

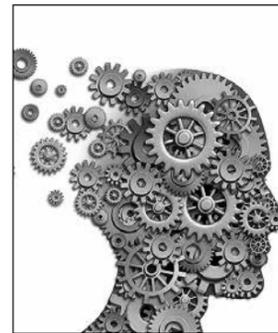
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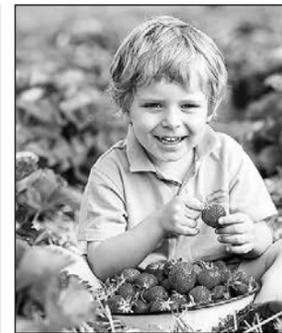


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## A Border Wall's Effect on Migration — Lessons from the Past

by Nora Haenn

How will a border wall affect migration? It's complicated.

First, a quick refresher. According to the Pew Research Center, the number of undocumented immigrants in the United States has held steady since the year 2009. This finding applies to North Carolina, as well. Also, the border shared by the United States and Mexico is about 2,000 miles long. To get a sense of what that means, think of a driver entering the I-40 in Wilmington and traveling west on the interstate. After crossing all of North Carolina, Tennessee, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and the Texas panhandle, the driver would see their odometer register 2,000 miles about 30 miles shy of the New Mexico-Arizona line. The border has no "wall," but parts do have fencing. The U.S. Border Patrol lists a patchwork of materials that serve as a 700-mile southern barrier: three wire cattle fence, vertical railroad rail, concrete-filled steel tubing, corrugated steel plate, and crushed cars.

So how might an expansion of the fencing system affect migration? As an anthropologist who studies migration, I want to share some findings that suggest a fence itself is unlikely to have an effect. The weightier issues include

the political and economic climates in both the United States and in people's home communities. Politics and economics can work at cross purposes in sometimes surprising ways.

During the past 25 years, the intersection of politics and economics has tended to support undocumented migration, even when the politics aimed to restrict unauthorized travel into the United States. For researchers, the early 1990s was a turning point when anti-immigrant policies unwittingly increased migration. Here's how the policies affected Mexican migration in particular. During the 1980s, the U.S.-Mexico border was fairly open, allowing 85 percent of Mexican immigrants to regularly return home. This kind of migration is known as "circular migration" because people tend to come and go periodically over a number of years. In the early 1980s, Mexicans were at least twice as likely to return home than the millions of migrants who preceded them to the United States. For comparison, the years 1880 and 1930 are a period known for mass migration to the United States from Europe and Asia. At that time, some 30-40 percent of U.S. arrivals turned out to be temporary sojourners.

The fluidity with which Mexicans came and went changed in step with increased border security. Between 1992 and 2009, the

U.S. border patrol staff rose from 3,555 to 17,415 agents (costs to taxpayers rose from \$3.26 million to \$2.7 billion. For migrants, this translated into a more expensive crossing. Smugglers readjusted routes and pressed deeper into parts of the Sonoran desert where patrol officers were less likely venture. Then, smugglers charged migrants the costs of these ever-evolving avoidance strategies. In 1993, a migrant might pay \$143 to be smuggled into the United States. By 2000, the same traveler paid \$800 to \$1,300, in real terms at least a five-fold increase. The going rate in 2006 was \$3,500, and in 2016 the cost had risen to \$5,000. The new routes required longer stays in remote and inhospitable environments. The threats to human lives grew along with costs. Between 1994 and 2009, an estimated 5,600 people died in the crossing. Annually, 300 to 470 people continue to perish trying to make the trip.

And, here's where the policy of increased border security backfired. In order to justify the costly and dangerous crossing, migrants began to stay longer in the United States. Circular migration took place on something like a two-year cycle. In the new century, migrants planned five and six-year journeys. The longer they stayed the less likely they were to return.

By militarizing our southern border, the U.S. government actually increased the likelihood migrants' moves became permanent. Again, the number of undocumented migrants in the United States has remained steady since 2009. If some people are sensing an uptick in migration, what they might be noticing is an uptick in *permanent* migration as the circular routes became truncated.

Will the same happen this time around? It's hard to say. The value of the Mexican peso fell as a result of Trump's election, and, as I write, an increase in gasoline prices in that country have led to widespread protests. Mexicans fear more expensive gasoline is a harbinger of hard times. In the past, economic trouble in Mexico might signal an increase in out-migration if employers in the United States kept up the hiring. Will they do so? Economic forecasters are predicting continued growth in the U.S. economy during 2017 and 2018, partly based on government spending. Time will tell if U.S. government spending—on things like a border wall—helps bolster the economy, encouraging employers to hire undocumented workers whose earnings are now all the more valuable back home.

*Nora Haenn teaches anthropology and International Studies at NC State University.*

## The Art of the Lie

by Julian Sereno

Lies are flying these days, openly and obviously as never before. So much so that it is now the subject of a national conversation. Whether it is considered criminal or disgraceful, or disregarded as mere hyperbole, or accepted as a strategic necessity, depends on who's doing the lying.

For example, it's perfectly acceptable and legal for police or prosecutors to lie to suspects or even the general public if they believe it will help convict the guilty or protect the public at large. However for any individual to lie to law enforcement is a felony that draws hard time. Just the other week, the hapless friend of the repulsive murderer Dylan Roof was sentenced to more than two years for lying to the FBI.

Prevaricating politicians are famous for breaking campaign promises, and there is

nothing illegal about it. At worst, they won't get reelected. That can change if a politician, or anyone else for that matter, lies under oath.

President Trump has taken lying to a new level. He made his entree' into the world of politics by promulgating the birther lie — that Obama was born in Kenya and thus an illegitimate president. Throughout the campaign, Trump lied so frequently and indiscriminately that his lies contradicted one another. I never knew if it was part of some cunning strategy or if he was just a credulous old man who believes the same fake news as his followers.

The newest, biggest lie to date has been his accusation that Obama tapped his phones in Trump Tower. He tweeted during the wee hours as it became clear that many of Trump's senior campaign aids had extensive dealings with the Russians. His National Security Advisor, Michael Flynn, was forced to resign for lying about contact with Russian officials. Richard Sessions, his Attorney General, was forced

to recuse himself from the Justice Department's investigation into contact between Russian officials and the Trump campaign when it turned out he lied under oath during his confirmation hearings. He testified that he had no contact with any Russian officials during the campaign and was subsequently outed by the Washington Post for having met with the Russian ambassador three times since September.

Trump's gambit initially paid off as it changed the conversation away from the Russians and the Trump Campaign working hand in hand. But then the denials started to pour in. Obama officials denounced it. None of Trump's aides had any evidence; FBI Director James Comey testified that there was no evidence whatsoever to support Trump's charges. Even a staunch supporter like NC Sen. Richard Burr said that there was no evidence of any wiretapping. When Trump suggested the British Secret Service tapped his phones on behalf of Obama, they characterized his charges as "ridiculous."

This lie is blowing up in Trump's face, despite the best efforts of his loyal stooge, Congressman Devin Nunes (R-CA) to give him cover.

Trump will face no legal consequences for his lie. His core supporters are unfazed, and Presidential lying is legal, as long as it isn't under oath. Which brings up our Attorney General, Jeff Sessions, who did lie under oath. He can sleep easy as long as the Republicans control the Executive Branch and both Houses of Congress. But that could change, and the Statute of Limitations for Federal Perjury charges is 5 years. Anybody for chanting, "Lock him up!"

The only one to lose his job so far on account of lying is Michael Flynn. He made the mistake of lying to Trump through his proxy, Vice President Pence.

It's OK to lie to the American people, to lie to Congress after you've sworn on a Bible to tell the truth. Just don't lie to Trump.

*Julian Sereno is editor and publisher of Chatham County Line.*

## Loving Mother Nature and Living in Her Embrace

by Joe Jacob

You know it is April when you hear ospreys circling above and see dogwood trees and azaleas blooming. For those of us canoeing and kayaking on the Haw River, April is also the month we see mountain laurel blooming along rocky, north facing bluffs; a real treat at this time of year. Although winter months usually provide the best water-levels to challenge the skill of whitewater paddlers, April showers often bring adequate water-levels along with the sights and sounds of courting birds and mammals and the greening of trees and shrubs. I am fairly certain that the first organizers of Earth Day on April 22, 1970, picked the month of April because everything is so alive at this time of year.

I recently participated in a meeting of local businesses where one person made the comment that she doesn't get out into Nature until the summer. Her comment led me to ask; "Why do so many people feel a disconnect to Nature for either part of or all of the year?" I am sure you have heard of the term "Mother Nature". To quote Wikipedia, "Mother

Nature is a common personification of nature that focuses on the life-giving and nurturing aspect of nature embodying it in the form of the mother." Think about that. What is the essence of our biological mother, if not someone who gives us life and nurturing? Of course, without the services of food, air, water and shelter provided by our Mother Nature, our biological mother would not be able to provide us with life let alone nurture us. Do we feel disconnected from our biological mother? Of course not. Our biological mother is a source of love that we carry in our hearts forever, and yet, the feeling of love doesn't necessarily transfer to our Mother Nature. Why is that?

Since the first Earth Day in 1970, the world's population has doubled and most of that expansion has occurred in urban environments. In cities, you find remnants of Nature in small parks, and to a lesser extent, in the yards of older, wealthier neighborhoods. Our day-to-day movements are usually on concrete or asphalt going from one box we may call school or office to other boxes we call grocery store or home. Heaven forbid that if it is raining

we would get wet while traveling among the boxes. Perhaps there is one good thing about the boxes. Since the creation of heating and cooling systems, we have found a way to avoid the air pollution that comes along as a byproduct of all of our scurrying around to get from one box to the next. Oh, I almost forgot about all the indoor air pollution that comes from the plastics and cleansers we somehow can't live without, but at least we feel more comfortable as we unconsciously poison ourselves.

There is a high cost to individuals from urbanization and the fast pace of development since it creates a false sense of disconnection to the natural world around us as our daily lives take us farther and farther away from our source of food, water and outside air. The fact is that we have never been more connected than we are now and we have never needed a healthy Mother Nature more than we do now. It is the health of our forests, grasslands, rivers and oceans with which we must concern ourselves. For in these natural ecosystems is the resiliency we need to adapt to a changing climate and obtain the essential products and services

of Mother Nature as the world's population continues to grow.

For your sake and the sake of humanity and all of life on this planet, get outside and touch the earth. Learn that Mother Nature needs your love just as much as you need her love. If you do, you will understand your connection to everything as Albert Einstein said so many years ago and I quote:

"A human being is a part of the whole called by us the universe, a part limited by time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings, as something separated from the rest, a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of Nature in its beauty."

*Joe Jacob, a Chatham resident for more than 30 years and a marine biologist by training, is president The Haw River Canoe & Kayak Co., www.hawrivercanoe.com, 336.260.6465. He worked for The Nature Conservancy for 20 years and served as Director of Science for TNC's Southeast Region.*