

The People Business:

Revisiting the Function of Networks in the Practice of Human Smuggling

Galen Hunt

Senior Thesis

International Relations

Brown University, 2014



Research Question

What factors explain the organization of human smuggling across the U.S.-Mexico border? Specifically, is it shaped by social networks at the place of origin or by dynamics at the border?

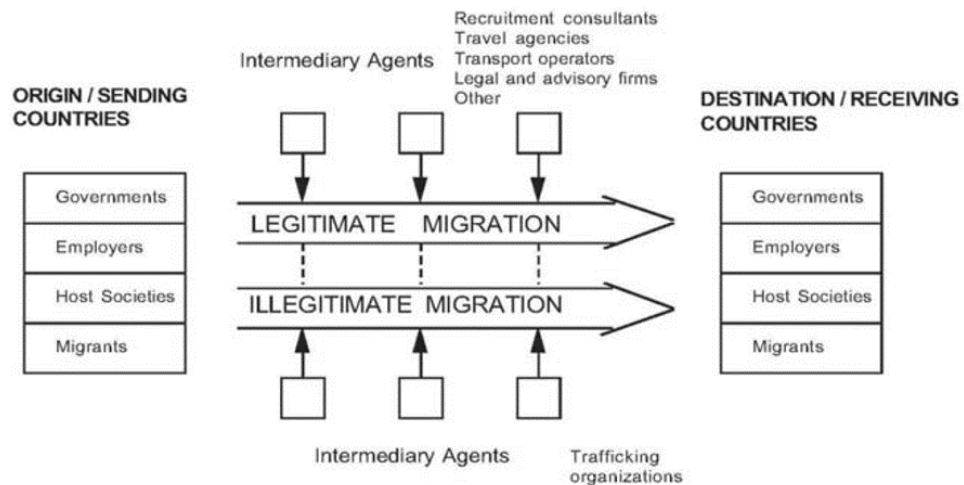


Debates on Human Smuggling

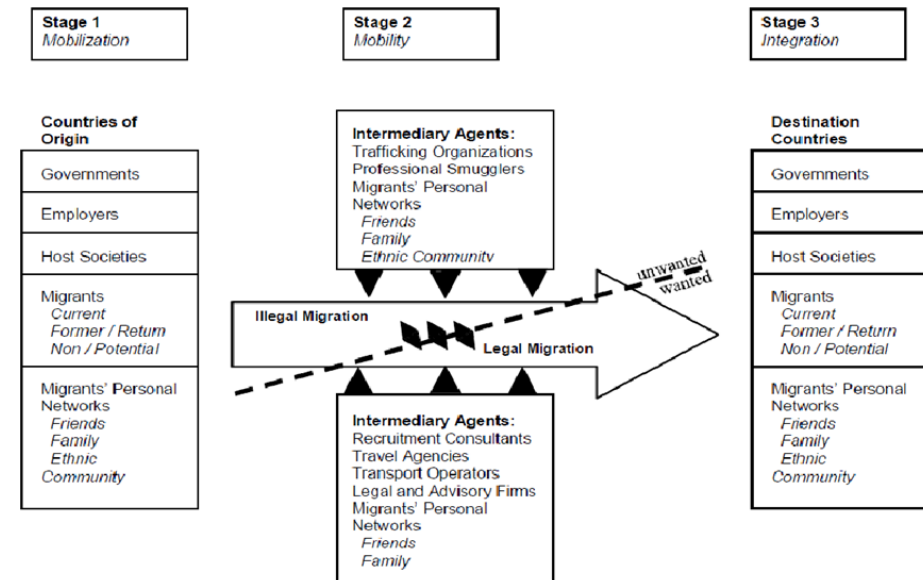
- Economics of Migration.
Push/Pull Factors

- Human Smuggling as a Social Process

- Global Migration Business



MIGRATION AS A FAMILY BUSINESS



Argument

In contrast with the Social Process/Family Business hypothesis, I argue that human smuggling organization is influenced to a greater degree by border-level factors than by a migrant's place of origin

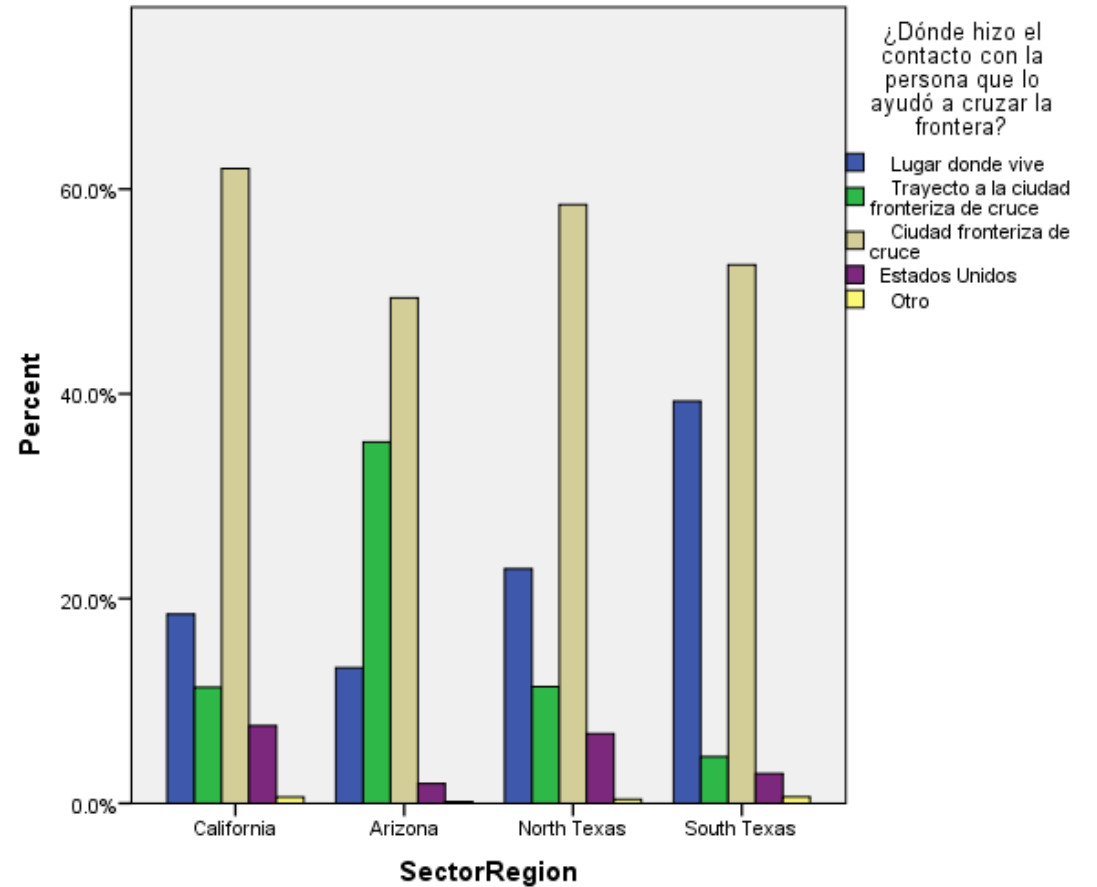


Research Design

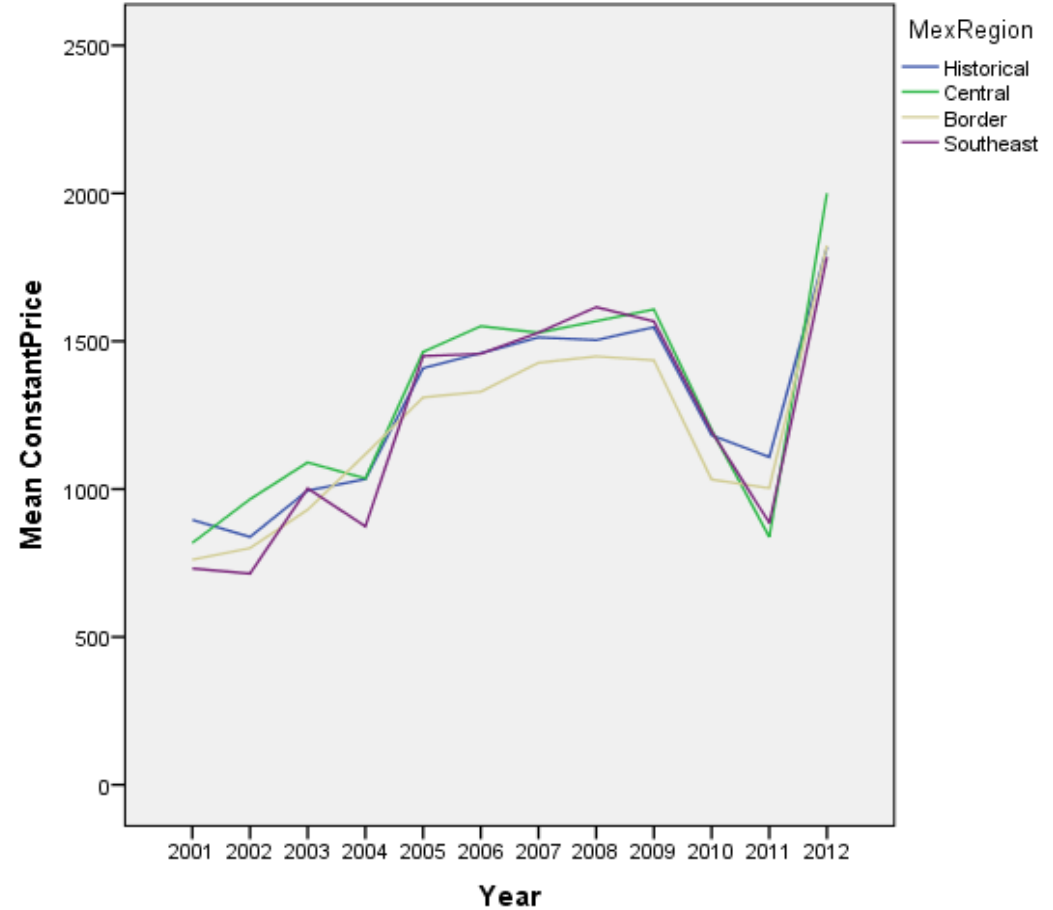
- The Case of Mexico
 - Inherent Value
 - Size and Data Richness
 - Lengthy Migration History
- Hypotheses
 - Border Level
 - Region of Origin
- Data Sets
 - Encuesta sobre Migración en la Frontera Norte de Mexico (EMIF Norte)
 - Mexican Migration Project (MMP)
- Data
 - Price, rate of smuggler usage, where contracted, why crossing place was chosen, help of social contacts along the border

Results I: Variation by Place of Crossing

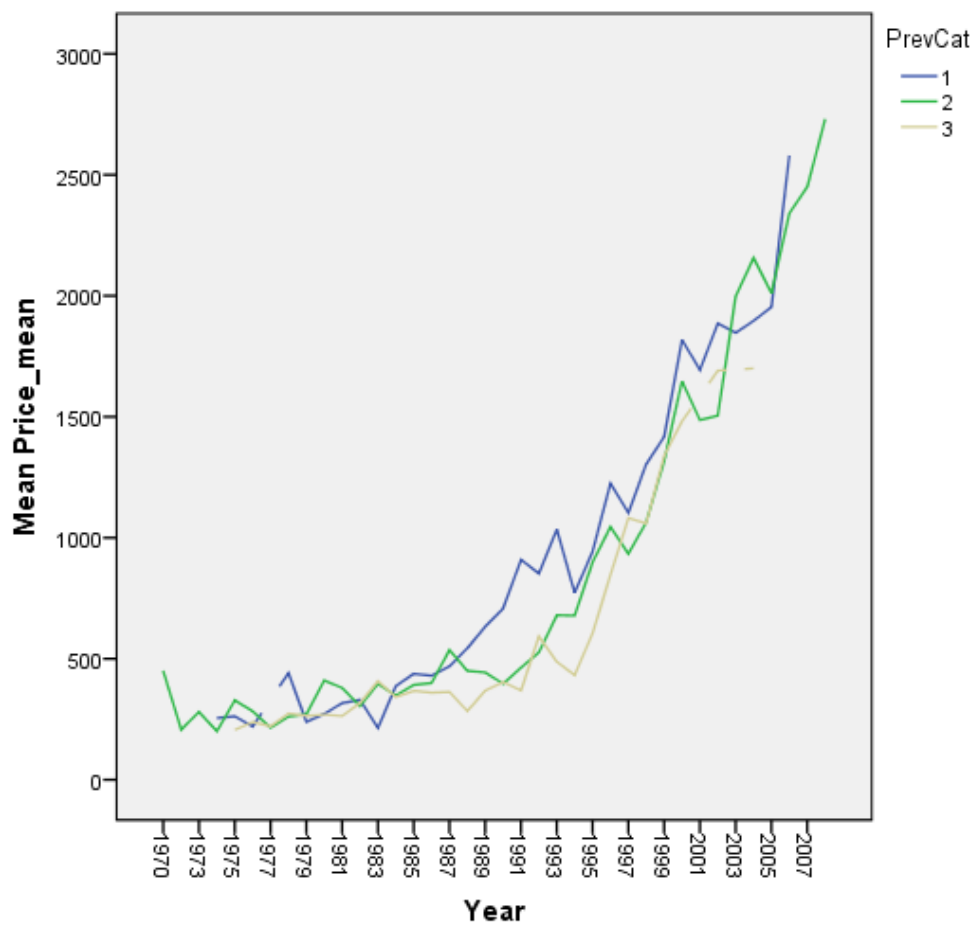
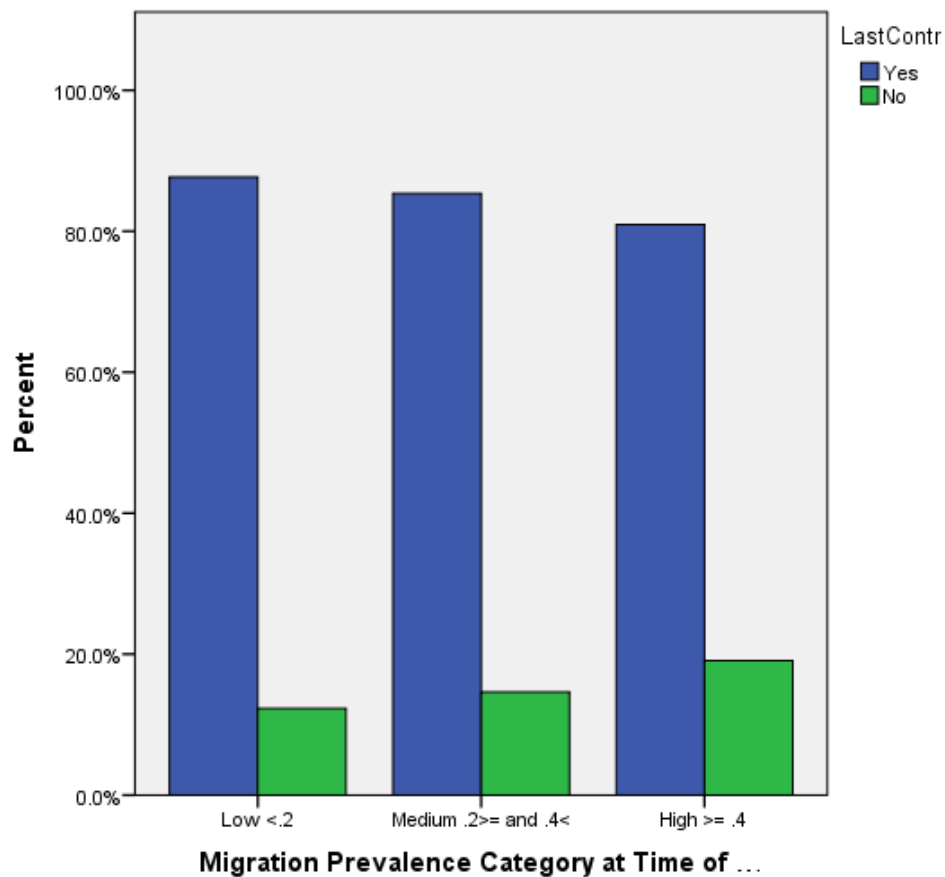
- Coyote usage
- Help of networks
- Place where contact was made
- Price



Results II: Lower Variation by Place of Origin



Results III: The Community Level



Implications

- Theory

- For established migration movements
- For newer migration movements
- Pastore and migration into Europe

- Practice

- Expand temp visa programs
- Lower/Smarter enforcement
- Humanitarian aid

Future Research

- Connecting smuggling organization to rates of violence
- Examining the function of employers in human smuggling
- Broadening the scope to other cases



Limitations

- Data availability and sampling biases
- Secondary sources
- Methodological limits

