

Abstract

Apart from trade and drug control, immigration is one of the three major issues affecting U.S. - Mexican relations. The U.S. today has more immigrants from Mexico alone than any other country in the world has from all other countries of the world. The scale of this human movement, the persistence and the large proportion of the unauthorized low skilled migrants, which dominated this flow for decades, make Mexican migration unique. The decision to migrate *North* has always been driven by economic motives; the prospect of higher wages and a better living standard have been the main push factors, until recently. Since 2007/2008 there has been a significant change in the character of Mexican migration. This can be attributed to several factors influencing the process at once, but the primary reason is the escalation of drug related violence on the Mexican side of the border. The focus of my thesis is to analyze the transformation of Mexican migration since 2007/2008. I argue these years have been a turning point in the dynamics of migration for two reasons. Firstly, in 2007 the American economy turned into recession, which significantly affected the flow of unauthorized migration. Secondly, in 2008 the drug related violence in Mexico spiked dramatically. This had a deterrent effect on the unauthorized migration but also encouraged a new wave of primarily legal, wealthier migrants fleeing the violence from Mexico.