percent decrease in arrests in 1994 versus 1993.

These projections, however, are based on the assumption that the JM ratios for each group observed, i.e., illegal migrant adults, illegal migrant juveniles, and arrests, will remain constant for 1994. This assumption is questionable because of the dramatic decline in illegal migrant apprehensions/arrests during the final three months of 1993 as shown in **Table 36**. It is, therefore, not unreasonable to believe that Operation Hold the Line may have unduly influenced the JM ratios for 1993. However, using the JM ratios for 1992 and developing a mean JM ratio by averaging 1992 and 1993 data provides similar results. The JM ratio for illegal migrant adults for 1992 is 39.9 percent. Using that figure, one would predict that 1,422 illegal migrant adults would be apprehended by Santa Fe Railroad police officers in El Paso in 1994. That means a 71.4 percent reduc-

⁵⁶ 567 illegal migrant adults apprehended from January-May 1994 in El Paso divided by the 47.6% JM ratio results in a projection of 1,191 expected to be apprehended in El Paso during the entire 1994 year. 1,191 projected apprehensions for 1994 is a 76.0 percent decrease from the 4,964 actual apprehensions in El Paso in 1993.

tion in apprehensions of illegal migrant adults during the first five months of 1994 versus the same time period in 1993. The mean 1992-1993 JM ratio is 43.8 percent, resulting in a predicted 1,293 apprehensions of illegal migrant adults, a 73.9 percent decline in apprehensions from 1993 to 1994. Similar conclusions result from applying the same approach to apprehensions of illegal migrant juveniles and arrests of illegal migrants by the Santa Fe Railroad police.

Clearly, the numbers of apprehensions and/or arrests of illegal migrants, both adults and juveniles have declined since the implementation of Operation Hold the Line. While it is unlikely that the decrease in apprehensions and arrests can be solely attributed to the Operation Hold the Line, it is not unreasonable to believe that the Operation is responsible for a substantial part of the decrease. Similar information was provided by the Southern Pacific Railroad police department. Although unwilling to provide specific crime statistics, they reported a 75 percent reduction in apprehensions of undocumented migrants. In October and November 1993, they experienced a total of five burglaries, compared to about five per day previously. The department attributes about 90 percent of the crimes on Southern Pacific property to undocumented migrants and attributes the majority of the reduction in criminal activity to Operation Hold the Line.

Drugs and Contraband. The U.S. Customs Service in El Paso is responsible for inspecting incoming people and vehicles to collect duties imposed on incoming goods and to prevent the importation of goods declared illegal by the U.S. government. Among those items often smuggled across the border are illegal drugs. As Operation Hold the Line interrupted the flow of people across the border at other than legal ports of entry, one would have expected an increase in attempts to smuggle drugs and other items through the ports of entry. The Customs Service maintains records of people apprehended for attempting to import goods illegally, paying particular attention to drug smuggling. **Table 37** shows the numbers of people apprehended while attempting to smuggle drugs and other items through the El Paso ports of entry during the period September 1992 -March 1994. The mean number of

Table 37.

APPREHENSIONS OF PEOPLE ATTEMPTING TO IMPORT DRUGS
(SEPTEMBER 1992-MARCH 1994)

Month	Marijuana		Cocaine		Heroin		Other		Total	
	92-93	93-94	92-93	93-94	92-93	93-94	92-93	93-94	92-93	93-94
September	26	32	4	3	0	0	79	66	109	101
October	20	40	2	4	1	4	44	58	66	106
November ³⁹	29	1	4	1	1	64	56	105	90	
December	23	29	4	3	0	2	86	72	113	106
January	28	28	2	2	0	0	64	55	94	85
February	30	41	1	6	1	3	58	50	90	100
March	39	28	6	4	0	2	55	65	100	99
April	28		4		0		71		103	
May	27		4		1		70		102	
June	26		3		1		46		76	
July	25		4		1		101		131	
August	28		6		4		55		93	
Total	339	227	41	26	10	12	793	422	1182	687
Mean	28.3	32.4	3.4	3.7	0.8	1.7	66.1	60.3	98.5	98.1
% Change		14.8		8.7		105.7		8.8		0.4

Source: U.S. Customs Service, El Paso Office

monthly apprehensions decreased slightly after the operation was implemented, but apprehensions for smuggling of marijuana, cocaine, and heroine increased by 14.8 percent, 8.7 percent, and 105.7 percent, respectively. **Table 38** shows the amounts by weight of marijuana, cocaine and heroine seized during those apprehensions. Marijuana seizures increased by 69.4 percent and heroine seizures increased by 61.9 percent, while cocaine seizures decreased by 28.3 percent. During the same time, total vehicle inspections increased by 3.9 percent. Because the rate of apprehensions for drug smuggling increased at a rate significantly higher than the rate of vehicle inspections, it is not unreasonable to suggest that Operation Hold the Line had an impact on drug smugglers. Deterred from crossing the border where the line of Border Patrol are stationed, it appears that smugglers increased attempts to cross at the ports of entries, resulting in increased apprehensions and seizures.

Agriculture. It also appears that Operation Hold the Line had a significant impact on the illegal importation of various agricultural goods through the El Paso area. Since the operation began, there was

a substantial decrease in the number of persons apprehended by agents of the El Paso district of the U.S. Department of Agriculture in possession of contraband agricultural goods while attempting to cross the border illegally. The department maintains data on the quantities seized of various fruits (specifically limes, avocados, guavas, and mangos), plants, exotic birds, and other items. **Table 39** shows the number of persons apprehended carrying contraband agricultural products into the El Paso area by USDA agents during fiscal years 1984 through 1993. It also lists the quantities of fruits and the numbers of exotic birds seized during that period.

The dramatic changes in apprehensions and confiscations appear to be directly related to the number of agents patrolling the border area. The USDA assigns agents to the district primarily to inspect people and vehicles entering the country through legal ports of entry. Prior to 1986, USDA agents had patrolled illegal border crossing points sporadically, on a volunteer basis. In 1986, the district increased the number of agents patrolling the border away from legal ports of entry. Then in 1989, the district teamed its agents with Border Patrol agents, effec-

Table 38.

AMOUNTS OF SEIZURES OF DRUGS AT BRIDGES BY U.S. CUSTOMS SERVICE
(SEP 92 - MAR 94)

Month	Marijuana (lbs.)		Cocaine (lbs.)		Heroin (grams)	
	92-93	93-94	92-93	93-94	92-93	93-94
Sep	606.0	696.0	8.5	*	0.1	none
Oct	486.0	2755.0	76.5	90.0	0.6	906.9
Nov	1047.0	1131.0	2.0	234.0	0.6	1587.0
Dec	423.0	1655.0	1.5	*	none	680.2
Jan	1571.0	1523.0	*	*	none	none
Feb	1335.0	2849.0	*	*	680.1	4081.0
Mar	1734.0	2148.0	28.7	*	none	1133.6
Apr	875.0	2414.0	*	961.0	none	1133.6
May	1144.0		5.8		997.6	
Jun	859.0		1.1		1315.0	
Jul	978.0		446.0		453.4	
Aug	1854.0		205.0		5441.3	
Total	12912.0	15171.0	775.1	1285.1	8888.7	9522.2
Mean	1076.0	2167.3	64.6	183.6	740.7	1360.3
%Change	101.4		184.2		83.6	

* less than 0.1 lbs.

Source: U.S. Customs Service, El Paso Office

Table 39.

SEIZURES OF ILLEGAL AGRICULTURAL GOODS AND CARGO

Fiscal Year	Persons	Fruits (lbs)	Birds
1984	6	33	7
1985	19	3,722	7
1986	94	18,789	91
1987	430	23,764	122
1988	1,113	78,203	96
1989	3,461	170,670	111
1990	3,280	285,040	82
1991	2,785	256,680	101
1992	717	66,482	44
1993	1,051	84,862	36

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, El Paso Office

tively doubling the number of patrols searching for illegal border crossers importing undeclared agricultural products. In 1992, the USDA reduced the number of its agents patrolling the border as increasing activity at legal ports of entry restricted the availability of agents for patrol duties. The numbers of persons apprehended and contraband goods confiscated shown in **Table 39** correspondingly reflect the increase and subsequent decrease in USDA agents patrolling the border. However, the number of apprehensions and contraband goods seizures plummeted in fiscal year 1994, when Operation Hold the Line was implemented. The number of persons carrying contraband agricultural products apprehended in the El Paso area by USDA agents during the fiscal year 1993 was higher than the first six months of fiscal year 1994, suggesting that the Border Patrol's operation had a significant impact on illegal importation of contraband agricultural products in the El Paso area.

Effects on *Pasamojados* in Juárez. We interviewed one smuggler of undocumented international migrants—we refer to him as Miguel—next to the Rio Grande on a busy street in downtown Juárez on the afternoon of February 9, 1994. Prior to the initiation of the Operation in September 1993, this *pasamojados* (“crosser of wetbacks”) had worked as a *lanchero*, ferrying Mexican nationals in his launch across the river to the shore in El Paso daily. The Border Patrol's new enforcement strategy had forced him to discontinue his boat service and adopt new strategies for crossing people illegally into the United States. Miguel told us that as a *lanchero*, he used to ferry three hundred persons daily across the Rio Grande in his boat, principally between 6 and 11 A.M. He charged his customers between U.S. \$1-5, depending on his perception of their ability to pay—better dressed people who appeared to be better off economically generally paid more. Miguel said that he used to ferry “all kinds of different people” who were heading north for “all kinds of different reasons,” but the bulk of his clientele consisted of Juárez residents who worked in El Paso. He also explained that, generally speaking, he did not ferry people from El Paso back to Juárez: those who waded or boated north across the river illegally typically walked or hitched a ride back across one of the bridges heading south.

Since the implementation of Operation Hold the Line, Miguel continued to work as a *pasamojados*, but his clients and his means for crossing them changed. Where before he ferried up to three hundred persons a day, mainly Juarenses who worked in El Paso, he now guides around thirty persons per week, mainly individuals migrating long distances from the interior of Mexico to interior points in the United States. Instead of ferrying them across the river in downtown Juárez by boat in daylight, he takes them by cover of night over or around Monte Cristo Rey near the western terminus of the Border Patrol's line of agents where the Juárez *colonia* of Anapra abuts Sunland Park, New Mexico. At this point, the border is just a line on a map, not a river to cross. The rate he charges now depends upon the extent of the service offered:

- U.S. \$50 to be taken to Sunland Park, NM (clients either make their own arrangements to be picked up on the U.S. side or can take a Sun Metro bus into El Paso);
- U.S. \$100 to be crossed at Sunland Park and taken by car or truck to downtown El Paso;
- U.S. \$300 to make flight arrangements to an interior U.S. city and be taken to the El Paso airport.

Frequent destinations for current customers are Denver, Los Angeles, Dallas, and Chicago. Miguel claims that other *pasamojados* charge lower rates but don't provide as reliable a service. He claims an 85 percent success rate in getting people across via Sunland Park.

Interviews with other *pasamojados* indicate that even if a wall were built at Sunland Park-Anapra, other areas exist where crossers could get around the walled-off area (currently, for example, in the area around Zaragoza). Where before these *pasamojados* took daily commuters across the river to shop and work, their clients now are persons who intend to remain in the United States. The *pasamojados* report that they continue to earn \$200-\$300 a day working three or four hours at a time; some days they make as much as \$500 or even \$700. Where before they

charged between \$1 and \$3 per client, now they charge up to \$100 to deliver an undocumented client to downtown El Paso.

Conclusions

What can we conclude from the above analyses? Our expectations on crime data were shaped by the information we received from interviews with law enforcement and city officials in February 1994. From six hypotheses based on that information, our conclusions follow the restatement of each hypothesis:

1. The El Paso crime rate, particularly with respect to property crime, is high due to its proximity to a large and relatively poor Mexican city.

No crime rate is acceptably low, but the evidence is clear that El Paso does not have a high crime rate relative to other U.S. cities of comparable size. There is no statistical evidence that demonstrates that the crime rate in El Paso, or other border cities for that matter, is high because of proximity to the Mexican border. There is evidence that suggests the Hispanic population is a relatively low-risk population for committing violent crimes when other factors are held constant, but relatively high-risk for committing property crimes.

2. The crime rate has been increasing in recent years, in part because of the increasing population pressures that El Paso shares with Juárez and in part because of the predatory behavior of some illegal entrants to the United States. To the extent the flow of illegals has been uncontrolled, the opportunities for a small, predatory subclass to engage in criminal activity in El Paso has increased.

There is no doubt that the crime rate increased sharply for most serious offenses during the 1980s, particularly for motor vehicle theft, and that the total rate for El Paso grew faster than other cities of comparable size from 1982 to 1992. But the rates for property crime, especially burglary and larceny-theft, have been declining in

recent years. It is possible that undocumented aliens contributed disproportionately to the rapid increase in crime in El Paso in the 1980s, but law enforcement manpower in the city was about one-half the national average during that time, and this must have been a contributing factor to the deteriorating situation as well. We have no direct evidence on the contribution of the illegal flow to crime rates in El Paso.

3. Young, male, poor residents of Juárez constitute a high-risk population for some types of criminal activity, mostly in regard to gang activity, minor offenses, and property crime.

The evidence here is mixed. We have no information on gang activity, but according to data on arrests, the reduction in minor offenses in the post-Operation period appeared more due to the role played by adult (possibly young adult) Hispanics rather than juveniles. Juveniles, particularly Hispanics, contributed disproportionately more to the reduction in serious crime than did adult offenders, and they certainly were more evident in arrests for vandalism. The expected decrease in petty crime does seem to be supported by the evidence, but the mechanisms that account for the decline are not as clear as our informants had predicted.

4. To the extent it curtails the illegal entry of the population at risk, the Border Patrol's strategy should have an immediate impact on property offenses and minor crime that should continue over the long term.

We do not have a long term to inspect as yet, but the immediate effects, if they are real, seem to include violent offenses, especially aggravated assault, and motor vehicle theft. It is clear that the cost of crime for the criminal has gone up as reflected in the clearance rates, and the returns have gone down for all levels of property crime.

5. The largest immediate effect of the Border Patrol's effort will be felt in the downtown areas of El Paso (police districts 31-36 and 51-56).

This seems unequivocally supported by the available data and by local police impressions of the changing character of the downtown area. We do not have access to post-Operation arrests linked to surrounding geographical areas that would provide a definitive commentary on the changing distribution of crime in the region.

6. The Operation's initial effects on serious crime may be short-lived as chronic offenders adapt to the new conditions. The Operation may have a long-term effect on violent and more serious crime if it is sustained and if law enforcement agencies are able to redirect resources into those areas as a result of sustained curtailment of the more numerous petty offenses that plague the community.

Serious crime does appear to have declined since the Operation began. However, not enough time has elapsed to be able to tell if the reductions in serious crime are due mostly to the Operation curtailing illegals who commit crimes or to the redeployment of El Paso police so that serious crimes among noncrossers are being deterred. Downward trends predate the onset of the Operation, and earlier years have experienced similarly comprehensive and sharp downturns in crime rates (1990-1991 in particular). The trends may have as much to do with local law enforcement and other factors in the community that may have gone unnoticed until the Border Patrol's Operation drew attention to such issues. Nevertheless, the patterns are consistent with the possibility that Operation Hold the Line has directly reduced crime, but it is yet unclear that the effects are large enough to be significant. There is no doubt that minor offenders of all ages and some petty nuisance crimes committed by juveniles in the downtown have waned and quite probably as a direct result of the current strategy to police the border. There is also no doubt that law enforcement resources have been redirected to other kinds of crime in the community. This may account for some of the drop in serious crime.

In regard to conclusions based on our examination of data from the railroads, the U.S. Customs service, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and our interviews with *pasamojados*, we found that railyard arrests and drug and contraband seizures declined since the Operation began. Mexican smugglers ferrying persons across the river continue to operate, but at a reduced rate of activity, and they are now charging higher prices than before the Operation began.

VII. Community & Organizational Effects in El Paso

This chapter examines the effects of the Operation on community and organization-related variables. We assess three aspects of the Operation's impact on the community—its effects on public opinion, its perception by Mexican-American community leaders, and its effects on human rights. We also interviewed Border Patrol agents to determine their perceptions of the Operation's impact on the organization and on their own job situations.

Public Opinion

The general impression one gets from talking to people in El Paso is that there is overwhelming popular support for Operation Hold the Line and for continuing it indefinitely. Media reports indicate that while some may have had reservations about the manner in which the Operation was implemented, the overall reception to it has been positive and the vast majority of El Pasoans are pleased with the Border Patrol's initiative. In the Chihuahuita neighborhood, residents even painted a mural thanking the Border Patrol for their action and praising Silvestre Reyes. El Paso's Channel 4 television news program regularly conducts call-in polls on topics of public interest; during the first week of the Operation received about 2,500 calls, nearly double the normal response. About 95 percent of the respondents indicated support for the Operation. An exit poll at a primary election site and one other political poll indicated support ranging from 84 to 95 percent

as well, and a survey conducted by the Border Rights Coalition in conjunction with the Mexican-American Legal Defense and Education Fund found a nearly 70 percent favorable response in the Chihuahueta neighborhood. Results from research team interviews confirm these findings and indicate a significant amount of popular support for the Operation.

While the figures appear to suggest overwhelming support within the community, there has been no scientific survey based on an unbiased representative sampling of the population. Telephone call-in polls do not ensure a random sample. The political polls asked only two questions in a larger survey of a broad array of topics. One poll was conducted for a Republican and one for a Democrat. The former involved 125 respondents selected at random from a list of people who had voted in the four previous Republican party primary elections and were, therefore, considered likely to vote in the primary election for which the poll was taken. The second poll was an exit survey of 115 people who had voted on the day of the survey during the early voting period for the Democratic primary. Both of these surveys, as with the Chihuahueta survey, sought information from a selected group of individuals and, consequently, cannot be taken as representative of the entire El Paso population.

The research budget was insufficient to conduct a scientific public opinion poll among El Paso and Juárez residents. In El Paso, survey costs are elevated by the large size of the Mexican-ancestry community, which would necessitate additional sample stratification. The Mexican-ancestry population of El Paso is quite diverse in terms of citizenship and residency status, Spanish-English language ability and practices, and degree of cultural, social, and kin-based linkedness to Mexico (Martinez 1994; Vila 1994). To get a comprehensive picture of public attitudes towards the Operation, it would be necessary to take special account of this diversity not only in terms of sample stratification, but also in terms of the language used in the questionnaires, the language fluency of interviewers in both Spanish and English, and the ethnicity of interviewers as well (Marin & Marin 1991).

Although it was not possible to conduct an unbiased, scientific survey in El Paso or Juárez, we were able to uncover many themes present in the public discourse on the Operation through in-depth interviews of key informants in both cities. In particular, we present below the results of meetings with leaders of El Paso's Mexican-American community. Mexican-American subsections of the community may support the Operation in different ways and for different reasons. Undoubtedly, there are those who support the Operation because they no longer identify strongly with Mexico. Still others might favor the Operation because they strongly identify with the United States, believe that by doing so they will be accepted as Americans, or feel that doing so will prevent their being denounced as un-American. Whatever the case, a scientific survey of an appropriately sized, random sample of the entire population of El Paso and Juárez would generate results that would show which sectors of the population support the Operation and which do not.

Mexican-American Community⁵⁷

This section describes the attitudes of Mexican-American elites in El Paso regarding Operation Hold the Line based on information gathered in ten personal interviews and in a group discussion involving fourteen participants conducted about seven months after the Operation began. The respondents included the county judge, two city councilmen, senior level public employees, directors of community-based organizations and social service agencies, and representatives of a wide range of civic and business associations.

The interviews focused on the positive and negative aspects of Operation Hold the Line. The following themes developed in the course of that conversation:

- The objectives of the policy;
- The legality of the policy;

⁵⁷ By Mexican American community, we refer to those persons of Mexican ancestry residing in El Paso who were born and/or raised in the United States.

- Who wanted the policy;
- The effects of the policy;
- Support and opposition among Mexican-Americans; and
- Ethnicity as a factor affecting Mexican-American responses.

The Objectives of the Policy. As is described more fully below, no precipitating events in El Paso were seen as having caused Operation Hold the Line. Respondents were, therefore, uncertain about the policy's objectives. The predominant view was that the policy was aimed primarily at reducing crime and social service abuse by undocumented immigrants. This was the justification offered by Mr. Silvestre Reyes of the Border Patrol, according to numerous respondents. A second view shared by a smaller, but substantial, number of respondents was that the policy was a means for the Border Patrol to defend its institutional interests. None of the respondents identified control of illegal immigration *per se* as an objective of Operation Hold the Line.

The Legality of the Policy. The respondents noted and emphasized that the United States has the right to police its border and control entry into the national territory. That Mexican-American leaders did not challenge Operation Hold the Line's legitimacy might seem somewhat surprising to some observers. One reason mentioned for this response was that the Mexican government publicly declared that the U. S. government had the right to implement Operation Hold the Line. This official Mexican position had four significant consequences. First, it helped defuse public anger in Juárez. As protests there were fueling similar sentiments in El Paso, dampening the public's ire in Juárez helped quiet voices across the river. Second, just as Mexican-Americans were mobilizing to demonstrate against Operation Hold the Line, the Mexican government publicly declared that it was not going to protest in behalf of its citizens, thus making it problematic for Mexican-Americans to do so. Third, Mexico's official position made it politically easier for those Mexican-Americans who supported the policy to make their views public. There has long been a

sizable number of El Paso's Mexican American leaders that recognize and value the many strong ties that link the two cities and that do not want to contradict official Mexican policy. Once Mexico made its position public, these Mexican-Americans, who included elected officials and directors of community-based organizations, did not feel constrained to hide their support for the Operation.

Moreover, because it explicitly targeted Mexicans as they illegally entered the United States rather than pursuing them once they mixed with Mexican-Americans within the U.S., Operation Hold the Line reduced harassment of Mexican-Americans and violations of the civil rights of Mexican-Americans or legal Mexican immigrants. Operation Hold the Line, thus, gave rise to no legal protests on account of such actions. The absence of legal challenges profoundly affected Mexican-American responses to Operation Hold the Line. It eliminated organized protests. More significantly, it made it possible for Mexican American leaders to participate in serious conversations regarding the El Paso/Juárez relationship.

Why the Policy was Initiated. The respondents unanimously agreed that prior to the initiation of Operation Hold the Line nothing unusual was happening in El Paso to prompt the new policy. Whatever their reactions to Operation Hold the Line, once it was implemented, El Paso residents in general, and Mexican-Americans in particular, were not asking that such a policy be developed. To the contrary, border control and immigration reform were not significant issues for most of El Paso's Mexican-Americans. In this, El Paso's Mexican-Americans reflect a well-established pattern. When asked to identify the issues that most concern them, Mexican-American leaders seldom mention immigration or immigration-related issues (de la Garza 1982; Pachon & DeSipio 1990). Similarly, the Latino National Political survey found that virtually no Mexican-American identified immigration as the most important problem facing their community or the nation (de la Garza 1992).

Given that Operation Hold the Line was not spurred by any new developments in El Paso, the respondents were troubled that El Paso was chosen as the

site for implementing this new policy with no apparent regard for how it would affect El Paso/Juárez. Moreover, there was widespread agreement that a major factor motivating Operation Hold the Line was the need for the Border Patrol to improve its image in the wake of national concern regarding undocumented immigration. Several respondents referred to proposals to militarize the border as indications that the Border Patrol was under siege and needed to act to protect its turf.

At no time did any respondent refer to illegal immigration as a national problem. Respondents acknowledged the debate regarding undocumented immigration, but seemed oblivious to claims that illegal immigrants were a drain on the nation.

Evaluation of Operation Hold the Line's Effects. Virtually all respondents agreed that Operation Hold the Line has:

- Reduced petty crime;
- Greatly diminished Border Patrol and police harassment of Mexican-Americans and legal Mexican resident aliens;
- Negatively affected businesses along the border;
- Increased tensions between El Paso and Juárez;
- Had, with one exception, no-long term effect on the prior patterns of interactions between El Paso/Juárez, including illegal crossings for the purpose of employment (it was reported that crossers in this category have changed their routine, i.e., maids and gardeners now stay in El Paso for longer periods rather than cross on a daily basis); and
- The one pre-Operation pattern that was disrupted is daily illegal crossings that appear to have been responsible for petty crime and made up the “street people” in El Paso’s downtown area.

Support and Opposition among Mexican-American leaders. Respondents were divided in their

reaction to Operation Hold the Line. Overall, their response is best characterized as a combination of general opposition, acquiescence, and targeted support. A clear majority expressed reservations about Operation Hold the Line, and between one-quarter and one-third supported it. This split reverses the pattern that appears to characterize how Mexican-Americans in general view Operation Hold the Line. However, as noted above, Mexican-American leaders opposed to Operation Hold the Line said they have had little political space within which to voice their opposition. That silence combined with public expressions of support may give an exaggerated impression of the extent to which Mexican-American leaders support Operation Hold the Line.

Respondents with reservations about Operation Hold the Line dismissed its achievements on several grounds. First, they argued that the amount and type of crime and nuisance caused by illegal crossers did not warrant such a heavy-handed response. Moreover, they claimed that street people continue to populate downtown El Paso, but that now, however, they are Anglo panhandlers. Several respondents asked why the latter are tolerated when their Mexican counterparts, who tended to be street vendors or windshield washers rather than panhandlers, are not? Second, they argued that because the Border Patrol and police have no right to harass Mexican-Americans, it makes no sense to defend Operation Hold the Line because it reduces such abuse. Third, they questioned how the cost of Operation Hold the Line could be justified if all it does is reduce petty crime? Fourth, they thought Operation Hold the Line contradicts the spirit of NAFTA and that its achievements do not compensate for the resentment it causes among Mexicans in Juárez and the disruptions it effected in the historical relationship of the El Paso/Juárez communities.

Operation Hold the Line opponents were made up primarily of leaders of community-based organizations and advocacy groups. Most of them were reluctant to acknowledge the extent to which Mexican-Americans in general support Operation Hold the Line. This is best exemplified by the author of the survey that found over 70 percent support in Chihuahuita, a poor neighborhood along the border

that includes many small privately owned residences, who argued that those he interviewed were not opposed to immigrants and did not really understand the broader implications of Operation Hold the Line. He and others who denied widespread Mexican-American support of Operation Hold the Line were chastised by the head of a neighborhood clinic (who adamantly opposes Operation Hold the Line) for being out of touch with and projecting their views onto poor Mexican-American residents who live along the border. The head of a community-based religious organization also pointed out that many in his organization supported Operation Hold the Line.

Operation Hold the Line supporters consisted primarily of elected officials and representatives of business organizations. The former insisted that the great majority of Mexican-Americans support Operation Hold the Line because it has reduced petty crime and removed street vendors and others from parks and the downtown area. One city councilman noted that his constituents were calling him and stopping him on the street to tell him how pleased they were that they were once again able to leave their homes, walk the streets and go shopping. Another reported that his constituents strongly supported Operation Hold the Line because “no one jumped through my yard last night,” and “my water hose has been in my yard for a week.” A third elected official noted that residents in neighborhoods along the border often complained about burglaries perpetrated by illegal crossers. Thus, they were hanging out banners supporting Operation Hold the Line.

Several respondents suggested that the extent to which Mexican-Americans were concerned about the crime issue had been affected by how the press had covered the issue. For example, one respondent noted that her grandmother commented on how she felt relieved now that illegal crossers were no longer present in her neighborhood. The respondent reminded her grandmother that she had for years hired illegal crossers to do yard work and had never before expressed concern about theft or other problems. The grandmother agreed, but then explained her reaction by noting that the press had made it

clear that crime had gone down since the Operation began.

Business leaders explained their support on legalistic grounds. Like everyone else, they were surprised when Operation Hold the Line was initiated. As it became clear that there was no legal basis for challenging the policy, that the policy would respect human rights, and that it would target illegal crossings and reduce the presence of the Border Patrol in Mexican-American neighborhoods, they came out in favor of it. Additionally, political and business leaders said that supporting the policy helped the Mexican-American image. First, it proved that Mexican-Americans are patriotic and support the nation's laws. Second, to the extent that crime and other problems in El Paso continued, it would show that Mexicans were not the cause of those difficulties.

Operation Hold the Line supporters and opponents voiced few general concerns about illegal immigration. Indeed, they favored liberalizing cross-border movements. Several proposed redefining the border so that movement between El Paso/Juárez would be unrestricted and would be controlled only at some distance beyond the border. Again, this is a view common to Mexican-American leaders (de la Garza 1982). Others advocated making it easier for Juárez residents to get the necessary documents for crossing the border. Most also noted that their only concern was with the 1 percent of the undocumented migrants who participated in illegal activities. Other illegal crossers came to shop or work and thus contributed to El Paso. “Why,” asked the respondents, “should we prevent those activities?”

Respondents made no reference to the abuse of social services by undocumented crossers. To the contrary, one leader claimed that data showed that there was no decline in births following Operation Hold the Line, as presumably there would have been if large numbers of illegal crossers were using these services [see Chapter V for a statistical analysis of birth data that show a decline]. Several other respondents noted that legal crossers make use of these services but no one seems to know or protest that.

The division between supporters and opponents reflects a pattern common to Mexican-American views of immigration. As has been noted, immigration issues are not salient to Mexican-American leaders. Moreover, Mexican-American opposition to immigration is inversely correlated with education and income (de la Garza 1993). This pattern holds in El Paso. The respondents who oppose Operation Hold the Line live or work outside the areas most affected by petty crime. They are well-educated professionals. Those who support Operation Hold the Line do so in behalf of the victimized who are poorer and live in the affected areas.

Ethnicity as a Factor Affecting Mexican-American Responses. Ethnicity sometimes affected the responses of the Mexican-American leaders to Operation Hold the Line.

- Whether they supported or opposed Operation Hold the Line, several respondents thought the Mexican-American reaction might have been more negative but for the fact that the person who initiated it, Silvestre Reyes, was also a member of the Mexican-American leadership community and a source of pride for Mexican-Americans. Thus, when he announced the policy, some of the Mexican-American leaders argued that it was thus hard for them to protest.

Some of them even argued that had an Anglo initiated Operation Hold the Line, there might have been more protest of the policy. This is because, as one Operation Hold the Line supporter said, “We have been attacked so many times that we are always defensive. The Operation would have disappeared in two or three days [if a Mexican-American had not directed it]. We would have been up in arms.” Reyes’ presence, in other words, was thought to have had two effects. First, it was argued that it deterred Mexican-Americans from mobilizing against Operation Hold the Line on the grounds that it was racist. Second, and as a result, the leaders argued that Reyes and Operation Hold the Line supporters had enough time to influence how the policy would be evaluated. They also said this initial period was further extended

by Mexico’s announced lack of protest of the legality of the policy. With that, the leaders said there was nothing left around which to mobilize protests, and the policy thus had a real chance to make itself felt.

- According to the respondents, Operation Hold the Line initially created a hostile anti-Mexican mood in El Paso. Spurred by Anglo support and press coverage, the leaders said some Mexican-American opponents of Operation Hold the Line were criticized as un-American by Anglos and Mexican-Americans alike. They said this served to prevent other potential Mexican-American critics from mobilizing or speaking out.

In conclusion, it would appear that Mexican-American leaders in El Paso are ambivalent regarding Operation Hold the Line. One reason they said they did not publicly oppose it was because there was little political space within which they could do so. They also said they were deterred from attacking the policy because a Mexican-American designed and was implementing it. Moreover, they also indicated they did not protest because Mexican officials recognized the right of the United States to enact it, and because it did not result in abuses of Mexican-American civil rights.

A sizable minority supported it because of its legality. Since it was legal, it would be unpatriotic to oppose it. Mexican-American elected officials supported it because their constituents benefited from it. That is, illegal crossers were disrupting neighborhoods and their presence was provoking Border Patrol and police harassment in El Paso’s poor barrios. To the extent that the objectives of Operation Hold the Line are limited to reducing petty crime, the respondents we interviewed supported it. Beyond that, however, they did not. Virtually all respondents favored a much more open border policy.

Finally, the responses to Operation Hold the Line suggest the extent to which Mexican-American reactions to immigration policy reflect their concern about how such policy directly affects them. Initially Mexican-Americans reacted defensively to Opera-

tion Hold the Line. Once they realized that they could not protest it on racist grounds and that Operation Hold the Line would neither target them nor round them up inadvertently, they were free to either support it or acquiesce to its implementation.

Human Rights

There is a long-standing and ongoing controversy regarding the violation of human and civil rights of both legally admitted and undocumented migrants and Mexican-American citizens along the U.S./Mexico border by Border Patrol agents and other INS personnel. Complaints about Border Patrol behavior appear to have escalated after passage of the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act as the number of agents increased and enforcement activities intensified. Questions about Border Patrol behavior have been raised in reports by human rights watchdog groups and journalists, lawsuits, protests from Mexican Consulates, and hearings conducted by Congress and the U.S. Civil Rights Commission.

Important allegations of human rights abuses were cited by various organizations, including Americas Watch (a branch of Human Rights Watch), the Immigration Law Enforcement Monitoring Project [ILEMP] of the American Friends Service Committee, the National Human Rights Commission of Mexico, and the U.S. Civil Rights Commission. A hard-hitting series in the *Los Angeles Times* (McDonnell & Rotella 1993) also documented serious abuses.

In addition to these reports, there have been individual complaints and lawsuits against agents and the Border Patrol as an institution, including accusations of verbal, psychological, physical, and sexual abuse, as well as of racial discrimination and failure to follow proper legal procedures. The Border Patrol and the INS more generally have been accused of having inadequate complaint and oversight procedures, of failing to discipline abusive officers, and of covering up instances of abuse. These have frequently resulted in substantial monetary awards to plaintiffs. One extraordinary case involved a class action suite brought against the El Paso Border Patrol by seven American citizens who claimed they were harassed by agents on or near the grounds of

Bowie High School in El Paso [*Murillo v. Musegades* (EP-92-319-B), W.D. Tex. December 4, 1992]. The school is situated adjacent to the border and, according to the Border Patrol, illegal Mexican crossers frequently fled onto the school grounds in order to disappear into the crowds and avoid apprehension. U.S. District Judge Lucius D. Bunton enjoined the Border Patrol from detaining individuals simply because they “look Hispanic.” The judge singled out the El Paso Border Patrol Chief, Dale Musegades for “doing nothing” to end abuses that were brought to his attention. Musegades admitted in court that he had not even read a previous court order forbidding dragnet sweeps in which agents illegally targeted Latino bar patrons. The judge concluded that the Border Patrol had used “excessive force” in engaging in illegal and abusive conduct against Latinos in the city. He said that “no justification existed for the force used against numerous plaintiffs and witnesses,” and that “victims fear retaliation by the INS and by the El Paso Border Patrol in the form of deportation, criminal charges, or loss of legal immigration status for themselves or family members.”

In 1991, the U.S. District Court ruled that two agents were negligent when, in the course of pursuing five Mexicans attempting an illegal crossing by boat into El Paso, they caused the boat to capsize. One man drowned in the incident, and the court awarded \$210 thousand in civil damages.

In May 1991 an El Paso agent shot and killed a *lanchero* (a Rio Grande boatman who ferries illegal crossers across the river) and was cleared as acting in self-defense. Witnesses and the Mexican government protested that the agent was in no danger when he fired.

The Mexican Consuls in border cities have frequently protested agent actions, and the Mexican government, through its embassy in Washington, has filed numerous diplomatic notes accusing agents of criminal violations of the rights of Mexican nationals. In August, 1992, the American Friends Service Committee, the League of United Latin American Citizens, and various organizations and individuals from the U.S. and Mexico filed a petition against the U.S. government with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of the Organization of American

States. The petition alleged that the government had “engaged in gross violations of human rights of individuals along the U.S. border with Mexico through the unjustified deadly use of force and violence.”

Hearings looking into abuses on the border have been conducted by the House Committee on Government Operations, Subcommittee on Government Information, Justice, and Agriculture in July, 1992 and by the Judiciary Committee’s Subcommittee on International Law, Immigration, and Refugees in August, 1992. In addition, the U.S. Civil Rights Commission held hearings on border incidents in San Diego in March 1993. In response to these and other developments, legislation is pending to establish an Immigration Enforcement Review Commission (H.R. 2119, commonly known as the Becerra bill after its principal sponsor, Xavier Becerra, D-California). The bill would set up the first civilian review panel ever created to oversee a federal government enforcement agency.

In summary, the INS and the Border Patrol have been targets of charges of excessive and abusive behavior in their enforcement of the nation’s immigration laws on the southwestern frontier. The El Paso sector has been the scene of a significant number of complaints. The former El Paso Border Patrol chief was the target of a class action suit which the government lost.

Chief Patrol Agent Reyes took over from Mr. Musegades upon the latter’s retirement. According to his own testimony, Chief Reyes was deeply concerned about the number of complaints of misconduct being lodged against his agents and the effect this was having on the Border Patrol’s morale and its image in the community. In an interview, Chief Reyes said that when he first arrived on the job the community generally thought that the Patrol was part of the illegal immigration problem, not its solution. He noted the numerous individual allegations against agents, the lawsuits, the Bowie High School verdict, and a restraining order against the agency.

According to Chief Reyes most of these complaints were unjustified and stemmed from a systematic

flaw in Border Patrol strategy that he said guaranteed failure. The strategy in place when he arrived on the scene was basically to permit Mexicans to cross the border illegally into the United States more or less at will and then to concentrate on apprehending those who either tried to continue into the interior or came to the attention of the Border Patrol once inside El Paso proper. Apprehensions of illegal migrants already in the United States were the benchmark by which the agency and individual officers rated their success. Operations took on the aspect of a cat and mouse game in which agents patrolled the sector on the lookout for suspicious persons, stopped them for questioning, and often engaged in pursuits if they fled. Those being pursued frequently resisted and/or claimed that agents used unnecessary force, failed to follow proper procedure, or engaged in harassment of a physical, psychological, or sexual nature. Both agents and suspected illegals often sustained injuries. More than occasionally shots were fired. Moreover, persons questioned or pursued sometimes turned out to be permanent residents, U.S. citizens, or Mexican nationals legally in the United States.

It seems evident that Chief Reyes hoped to reduce complaints leveled against his agents by changing enforcement strategy. The Patrol’s own Seventy-Five Day Evaluation of Hold the Line states, “The complaints by the local community of over aggressiveness by the agents, the lawsuits and the complaints heard by the Chief Patrol Agent called for an immediate solution” (Reyes 1994). Operations Blockade and Hold the Line would arguably have the effect of reducing the number of encounters between agents and suspected illegal aliens by shifting from an effort to discover, catch, and return those who managed to get into El Paso to preventing them from entering in the first place.

What have been the consequences of this change of strategy for the rate and seriousness of complaints against agents? Interviews with Border Patrol officials, human rights activists, and other interested observers, and the analysis of those data that are available suggest that complaints of abuses have fallen markedly since September 19, 1993. It seems reasonable to attribute this change to Operation Hold the Line insofar as (1) the Border Patrol is no longer

deploying many agents within the city to look for and pursue illegal migrants, and (2) encounters between agents and suspected migrants have subsequently declined. Fewer encounters mean fewer opportunities for abuse and claims of abuse. Qualitative evidence collected in interviews with law enforcement officials, Border Patrol employees, and community groups indicates that the numbers of incidents involving abuses or charges of abuses have dropped substantially since the launching of the Operation.

Official evidence of complaints is collected by several government agencies, including the FBI, the local police, and the Border Patrol itself. The FBI is responsible for investigating complaints that come to its attention and the INS forwards those deemed of sufficient weight to the Office of Inspector General in the Justice Department in Washington. Interviews with the El Paso office of the FBI indicate that no complaints have come to their attention since the Operation began. Figures from the Office of Inspector General in Washington have not been made available as of this writing.

The El Paso Border district of the Patrol has provided data on complaints lodged with it and forwarded to the local branch of the Office of Inspector General, called the Office of Internal Audit. Serious complaints that involve violation of civil rights or criminal activity on the part of the agents are processed by the Office of Internal Audit; the rest are returned to the Border Patrol for review. Their data, while difficult to interpret, show a substantial drop in the overall number of complaints and cases considered serious enough to merit processing by the Office of Internal Audit. From October 1, 1992, through September 19, 1993, that is, in the eleven and a half months before the launching of the Operation, there were 114 complaints, 91 of which were found to merit review by the Office of Internal Audit. From September 19, 1993, until February 8, 1994, approximately the first five months of the operation, there were 38 complaints, 25 of which were handled by the Office of Internal Audit. This means that between September 19, 1993, and February 8, 1994, complaints were made at the rate of approximately 7.6 per month. If that rate continued, there would be 91 complaints over the first year of the

Operation, compared to 114 during the previous 11 1/2 months, a reduction of 21 percent. The ratio of serious to less serious complaints in the period between the onset of the operation and February 1, 1994, is about 2 to 1; in the previous year it was about 4 to 1.

Another source of information on the level of complaints of abuses was collected and provided by Suzan Kern, Coordinator of the Border Rights Coalition, an El Paso-based group that works in the area of the human rights of Mexican migrants and minority groups. The Coalition was established by the Immigration Law Enforcement Monitoring program [ILEMP] of the American Friends Service Committee, based in Houston. One of its principal purposes is to encourage individuals to report abuses of the Border Patrol. ILEMP has established a common complaint form and organized groups to collect complaints in each of the five sectors along the U.S.-Mexican border. These data are then fed into a central collection point in Houston. None of the complaints collected by Ms. Kern in El Paso in 1993-1994 have been inputted; instead she provided a summary of all the reports she had collected from 1988 through January 1994.

These data can be somewhat difficult to interpret quantitatively. A form is completed for each "incident." Incidents may involve one or more persons. The person(s) may relate a number of different sorts of abuses occurring during the same incident. Sometimes the incident reported is not a single event but several or many that have involved the individual. The result is that the number of abusive behaviors reported is many times larger than the numbers of abusive incidents reported.

A coding mechanism has been developed by ILEMP to categorize types of abuse, the broad categories being (1) psychological or verbal, (2) physical, (3) denial of due process, (4) illegal or inappropriate seizure of persons, (5) illegal or inappropriate searches, (6) seizure or destruction of property, and (7) local law enforcement/Border Patrol cooperation. Both the date of the incident and the date the report is filed are recorded, although sometimes information is incomplete. The individuals involved may or may not report the incident to the authorities.

The Border Rights Coalition makes no attempt to externally validate the statements given by their informants.

In sum, the data result from an humanitarian organization's attempts to encourage and systematize the filing of complaints against the Border Patrol. Collection of data is erratic and episodic. No claim could be made that the figures represent the actual level of abuse or citizen perception of abuse. Nevertheless, they may be analyzed to see if there is a discernible difference before and after the implementation of Operation Hold the Line. The Border Rights Coalition's data indicate that there has been a sharp decline in the number of complaints filed

and in the number of abuses reported by complainants in the months after September 19 (**Tables 40 and 41**).

If one of the chief objectives of Operation Hold the Line was to relieve the Border Patrol of the pressure and embarrassment of frequent, highly visible controversies over agents' alleged abusive behavior, it seems undeniably to have been successful. However, this objective has been achieved through a change in tactics and does not, on present evidence, appear to reflect any more fundamental change in the culture, training, or behavior of Border Patrol agents.

Table 40.

HUMAN RIGHTS-RELATED INCIDENTS REPORTED, EL PASO SECTOR

	Incidents	Incidents/Month
January 1 - September 18, 1993	18	2.1
September 19 - May 30, 1994	5	0.58

A single incident may involve a variety of abuses.

Source: Suzan Kern, Coordinator, Border Rights Coalition, El Paso.

Table 41.

TYPES OF ABUSE

	1/01-9/18/94	1/19-5/31/94
Psychological or verbal	25	1
Physical	8	2
Due process	11	3
Illegal/Inappropriate seizure of persons	17	2
Illegal/Inappropriate searches	—	1
Seizure or destruction of property	7	1
Local law enforcement/ Border Patrol cooperation	1	—
Total	69	10
Abuses/Month	8.1	1.2

Abuses are more numerous than incidents because a single incident may involve a variety of abuses.

Source: Suzan Kern, Coordinator, Border Rights Coalition, El Paso.

Job Satisfaction among Border Patrol Agents

One potentially significant and pivotal effect of Operation Hold the Line is its impact on Border Patrol agents. The research team observed agents on duty over extended periods and conducted in-depth interviews. This section summarizes the findings of these observations and interviews, most of which were conducted between March 17 and May 3. Twelve agents at various levels of authority and experience were interviewed at length over the course of several weeks. Additionally, four management-level personnel were interviewed. The agents were asked to comment not only on their own situations, but also on the concerns of their fellow agents as they perceived those concerns. We had an opportunity to ride with agents, observe the line at different points, witness tracking and apprehension of undocumented migrants, spend time at Paso del Norte detention center [PDN], talk with undocumented migrants, and interview agents. The interviews result from an effort to locate individuals who could somehow represent a variety of perspectives (among those interviewed were three female agents). However, the sample size (12 of approximately 450 agents) and the nature of the topic means that the views expressed might not be representative.

Agents readily discussed their views and situations, which may itself signify the important effects of Operation Hold the Line on the lives of the agents. Several interviews lasted as long six hours. Agents were asked to act both as respondents, commenting on how the Operation had influenced their personal lives, and as observers, reporting what effects other agents had discussed with them. Some agents were interviewed more than once, particularly in their role as observers. Our observations and interviews generated more than two hundred pages of notes. What follows is a first assessment of the most salient issues that surfaced about the internal effects of Operation Hold the Line on the Border Patrol and its agents.

There appear to be several problems facing the agents. A number expressed frustration with the

new border control strategy and a belief that the Operation is costly in terms of boredom, the erosion of job skills, low morale, and the resultant physical and psychological effects of stress. First among these is boredom. Instead of pursuing illegal migrants (a task they said required skill), agents are sitting alone on station for long hours watching for crossers with no action. One agent indicated that the six hours spent during the interview had been the high point of his job since the Operation started. He felt that the Operation had been harmful to his professional and personal life and stated that he was “dying of boredom.”

A second problem, erosion of skills, is an important concern of the agents. Under the previous strategy, agents thought they encountered opportunities to improve their powers of observation and enhance their investigative and interrogative abilities through the diversity of activities they faced every day. In addition to pursuing and apprehending Mexicans observed crossing the border, they also investigated locations and businesses where undocumented aliens were suspected of being illegally employed, cultivated informants and followed up on informant’s tips, and gathered information by talking to people in the streets. Under the current strategy, the majority of agents are assigned to the line for most of their duty time. The following is a typical reaction:

You’re sitting there and you are holding the line . . . that’s all we’re doing. We’re not doing paperwork, we’re not speaking Spanish, we’re not cultivating our interviewing and investigative skills. Everything is dying.

[What we need is] the opportunity to develop our skills, to get better at them gives us self-satisfaction. We want to excel in our job. We do not want to stay put, we do not want to sit and do nothing. We need the challenge of our investigative skills. We need the challenge of our physical skills.

The third problem is a loss of self-esteem and feelings of self-worth and the concomitant concern that those higher in the chain of command will be unable to identify and reward high achievers. Since

agents spend much of their time sitting and watching, they perceive little opportunity to excel; consequently, it would appear that their chances for promotion or beneficial transfers are substantially diminished. One agent who was adamant about this stated: “I feel that my career has ended.” Others were equally adamant:

Because we’re just sitting on the line and we’re not being productive, no paperwork, no cases, our appraisals have no chance of getting an outstanding rating. Everybody is going to get a satisfactory, in which you don’t get an extra point.

If we’re just sitting on the levee doing nothing but crossword puzzles or reading, no cases, how can we justify that we should be upgraded to a GS11? We’re afraid that they will come out here and audit us and say, “GS9, making \$45,000 a year, are you kidding. You guys should be GS3s.” Any GS3 person could be doing this. We’re not doing anything. So that’s what we’re afraid will happen. I don’t think they’ll ever take our grade away, but it’s a scary thought.

It used to be that the Border Patrol allowed you to be involved in several different areas—freight trains, airports, a unit with plain clothes for picking up smugglers, foot patrol downtown with the PD officers, task force. The thing about it was that El Paso agents gained more experience/intelligence than a lot of other stations. It used to be that if you worked El Paso and you put in for something somewhere else, you probably got picked because they knew you had handled it all. But now, El Paso agents, now it’s been seven months. At the end of one year, you get an appraisal. Now the supervisor will write one little sentence on there. “Satisfactory, sat on the levee.”

Another important issue is job satisfaction, and a critical factor in job satisfaction was the freedom of action each agent was afforded. When asked what they most liked about their jobs, a frequent answer was the freedom that they had to operate:

You were able to do your job the way you thought it should be done, not according to someone else’s standards. If you were good at catching people coming across, if you had a way that worked best for you, that’s how you worked it. No one told you how you had to catch the people, no one told you how to break someone if they said they were a U.S. citizen and you knew they weren’t. You did it your way. You were challenging yourself everyday. It gave everybody a lot of freedom. In most jobs there is a quota, but we didn’t have that. I can catch as many as I want; I can sit and wait for drugs to come across if I want; I can catch criminal acts if I want. That’s a big freedom.

However, this kind of job flexibility has also been a source of difficulty for the Border Patrol as an institution. Complaints and law suits were filed as a result of what others perceive as an arbitrary use of force. One of the most significant positive results of Operation Hold the Line is the dramatic reduction of abuse complaints against the Border Patrol. Some of the agents noted this:

I think the number one benefit is the fact that we’re not out there in the public and every other person turns around and files a civil rights or some sort of law suit on us. We’re no longer out there for everybody to turn around and call the chief and say “he mistreated me.” It’s keeping us out of trouble.

Other agents expounded on their feelings of having been robbed of one of their primary sources of job satisfaction, the camaraderie:

You miss working with the people because in the past you were one of the important components. When you were tracking, you worked closely with the people, working in a team, and [now] you don’t get to do that. Especially in Anapra area, you have to work teamwork. If they took a little study [of] the agents who work for two weeks straight compared to those who work the line, you’ll

see a whole different personality. They're much happier. They joke around. They're ready for work. They want to go to work.

All of the factors mentioned above—boredom, erosion of skills, low morale and self-esteem, loss of job satisfaction—can lead to stress which, in turn, can generate further problems in a vicious cycle:

I know that the guys I've talked to have said that their wives have told them that they're not the same person. [The wives say their husbands] never talk, never want to do anything anymore, have gained weight, or are constantly negative and in bad moods. Sitting in one place for nine hours a day with no one to talk to will do it to you. So as far as health effect, morale, spiritually, mentally, it's really, really taken its toll.

They've [management] obviously never thought about [the negative costs]. What can you do to alleviate back problems, headaches, migraines, stress? Some of these guys are just about ready to go off the deep end.

The frustration sensed during several interviews indicated classic signs of alienation—powerlessness, lack of sense of purpose, isolation, and detachment from work (Seeman 1959). Several agents were putting in for other jobs—about 40 percent according to one source. They said they were trying to leave the Border Patrol because they didn't feel they were accomplishing anything with their lives. One source said that in the past no one looked at the job vacancies book; now they all were looking at it just prior to heading out to the line.

The desire to quit is usually among the first responses towards an unfulfilling work environment (Mobly 1977; Steers & Mowday 1981). However, in the case of the Border Patrol, quitting is not an entirely viable alternative. Agents feel that they cannot quit because they earn a good salary. With overtime many can make between \$35 thousand and \$45 thousand after five to ten years on the job. Since many have no more than two years of college education, some believe that their opportunities for employ-

ment outside the federal government are limited. Nevertheless, there are those who have decided to make the best of what they consider to be a difficult situation. They are taking college classes, listening to language course tapes, or bringing hobby projects to the job with them. Only a minority of the agents interviewed acknowledged taking this approach, however.

Another finding is that agents do not detain every illegal migrant. Each of the agents seemed to have his or her own method for distinguishing between whom they considered to be the good guys and the bad guys:

You weren't just worried about this one person standing there, especially if you knew that he's okay, just wanting to come in and pick up cans. We used to let people . . . pick up aluminum cans around UTEP or somewhere. That was the money they lived on. We knew that once they filled up their bag of aluminum cans, they'd go right back. That's not a problem. Rescue Mission people, same thing. They'd get their meals, they'd feed their kids, they'd go back. It's easy to turn your back on that so to speak, when you know you can go around the corner and pick up hundreds of illegals that are going to be standing on corners trying to wash your windows, or steal things, or sell cigarettes illegally.

Finally, it appears that a number of agents do not believe that Operation Hold the Line is successfully reducing the entry of undocumented aliens. One frustrated agent stated "they are coming around us, above us, below us, and between us," referring to the ends of the line, the railroad tracks which run above the ASARCO area, the tunnels by the downtown area, and the space between agents. During observation periods we witnessed several attempts to cross, some successful. Since agents are discouraged from leaving their designated spots, it is difficult to apprehend illegal migrants once they have crossed. One agent noted that management trumpets the success of the Operation based on reduced apprehensions data. He claimed that the reduction

in apprehensions was not because illegal crossings were being prevented, but rather because there were no agents available to apprehend illegal crossers once they had gotten beyond the line of agents at the border. He also asserted that the Border Patrol's employer sanctions unit was not apprehending suspects because it was not being allowed to open new cases.

Some agents noted that Operation Hold the Line does not prevent the entry of undocumented migrants; rather, it simply generates new crossing tactics. The most popular and successful technique is to use a decoy. According to one agent:

They have one alien try to come across as a decoy. All the agents focus attention on him. But meanwhile, five will cross on the other area where they're not looking. So they know how to get in. There's an area way up here where there's no river, no fence. At nighttime, they just walk across.

The willingness to engage in this tactic can be explained in part by the low cost to the decoy who gets apprehended. Most of the time when an illegal migrant is apprehended, he/she is detained at PDN until twelve to fifteen individuals are being held. At that time Mexican authorities are notified. The Mexican authorities return the detainees to Mexico and release those who are Mexican citizens. Only those detainees who appear to be criminals are held at PDN for further investigation. Thus, the only real consequence to the average decoy who is caught is that he/she is detained and returned to Mexico for another attempt.

During one observation period researchers were able to see the decoy tactic in action. Agents were faced with a dilemma. If they ignored the decoy, that individual would succeed, knowing that once away from the line the chances of apprehension are seriously reduced. The tactic calls for decoys to be sent one at a time until the agents give chase. Then the rest cross unmolested. One agent expressed her frustration over the perception that once undocumented migrants have crossed they are essentially home free:

They're not worried about walking outside their door or driving down the street, or working downtown, because they know there are no agents there. So most of these people have no worries about being in El Paso, once they're away from the border. I live on the west side, and I see maids over there, illegal maids, ten to twenty everyday in this one area. People ask, "How do you know they're illegal?" Because some of them I recognize from when I caught them.

Another popular tactic is to cross at night. According to one agent:

[Night is] the easiest time. There are times at night where there is an area maybe every three or four hundred yards where we have a vehicle. But there are other areas that you have one vehicle and then for half a mile to a mile further, there is none. It's very easy for them to get into those areas, and they know which areas they can cross more easily. Nighttime, when it's dark, agents can't see everything. And he's not allowed to walk too far away from his vehicle, because we've had incidents where they've broken into the vehicle and stolen things, so he can't go too far away from the vehicle, so this allows the aliens to come through. Midnight shift is very easy. You've got agents now who have done this for seven months, and there are times when you just can't stay awake.

Although these statements and perceptions represent a small sampling of El Paso sector agents, a high percentage of the persons talked to expressed similar morale problems and similar concerns over the well-being of their fellow sector personnel. Without a more comprehensive survey, it is difficult to judge the full extent of the problem. However, these problems will require resolution if the enforcement strategy embodied in the Operation is to be replicated elsewhere along the border.

Conclusions

In summary, the Operation appears to have received widespread popular support, although no scientific representative poll has been taken to document the overall degree of this support or those population segments in which it is highest. Some ambivalence is evident among Mexican-American community leaders. While most support the Operation, several leaders of community organizations expressed opposition. A major positive effect of the Operation on the community is its substantial reduction of charges of human rights violations and abuses brought against the Border Patrol. Finally, the Operation may be creating morale problems among the Border Patrol rank-and-file, who report a high degree of boredom with the new duties involved in the Operation and express anxiety about what criteria will be used to assess their performance and determine promotion.

VIII. Effects on Illegal Border Crossers in El Paso and Juárez

Chapter III presented quantitative findings on the effects that the Operation had on illegal crossings from Mexico into the United States. In this chapter, we present our findings on the effects that Operation Hold the Line had on illegal crossers and their border-crossing behavior. These findings are based on dozens of qualitative, field interviews conducted in Juárez and El Paso in February, March, and April 1994. The first section describes the border-crossing situation prevailing in the months and years preceding the launching of Operation Blockade. The second section presents findings on some of the reasons why many Juárez residents have not been able to obtain INS permission to cross the border legally with a Border Crossing Card [BCC]. The last section describes illegal crossers' reports on how they have been affected by the Operation.

Before Operation Blockade

Many people we interviewed in Juárez and El Paso agreed that before the initiation of the blockade, illegal crossing of the border was fairly easy. While one reason given for this was that the border was not heavily patrolled, we also received reports that Border Patrol agents often informally allowed workers and other cross-border commuters who they believed were not engaged in criminal activities to cross freely without formal inspection at official ports of entry. This practice appears to have been particularly common at the point where Colonia Anapra, on the Mexican side, faces Sunland Park, New Mexico. Here the border is nothing more than a line in the sand separating two communities only several hundred yards apart from one another. Anapra is an outlying *colonia* in Juárez, and is a long bus ride over rough roads from downtown Juárez and the nearest international bridges. The Border Patrol kept this area under surveillance but, given the inconvenience of crossing at the official ports of entry, routinely allowed residents of both Anapra and Sunland Park to cross here. According to Border Patrol agents we interviewed, within the Patrol the Sunland Park, New Mexico zone was referred to as the "Anapra Port of Entry." One resident of Anapra, whose testimony matches that of other residents we interviewed, described the situation prevailing before the Operation:

All kinds of people used this crossing, even if they had a Border Crossing Card. This is because we know that a Border Crossing Card is not valid for working. And if they have to be at work before nine in the morning, they can't cross on the bridge and still get to work on time. And the people having to work in the fields in New Mexico, well they have to be at work at four or five in the morning! So even with their border crossing cards it paid for them to cross here. . . . The immigration officials themselves made it easy if they knew that the people were crossing to work or if they recognized the person crossing. There were agents whose post seemed to be permanent, and they just about knew everyone who crossed here. I

myself spent four years crossing here on foot. A lot of times we would go shopping in El Paso [Sunland Park is served by the El Paso bus system] or we would go to the San Martin de Porres church in Sunland Park, very close to here. The mounted *migra* would stop us over there to take some information from us, and when we would explain that we lived here, many times they would say, “Go ahead. Be careful and make sure you go back to where you live afterwards.” Other times they would say, “Well, you can’t cross here now. Go on back.” Practically speaking, they never detained us. . . . And the street vendors knew the times of day when the agents would let them across, by pretending not to see them, after four o’clock in the afternoon and between six and eight in the morning.

Persons we interviewed in other parts of Juárez and El Paso confirmed these practices on the part of Border Patrol agents before the Operation began. And we were told of *lancheros* who ferried people across the river downtown in plain view of INS officials on the international bridges, who also apparently ignored illegal northbound crossings by people walking across on the wrong side of the bridge. (See, for example, the comments of Juárez city officials in Chapter II.)

The apparent tolerance of illegal crossing on the part of the Border Patrol led at times to anomalous results. The Rescue Mission, a church-run homeless shelter and soup kitchen located along the river near Old Fort Bliss, regularly received persons from Juárez seeking food and shelter. The Rio Grande at that point is shallow and easily forded, and many poor residents of Juárez would cross there to get a meal at the Mission. On occasion, the Border Patrol would enter the grounds of the Mission and arrest Mexicans who were on U.S. soil illegally. On Thanksgiving Day 1992, the Border Patrol staged a raid on the Rescue Mission and deported several undocumented Mexicans, mostly women and children.

The director of the Rescue Mission, a retired El Paso police officer, described his reaction to this incident.

He said he could not understand why the Border Patrol would allow people to cross the river unimpeded and then arrest them when they sat down in his mission to say grace before their meal. Following the Thanksgiving incident, the Rescue Mission arranged a truce with the Border Patrol whereby the Mission agreed to check entrants’ identification before serving them and the Border Patrol agreed to stage no further raids there. This agreement generated its own set of potential problems insofar as a homeless persons who appeared to be Mexican and could not prove U.S. residence could be turned away by the shelter—even though they could be U.S. citizens who, as homeless people, had lost their ID.

Not all illegal border crossers live in Juárez. Many undocumented Mexican residents live illegally in El Paso. Before the Operation, they were able to take advantage of the Border Patrol’s tolerance of illegal crossing to visit friends and family on the Mexican side. In some cases, these illegal crossers living in El Paso were married to legal residents or citizens or had children who were U.S. citizens. We interviewed one Mexican man in El Paso whose case is illustrative. The man and his wife moved, illegally, from Delicias, Chihuahua to El Paso in 1979. They have resided in El Paso ever since, and have two children who are U.S. citizens attending the El Paso Public Schools. Both the man and his wife applied for amnesty in 1988. The man was granted amnesty, but his wife, because some of her papers were not properly filed by their immigration lawyer, was not. They have since applied for her to become a legal permanent resident, but her application is still pending. Traditionally, when this family wants to take the children to visit their grandparents in Delicias, they have driven together into Mexico in their station wagon. Upon returning to the border from Delicias, the man would drop his wife off near downtown Juárez to take a launch across the Rio Grande. He would drive across the international bridge with the children and pick her up on the north bank of the river. Since the Operation began, they have had to abandon this practice. This man says he knows that it is still possible to cross illegally, but that it is too risky for her to try anymore. “We’re talking about the mother of my children, you know!”

In extensive interviews with both legal and illegal crossers from Juárez, we were told on several occasions that prior to Operation Hold the Line some persons who lived in Juárez and worked illegally in El Paso would cross the border illegally, away from official ports of entry, even though they possessed a valid BCC. The reason we were given for this apparently anomalous behavior was that these illegal workers feared having their BCCs confiscated by INS port of entry officers who might suspect them of working illegally.⁵⁸ The loss of the BCC could entail considerable hardship for its bearer, both in terms of loss of the privileges it confers and in terms of future prejudice should the person wish to apply for any other visa to the United States. Detention by the Border Patrol for illegal crossing, however, implied rather less drastic consequences for the detainee. Because the detainee need not present documents to the Border Patrol in order to be “voluntarily departed” back across the border, he/she could simply give a false name and be walked back across the bridge to Juárez after a few hours in detention, avoiding both loss of the BCC and future prejudice before the INS. Given that confiscation of the BCC seems to have been an unlikely event, we may surmise that BCC holders who routinely crossed the border illegally before Operation Hold the Line did so owing rather more to the fact that crossing illegally was fairly easy than to any substantial reduction in risk by pursuing such a strategy. Further, nearly all of the current or former illegal crossers we interviewed in Juárez and El Paso did not possess a BCC and had never applied for one. Below we discuss the reasons why illegal crossers did not avail themselves of the BCC in order to cross the border legally.

The Border Crossing Card

Operation Hold the Line was initiated by the Border Patrol of the Immigration and Naturalization Ser-

vice to eliminate illegal northbound crossings of the U.S.-Mexican border in El Paso. Less concern seems to have been demonstrated with regard to preventing the illegal employment or settlement of Mexican nationals in El Paso once they have crossed the border. Most illegal northbound crossings in the El Paso district are made not by Mexican long-distance migrants whose destinations lie far into the U.S. interior, but rather by residents of Juárez who make social visits, shop, sell goods, and work in El Paso. These activities are often no different than those carried out by Juárez residents who cross the border legally with a Border Crossing Card. Moreover, many legal and illegal crossers are not meaningfully distinguishable in terms of their likelihood of becoming immigrants to the United States and of their potential membership in classes of excludable aliens under §1182 of the CFR (see above). Our best estimates indicate that there are many more Juárez residents who abuse their privileges as BCC holders by working in El Paso than there are Juárez-El Paso commuters who cross the border illegally. (See Chapter III for estimates of the relative sizes of these groups.) **Table 42** summarizes the differences and similarities among illegal border crossers, noncrossers, and BCC holders.

From a U.S. perspective, it would seem that almost any employed person in the workforce would quickly be able to meet the common sense requirements of the BCC application process regarding proof of one’s residency and economic solvency.⁵⁹ The Mexican reality in general, and the Juárez reality in particular, however, do not correspond very well to a U.S. perspective on routine documentation of an individual’s socioeconomic status. First, thousands of employed residents of Juárez, including the multitudes employed by U.S.-owned *maquiladora* plants, live in self-constructed housing in vast squatter settlements called *colonias*. Residents of these *colonias* often own no official title to their lots, pay no rent, and receive no public utilities. Water and propane gas are trucked in, and electricity is frequently pirated by attaching illicit feeder lines to main power lines. While *colonia* residents are poor by U.S. standards, they are typically quite attached to living in

⁵⁸ As we discuss in more detail below, INS officers have the right to confiscate BCCs they suspect are being used to work illegally in the U.S. A person crossing daily in the early morning hours would run a considerably higher risk of detection over time than someone crossing less frequently or at hours that corresponded better to other kinds of nonprohibited activities.

⁵⁹ See **Table 1** (Chapter II) for a listing of official INS requirement for BCC applicants.

Table 42.

COMPARISON OF CHARACTERISTICS OF ILLEGAL BORDER CROSSERS, NONCROSSERS,
AND CROSSERS WHO POSSESS THE BORDER CROSSING CARD

	Illegal Crosser	Noncrosser, No BCC	BCC Holder
Length of Juárez residence	Likely to be a recent arrival.	Likely to be a recent arrival.	Likely to be long-term resident.
Informal vs. Formal employment	Likely to be unemployed or informally employed in Juárez; informally employed in El Paso.	May be either formally or informally employed, or unemployed in Juárez	Likely to have been formally employed in Juárez at the time of issuance of the BCC; may be formally or informally employed, or unemployed in Juárez at present; informally employed in El Paso.
Stable and sufficient source of income to support self and dependents	May or may not have a stable and sufficient source of income.	May or may not have a source of income at the source of income.	Has stable and sufficient time the BCC is issued; may or may not subsequently.
Benefits derived from proximity to U.S.A.	Access to goods & services; lower prices for goods; may gain access to employment at higher wages.	Access to goods imported by smugglers and middlemen.	Access to goods & services; lower prices for goods; may gain access to employment at higher wages.
Frequency of border crossing	May cross frequently or infrequently, depending on motives for crossing and degree to which the border is effectively patrolled.	Does not cross.	May cross frequently or infrequently depending on motives for crossing; if employed in El Paso, frequency of crossing depends on work schedule and intensity of inspection of entrants by INS officers at U.S. ports of entry.
Family in El Paso	May have family members living in El Paso.	Seldom has family members living in El Paso.	May have family members living in El Paso.
Crossing status of other family members	May or may not have BCC.	May or may not have BCC.	May or may not have BCC.

Juárez, often having invested considerable portions of income and savings in the construction and maintenance of their homes.⁶⁰ Many residents own cars and have such modern appliances as stereos, VCRs, refrigerators, gas ranges, and televisions. The existence of such squatter settlements is less an indication of widespread absolute poverty in Juárez (as measured by personal incomes), and more an indication of the city's lack of an adequate infrastructure to meet the needs of a population growing rapidly due to migration from the Mexican interior. Many *colonia* residents might have a difficult time in documenting their Juárez residence in the ways requested of BCC applicants by the INS.

Second, a large proportion of the population all over Mexico, but especially in a Northern border city like Juárez, is employed in the so-called informal sector. By informal sector, we refer here not only to the petty commerce of street vendors and market stall operators, but also to a wide range of economic activities undertaken by small-scale establishments and the self-employed that take place largely beyond the reach of government regulation. Informal sector workers typically are not registered with Mexican Social Security, do not appear on any official payroll, have no taxes deducted from their wages, and are not protected by state health and safety regulations. Various research studies in recent years point out that, especially in Mexico's northern border cities, informal employment is decidedly not synonymous with poverty; for older males especially, informal self-employment typically offers higher income potential than employment in a formal enterprise such as a *maquiladora* (Roberts 1991; 1993). Our interviews in Juárez confirmed this. A number of working men reported that they could earn two and one-half to three times more as informal laborers in construction than they could in the *maquiladoras* as machine operators (a formal occupation).

⁶⁰ Interestingly, a number of illegal border crossers we interviewed in such *colonias* remarked that, although they worked in El Paso, they had no intention of abandoning their Juárez residences to live in El Paso. They had too much invested in their homes, which were not readily salable, and could see no affordable housing alternatives for themselves and their families on the U.S. side of the border.

Informal employment, when defined in these terms, reflects not so much the massive pursuit of subsistence alternatives to unemployment by the urban poor, but instead the inability of the Mexican state to regulate effectively the multitude of small-scale commercial activities undertaken by its citizens. Using results from the *Encuesta Nacional de Empleo Urbano*, Zenteno (1993) estimates that at the end of 1989, 29.3 percent of workers in Juárez were not covered by Mexican Social Security and that up to 47 percent of workers were employed by enterprises that could be considered informal by one definition or another. We also know from the ENEU that 17.4 percent of Juárez's economically active population consisted of self-employed workers, most of whom were informal (Browning & Zenteno 1993). Many workers employed informally are in fact poor and working under highly precarious conditions. Many others, however, are quite gainfully employed by prevailing local standards, and may in fact themselves be employers. Because the employment of all informal workers (by definition) is incompletely regulated/documented by the Mexican government, many gainfully employed people in the informal sector might find it difficult to document their financial solvency in the ways requested of BCC applicants by the INS. Many of the interviews we conducted with Juárez residents confirmed this point:

- A housewife living in Rancho Anapra, a *colonia* opposite Sunland Park, New Mexico described her neighbors' situations:

Well, the requirements for the *pasaporte local* aren't many, but most of the men living around here can't fulfill them because they work in construction, you know. They don't have any kind of receipts, or pay stubs and they know that's one of the indispensable requirements you have to present—a whole year's worth, you know, of pay stubs. And that's why they can't do it. Most of the women around here work as domestics, and they don't get pay receipts, either. The people who work in the *maquiladoras*, well they have a little easier time of it, and I

think that there you'll find people who have their *pasaporte local*.⁶¹

- The proprietor of a small grocery store, also in Rancho Anapra, was recently able to get BCCs for himself and his wife by presenting his tax receipts, bank statement, and business registration papers to the INS. Getting the BCC for the two of them was “no problem.” His grown son, however, was unable to demonstrate his financial solvency to get the BCC because although he worked full-time for his father, he was not on the official books of the business.
- Another man residing in Rancho Anapra paints cars for a living and lives with his family on a plot of land to which they have no title. They built their home, a small cement block cubicle, themselves, and do not receive any public utilities (they have to pirate their electricity). He would like to get his Form 13 and BCC but has virtually none of the documents required to prove his residency and financial solvency.
- A man in his twenties selling fruit from a stall at the Cuauhtémoc market would like to get his BCC, but “doesn’t get paid by check” and thus is unable to present pay stubs documenting his employment. He has lived in Juárez all his life.
- A twenty-six-year-old man, and lifelong resident of Juárez, was waiting in line on the Paso del Norte Bridge to apply for the BCC for the first time. Until a year ago, he had always worked as a journeyman mason in the construction industry, and had never appeared on anyone’s official *nómina*, or payroll. Since last year, he has been working as an electrician at a *maquiladora* and just now has completed a full year’s set of pay stubs.

⁶¹ All interviews of Juárez residents were conducted in Spanish. Direct quotes appearing in this section of the report are translations.

- A businessman eating lunch at a restaurant in the Cuauhtémoc market had no problems getting his BCC because he had all his business papers in order. He believed, however, that employees would have a harder time documenting their status:

In my opinion, the requirements the Americans demand [for the BCC] are too tough. Because a lot of people are working, that have been working for some time, and due to negligence on somebody’s part, because of the way Mexicans operate—we don’t file our checks, and we don’t keep our payroll and other books completely in order. For that reason, a lot of people have problems trying to get together all the paperwork that the United States asks for. . . . The problem is all the paperwork they ask for. A lot of people meet the requirements [of financial solvency], but getting the paperwork is impossible because we don’t keep our books the way they want us to.

- Jose Alberto Silva, Juárez’s *director del gobierno* was well aware of the difficulties encountered by the informally employed in obtaining the BCC:

Unlike in the United States, in Mexico not everybody is registered with the government. In the United States everybody is registered through the Social Security system. But here in Mexico it’s not possible. We don’t have that mechanism, that kind of registry. In Mexico, for example, I know some people who are carpenters, or who run other small businesses for themselves. And they don’t take care of their taxes properly since they work alone. In order to get a permit to enter the United States, they ask these people for many documents. The truth is that these people do have jobs. But they can’t prove it because they aren’t registered in any way like the United States has with Social Security. . . . In our country this is a very large

group, these kinds of people. They could be maids or mechanics. In these types of activities people work and have money, but they have no way of documenting it. And they have a hard time obtaining permission to enter the United States.

We also interviewed and observed INS officers involved in the BCC application and issuance process. As noted above, the law grants INS officers almost total discretion in determining a BCC applicant's eligibility for entry into the United States. We found these officers to be aware that for many working Juárez residents it is not possible to obtain all of the documentation of solvency that the INS flier indicates are required for issuance of the BCC. Many of these officers are Mexican-Americans who have lived in El Paso for many years, and some still have relatives living in Mexico. As a result, they are aware that the BCC requirements do not always correspond well to Mexican reality, and they are willing to be "flexible" in whether absolutely all the documents listed on the flier must be presented.

A self-employed carpenter, for example, who could not produce pay stubs because he worked for cash for many different clients, could be issued a BCC—according to one of these INS officials—if he could present bank statements showing frequent deposits of sufficiently large amounts so as to reasonably support himself and any dependents he might declare. According to these officials, there is no set amount of money that one must have in the bank in order to be considered solvent—it appears to be left to the judgment of the officer reviewing the application. We received one indication of how subjective such determinations of status can be when one agent told us that he had approved an older, self-employed man's application mainly because he saw that the man had "hard-working hands."

Another agent described his attitude towards the application process:

Poor people have rights, too. My grandparents were Mexican and they were poor, poor but honorable. People of scarce means that can prove to me that they work for a living

and only want to come over here to shop, since some things are cheaper to buy here, can get a *mica*. Above all it's necessary to be humane. If you have any doubt about some case, before rejecting it, you have to ask the opinions of the other officers. . . . It's all about giving the best service possible and issue *micas* to everyone who qualifies, and even more so if it's poor people.

In spite of the statements of individual agents regarding their own flexibility in considering documents presented by BCC applicants, the INS chief of the Paso del Norte port of entry insisted that all his inspectors apply a common set of criteria regarding applicants' proof of solvency. The most important of these, and one to which he said no exceptions are made, is that applicants present documentation of at least one year of continuous employment up to the time of presenting the application. Further, by making clear to potential applicants before they apply that they will be required to present documentation of their solvency, the INS makes sure that people who are unlikely to have their applications approved do not even bother to apply. The fliers distributed by the INS at the ports of entry to El Paso are one indication of this. Another strong piece of evidence is that officials of the Mexican *federal delegacion* in Juárez inform applicants for the Form 13 that the INS will require them to produce documentation of their economic solvency, in the form of pay stub, tax receipts, bank statements, and the like, before it will issue them the BCC. Information about the BCC application process is also disseminated via Spanish-language radio programs that have been broadcast in El Paso and Juárez since June 1993 and that allow listeners to call in questions about the BCC to on-the-air INS officers. While exceptions to documentation requirements may be made on a case-by-case basis by individual agents, the INS public position is clearly that documentation of one's stable employment and income is expected.

After interviewing dozens of Juárez residents about the BCC in a number of different situations around the city—in working class *colonias*, at the Cuauhtémoc market, with families waiting in line to be given their application interview appointment at

the Paso del Norte Bridge, and at *maquiladora* gates at shift's end—we reached an additional set of conclusions regarding people's knowledge and experience of the BCC:⁶²

1. Most Juárez residents are aware of the existence of the BCC and the documents required to obtain it. Everyone we interviewed, whether they had ever applied for one or not, knew what the *pasaporte local* was. They also knew that one must demonstrate financial solvency to qualify for the BCC, and that this meant, in most cases, being able to present the INS with a full year's worth of pay stubs from a full-time job in Juárez. Consequently, virtually all of the persons we interviewed knew whether they themselves could meet the INS official documentation requirements.

2. Getting the BCC is not a problem for those who can produce the required documents. Those people we interviewed who had obtained their BCC did not report having had any particular difficulties in negotiating the process. The documents they needed were not costly to obtain (legally)⁶³ and nobody complained of having been badly treated by any Mexican or INS officials during the application process. Some people did complain of the inconvenience of having to wait all day in line at the Mexican *delagación* for their Form 13, and then having to wait all night again on the Paso del Norte Bridge to get their application appointment, but this inconvenience was clearly outweighed by the benefits of obtaining the BCC.

⁶² We gleaned little information in our interviews about individuals who use the BCC to work illegally in the United States. Such persons were presumably not in Juárez during weekday working hours when most of our interviews were conducted. While we also interviewed many individuals in El Paso, it was exceedingly difficult to find people who were willing to admit to working illegally there and to let us interview them about their experiences. We do know from other sources, however, that many BCC holders do work in El Paso. See Chapter III of this report for estimates of the magnitude of this phenomenon.

⁶³ It can be difficult, however, for persons who have migrated to Juárez from elsewhere in Mexico to obtain official copies of their birth certificates if they have lost the original. This is especially the case for older individuals or persons from rural areas.

3. Long-term residents of Juárez are more likely than more recent arrivals to qualify for and obtain the BCC than more recent arrivals from other parts of Mexico. Because over the course of a lifetime, individuals and their family members may work in a variety of occupations, longer-term residents of Juárez are more likely to have worked at some point in time in a formal-sector job that provided them with the documentation needed to demonstrate financial solvency. Many long-term Juárez residents first obtained their BCC as dependents of their parents, and as the BCC has no expiration date, they still are able to use it. Long-term residents are more likely to live in established neighborhoods fully served by public utilities. They are also more likely to view the BCC as a document that is both obtainable and worth having, having known about it for most of their lives. Although long-term residents of Juárez are more likely to qualify than newer arrivals, some of them miss the opportunity to get their BCC. This is because individuals may meet the BCC requirements at one point in their lives, but not at a later point. If they fail to see the need for a BCC at the time they have access to the required documentation of their eligibility, they may lose the opportunity for the rest of their lives

4. It is not uncommon for Juárez residents without a BCC to have immediate family members who do have one, and vice versa. We interviewed many people whose immediate family members—sisters, brothers, parents, and children—do not share their own status as a holder or nonholder of a BCC, even though all family members have lived in Juárez for the same amount of time. This situation seems to be more common when immediate family members do not live with one another, particularly in the case of siblings, and presumably do not participate in a common household budget.⁶⁴

5. Many Juárez residents, both long-term and shorter-term, have no interest or need to go to El Paso regularly, and thus do not apply for the BCC (nor do they enter the United States illegally). A substantial portion of the people we interviewed in

⁶⁴ Many people we interviewed also had immediate family members living in the United States, some legally, some not.

Juárez, from among a variety of working class occupations and neighborhoods, said that they had no reason to apply for the BCC as they had no need to or interest in going to El Paso or the United States.⁶⁵ Part of the reason for this may have to do with the self-perpetuating nature of residential and occupational segregation as it exists in any large metropolitan area: people tend to restrict their routine geographical movements to areas around where they live and work. Just as many residents of the Bronx may have never been to Staten Island and see no need to ever go, many working people in Juárez have virtually no knowledge of or relationship with El Paso or people living there. The fact that El Paso is, of course, in another country, and one that is perceived as not particularly welcoming of working-class Mexicans, only makes this phenomenon stronger. Here, as above, it is worth quoting a few of our informants directly:

I don't need a *pasaporte local* because it's just the same over there as it is here. (Man, mid-twenties, working as a vendor in Cuauhtémoc market)

I wasn't thinking about getting my *pasaporte local* when I started working here. I wasn't interested in going [to the United States]. It looks like they treat Mexicans very badly over there. . . . For us, Mexico is better. We've seen on television how badly they treat Mexicans in the United States. (Seventeen-year-old woman, lifelong Juárez resident, *maquiladora* employee)

No, I didn't go into the *maquiladoras* to get my *pasaporte* [local]. Because going over to the other side doesn't interest me. The

⁶⁵ Interestingly, even a number of the people we interviewed waiting in line for their BCC on the Paso del Norte Bridge stated that they had qualified for the BCC for some years, but only then had gotten around to applying for it. The main reason given for not having applied sooner was that they had no need for it up until now. The pressing need now, typically, was to shop for better prices and merchandise in El Paso. Some people reported that their economic circumstances had recently changed, making the potential savings gained or particular product obtained more urgent for them.

United States doesn't interest me. Not even to shop! Because I say that what there is over there, we've got here, too. I'm not going to go over there just because a few things are cheaper! Sometimes it's better for a person to just to stay around here in Juárez, in their own Mexico, and not over there where they're going to be against you, look down on you. (Twenty-four-year-old woman, native of Durango who has been living in Juárez for three years and working in a *maquiladora*)

I don't visit the United States. I don't consider it necessary. Anything you'd want is here. We don't need to go over there. (Thirty-one-year-old man, native of San Luis Potosí, living in Juárez for seven years working in a *maquiladora*)

It doesn't pay for the person who has his/her job or studies or something like that to come here. My brother is one of those people. He'll never get his crossing card! And now that a lot of American products are imported into Juárez he and his family buy things there. Sometimes they ask me or my mother to bring them things. It's no problem for us. We go to see them in Juárez, too. They're so close! The ones who have problems are the ones who live far away and can't cross the border. (Woman, former resident of Juárez, now living legally in El Paso)

6. Obtaining the BCC is seen as a fringe benefit of working in a *maquiladora*. We interviewed a number of *maquiladora* workers, both women and men, most of whom had obtained or were in the process of obtaining their BCC. While no one we interviewed stated that they themselves had taken a job in a *maquiladora* principally in order to get the BCC, many acknowledged that one of the fringe benefits of their employment was the ability to qualify for it after a year of work. Nobody indicated definitively that once they had obtained the BCC they would leave *maquiladora* employment to attempt to work in the United States, although some

clearly considered that to be one option open to them. Young adults working in the *maquiladoras* are able to get BCCs for other family members living with them, including their parents, based on their *maquiladora* employment. People we interviewed who did not work in the *maquiladoras* generally regarded *maquiladora* employment as low-paying and otherwise unattractive, except for the fact that such employment facilitated obtaining the BCC.

7. Some persons in possession of the BCC formerly entered and worked in the United States illegally. Several people we interviewed who had obtained their BCC based on their current employment in Juárez had, at some earlier point in their lives, worked illegally in El Paso or elsewhere in the United States. These people preferred to live and work in Juárez under less precarious circumstances than they had experienced in the United States working illegally. At the same time, the BCC offered them the possibility of access to certain of the economic benefits, in the area of personal consumption, that they had formerly accessed by entering or residing in the United States illegally.

8. Mexican residents who do not possess valid border crossing documents themselves often still

attempt to cross into the United States at official ports of entry. To avoid bottlenecks in the flow of pedestrian and vehicular traffic on the international bridges between El Paso and Juárez, INS inspectors do not ask every crosser to produce documents, nor do they inspect all requested documents very closely. Often, inspectors will only ask entrants for a verbal declaration of their U.S. citizenship before letting them pass. Before Operation Hold the Line, this meant it was possible, albeit risky, for crossers to enter the United States with improper documents or no documents at all. After Operation Hold the Line began, INS inspectors began checking entrants' documents much more closely, and uncovered many cases of Mexican nationals using invalid, fraudulent, or other improper documents to attempt to enter the United States. **Table 43** presents a summary of documents confiscated at the Bridge of Americas Port of Entry from September 1993 through January 1994. Interestingly, the most common type of misrepresentation detected was the use of fraudulent U.S. naturalization papers. While almost no one appears to attempt to cross with an altered or fraudulent BCC, a fair number of people seem to attempt to cross with someone else's card, presumably betting on lax inspection of the photograph it bears on the part of INS personnel at the port of entry. Other

Table 43.

TYPES OF FALSE DOCUMENTATION ATTEMPTED BY MEXICAN CROSSERS, BRIDGE OF THE AMERICAS
(SEPTEMBER 1993-JANUARY 1994)

Type of Improper Documentation	%	#
Impostor using BCC	30	78
Altered BCC	0	0
Fraudulent naturalization papers (USC-911)	38	98
Impostor using legal permanent resident document	12	31
Counterfeit legal alien permanent resident document	17	44
Altered legal permanent resident document	1	3
Impostor, I-94	0	1
Amnesty fraud	0	1
Amnesty impostor	1	2
Fraudulent or altered U.S. passport	0	0
TOTAL	100	258

Source: U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Office, El Paso Office

common misrepresentations include using a counterfeit Legal Alien Permanent Resident Card [LAPR] or using someone else's "green card."

One kind of misrepresentation that cannot be picked up at the port of entry is the use of falsified documents to obtain a valid Border Crossing Card. Several informants we interviewed in both El Paso and in Juárez averred that the purchase of fake pay stubs, birth certificates, employment letters, utility receipts and the like was not uncommon among persons who desired a BCC but could not otherwise obtain the necessary documents to present with their application for it. The most ingenious account we heard was that of a woman whose sister had obtained a BCC by purchasing false documentation of her employment from a man working in the personnel office of a *maquiladora* in Juárez. The INS does routinely make calls to employers to verify the employment of BCC applicants; in a case such as this verification was useless as the company official was a participant in the scam. As with the frequency of the incidence of misrepresenting oneself with improper documents at the port of entry, it is impossible to estimate the frequency of this sort of fraudulent acquisition of the BCC. Documents seized are only those discovered, and the number discovered depends not only on the number in circulation but also on the amount of effort made to detect them.

Effects and Responses

Based on our field interviews in both El Paso and Juárez, we reached the following conclusions about the effects of Operation Hold the Line on illegal crossing and illegal crossers.

1. Illegal crossing is now much more difficult than it was before the Operation began. Absolutely everyone we interviewed who has attempted illegal border crossings in the El Paso area acknowledges that doing so is much more difficult than before September 1993. Those who attempt to cross are more likely to be detained than before and are obliged to make their attempts at night and/or by going around the Operation to cross at deserted locations near Sunland Park, New Mexico or Fabens, Texas. These attempts are time-consuming and ar-

duous. Several of our informants on both sides of the border have commented that the intensity of the blockade of the border has diminished since its first month. While crossing now is easier than it was in that first month, it is still more difficult than before the Operation began.

2. Some illegal crossers have given up crossing; many people who have other income alternatives in Juárez have given up working in El Paso. Unemployment in Juárez is low relative to the rest of Mexico; jobs are available in the *maquiladoras*, in construction, and in domestic service. The pay for these jobs, however, is quite low relative to the cost of living. Older illegal crossers, particularly older women, have largely given up illegal crossing, regardless of the loss of income. They simply do not see the benefit as being worth the increased risk and difficulty of making arduous, nighttime crossings. Many street vendors gave up crossing after the Operation began because of their inability to get through the Border Patrol linewatch quickly and surreptitiously while loaded down with fruit and other wares to sell.⁶⁶ Some of these vendors took up selling in downtown Juárez instead, including to drivers waiting in line to enter the United States on the Paso del Norte International Bridge. All former illegal crossers who earned incomes in El Paso before the Operation began have experienced a loss of income; for some this loss has been catastrophic, for others, who have other family members working in Juárez, it has been less so, particularly if they themselves have been able to find other work in Juárez. Some recent migrants to Juárez who earned their living in El Paso's underground economy were forced to return to the Mexican interior following the Operation as their remaining personal and/or family resources were insufficient to maintain themselves in Juárez.

3. Illegal crossing is still possible and many people continue to cross illegally, though fewer than before Operation Blockade/Hold the Line. The line of agents posted along the border by the Border Patrol is penetrable, particularly away from the

⁶⁶ Former El Paso street vendors we interviewed reported that they could make \$120 or \$130 per week selling fruit in El Paso. In Juárez they would be lucky to make one-third that amount as vendors and one-half that amount in other occupations.

downtown areas where several physical barriers, such as fences and aqueducts, make a speedy crossing impossible. This was corroborated in our interviews with illegal crossers on both sides of the border, by their legal coworkers in El Paso, social service providers in El Paso who still serve nonresidents, and Border Patrol agents. Since the beginning of the Operation, the number of agents on duty at any given time has been reduced and, as a result, Border Patrol vehicles are stationed as much as one-half mile apart in some areas. Fewer agents are available to make actual apprehensions of illegal crossers who have breached the first line of defense. Moreover, boredom, disillusionment, and fatigue have resulted in some Border Patrol agents not proving to be very good sentinels, sometimes allowing illegal crossings while sleeping or reading in their vehicles, and other times simply not intervening in time to halt an illegal crossing in progress.

They slip through [the line of the operation]. You can cross at night. At dawn or at night. You know, the *migra* stands sometimes half a mile apart, and you can slip through the line. It's a lot harder. [The ones who get through] are fast runners, they're young. I know one woman that crossed that we'd had in the shelter for a long period of time, has an American kid. The American kids had to stay over there [in Juárez] with the mother, but she crossed to work as a domestic. Many of these people, they send money back, because here they eat, there they don't. (Ray Tullius, Director, El Paso Homeless Coalition)

I asked him how he'd done it. I thought with the blockade, he wouldn't be able to come any more. So when I saw him again at work, I asked him, "How did you do it?" He told me at two in the morning, through the desert. He said that several of them cross at once. They get together. If they see the Border Patrol agents, and the agents run to try to catch them, they all run in opposite directions, but towards the other side. Whoever gets away, well, he gets away! (Mexi-

can maid who lives and works in El Paso relating the tale of a gardener she sees working at one of the houses she cleans)

Like out away from town, the day before yesterday, the Border Patrol wasn't around at all. And I was getting my nerve up to cross right then, but I didn't cross because of my kids there in Juárez. What am I going to do with them over there and me over here? So, I'm going to take my kids back down to Durango and then come back across again at Anapra, because it's safer there. (Mexican woman who formerly sold fruit on the street in Juárez, interviewed in El Paso)

4. Juárez residents who use their border crossing card to work illegally in El Paso have responded to more rigorous inspection and interrogation of bridge crossers by crossing at times when it is more believable that the purpose of their visit is other than to go to work. When Operation Hold the Line began, INS inspectors on the international bridges confiscated the border crossing documents of some Mexican entrants who made apparently false claims about the purposes of their visits to the United States. Reports abounded of persons being turned back at the border for claiming to make shopping trips at 7:00 AM with only a few dollars on their person.⁶⁷ Illegal workers and people who live or work with them who we interviewed concurred that many crossing card abusers have taken to crossing the bridges at hours when it is easier to convince INS inspectors that they are make a shopping trip or a social visit. A Mexican maid we interviewed in El Paso had this to say:

A lot of maids have their crossing card and come across to work. But they don't cross early in the morning anymore. They cross later in the day. They're afraid that if they cross early in the morning they'll be caught. They'll be asked, "Where are you going? All

⁶⁷ Here it seems that a few isolated incidents were greatly magnified by the power of rumor and sensationalist media coverage.

the stores are closed now. What will you be doing?” And they also have to carry some money on them, enough to be able to justify that they’re going shopping. Because sometimes they’ll run into an immigration agent who wants to examine the contents of their purse. I’ve seen them do this.

5. Those who continue to cross illegally do so less frequently, but stay over longer periods of time in El Paso. Illegal crossers, as well as people who associate with illegal crossers, say that they cross the border less frequently than before the Operation because crossing is more difficult and the likelihood of apprehension is greater. For people who do not spend the night in El Paso, this means a substantial loss in income compared with before the Operation, because they work fewer days in El Paso. They are typically men who work irregularly in El Paso cutting grass, trimming hedges, or as construction day laborers. Crossing at less frequent intervals for them does not imply the loss of a job, for they did not have a regular work schedule in El Paso before the Operation began. For others, such as nannies, housekeepers, and skilled trades people, whose employers expect them to keep a consistent schedule, the response has been to cross less frequently, but sleep over in El Paso several nights in a row, or even for up to a week or two. Some maids and nannies moved in with their employers. Other illegal crossers stayed with relatives, or rented a room from a Mexican friend or acquaintance in El Paso. Some outdoor construction and yard workers took to sleeping under the desert stars on the mountainsides surrounding El Paso.

I used to work as a housekeeper in El Paso, but now I’m an operator in a *maquiladora* here in Juárez. I quit crossing [illegally] with the blockade. Lots of people were detained. A lot of us women used to cross, and then we just couldn’t any more. . . . The people who still manage to cross, well, we don’t see them again for a long time, or we only hear from them by phone. . . . Most of them are staying with the people they work for, or with some friends or family, if they have them in El Paso.

In our interviews, we also received secondhand reports of illegal crossers who have abandoned their Juárez residence altogether since the Operation and moved to El Paso to live as well as work. Given the disincentives for revealing their identity as illegal residents, we were unable, however, to interview any of these persons directly.

6. Some undocumented Mexicans residing and working in El Paso are now cut off from friends and family in Mexico by the Operation. Not all illegal border crossers, either before or after the Operation began, lived in Mexico. Undocumented Mexican residents of El Paso are also obliged to cross the border illegally if they wish to visit friends and relatives or to conduct business in Mexico. These people may be members of households that include members who are legal residents of the United States, including Anglo and Mexican-Americans, Mexicans who are legal permanent residents of the United States, Mexicans who legalized their residence under the Immigration Reform and Control Act, and U.S.-born children of Mexican immigrants.

One of the things that this blockade has done—many of our families in El Paso are “mixed,” which means . . . I married a woman from Juárez! Many of us have intermarried across this river. Now it takes some time for the Mexican woman to become legalized, and it cost me \$800 to legalize my wife and her son. Now many of these people don’t have that: \$800, that’s their life. So many of these women that are tied there throughout El Paso are living with American kids, an American husband, sometime who runs off, with extended family in Juárez. Now she’s illegal—she’s technically illegal. She cannot cross. She’s stuck on this side with her American kid with her family across the river. That’s prevalent, all throughout this place! Right now, she can’t go back. And Immigration could technically pick her up and tell her “Go back.” And here you’ve got five American kids, who go back over there and they’re not supported in Juárez because they’re American kids. They don’t participate in any of the social services [in

Juárez] because they're foreign kids. (Ray Tullius, El Paso Homeless Coalition)

Before Operation Blockade/Hold the Line, illegal border crossing was relatively easy, and Mexican nationals residing illegally in El Paso more readily could maintain relationships with friends and kin still residing in Mexico. Many times these cross-border relationships among families consisted of a parent or an adult child living and working in El Paso and returning regularly to the rest of the family on the Mexican side with money and goods. Operation Blockade/Hold the Line, by making the maintenance of these kinds of relationships more difficult, also generates some incentives for family residential reunification: the family member living in El Paso may return to live in Mexico, or other family members may seek to move to El Paso.

7. Once across the border, undocumented Mexicans are less likely to be picked up by the Border Patrol than they were before the Operation. Illegal border crossers we interviewed in Juárez and El Paso, as well as residents of Mexican immigrant neighborhoods in El Paso, concurred that since the Operation began, Border Patrol surveillance of El Paso neighborhoods and workplaces had abated noticeably. As a result, undocumented Mexicans, once they had crossed the border, faced a decreased chance of being detected and deported by the Border Patrol. For example, a Mexican resident of an El Paso apartment building located in El Paso near Chamizal Park on the border, reported:

Down where I live you used to see the Border Patrol passing by the entrance of my complex fairly frequently. Now you never see them. They used to make sweeps through the neighborhood, and people used to hide or we used to hid them! [Laughs.] A lot of them would dive under parked cars to hide when they would see the Patrol. They would hide however they could!

This decrease in Border Patrol surveillance of areas in El Paso located away from the border has made illegal worker' strategy of extending stays in El Paso all the more sensible. Whereas before Operation

Blockade/Hold the Line, illegal crossers who worked illegally in El Paso feared apprehension at all times while in the United States, now their risk of capture is restricted to the moment of crossing. Moreover, the risk of apprehension while crossing illegally has risen considerably. Hence it is a good strategy to try to maximize the work days in El Paso gained per illegal crossing. The same logic applies to persons who abuse their Border Crossing Card by using it to work illegally in El Paso.

Many of these conclusions are embodied in the case of one Mexican man working in El Paso whom we interviewed in April 1994. His story follows.

Reynaldo Rodriguez [a pseudonym] is a skilled mason who works as an independent contractor to homeowners in El Paso. Now in his mid-forties, he moved to Juárez from his hometown of San Francisco, Chihuahua in 1972. Before he began working in El Paso five years ago, he worked for many years in the construction industry in Juárez. He has always earned his living as a mason. He lives in Juárez with his family in Colonia Felipe Angel. He has eleven children, ranging in age from fifteen months to twenty-five years old. Four of his children work in *maquiladoras*; his wife does not work outside the home.

Mr. Rodriguez does not have a Border Crossing Card because he has always worked informally in the construction industry; moreover, he is not in possession of his birth certificate, which he lost many years ago. Nobody else in his family holds a BCC, although one of his daughters plans to apply when she completes the required year of employment at her *maquiladora* job.

As a mason in El Paso, Mr. Rodriguez can earn up to \$150 a week; doing the same work in Juárez, he would be lucky to clear \$100. The additional money he is able to earn in El Paso is essential to him, given the size of his family. By the same token, having such a large family obliges him to live with them in Juárez, where the cost of living, especially for housing, is considerably lower than in El Paso. He prefers working independently for private homeowners because on a construction site in El

Paso he would have payroll and social security taxes deducted from his check. He gets work from homeowners based on recommendations from people he has worked for in the past. He believes he is paid fairly for his work and has generally been treated well by his various employers.

We interviewed Mr. Rodriguez one afternoon when he was at work laying a brick stairway on the grounds of a home in an affluent section of El Paso high on the slopes of a mountain northeast of downtown. He spoke unreservedly about his experiences crossing the border illegally, both before and after Operation Hold the Line.

Mr. Rodriguez told us, as have many other with whom we spoke, that crossing the border illegally, even downtown during the day, was fairly easy before the implementation of Operation Blockade/Hold the Line. He used to cross back and forth to work almost every day. When the Operation began, he was taken by surprise and was unable to get across the border for the first month or two. After that, he found he was able to make the crossing, although it was difficult, and he had to do it at night.

When they began the blockade, yes, we did go a month or two without being able to cross. I mean, the surveillance was more intense. And now it seems that things are getting back to normal so that one can cross.

Mr. Rodriguez usually makes his crossing now at a point on the Rio Grande known as Las Piedras next to the big ASARCO smelter in El Paso. He crosses the river by himself at night, but sees many other people crossing in the same place. He describes his method of crossing:

Well, we just wait until they aren't in the spot where we want to cross, you know. Because they're not there, you know. In other words, they're not planted right there in the spot where we want to cross. And, if they are there, why sometimes they're asleep! And we cross! We cross, and it's no problem. It hasn't been very difficult. I guess that now they recognize you as someone who

is coming to work. You're not coming to, you're not one of those that they say is coming from over there to steal. They're looking the other way then, once they begin to recognize you, it comes to people coming across to work. They know full well that you're coming to work. Sure, they see us cross. And they don't do anything. . . . When I cross [the Border Patrol vehicle] is about sixty yards away. Sometimes they see us. Or, as I say, they're asleep. . . . When they detain me, it's because they see me, and I stop, and that's it! Why would I try to run? It just makes it a bigger crime.

He has been apprehended by the Border Patrol two or three times since the Operation began. Being detained by the Border Patrol is "no big deal" according to him. They just ask him for his personal data and return him to the Mexican side. He then goes home to bed to get some sleep before attempting to cross again the next night.

In spite of the added difficulty in crossing illegally, Mr. Rodriguez still feels obliged to do so. He needs the extra money he can make in El Paso to support his family. He believes that the Mexicans who have stopped crossing since the Operation began weren't really coming over to work. He claims to know many people who continue to cross illegally in spite of increased surveillance of the border:

Yes, I know quite a few people who still cross. Out in the *colonia* where I live, well, there in the same street where I live, there are some ten people who cross, aside from those we meet on the way [across the river].

If the border were someday effectively sealed, he supposed that he would go back to working in the construction industry in Juárez, as he did before he started working in El Paso five years ago.

Because of the increased difficulty in crossing illegally, Mr. Rodriguez has tried to minimize the number of crossings he has to make. Whereas before the Operation began he crossed daily, he now limits his crossings to two or three per week. He rents space

in an apartment with some kin who live in El Paso. Other men he knows have taken to sleeping out under the stars in the desert near where they are working.

A lot of people, at times they go out into these little gullies there, where they sleep. And they come out of there to work. They go downtown to eat dinner. Because up here the bosses give them their midday meal, you know. So they go downtown to eat dinner, they come back up here, and wherever it gets dark on them, that's where they stay. Nobody complains about them sleeping up here. No problems.⁶⁸

Mr. Rodriguez says that even before Operation Hold the Line began, he had never been apprehended by the Border patrol once he had made it past the agents right at the border itself. He says now that he doesn't worry at all about being picked up in El Paso.

We also had the opportunity to interview Mr. Rodriguez' employer of the moment. The owner of the house where he worked was a real estate agent in her early fifties, the product of a mixed Mexican-Anglo marriage. She spoke Spanish fluently. She remarked that while immediately after Operation Hold the Line began some of her friends in the neighborhood complained of losing their help or having them not show up for a period of time afterwards, Mexican laborers had generally continued to be available for domestic service since the blockade without any major interruption. This woman described her own attitude regarding employing undocumented Mexican laborers:

I had a yard guy that worked for me for seventeen years and he told me that he was under the amnesty. I don't ask! If you asked me about him, I don't ask about him [Mr. Rodriguez]. I don't ride him in my car and I don't ask him. He works for the guy be-

⁶⁸ Mr. Rodriguez' account in this regard was corroborated by his employer, who mentioned that she regularly saw Mexican men sleeping under the stars on the mountainside near her house since Operation Blockade/ Hold the Line went into effect.

low [her neighbor down the hill], that's where I got him from, and I don't ask. I don't think I have an obligation to ask, if I've got a yard guy, you know. I might, but I just don't ask. What I don't know doesn't hurt me, and I really don't want to know. That's the way I do it!

Her ambivalent views regarding the ethics of employing undocumented Mexicans were also telling, reflecting the peculiar contradictions of living on the Mexican border.

But the people who are coming and who are staying here, it's draining on the taxpayers, you know, hospitals and all the rest of it. On the other hand, these people are hungry, and they climb the mountain, you feel sorry for them. You know, they start across that mountain at two o'clock in the morning hoping to come get a job. And they talk about, I'm sure there are a lot of thieves and a lot of criminals, but there's a lot of honest people, and they should really come and give them some kind of thing for maid and yard work, because people here aren't going to do it. They're just not going to do it, you know. You can't get anybody to do maid service that lives here—they'd rather go collect welfare.

The views of interviewed Juárez officials were rather less ambivalent. They argued forcefully that the INS should create some mechanism to ratify legally a long-standing practice in El Paso-Juárez that they regard as beneficial to residents of both sides of the border: the employment in El Paso of noncitizen, nonresident Mexican workers, such as Mr. Rodriguez. Abelardo Escobar, Juárez' *secretario del ayuntamiento*, summarized these officials' views:

We have made some comments at the meetings we have had with U.S. customs and immigrations officials. There are many people who live in Juárez and cross to work in El Paso who have done so for years. They work in homes as domestic help, they are employed in workshops. They work. A

good, efficient, and honest work force. Thousands of people! Why can't there be some mechanism invented to legalize their situation? These are people who live here in Juárez who are not going to invade the interior of the United States because these people by tradition live here. This would greatly reduce a lot of the pressure in this area. Because it would benefit the community of El Paso as well. There are families and there are businesses that require these people. They have needed them and they have utilized them, and it has worked and has been of mutual benefit, as much for the businesses as for the American families as for the Mexican people. And they're not riffraff, they're honest people that go over there to work.

These local Mexican officials recognize the incentives low wages on their side of the border create for illegal border crossing. They claim that as long as the large wage discrepancy between Juárez and El Paso continues to exist, strong pressures to cross illegally into the United States will persist.

IX. SUMMARY

This chapter summarizes the major research findings from the analyses presented in the preceding chapters concerning the effect to date of Operation Hold the Line on illegal crossings and on other variables thought to be associated with such crossings. Examining the study's findings taken together, instead of individually in separate chapters, facilitates the formulation of an overall assessment of the extent to which the Operation has been achieving its objectives. It also provides a better perspective from which to consider any unintended negative side effects to be factored into the evaluation. Because the objective of this study is to provide an assessment of the Operation, not to formulate policy recommendations, we do not present recommendations concerning changes in immigration policy. Recommending policy is the task of the U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform, which was established as part of the 1990 Immigration Act and charged with

the responsibility of studying all aspects of U.S. immigration trends and policies and formulating recommendations for policy changes in its reports to Congress, the first of which is to be submitted by October 1, 1994. The findings of this research are, nonetheless, particularly relevant to certain immigration and border policy issues. Thus, the last section of this chapter outlines these issues and discusses the implications of the study's findings for each of them.

Findings

The major findings to emerge from the analyses presented above are:

1. Illegal crossings into El Paso have been substantially deterred by Operation Hold the Line;
2. The deterrent effect appears to have diminished the longer the operation has lasted;
3. Long-distant labor migrants have been less deterred from crossing by the Operation than other kinds of crossers because they seem to have shifted their crossing points to other locations along the border;
4. Legal crossers/illegal workers and illegal crossers/illegal workers appear to have changed the daily pattern of their crossings and to have extended the duration of their stays in El Paso;
5. Illegal crossers/illegal workers who engage in street vending and small-scale, low-level criminal activities have been substantially deterred from crossing;
6. Business activity in both El Paso and Juárez in general does not appear to have been substantially harmed by the Operation, although sales in downtown El Paso close to the bridges have declined somewhat and certain representatives on both sides of the border continue to claim that negative business effects exist;
7. The Operation may have led to a small reduction in school enrollment in the El Paso area;

8. The Operation appears to have led to a small decline in the number of births in El Paso as indicated by data both on registered births and on deliveries in Thomason Hospital;
9. The Operation seems to have caused a reduction in petty crime (small-scale, low-level nuisance and property crimes), especially in downtown El Paso;
10. The Operation appears to have led to a small reduction in other property and violent crime rates beyond what would be expected given the long-term downward trend in these rates in El Paso (and most other cities of similar size). However, this decline may have come about because these kinds of crime were targeted for additional police activity in the months right after the Operation began.
11. The Operation has increased the rate at which illegal drugs and other contraband and illegal agricultural products have been seized;
12. The Operation appears to have received overwhelmingly positive public support in El Paso, although no representative scientific poll has been carried out that confirms this or that documents in which groups support is strongest and in which it is weakest;
13. Support in the Mexican-American community appears to be high, although most leaders of community organizations that we interviewed expressed opposition. Also, several Mexican-American leaders argued that this support was partly because Chief Reyes was Mexican-American, partly because the Mexican government had publicly acknowledged the right of the United States to control its own borders and to carry out the Operation, and partly because the new strategy reduced discriminatory Border Patrol actions against Mexican-Americans (e.g., agents stopping Mexican-Americans to questions whether they were illegal clients or not);
14. The Operation's change in border control strategy has resulted in substantial declines in charges of human rights violations and other abuses against the Border Patrol and, according to school administrators, to much safer environments around schools close to the border because agents are no longer chasing suspected illegal crossers through school yards and playgrounds or questioning Mexican-American students;
15. The redeployment of Border Patrol agents to shift-length, guard-duty responsibilities at the border may be causing substantial morale problems arising out of boredom and concerns about how performance will be evaluated under the Operation's new work conditions;
16. Some illegal Mexican immigrants residing and working in El Paso find it more difficult as a result of the Operation to visit friends and relatives in Mexico and then return to El Paso;
17. Once across the border, illegal crossers appear less likely to be apprehended by the Border Patrol than they were before the Operation; and
18. Some of the pressure to cross the border illegally in the past from Juárez to El Paso has derived from inconveniences in obtaining Border Crossing Cards; some of the current pressure results from persons who desire to cross temporarily and who meet the requirement necessary to obtain a BCC except that their employment in the informal sector means they do not possess the kinds of papers necessary to verify employment.

Assessment

Based on an examination of a wide variety of evidence, there is little doubt that Operation Hold-the-Line has curtailed crossings into El Paso. According to the Border Patrol, the number of illegal crossings prior to the Operation was in the neighborhood of eight thousand per day (as based on photographs taken at selected points at selected times along the

border). Since the Operation, apprehensions have declined from about seven hundred a day in the comparable preblockade months of fiscal year 1993 to about two hundred a day in the months after the blockade.

It is difficult to know how such figures on apprehensions correspond to reductions in the number of border crossers (in part because the same individual can be apprehended more than once and because some crossers may be staying longer periods in El Paso). This is especially true in the post-Operation months when the usual relationships between the amount of enforcement effort and apprehensions seem to have reversed their previous pattern. However, the number of crossers probably also has been cut substantially. This curtailment of illegal crossers into El Paso includes both workers and nonworkers. Our ethnographic data indicate that the former have been less affected than the latter. But the Operation has also changed the crossing patterns of those who cross intending to work.

The Operation has resulted in other intended and unintended effects as well. One intended effect was to reduce street vending by Mexican nationals in El Paso's downtown commercial district and in certain residential neighborhoods close to the border. The Operation seems to have been successful in reducing the participation of illegal crossers in this activity. One study, conducted by the University of Texas at El Paso, interviewed forty-six of the several hundred downtown street vendors before the blockade and found that 41 percent of these referred to themselves as "illegals" who lacked papers to work in the United States (Staudt 1994). One of the unintended effects of the Operation, as suggested by interviews with residents of Juárez as noted above was to encourage some Juárez commuter workers, particularly women domestic workers, to find places to live in El Paso in order to keep their jobs. This does not necessarily imply a complete abandonment of Juárez as their principal residence, but rather an effort to reduce the number of times they must make an illegal crossing per week or per month. The data examined in Chapter III on bridge crossings showed patterns consistent with this outcome.

Overall, based on the anecdotal and other evidence, we conclude that the Operation has been more successful in curtailing illegal migration among local crossers than among long-distant migrants. The latter can go around the line, either with the help of *pasamojados* or by choosing another entry point along the 1,900-mile border. Moreover, Operation Hold the Line makes the apprehension of long-distance migrants passing through El Paso even less likely, insofar as Border Patrol agents formerly deployed inland are now deployed right on the border. And among local crossers, differences in the extent to which the Operation has been successful exist by type of crosser. It seems to have been successful among certain illegal crossers/illegal workers (particularly street vendors and others like older female domestic workers for whom crossing has become especially difficult), and (especially) juvenile crossers. These types of crossers tend to be the poorest of the Juárez crossers.⁶⁹ Long distance labor migrants and legal crossers/illegal workers typically have greater financial resources as their disposal; otherwise they could not finance their long-distance migration or qualify for a Border Crossing Card. Legal crossers/illegal workers, as long as they have valid crossing documents and believable reasons for entering the United States, are perhaps even more free to work illegally, given the decreased presence of the Border Patrol throughout the city of El Paso. And by all accounts, those illegal crossers, including nonlabor crossers, who are well-integrated into the social fabric on both sides of the border, can still find ways to cross, including obtaining false documents and staying for longer periods with friends and relatives (who may also be illegal) in El Paso. Those nonworking crossers who have been entering the United States to give birth may have been deterred somewhat as evidenced by the small decline observed in births. But what has gone down the most, apparently, is the participation of illegal crossers in petty crime and street vending in south El Paso, activities most associated with juvenile crossers and other youths and adults from Juárez who sought to extend their information economic subsistence activities to the U.S. side.

⁶⁹ See Chapter VIII for information about socioeconomic heterogeneity within these categories.

Policy Implications

The principal stated objective of Operation Hold the Line was to eliminate illegal border crossings by persons from Mexico into the United States in the El Paso sector. Several broad lines of strategy might be drawn to achieve this policy objective, not all of which are mutually exclusive:

1. Illegal crossings might be physically deterred through increased policing or placement of barriers along the border (such as fences, trenches, walls, etc.);
2. The benefits of both legal and illegal border crossing could be absolutely reduced by eliminating sources of employment and consumption in the United States to illegal or insufficiently documented Mexican residents (by requiring fraudulent-proof identification, for example, and by requiring employers to check prospective employees' IDs);
3. The benefits of both legal and illegal border crossing could be relatively reduced by lowering disparities between the two sides of the border with regard to wages, prices, and the availability of goods, services, and jobs;
4. The ease of illegal crossing could be reduced relative to legal crossing by making legal crossing documents easier and less expensive to obtain;
5. The cost of legal crossing could be lowered relative to illegal crossing by increasing the number of legal ports of entry to the United States and reducing border-crossing fees; and
6. Illegal border crossing could be legalized.

Of these five broad lines of strategy, numbers 2, 3, 5, and 6 fall outside the purview of the local districts and sectors of the INS/Border Patrol. Numbers 2 and 5 would require action by the U.S. Congress, and number 3 would require concerted international cooperation between the U.S. and Mexican governments, as well as among industries in both

countries. Number 5 would depend upon actions by other department/agencies of the Executive Branch of the U.S. government as well as the Mexican federal government (which collects northbound tolls). Strategy number 1 is the one emphasized in Operation Hold-the Line. Number 4, because it falls within the purview of the INS Border patrol in the El Paso district, could receive greater consideration given the relationship between legal and illegal crossings.

The research results hold several other implications, four of which in particular warrant discussion. One is that strategies number 1 and 4 often need to be considered together because of the relationship between legal and illegal crossings. As noted in Chapters I and II, the formulation of immigration policy needs to take into account that legal and illegal migration to the United States are often interrelated, particularly in the case of Mexican migration. Policies that restrict one can increase pressure for the other, and *vice versa*. In the case of El Paso/Juárez before Operation Hold the Line, the difficulty and inconvenience of obtaining BCCs led to increased numbers of persons crossing illegally. Many other crossed illegally, and continue to do so, because they meet the requirements for obtaining a BCC but are not able to provide the papers verifying that they do. Thus, border control strategies that make illegal crossings more difficult (as is the case with Operation Hold the Line) may increase the propensity to cross legally among those holding valid BCCs, and thus increase the traffic at, and pressure on, bridge check points. They also increase the desirability of obtaining BCCs to cross legally. Stated differently, closing what many have called the "safety valve" of illegal Mexican migration often serves to increase demand for legal migration, whether in the form of those seeking to settle as permanent immigrants or those seeking local border crossings into El Paso. The failure to take steps to meet the demand for local commuter border crossings is likely, in turn, to increase pressure for illegal migration.

The members of the research team frequently heard that a need existed before and continues after Operation Hold the Line to place more INS and U.S. customs personnel at the bridges to speed the pace of legal crossings. Increased personnel also are

needed to process BCC applications. Many observers in El Paso who support the goals and strategies of Operation Hold the Line remarked that it was unfortunate that effort had been devoted to curtailing illegal crossings but not to facilitating legal crossings. To the extent that the Operation is successful in curtailing illegal crossings, and especially certain kinds of illegal crossings, perhaps it will also serve to focus increased attention on the need to facilitate legal crossings. And, as the flow of certain kinds of illegal crossers diminishes, it may focus attention on a major remaining group whose members possess strong motivations to cross illegally—those who want to shop and visit friends and relatives in El Paso and who now meet the residency and employment criteria for a BCC but do not have papers to verify this because they work in the informal economy. Developing ways for such persons to cross legally, however, would involve the risk that crossers might abuse such a privilege for permanent illegal migration purposes and to obtain access to jobs and social services, rather than for temporary shopping or visitation.

Current holders of the BCC could retain and use their documents through their current expiration date or as long as they remain valid, without having to pay a fee. Not changing the status of current BCC holders could avoid creating disincentives for Juárez residents to shop and conduct business in El Paso. By legalizing the crossing of additional Juárez residents of financial means, El Paso businesses might also increase their sales to Mexican consumers. The border crossing licensing fee, if set at the proper level, need not discourage potential cross-border shoppers, either. The large business done with Mexican shoppers by such discount houses as Sam's Warehouse and Price Club, which have a membership fee, demonstrates that collecting a fee and making sales are not mutually exclusive propositions.

The second (and related) implication of the findings is that border control strategies and reward system design and implementation must acknowledge the multiplicity of different kinds of border crossers. As the United States and Mexico increase trade with one another as a result of NAFTA, it becomes more important that the border not become a bottleneck

to the legal flow of goods and people necessary for the further growth of trade. Our field interviews indicated that individual Border Patrol agents informally engage in practices that involve related kinds of distinctions when they overlook the illegal crossings of persons they know are going to El Paso to work rather than to "cause trouble." If the logic implied by such practices were extended to the level of more formal border control strategies, it might lead to efforts to find new ways both to facilitate legal crossings and to develop border control strategies that penalize neither Mexicans who want to cross legally for legitimate reasons nor Mexican-Americans whose appearance makes Border Patrol agents think they might be illegal migrants.

It is also our conclusion that Operation Hold the Line has been more successful in curtailing some kinds of El Paso crossers than it has in slowing long-distance labor migration. The Commissioner of the INS, Doris Meissner, has announced that strategies similar to Operation Hold the Line will soon be implemented in all sectors west of El Paso. If the main objective of extending the Operation is to stop illegal labor migration to the United States, the question might be raised about the degree to which this will be effective without similar strategies being put into place along the entire United States border with Mexico. If the main objective, however, is to deter temporary crossers whose destinations are U.S. communities along the border, then operations similar to the one that has been in force in El Paso over the past eight months would seem to hold greater promise of success.

The third major implication flowing from the findings of this research is that, whatever the degree of effectiveness of Operation Hold the Line, its continued effectiveness will increasingly depend on finding ways to deploy and motivate Border Patrol personnel and that take into account that the new border control strategy appears to involve agents in long periods of inactivity as a result of their holding fixed positions from which they watch for crossers. This inactivity not only appears to be causing boredom, it seems to be raising anxiety that the new strategy does not entail the kinds of activities for which agents have traditionally been evaluated and

considered for promotion. As Operation Hold the Line is extended to other sectors, some sort of modified deployment strategy might be necessary to maximize long-term effectiveness.

The strategy implemented by Chief Reyes in El Paso of stationing agents right on the border, rather than having them search for illegals who have already entered the city, has received considerable national publicity. Some observers have expressed puzzlement that this new strategy has not been tried sooner and elsewhere. This reaction reflects a misunderstanding about the number of agents required to implement a border saturation strategy like Operation Hold the Line. Initiating such a strategy in El Paso seemingly required all the resources the sector could muster and then some. Supplementary funds were approved for overtime pay and agents were pulled off other assignments (such as employer sanctions investigations and desk jobs) and redeployed on the border. Operation Hold the Line is a very labor-intensive strategy and it seems evident that it has stretched to the limit the ability of the El Paso sector to carry out the functions it was performing before the Operation began. And as reported in Chapter VII, the long shifts served by agents appear to be harming morale and perhaps reducing their effectiveness.

In truth, the Border Patrol has probably never had a sufficient number of agents to implement border saturation strategies on a widespread scale. In FY 1994, Border Patrol agents numbered an estimated 4,343, the largest number in the history of the service. In FY 1984, by contrast, the number of agents was 2,333, a number probably insufficient to implement a strategy like Hold the Line. After the passage of the Immigration and Control Act of 1986, however, the number grew to 4,074 by FY 1988, an increase of 34.7 percent over FY 1985. Since then the number has declined, dropping to 3,684 by FY 1991, after which it jumped by 10.2 percent to 4,061 agents in FY 1992. Thus, if the present level of resources in the Border Patrol is stretched considerably by Operation Hold the Line in El Paso, this is also likely to be the case as the strategy is extended to other sectors.

Resources are all the more likely to be strained if efforts are made to redeploy agents so as to cut back the number of consecutive hours spent on what amounts to guard duty at the border. In the military, to achieve maximum vigilance at guard posts, troops are rarely assigned to more than two hours of guard duty at a time. While Operation Hold the Line may not require the intensity of vigilance necessary in the military, there is a real possibility that eight hours is too long for maximum effectiveness. Implementing shorter shifts would undoubtedly require more personnel, especially to the degree that the Border Patrol will continue to fulfill all the other responsibilities it has been allocated in recent years. At a minimum, it would seem worthwhile to conduct field experiments and evaluations to ascertain the most effective ways to deploy agents in field situations like Operation Hold the Line.

The fourth issue for which the results of this study hold implications concerns the question of how to evaluate evidence about the effectiveness of a change in policy or strategy such as that involved in Operation Hold the Line. As noted in Chapter III, observing changes over time in outcomes that are expected as a result of policy changes amounts to conducting quasi-experiments in which before-after comparisons are drawn. The difficulty of such comparisons for the observer, of course, is in making as sure as possible that observed postevent changes can be attributed to shifts in policy rather than to changes in other factors with which postevent changes might be associated. The results of this research demonstrate the need for care and caution in making judgments about such changes, particularly when the outcome that is being observed is itself changing over time because of factors having nothing to do with the change in policy.

Two examples from the El Paso situation are instructive. One of these was seized upon by supporters of Hold the Line as evidence the Operation was successful and the other was embraced by opponents as indication it was not. These examples involve crime statistics and birth data. It is easy to misread the meaning of these because each has been changing over time, but in different directions. Crime rates in El Paso, as elsewhere, have generally

been declining in recent years. This means comparisons of rates for post-Operation months with rates for the previous pre-Operation year will necessarily show a decline and thus appear to indicate a reduction in crime as a result of the Operation. Numbers of births, on the other hand, have been increasing, especially births in the Mexican-origin population. This means comparisons of the number of post-Operation births with the number from the previous year will show an increase if the Operation has had no effect on births, or they will show no change in births if the Operation has reduced the number of Mexican-origin births by an amount roughly equal to the annual secular increase.

The first of these relatively unsophisticated comparisons appears to show the Operation was working as intended; the second seems to indicate it was not. However, when crime and birth data are analyzed using procedures that take into account the longer-term trends in each of the variables, the results are different. The crime data generally show smaller effects of the Operation on major crime than the crude comparisons, whereas the birth data show that births seem to have declined by about 5 to 10 percent. This demonstrates that both supporters and opponents of policy changes should be cautious in claiming evidence that upholds a certain point of view. All sides to an issue are entitled to an assessment that strives to be as objective as possible and that seeks to use the best possible research methods in its work. Even such objective efforts are inevitably incomplete, however, especially when they involve assessments of ongoing processes as is the case here. Thus, continued monitoring of Operation Hold the Line and its effects is both necessary and important.

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