Mexican Migration Project

User Codebook: MSAYEAR

March 1999

MSAYEAR: Introduction

This file contains information on the consumer price index (base 1982-84),
unemployment rate, number of Mexicans who became legal residents as a percent
of the total Mexican foreign-born population and total population size for
all urban areas used in the Mexican Migration Project for selected years.

MSAYEAR: Variable List

Variable	Column	Format	Label
YEAR	1-4	F4.0	Year
PLACE	5-7	F3.0	Mexican migration geographic code
CPI	8-15	F8.4	Consumer price index (base 1982-84)
YEARGEO	16-23	F8.0	Unique identifier (year*1000 + place)
UNEMPLOY	24-31	F8.4	Unemployment rate
NUMLEG	32-39	F8.0	Number of legalizations in year
FORBORN	40-47	F8.0	Size of Mexican foreign-born population
LEGVAR	48-55	F8.4	Percent legalized during year
TOTPOP	56-63	F8.0	Size of total population

MSAYEAR: Variable Codes

Variable	Label and Code

YEAR   Calendar Year
      yyyy   Year

PLACE   Mexican migration geographic code
                     (See Appendix B)

CPI   Consumer price index (base 1982-84)
      nnn.nnnn   Index

YEARGEO   Unique identifier (year*1000 + place)
      nnnnnnnn

UNEMPLOY   Unemployment rate
      nnn.nnnn   Rate

NUMLEG   Number of legalizations in year
      nnnnnnnn   Number

FORBORN   Size of Mexican foreign-born population
      nnnnnnnn   Number

LEGVAR   Percent legalized during year
      nnn.nnnn   Percent

TOTPOP   Size of total population
      nnnnnnnn   Number

MSAYEAR: User Notes

Consumer Price Index

The consumer price index (variable=CPI) was obtained from the Bureau of Labor
Statistics homepage (http://www.bls.stat). The BLS calculates the Consumer
Price Index for selected major MSAs and regions. We used the following CPI
(base year = 1982-1984; not seasonally adjusted; for all
urban consumers). For areas where it exists, the metropolitan CPI was used;
otherwise, we assumed that the rate of inflation for an area was the same as
that of the region in which the area is located. For smaller metropolitan
areas, the BLS series only began in the mid-1980s, so the CPI from 1970 up to
the year in which information became available was estimated by assuming that
the level of inflation in the metropolitan area grew at the same rate as
inflation in the region in which it was located.

Legalizations and Foreign-Born Population

This file contains information on the number of Mexican foreign-born persons
who became legal resident aliens as a percentage of the total Mexican
foreign-born population in the Mexican Migration Project geographic places
from 1970 to 1995 (Variable=LEGVAR). For each geographic area in each year,
the total number of Mexicans who achieved legal status is determined to
measure changes in the supply of legal Mexican workers.

The numerator of this variable is composed of non-IRCA and IRCA-related
legalizations. The number of non-IRCA legalizations was obtained from a
datafile produced by the INS on "Immigrants admitted to the United States"
(U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, 1994). This file,
however, was only available for the years 1972 to 1993, so the number of
legalizations for the years 1970-71 and 1994-95 were estimated by
extrapolating backwards and forwards, respectively, on a five-year linear
trend within each geographic area. For the period 1983-1993, information on
the intended area of residence is specific enough (zip code level information)
that each green card recipient can be mapped accurately to the geographic
areas used in this database. For the
period 1972-1982, each individual can only be matched to an area based on
large cities for which the tapes provide information.

Information on the number of IRCA-related Mexican legalization (Legally
Authorized Workers and Special Agriculture Workers) applications filed by area
is provided by the Immigration and Naturalization Service for the fiscal years
1987 through 1989. For a small number of applications filed in each
geographic area, the year of filing is unknown. Therefore, these applications
were distributed across fiscal years according to the known distribution of
applications filed by year and by area. The number of IRCA legalizations was
then added to the number of normal green card legalizations to obtain total
legalizations for each labor market in each year (Variable=NUMLEG).

Information on the denominator of this variable, the size of the Mexican
foreign-born population in each area for each respective year, is available
from the U.S. Census Bureau for the three censal years that this study
encompasses (namely, 1970, 1980 and 1990). We fit a second-degree polynomial
equation to these three data points to estimate the size of the Mexican
foreign-born population in each area during the inter-censal years. To
estimate the Mexican foreign-born population in the years 1991-1995, we
assumed that the annual growth rate during this period is the same as the
annualized constant growth rate in each area between 1980 and 1990
(Variable=FORBORN).

The final variable measures the number of legalizations as a percent of the total Mexican foreign-born population in a place (Variable=LEGVAR). As a result of the IRCA amnesty program, the value of this variable increases dramatically in the post-IRCA period and serves as an indicator of the saturation effect of a legal labor supply on migrants' wages.

Unemployment Rate

The most recent information on the number unemployed and the size of the civilian labor force at the county level was obtained for the years 1974 and 1976-1996 from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics Division. The counties were mapped to the Mexican Migration geographic codes and the unemployment rate for each year was computed by dividing the number unemployed by the size of the civilian labor force (Variable=UNEMPLOY).

For the early 1970s, no information by county is available although information on unemployment for the censal years 1960 and 1970 is available. For the years 1971-1973, the assumption was made that unemployment rates in a county follow the same trends as that of the state (State unemployment figures were also obtained from the BLS, LAUS division). An estimate of the unemployment rate for 1975 was obtained by averaging the unemployment rates for 1974 and 1976.

Total Population Size

Data for selected years between 1970 and 1995 were obtained from periodic Census publications, such as the Current Population Series (P-25) and County and City Databook. Data were obtained for most areas for the following years: 1970, 1974, 1976, 1977, 1980, 1984, 1986, 1987, 1990, 1991. For counties with populations below 100,000, information was gathered on population size for the following years: 1970, 1974, 1976, 1977, 1980, 1986, 1990, 1991. The population for the intercensal years was estimated by assuming an exponential growth function. To estimate the population 1992-1995, the constant growth rate that prevailed between 1980 and 1991 was applied. The variable TOTPOP represents total population counts for the years 1970 through 1995.