



WP/08/244

# IMF Working Paper

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## Do Interest Groups Affect U.S. Immigration Policy?

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**IMF Working Paper**

Research Department

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Authorized for distribution by Alessandro Prati

October 2008

**Abstract**

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While anecdotal evidence suggests that interest groups play a key role in shaping immigration policy, there is no systematic empirical analysis of this issue. In this paper, we construct an industry-level dataset for the United States, by combining information on the number of temporary work visas with data on lobbying activity associated with immigration. We find robust evidence that both pro- and anti-immigration interest groups play a statistically significant and economically relevant role in shaping migration across sectors. Barriers to migration are lower in sectors in which business interest groups incur larger lobby expenditures and higher in sectors where labor unions are more important.

JEL classification: F22, J61.

Keywords: Immigration, Immigration Policy, Interest Groups, Political Economy.

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\* We would like to thank: Joe Altonji, Regina Bateson, Stijn Claessens, Caroline Freund, Kishore Gawande, Gordon Hanson, Tim Hatton, Simon Johnson, Giovanni Maggi, Julia Massimino, Francesc Ortega, Chris Papageorgiou, Giovanni Peri, Steve Pischke, Dennis Quinn, Jim Rauch, Rodney Ramcharan, Dani Rodrik, Michele Ruta, Kenneth Scheve, Antonio Spilimbergo, Arvind Subramanian, Guido Tabellini, Joel Trachtman, Thierry Tresselt and Peter Wright for useful comments. We would like also to thank seminar participants at the AEA Meetings in Chicago and New Orleans, CEPR IZA Conference on Labor Economics, CEPR Conference on "Transnationality of Migrants," Riga, Erasmus University Rotterdam, University of Essex, University of Geneva, Georgetown University, Institut d'Analisi Econòmica, IMF, IZA-World Bank Conference on Employment and Development, London School of Economics, Luca D'Agliano Spring Conference, Midwest International Trade Meetings (Ann Arbor, MI), Midwest Political Science Meetings, Università degli Studi di Milano, Università degli Studi di Milano-Bicocca, University of Nottingham, Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Università di Roma Tor Vergata, World Bank Research Department, and Yale for useful comments. Jose Manuel Romero provided excellent research assistance.

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