Most research on social networks and immigrant incorporation focuses on the short-term and positive functions of networks, neglecting changes in networks over time. I present a dynamic and variable portrayal of networks to demonstrate how they gradually assume different forms and functions for women and for men that differentially affect settlement outcomes, particularly opportunities to become legal. The gendered social relations of neighborhood, work, and voluntary associations interact to produce this outcome. The conclusions suggest that social networks can both strengthen and weaken over time, can change differentially for different segments of the immigrant community, and therefore can have disparate effects on incorporation.

In their attempts to understand contemporary migration to industrialized nations, researchers focus increasingly on the concept of social networks. In the migration literature, networks refer primarily to personal relationships based on family, kin, friendship, and community (Boyd 1989:639). Current migration research emphasizes social networks in various stages of the migration process, including (1) decisions to migrate (Grasmuck and Pessar 1991), (2) direction and persistence of migration flows (Massey et al. 1987), (3) transnational links (Kearney 1995), and (4) settlement patterns and incorporation (Hagan 1994; Massey et al. 1987).

Research on social networks and immigrant incorporation emphasizes how networks reduce the short-term costs of settlement. In the initial stage of settlement, migrants’ networks in the receiving area provide social capital to assist them in adapting to their new environment (Browning and Rodriguez 1985). Immigrants settling in communities with well-established networks generally seem to be incorporated into U.S. society more smoothly than do those in communities with poorly developed networks. Communities with mature networks provide newcomers with emotional and cultural support and various other resources, including initial housing and information about job opportunities; the latter can lead rapidly to access to labor market niches and the acquisition of new skills (Bailey and Waldinger 1991). Over time, networks in the settlement area develop ethnic associations that provide organizational support for newcomers and additional settings for circulating information and assistance (Massey et al. 1987).

Although research on social networks in immigrant incorporation has explained the relative ease with which some immigrant groups adapt to their new environment, Boyd (1989:655) argues that models of networks are too static; they emphasize only the networks’ existence, operation, and persistence but pay little attention to their transformations over time, particularly the conditions under which they weaken or erode. Others remark on migration researchers’ tendency to overlook variation in the resources that immigrants draw from their networks (Boyd 1989; Grasmuck and Pessar 1991; Hagan 1994; Kibria 1993).
Recent research on immigrant incorporation challenges this simplistic representation of social networks by taking a long-term view of network dynamics and by examining group variations in the position and use of networks. In her study of Salvadorans in San Francisco, Menjivar (1994) shows that kinship-based networks ease the initial stage of migration, but lack of material resources in the ethnic community and fluctuations in the local economy weaken networks’ effectiveness over time. Hondagneu-Sotelo’s (1994) study of networks among Mexican domestic workers in the Bay area finds that newcomers breaking into the industry are sometimes exploited by their more seasoned counterparts. These findings are corroborated by Mahler’s (1995) study of Salvadoran neighborhoods in Long Island.

Recent debates about ethnic enclave economies also examine whether enclaves are means of long-term economic advancement for all segments of immigrant groups. For example, revisited research on Miami’s Cuban enclave (Portes and Jensen 1989) shows that women receive few of the benefits experienced by male coethnics. Similarly, research on New York City’s Chinese enclave (Zhou and Logan 1989) finds negative human capital returns for female workers only and suggests that the positive outcomes of enclave economies for men may be enjoyed at the cost of women’s opportunities. Gilbertson’s (1995) research on Dominican and Colombian workers in Latino firms in New York City also concludes that the success of small business owners and male workers is won at a cost to immigrant women. These studies not only challenge the assumption that social networks have positive long-term benefits but also suggest that networks operate in gendered ways to produce systematic differences in labor market outcomes for men and for women.

In this research I attempt to further the understanding of the links among gender, social networks, and socioeconomic adaptation and mobility. Drawing on a study of the settlement process of an undocumented migrant community in Houston, Texas, I identify particular conditions under which social networks can develop or weaken. Then I show how these variations in network structure influence men’s and women’s different adaptation experiences. I focus primarily on the attainment of legal immigrant status. Specifically, I show how the social relations of work, neighborhood, and voluntary associations create different network structures for men and for women. Last I examine how gendered network structures differentially affect men’s and women’s ability to become legal residents under the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA). The findings have implications beyond the effects of gendered social networks on opportunities to legalize: As the period of settlement increases, the differences between men’s and women’s contexts of adaptation transform their respective network structures. Differences in network dynamics may account over the long-run for divergence more generally in the social, economic, and legal incorporation of immigrant women and men.

**RESEARCH APPROACH**

This research is based on a three-year ethnographic study focusing on the settlement of a Maya community in Houston (Hagan 1994). The larger study followed the development of the Maya community, tracing the migration and settlement histories of both pioneer and recent migrants. One of the central objectives was to examine how this community of approximately 1,000 undocumented migrants from Guatemala responded to the U.S. legalization or “amnesty” program of the mid-1980s.

I began fieldwork in the summer of 1986. From June 1987 through March 1990, I lived in one of several large apartment complexes that houses the majority of the Maya. I then spent the summer of 1990 in the “sending” community in Guatemala. The study generated data on community- and group-level behavior, and documented in detail the experiences of 74 Maya—32 women and 42 men. In addition, in 1993 I revisited members of this group to assess network changes resulting from legalization.

I studied this Maya community in part because of the mature development of its social structure. Since the arrival of the pioneer migrant in 1978, the Maya have developed extensive community-based networks (e.g., neighborhood, housing, job, and association
networks) while maintaining strong social and economic links with the home community. These networks regulate autonomous migratory flows (Rodriguez 1996) from the highlands of Guatemala to Houston and explain the Maya immigrants’ successful initial adaptation (Hagan 1994; Rodriguez 1987).

My chief research question was “What role do immigrant-based networks play in long-term settlement opportunities?” The passage of IRCA provided an opportunity to examine the relative strengths and weaknesses of coethnic and interethnic social networks in facilitating or blocking participation in the legalization program provided by IRCA. Surprisingly I was able to observe some unexpected implications of migrant-based networks for incorporation. As a result I learned not only that networks have diffuse importance to immigrants but also that the differences between women’s and men’s network structures are critical to their long-run adjustment.

NETWORK DYNAMICS IN THE MAYA COMMUNITY

The social foundation of Totonicapán Maya migration to Houston can be traced to the fall of 1978, when Juan Xuc, a young weaver and subsistence farmer, made his way from the rural western highlands of Guatemala to the postindustrial environment of Houston in search of wage work. Business was booming in Houston during the 1970s. The escalating price of oil had fueled the area’s economy to a state of hyper growth and had indirectly created demand for low-skilled workers in the burgeoning service sector. Juan easily found a job as a maintenance worker in a rapidly growing supermarket chain. Within several months he had established sufficient contacts at work to find a position for his brother-in-law, Pablo.

News of opportunities for wage work quickly reached Juan’s village, San Pedro. Slowly but steadily, Juan found maintenance jobs for male kin and friends from his home-town. By 1981 Juan had been promoted to supervisor (encargado) to his fellow Maya, was earning $5 an hour, and had saved enough money to bring his wife, Carmen, and their two children to Houston. His position as encargado of maintenance jobs enabled Juan to recruit a steady stream of male migrants, all of whom he directed to maintenance positions in the same retail chain.

Carmen’s arrival in Houston coincided with a resurgence of local demand for private household domestic workers and child-care providers, especially for live-in positions, to clean the homes and care for the young children of professional women entering or resuming careers in the area’s expanding economy. Assisted by the wife of Juan’s boss, Carmen and Juan pioneered the Maya women’s entry into this job niche. At the request of her employer’s friends, Carmen recruited a small stream of women from San Pedro, who assumed positions as live-in and day domestics in Houston. This initial group included Pablo’s wife and the wives and close kin of Juan’s earlier recruits. Because wage work for Maya was scarce back home and because of the economic advantages of employment-based, live-in arrangements for newcomer single women, female workers soon streamed north. Increasingly, then, both the men and the women relied on same-sex kin and friends in Houston and San Pedro to organize the migration journey and to gain access to established gendered labor market niches on arrival in Houston.

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1 Pseudonyms are used for the names of all the Maya, and for the Guatemalan municipios (townships and villages) from which they come. Totonicapán is an authentic department located in the western highlands of Guatemala.

2 Like Juan, many of the first Maya to leave San Pedro were subsistence farmers who supplemented their income by producing local crafts, especially woven goods. The erosion of economic opportunities for subsistence farmers and artisans in the Guatemalan highlands, caused in part by economic decline and political strife, led many of Juan’s fellow Maya to seek wage employment in the United States.

3 Employers of the Maya typically hire men for maintenance positions and women for live-in domestic positions. Although there are non–sex-specific positions in the firm employing the men, such as cashiers and food counter workers, these jobs require English-language skills, and workers in these positions are more visible to the firm’s predominantly upscale, Anglo clients. The undocumented Maya cannot meet these qualifications; thus both sexes are excluded from these positions.
Table 1. Occupations among Members of the Study Group: Maya Immigrants, Houston, Texas, 1990

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th></th>
<th>Men</th>
<th></th>
<th>Community</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance/stk</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>84.5</td>
<td>36.5</td>
<td>49.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanic</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baker</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>96.9</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>41.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day laborer</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>99.9</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>99.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: One Maya with two occupations is counted twice, .5 for each occupation.

By the early 1980’s, many households in San Pedro had kin living and working in Houston. By the mid- to late-1980s, social networks had become increasingly complex; they extended beyond San Pedro to reach households in more than eight nearby municipios in Totonicapán and also in the neighboring departments of Quezaltenango and El Quiché. By 1986, close to 1,000 Maya from Totonicapán had made their way to Houston and were living in a series of apartment buildings adjacent to the building where Juan initially had settled.

Juan’s and Carmen’s roles in the development of the Maya community structure were not limited to the initial recruitment of workers. Their efforts, and those of other community members, led to the development of an ethnic neighborhood and several Maya-based organizations, including a Protestant church and several community soccer teams. Today there are more than 1,800 Totonicapán Maya in Houston.

A central function of a well-developed immigrant community structure is to furnish newcomers with resources for finding wage work. This is particularly important for undocumented migrants such as the Totonicapán Maya in Houston. Yet, although all newcomer Maya utilize community-based job networks to find employment, these networks operate differently for women and for men. Table 1 illustrates the occupational clustering of the Maya in Houston. Some 85 percent of the men in the study group are employed as stock or maintenance laborers in the same firm where Juan, the pioneer Maya, has worked since his arrival.

Men’s Work

The concentration of men in the maintenance departments of one supermarket chain can be explained largely by local labor market opportunities, by the Maya’s well-developed social network structure, and by the men’s ability to use these ethnic resources to control the work process. The Maya men work for a Houston supermarket chain that was established in 1966, just before the boom years. Unlike many other businesses, which closed their doors during the area’s recession in the mid-1980s, this supermarket chain prospered. Since the beginning of economic recovery in the late 1980s, the chain has grown rapidly; it now employs more than 22,000 workers in 102 stores throughout Texas—half of these are in Houston. This growth facilitated the Maya’s construction of an ethnic-based system to control the social organization of the work process. The system is managed by the encargado, who holds a supervisory position among coethnics in each of the stores employing Maya men (e.g., supervisor of the maintenance crew). This position is usually awarded to a leader in the ethnic community and who also has worked in the company for a long time. Encargados may not be formally recognized by other, non-Maya workers and managers in the store.

This ethnic-based labor system relies on the community’s social networks to control recruitment, work schedules, and promotion. Friends and kin already employed in the supermarket chain alert prospective workers, whether in Houston or in Guatemala, of the
availability of a job. A prospective worker arriving in Houston is recommended to the employer by a member of the sponsoring network, usually the encargado. Social interaction between Maya workers and department and store managers flows almost entirely through the encargado, who also organizes his crew’s work schedules and determines their promotions.

As time passes, the store manager relies increasingly on the encargado for new workers, and the encargado increasingly controls the work process. As Juan explained to me,

We (the workers) know even before the manager when a worker is going to ask to move [to another department], and we ourselves are already deciding who to bring in [as a replacement]. So we know when someone is going to move or leave, even though the store managers do not yet know. They themselves [the workers] say, “I want to move up and I want to talk to them [the store managers] if they will allow me.” So one [the encargado] knows then [and] . . . talks to the department manager and says, “You know he is going to move up, and I need another worker.” And I bring him one. And so there is no time [for managers] to make an announcement about an opening. That’s why another [non-Maya] worker cannot enter [the maintenance department]. It is not because they [the managers] don’t want him. It is because we know when someone is going to leave and, though the managers do not know, we already have a person ready [for the vacated job].

(Hagan 1994:63–64)

It is no wonder that none of the men in the study group and few of those in the larger Maya community employed in this firm have left. Social control of the recruitment process translates into social comfort for Maya workers. Under the encargado system, Maya workers can miss work for several days without fear of being reported to the store manager. Indeed, during the summer months workers arrange vacations during their hometown’s yearly fiesta. The men virtually have reorganized the work process according to social and cultural practices back home in Guatemala.

**Women’s Work**

The Maya women also cluster in one industry and in one type of job. As Table 1 shows, all but one of the women in the study group are private-household domestic workers; the large majority of these are live-in domestics. Their occupational concentration can be explained by local labor market opportunities, by the Maya’s entry into what Diner (1983) calls a “labor vacuum” (a job not wanted by others), and by the women’s use of social network strategies.

Historically, domestic work in Houston was dominated by African American women, and a small number of Mexican American and Mexican immigrant women. Beginning in the 1970s, however, the number of African Americans declined as younger cohorts enjoyed greater employment opportunities. During the 1980s, African Americans’ domestic employment in Texas plummeted more than 50 percent to its current low level of less than 4 percent (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1993a). At the same time, labor force participation in Houston among women aged 16 and older of all races continued to rise, surpassing the national average in the mid-1980s and reaching over 61 percent in 1990. As U.S.-born minority groups shift out of domestic work, the vacuum is filled increasingly by immigrants, especially newcomer Central American women who rarely move out of this job niche (Hagan 1994; Repak 1994; U.S. Bureau of the Census 1983, 1993b; U.S. Department of Labor 1996).

Data from the 1-percent 1990 Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) from the U.S. Census show that while native-born employment in private household domestic work declined by 27 percent from 1980 to 1990, foreign-born employment in this niche increased by 73 percent during the same period. A follow-up survey of the population legalized under IRCA ranked private-household cleaning and private household child care as the leading occupations among women. Central American women especially were concentrated in this job niche over time (U.S. Department of Labor 1996).

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4 After acquiring legal status, a handful of workers left this firm to work in a movie theater chain, and a few more left to work in a restaurant chain. Their jobs are still low-skilled (e.g., janitors, dishwashers) and therefore do not reflect vertical economic mobility. These moves are potentially significant, however, in that they may diversify male-based job networks.

5 Data from the 1-percent 1990 Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) from the U.S. Census show that while native-born employment in private household domestic work declined by 27 percent from 1980 to 1990, foreign-born employment in this niche increased by 73 percent during the same period. A follow-up survey of the population legalized under IRCA ranked private-household cleaning and private household child care as the leading occupations among women. Central American women especially were concentrated in this job niche over time (U.S. Department of Labor 1996).
As undocumented recent arrivals with little or no experience in the labor market, Maya and other Central American women typically find jobs as domestic workers, as have Mexican newcomers (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994), other disadvantaged nonwhite groups (Rollins 1985; Romero 1988), and earlier cohorts of immigrant women (especially single women) in urban areas throughout the United States (Diner 1983; Glenn 1986; Katzman 1978). As live-in domestics, the women typically juggle child-care and housecleaning responsibilities over a six-day (often including evenings) work week and generally earn a starting salary of less than $100 per week.

A handful of the better-established women in the community, such as Juan's wife Carmen, have graduated first to more lucrative and more autonomous day work, and then to what Romero (1988) calls "job work," in which the worker performs housecleaning work in several households. However, unlike Mexican American domestics in southern Texas (Romero 1988) and Mexican immigrant domestics in the Bay area (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994), many Central American live-in domestics in Houston and elsewhere have not made the transition into day work (Hagan 1994; Repak 1994; U.S. Department of Labor 1996). Historically, this job niche in Houston has been controlled by the better-established immigrant and minority groups and, more recently, by large-scale commercial services.

For most Maya women, the first live-in position is located by kin and friends already living and working in Houston. Typically an established domestic worker learns of a job opening through another worker or through her patrona, as the Maya call the female employer. The Maya worker then notifies a recent arrival of the available position. Over time, the newcomer domestic may become incorporated into the larger network structure; this enables her to move on to a more desirable live-in position (e.g., better pay, more time off, fewer children). As the period of settlement increases, a few fortunate domestics (those who acquire English-language skills, purchase a car, and/or acquire legal status) make the transition to day work. However, social mobility to more desirable forms of domestic work remains limited in this competitive and ethnically bound industry.

**Network Transformation**

Although the social resources provided by community networks facilitate women's and men's initial entry and adaptation in postindustrial Houston, over time Maya men enjoy greater economic and social opportunities than do Maya women. Several structural factors account for this divergence: the different dynamics of men's and women's social relations of work, the extent to which women's and men's job networks are linked to coethnic and nonethnic networks, and the size and growth rates of the workplaces and industries in which men and women are incorporated. These factors interact to increasingly produce observable differences in men's and women's social networks.

The newcomer men enjoy almost immediate access to jobs, and their wages increase steadily. They benefit from their cultural affinity, from which they developed the encargado system to control and restructure the social organization of the work process. They benefit from working in a growing retail chain that provides opportunities for promotion, rising wages, and benefit packages. They also benefit from resources and information flows circulating throughout an extensive set of well-established and mature male networks, ranging from the neighborhood to workplaces to community life-cycle events at the ethnic church. As their length of time in Houston increases, the men also forge links with nonethnic neighbors and coworkers, and begin to take advantage of the weak ties generated from membership in a large recreational association in the area (McPherson and Smith-Lovin 1982); thus they bridge and maximize information flows.

Opportunities are much more limited for Maya women. Newcomer women in the community encounter less mature and thus less resourceful job networks. Live-in domestic workers can provide only limited assistance to recent female arrivals. Confined largely to the employer's house and to unequal patterns of exchange within the employer's family, they do not benefit from the social relations of reciprocity that men find in the ethnic neighborhood. Nor do they benefit from the network resources provided through recreational organizations such as
the soccer league. News of a job opening is restricted to information passed through the employer or through other live-in domestics they see at Sunday religious and other community gatherings. Further, because only a few household positions are open at any one time, domestic workers compete with their own friends and kin. Consequently women wait far longer than men to find jobs; each newcomer woman must gain access to a separate employer, while teams of men are hired by one employer through the encargado. Moreover, women workers are rarely recruited from Guatemala because employers of domestic workers require a personal interview before hiring, particularly when child care is part of the job description. Also, working in an unregulated industry usually yields earnings below minimum wage for work weeks extending well beyond the customary 40 hours. Thus, unlike the Maya men, who use ethnic ties to control the work process and enhance mobility in the workplace, Maya women derive little long-term benefit from their cultural affinity.

Perhaps the most important factors leading to network transformation in the Maya community are the social consequences of women working long and unpredictable hours in the confines of an employer’s house (Gonzalez de la Rocha 1994; Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994; Repak 1994; Rollins 1985; Romero 1988). Working in employers’ homes in affluent residential enclaves located some miles from main bus lines, women have few opportunities to interact with coethnics from the neighborhood or with other working-class families elsewhere. Their relationships are constrained by residential isolation among Anglos, who are economically, socially, and geographically remote. The women are uprooted from the social relations of exchange and reciprocity that characterize working-class urban families (Hernandez-Leon 1996); thus their ties with other coethnics weaken. Social contact with local shopkeepers and other providers of goods and services is also constrained by the physical remoteness of the employer’s neighborhood.

Unable to maintain horizontal links with either coethnics or nonethnics, the women become increasingly dependent on and controlled by their patronas. This situation leads to the breakdown of ethnic-based networks and to eventual isolation. In contrast to the men in the community, who live and work side by side, pool rides to work, and meet for soccer matches on weekends, the women typically work alone from Monday through Saturday in their employers’ households. Only one day (Sunday) is left to reestablish community ties through neighborhood and religious activities.

Women’s uneven participation in coethnic voluntary associations also limits the formation of extensive networks. Religious activities are organized largely by small groups of Maya women. Although these associational activities, such as Bible-reading classes, Quiché language classes for the young, and tamale sales for the upkeep of the church, are crucial to maintaining ethnic solidarity and reproducing Maya culture in Houston, they limit women’s involvement in other neighborhood events that might provide opportunities for developing social ties with nonethnics. Ironically, some of the women—those who leave their children in Guatemala with relatives—still possess their closest ties with friends and family in the home community.

Because of their particular neighborhood and work conditions, Maya women’s initial social network structure (which linked them to Houston, the neighborhood, work, community events, and church activities) steadily deteriorates. Ties to the Maya community become weaker as a more limited social network structure emerges; thus domestics become increasingly vulnerable to their employers’ whims. This situation is especially problematic for single women in the community (a group that constituted more than half of the study sample at any one time) because they cannot rely on support either from spouses and other coethnic males in Houston or from their parents in Guatemala for information leading to better employment opportunities.

Thus, over time, the structures of men’s and women’s networks diverge. Men’s networks expand; women’s contract. The implications of these gendered networks extend beyond social and economic opportunities; they also influence men’s and women’s long-term settlement opportunities, as is evidenced by their uneven participation in a major legalization program.
Table 2. Year of Arrival and Immigrant Status of the Maya Study Group: Houston, Texas, 1990

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arrival/Status</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year of Arrival</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before January 1, 1982</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>1984</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>34.4</td>
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<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January–April, 1989</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>32</td>
<td>99.8</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Post IRCA Legal Status</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legalization program</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political asylee</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent resident or visa holder</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undocumented</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>71.9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>32</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**GENDERED NETWORKS AND LEGALIZATION**

A central provision of IRCA was the general legalization program, which provided legal status for undocumented immigrants who could show that they had lived continuously in the United States since before January 1, 1982. At the same time, IRCA imposed sanctions on employers who hired unauthorized workers. Having arrived in Houston after the eligibility cutoff date, many members of the Totonicapán Maya community did not qualify for legalization (see Table 2). Consequently most persons in the community assumed a “wait and see” attitude: They waited to be fired from their jobs, at which time they would see about returning home. Thus, when the doors to the legalization office opened, only a handful of eligible immigrants in the community began preparing their applications. Under the guidance of legal counsel, the first cohort of applicants meticulously organized their papers and submitted their applications in late June of 1987.

The community waited. Within a few months, several of the applicants had received temporary residence cards. Their success stories spread quickly through the community; many were quite surprised to learn how easily the applicants had been screened by INS and had received documentation. Some went so far as to compare the program to lotteries in Guatemala. Interest was piqued, and legalization became a major topic of discussion at community events. By late fall of 1987, no one had lost a job as a result of employer sanctions; in fact, several of the women encountered no difficulty when they changed live-in positions in the summer of 1987, and several return migrants slid easily into job slots in the supermarket chain despite their lack of work authorization.

Events then moved in an unforeseen direction. Cesar and Andres, two young men in the community who technically were not eligible, decided to take a chance and file applications. They breezed through their first INS interview. Less than a month later, they received work authorization cards and were
notified that their residence status would be determined within six months. In less than a week, community networks had circulated their success stories among the Maya; by now, surprise had turned into mild astonishment. The information that passed through these networks relayed to community members both the technical workings of the application process and, most important, the short-term benefit of applying (i.e., immediate work authorization). Coworkers, neighbors, household members, and even teammates at soccer matches discussed "how to do it."

By the end of 1987, formal eligibility was no longer a significant consideration for migrants applying for legalization; their decisions depended more strongly on the experience of others in the community. In the long run, whether formally eligible or not, most Maya decided to apply in response to the information passing through the migrants' social networks. If a coworker applied, other coworkers followed suit. If a housemate applied, others did the same. Most migrants interpreted the program as a way to buy time to earn money; few expected their petitions to succeed.

Not all of the Maya benefited from the accumulated information about legalization. The women were much less well-informed than the men: Their live-in domestic positions had restricted their interaction with others in the community, and therefore their knowledge about the legalization process. Although most women eventually decided to apply for legalization, they encountered an additional obstacle when it came time to document their eligibility.

During the course of the legalization program, INS substantially relaxed its documentation requirements. Applicants originally were required to present three types of evidence to INS: proof of residence since January 1, 1982, proof of financial responsibility, and proof of identity. In the ideal scenario, these pieces of documentation would include verifiable evidence such as rent receipts, telephone bills, W-2 forms, and paycheck stubs. As the INS watched the immigrants flow through the process, however, it quickly learned how difficult it was for an undocumented person to gather such documentation. By the final quarter of the year-long program, then, INS had relaxed its requirements; it accepted affidavits and intermittent evidence as adaptations to the realities of undocumented life (Hagan and Baker 1993). Although this more inclusive position triggered a rush of applications in the final quarter of the program, many in the Maya community found it difficult even to secure affidavits.

A gendered network structure, characterized by unequal access to resources provided by strong and weak ties, enabled most of the men to gather the documentation necessary to legalize but restricted females' participation in the program, even though a large proportion of both women and men were ineligible (see Table 2). Being well integrated into community-based networks, the men received detailed information about others' experiences (e.g., the absolute minimum documentation necessary to submit a file, knowledge of who might supply affidavits for periods impossible to document with verifiable evidence).

In addition, because the men were concentrated largely in a regulated industry in which the INS made great outreach efforts, employers of the firm were better informed about their responsibilities, rights, and protections under IRCA than were employers in the private-household domestic industry. Male workers easily obtained evidence of an employment history from their employers in the form of pay stubs. Rent receipts, telephone bills, and electrical bills were used to verify residency. Coworkers (and their family members), neighbors, and other (non-Maya) immigrants from the soccer league supplemented application files with affidavits attesting to proof of residency and employment for periods not covered by more verifiable forms of documentation. These weak ties—ties with longer-established immigrants and native-born persons in the Houston community—became crucial in providing the men with affidavits during the documentation process.

In contrast, although most women attempted legalization, all but a handful abandoned the attempt because of the numerous obstacles they encountered while collecting documentation. Because they did not live in households in the ethnic community, few of the Maya women were able to furnish proof
of residency in the form of rent receipts or electrical bills. Being confined to an employer's house and being paid in cash for domestic work proved to be a tremendous disadvantage for the Maya women, as it probably was for other immigrants working in unregulated jobs. When it came time for the women to gather documentation, they found that they were dependent on affidavits from only one source, the female employer, who in most cases refused to provide them.

One employer, Martha, a 34-year-old professional and mother of one, gave the following reasons for refusing to provide documentation for her domestic, Graciela, a single Maya woman who had been working and living in her home for three years. Martha's comments reflect a common tale:

I would like to help Graciela, but we are a bit nervous about the legal implications of writing an affidavit. It's not INS. We haven't paid social security for Graciela in the past. Now we would have to report it. My husband is a lawyer; it might get a bit sticky. He won't bend on this. My mother and he believe that INS will report us to IRS. I just can't take the risk.

The concerns of Martha and of other employers proved prescient with the emergence of the "Nannygate" scandal. Yet their decision not to provide affidavits (even employers of eligible domestics refused) caused most women in the study group to abandon their attempt to legalize. Moreover, if one domestic gave up, others became disenchanted and followed suit. This suggests that although the strong female-based ties helped recent arrivals in their search for a job, they acted as a hindrance in the documentation process. The redundant information transmitted through strong ties of kinship and community are more likely to be characteristic of the information passed via women's networks than information circulated through men's networks, because women's contacts tend to be localized in family and neighborhood, while men's ties tend to extend to a variety of occupational and associational settings (Gonzalez de la Rocha 1994; Smith-Lovin and McPherson 1993). Women suffered a clear disadvantage in that (unlike the men) they had not developed weak ties with persons outside the Maya community. They could not rely on landlords, neighbors, coworkers, or area service providers to verify their residency or their employment. Sonya, one of the many women who couldn't obtain an affidavit from her employer, was so desperate that she roamed her employer's neighborhood, going door-to-door, in search of a familiar-looking person who would help her. None did.

Nine women in the study group, however, did acquire legal status; four of these worked as day domestics, and seven were married. Both day domestics and married women benefited from their links to a more extensive network system that included weak ties. Day domestics had a greater chance of finding one employer, among the several for whom they worked, who would provide an affidavit. The seven married women in the sample had an advantage over single women in benefiting from the resources provided by their husbands' weak ties to members of established immigrant and native-born groups (Kossoudji and Ranney 1984).

Despite the resources provided to women through their husbands' social ties, however, several of these women commented on the patriarchal constraints and consequences associated with legalization. Some men refused to help their partners; other men who attained legal status used it as a bargaining chip in their precarious relationships with their female partners, thus increasing the women's dependence on them. In two cases, women remained in abusive relationships with their husbands in the hope of a successful petition once their husbands became legal.

In sum, for most members of the community, the process of documenting residency and work began with insurmountable problems. Community-based networks, however, made the process increasingly less difficult because these ties provided the detailed knowledge needed to convert awareness into action. Nonethnic ties produced the documentation necessary to file a legalization application. The Maya women, however, were the exception to this pattern.
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The findings of this study suggest that we must rethink our understanding of the long-term interactions among immigrants’ social networks, gender, and incorporation outcomes. Critical for immigrants’ long-term incorporation is whether the social context of neighborhoods, workplaces, and associations fosters the development of an expansive network of “weak ties” (Granovetter 1973) with non-coethnics. Most of the research on immigrants’ settlement and social networks highlights the short-term benefits of family- and kin-based resources for initial settlement, but does not illuminate the effects of network dynamics over time. This case study of the Maya in Houston illustrates how newcomers to the community draw on the resources of these social networks to find housing and jobs. Immigrants also can draw on such social relations long after the initial settlement stage: The circulation of information through these networks facilitated many community members’ decision to legalize.

As the settlement period lengthens, however, disadvantages of immigrant-based social networks can and sometimes do emerge. Migrants can become so tightly encapsulated in social networks based on strong ties to coethnics that they lose some of the advantages associated with developing weak ties with residents outside the community. The social context of private-household domestic work prevented the Maya women from developing horizontal links of exchange and reciprocity with non-Maya. As they were confined to a diminishing set of personal networks and to the strong ties on which those networks are built, their pool of resources diminished. In contrast, the Maya men benefited from the social relations of work, neighborhood, and recreation, all of which enabled the development of social ties with other long-term immigrants and native-born persons. These weak ties proved invaluable for securing affidavits in their legalization efforts.

Gendered networks for immigrant incorporation have far-reaching implications. In the case of the Maya, such networks operated so as to limit the women’s ability to settle legally in the United States, while they enhanced the men’s ability to do so. Because of residential isolation of private-household domestic work, undocumented domestic workers in other metropolitan areas probably could not verify employment and residency for legalization. It is also likely that other undocumented women working in similar settings (small, unregulated, segregated by sex and ethnicity, personalistic, and involving patriarchal or vertical ties with the employer) found it difficult to produce a six-year paper trail of their residential and employment history in the United States. Nationwide such gender differences in employment and in consequent network phenomena may account for the high turnout of men—a sex ratio of 1.38 for the total legalized population of 1.7 million—as well for the 127,000 spouses and 46,000 unmarried partners of legalization applicants who were in the household at the time of application but did apply (U.S. Immigration and Naturalization 1992).7

The gender differences in network formation that I identify among Guatemalans may well apply more generally to other immigrant groups and other incorporation outcomes. This will be true insofar as men’s and women’s residential patterns, occupational niches, and association memberships imply the development of different network structures (Gonzalez de la Rocha 1994; Sassen 1995; Smith-Lovin and McPherson 1993). This does not mean, however, that other gendered networks will necessarily take the same form and direction as those in the Maya community. Nor does it mean that gendered transformations in migrant-based social networks always benefit men’s incorporation experience. Among Vietnamese-American families in Philadelphia, for example, Kibria

7 Despite the stable gender composition of the U.S. foreign-born population enumerated in the Current Population Survey, the predominance of women in legal streams (Donato 1992), and the almost equal representation of women and men in undocumented flows (Passel and Woodrow 1984), men outnumber women in the total legalized population by roughly 58 to 42 percent. This sex ratio of 1.38 is considerably higher than the undocumented sex ratio of 1.14 estimated in 1980 (Passel and Woodrow 1984). Moreover, the number of spouses and unmarried partners who did not apply was probably even larger because this figure does not include unmarried women not in the households at time of application (i.e., live-in domestic workers).
(1993) showed that network transformations sometimes can benefit women’s incorporation outcomes. In particular, she found that when females’ responsibilities are expanded in the settlement area, women’s networks can grow and diversify to include contacts with institutions and organizations outside the ethnic community. Regardless of the direction, however, the outcome remains gendered: The development of each sex’s network structure may yield different benefits.

To date, most migration studies have focused exclusively on the dynamics of personal networks. We need additional research on the development and role of nonethnic ties in immigrant incorporation. In this paper, I have demonstrated that the development of weak ties is crucial for providing opportunities to settle legally in the United States. Scholars outside migration research emphasize the importance of weak ties in enabling economic mobility (Granovetter 1973), facilitating better health (Berkman and Breslow 1983), and providing job access to disadvantaged inner-city populations (Wilson 1991).

Migration studies could benefit from paying more attention to this distinction between strong ties and weak ties and from broadening their focus to outcomes beyond labor market performance. By addressing the concept of weak ties, we have the potential to shift the focus from personal ties among immigrants to include the role of contacts with nonethnic organizations and institutions in the incorporation process. By refining the ways in which we employ network considerations and by incorporating a broader and more dynamic view of social networks, we will be better able to understand the impact of gender and other group differences on immigrant incorporation.

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ant destination and settlement area, establishing what I have called the Monterrey-Houston connection—a binational, intermetropolitan migration circuit linking Mexico's third-largest city with the third-largest concentration of Mexican immigrants in the United States.

I now turn to describing how this circuit was created, what kinds of bridges contribute to funnel people through the circuit, and the types of occupational and social experiences *regiomontano* immigrants have endured in Houston.

**CHAPTER 4**

The Monterrey-Houston Connection

The Social Organization of Migration and the Economic Incorporation of Immigrants

In this chapter, I move from the causes and structural forces that have uprooted skilled industrial workers to the social organization of international migration in the Monterrey-Houston intermetropolitan circuit. As I analyze the kinds of networks and social capital these urbanites use to migrate to the United States and specifically to Houston, their most important destination, I also offer a window into a variety of border-spanning social contacts and activities immigrants and their families and friends undertake, thereby linking Monterrey and the Bayou City. In addition, this chapter undertakes a second analytical task: uncovering the types of jobs *regiomontano* workers obtain in Houston's labor market and determining the effect that their urban-industrial extraction has had on their occupational incorporation in the United States.

The fact that networks and social capital sustain and contribute to diffuse migratory behavior is a well-established finding of Mexico-U.S. migration studies (Massey et al. 1987; Massey, Goldring, and Durand 1994; Rouse 1989; Wilson 1994). However, since most studies have focused primarily on the migratory flows arising from the country's rural areas, the existing knowledge of the social organization of international migration stemming from Mexico's urban and metropolitan areas is quite limited. Available studies suggest that because of an advanced social division of labor, anonymity and heterogeneity, and lack of economic cooperation across households, large cities are not fertile grounds for the development of migratory social capital, especially strong nonkin
social ties (Flores 2001; Fussell and Massey 2004; Roberts, Frank, and Lozano Ascencio 1999). Twenty years ago, the seminal Return to Aztlán (Massey et al. 1987) demonstrated that urbanites countered this sociological reality by accessing, through kinship, networks and social capital originating in towns and villages with a long-standing tradition of U.S.-bound migration. This landmark study demonstrated, albeit indirectly, that even though city migrants did not rely on their own urban-grown support network—drawing instead from family and rural origin ties—their migration was neither atomized nor unstructured.

Ten years of fieldwork on the Monterrey-Houston connection confirm the centrality of networks in the social organization of migration in La Fama and of kinship ties as the most important source of contacts, information, and support for cross-border migration. However, I also encountered a different set of findings, namely, that the men and women of this barrio also use the social relations established in the urban neighborhood as a means to sustain U.S. migration. In contrast with previous research, I discovered that the residents of La Fama often activated their ties with fellow neighbors to cross the border, find shelter, and obtain a job in the Houston labor market. In La Fama, then, the question is not whether residents were able to establish networks rooted in the city to support their sojourning in the United States. The evidence shows that they did. The question is what kind of context and social relations allowed for the rise of networks that were grounded in the urban neighborhood and were not dependent on rural connections. The answer has to do, in part, with the residential and employment stability of the households of La Fama, a characteristic generally shared by the industrial working class in Monterrey. Having lived for decades side by side and close to common workplaces, individuals and families developed relationships going beyond the uniplex relation of vecinauzgo (being a neighbor). They had attended the same public schools, played in the same soccer clubs, and worked in the same factories.

Without reaching the multiplicity and strength of paisano (rural hometown) networks, in which people are connected by blood, economic cooperation, and residence, the social ties created by La Fama urbanites generated opportunities for migration for an ever-increasing number of people, many of whom had no prior personal or family cross-border experience. Reminding us about the capacity of weak ties to reach beyond small, closed groups, argued by Granovetter (1973), neighborhood-based networks contributed to the diffusion of migratory behavior by expanding the social infrastructure that sustains and makes migration a collectively organized and durable social process.

For more than twenty years now, these networks have channeled La Fama migrants to specific neighborhoods and jobs in Houston. Compared to the networks and the migratory history of western Mexico, dating back more than a century, the ties connecting Monterrey and Houston are rather young. As I demonstrated in the previous chapter, pioneer immigrants first arrived in Houston during the late 1960s and early 1970s, with the bulk of migrants moving there during the 1980s and 1990s. Nonetheless, immigrants from Monterrey have established a branch community in the northwest section of the Houston metropolitan area, where individuals and families from La Fama and surrounding neighborhoods have concentrated, showing how settlement at the destination is mediated by social networks.

Still, migrant networks cannot entirely account for why and how Houston became the most important destination of the flows originating in Monterrey. Even though Mexicans have long been part of Houston’s urban-industrial development (Shelton et al. 1989), the Bayou City did not become an important destination for regionomontano migrants until the mid-1970s, when the city emerged as a global center for the oil extraction and oil technology industries. Thus, in addition to early active recruitment, Houston’s momentous economic growth during the oil boom of the 1970s was a key force attracting immigrants from Monterrey. Notably, many of these newcomers were able to transfer their industrial manufacturing skills and experience to the Houston labor market, which was dominated by the needs of oil-related industries. Having received technical education in Monterrey’s ample vocational and trade school infrastructure and after long years of on-the-job training, these predominantly male workers have been incorporated into skilled, nonseasonal urban occupations, often as machinists, establishing niches in several manufacturing industries. These technical skills have allowed workers to be less dependent on strong and closed ties and to establish yet another kind of weak tie network based on occupational contacts with fellow machinists, mechanics, precision welders, and even the owners and supervisors of the workplaces that employed them.

However, skilled regionomontanos also toiled in unskilled occupations, particularly in the unstable and dangerous removal of asbestos, a job that became available in the 1980s when labor demand in the oil industry plummeted due to the worldwide decline in oil prices. Despite pro-
found changes in Houston's urban economic specialization, which have reduced the importance of the oil industry and its branches in the metropolitan labor market, *regiomontanos* have continued to find employment in the oil tools and technology, maintenance, and extraction industries, where they use a combination of technical skills and networks to leverage better wages and conditions.

I begin this chapter by presenting a review of Houston's contemporary political economy and the role of Mexican immigration in this city's urban-industrial development. I then turn to the social networks that sustain migration between Monterrey and Houston, revisiting the experience of immigrant pioneers from La Fama to assess the role that these individuals, their families, and their neighborhood institutions have played in articulating cross-border support ties. The last two sections of the chapter analyze the occupational incorporation of *regiomontanos*, focusing on machinists and other skilled workers, on the one hand, and asbestos removal laborers, on the other; and the contours, determinants, and limits of immigrant transnationalism and border-spanning social activities and linkages in the Monterrey-Houston migratory circuit.

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF HOUSTON AND MEXICAN IMMIGRATION

Established in the 1830s by northern capitalists as a real estate venture, Houston functioned during the nineteenth century as a commercial and banking center for the Texas agricultural economy. With a sizable black population to serve as cheap labor, Houston did not begin to attract Mexicans in significant numbers until the turn of the century. The discovery of oil in the surrounding region in 1901 signaled the start of a process of industrialization that soon transformed Houston into "a major oil and gas city" (Shelton et al. 1989: 11; see also Feagin 1988). Houston's political economy became quickly intertwined with Detroit and the automobile industry and with New York City, where financial decisions about oil investments were made. At the same time, large oil corporations began to dominate the business by buying up smaller companies and expanding to a variety of oil-related sectors besides extraction. The development of an infrastructure to process and transport oil and oil products required increasing numbers of workers, and hence the city began attracting Mexican laborers. The Mexican Revolution, however, was an additional factor explaining the arrival of individuals and families who were fleeing widespread violence south of the border.

Thus, between 1910 and 1920, Mexicans started to settle in the periphery of the downtown area and to establish two distinct *colonias*, the Second Ward and Magnolia. The second of these settlements, Magnolia, originally a neighborhood of European immigrants, evolved around the construction and the industries and commerce of the Houston Ship Channel. Laborers from the northeast and north-central Mexican states of Nuevo León, Coahuila, Tamaulipas, San Luis Potosí, and Zacatecas resided in these areas, which nowadays make up the historic Mexican American districts of the city (De León 1989; Feagin 1988; Rodríguez 1993; Shelton et al. 1989).

The *colonias* maintained a strong sense of cultural and ethnic identity due to intense contacts with the homeland and the social and economic barriers erected by the Anglo establishment that isolated Mexicans and segregated them to the lowest-paid jobs. In this context, educational opportunities were restricted, and social mobility was limited to the bounds of the ethnic and immigrant enclave. Nonetheless, the Mexican *colonias* evolved their own community institutions (newspapers, cultural and mutual aid associations, churches, and schools), businesses (grocery and drug stores, barber shops, bakeries, cafés, and doctors’ and dentists’ offices), and even an internal stratification system with laborers, merchants, and a few professionals providing services to local residents. Needless to say, Spanish was the lingua franca of these settlements. Meanwhile, immigrants from Mexico and Mexican Americans from other parts of Texas continued to arrive in Houston. According to De León (1989), by the 1920s, people from the core region of migration in Mexico (Guanajuato, Jalisco, and Michoacán) were present in the *colonias*. The Mexican origin population in Houston expanded from 6,000 in 1920 to 15,000 in 1930, reflecting a pattern of broader demographic and industrial growth affecting this city. During the same period, Houston's total population more than doubled, increasing from 139,000 to 292,000 (De León 1989; Rodríguez 1993).

The 1930s signaled a new era for the Mexican settlements of Houston as the generation of the children of immigrants began to consider itself American (rather than Mexican) and to show an orientation toward U.S. mainstream institutions. De León (1989) calls them the Mexican American generation. According to Rodríguez (1993), this shift in orientation also marked the transformation of the *colonias* into inner city barrios inhabited by a minority population and incorporated as such into the larger urban political structure. The markers of this transformation were the increasing use of English, the celebration of American fest-
tivities, and the introduction of mass consumerism into the economic life of the barrio. During the 1930s and 1940s, Mexican Americans founded new political organizations that sought to establish alliances with Anglo leaders. These developments also indicate the emergence of clear and yet fluid divides between Mexican Americans and Mexican immigrants (De León 1989; Rodriguez 1993).

The continued discovery of oil fields in east Texas saved Houston from the worst effects of the Great Depression. The city's role as a major port for shipping oil and commodities such as cotton and lumber strengthened, and, by the 1940s, Houston surpassed New Orleans as the most important gulf seaport, actually becoming the sixth largest of such facilities in the United States. During this period, the Gulf Coast emerged as the most important oil-refining region of the nation, with more than one-third of the country's total refining capacity. The era immediately before and after World War II were also characterized by the flow of substantial federal resources into the Houston economy. During the Depression years, federal investment helped to erect the city's infrastructure of roads, schools, and government buildings and to make improvements to the ship channel. During and after the war, government money was invested in the petrochemical industry, which first produced aviation oil and synthetic rubber and then made asphalt and plastics. Major oil and gas pipelines channeled these raw materials from east Texas to the Northeast (De León 1989; Feagin 1985; Shelton et al. 1989).

Although Mexicans in Houston did not experience the massive deportations that their compatriots did in cities like Los Angeles during the Depression, they did suffer forced repatriations, poverty, and ever-increasing social exclusion and discrimination. The estimates reported by De León (1989) suggest that Mexican immigration to Houston slowed down during the immediate post-World War I period—a development resulting perhaps from the effects of the crisis and the repatriations. During the 1940s and 1950s, Mexican demographic growth in Houston took place by means of the internal migration of rural Mexican Americans to this city as part of a process of urbanization of the Texano-Mexicano population. Thus, 1950 census data indicate that five of every six Spanish-surnamed residents of Harris County were U.S. born. Furthermore, the 1960 census revealed that only about 13 percent of the county's Mexican inhabitants were foreign born (De León 1989).¹

Houston continued its rise as a national and international oil center benefiting from the postwar demand for petroleum and oil products, such as asphalt, plastics, and jet fuel. Despite the antistate rhetoric of its growth coalition that construed an image of a "free enterprise city," Houston received substantial federal aid. A prime example of this support was the creation of the National Aeronautic and Space Administration (NASA) complex in this city in the 1960s. During this decade, the restructuring of the oil industry had a significant impact on Houston as big corporations relocated subsidiaries and administrative headquarters and increased production there.² This attracted large numbers of both white-collar and blue-collar workers to the city. As a result, Houston's population grew from 600,000 in 1950 to 938,000 in 1960, and further to 1.2 million in 1970. A rapid increase in undocumented Mexican migration to Houston ensued during the late 1960s and 1970s, responding not only to this city's economic boom and its transformation into the global center of the oil industry but also to the end of the Bracero program in 1964 (which closed the avenue for legal migration) and the general trend of migrants to move from rural to urban employment in the United States (De León 1989; Durand 1998; Feagin 1987, 1985; Shelton et al. 1989).

By the 1970s, many different sectors of the oil industry were concentrated in Houston, from subsidiaries and units of large corporations in charge of exploration, discovery, and extraction of petroleum and gas to transportation businesses, producer services firms (law, accounting, and marketing), refineries, and petrochemical companies. By this time, "Houston had evolved into the oil-technology distribution center for the world's oil industries" (Feagin 1985: 1219). Two particular branches of the oil technology sector were housed in this city, namely, "oil-tool companies manufacturing machinery, drilling equipment, and construction equipment; [and] metal fabrication companies making pipe, storage tanks, and oil rigs" (Shelton et al. 1989: 20). These are branches that incorporated many skilled industrial workers originating in the Monterrey metropolitan area.

In Houston, the 1970s were a golden era. As the global city of the oil industry, Houston benefited from the increase in oil prices and the demand for petroleum-related technology and services in key producing areas of the world.¹ Indeed, oil prices increased from $3.39 a barrel in 1971 to $31.77 a barrel in 1981 (Feagin 1987). As a consequence, industrial and financial firms concentrated their investments in oil-related projects, further deepening the economic specialization of the metropolitan area. Thus, while other cities were experiencing the effects of the recession of 1973-74, Houston was undergoing an economic boom and multiplying its links to other cities and regions of the world (Feagin
The demographic growth of the city continued unabated, and by the early 1980s, Houston had reached a population of 1.7 million, while the metropolitan area had climbed to 3 million. The number of Latinos in the metropolitan area increased from 212,444 in 1970 to 424,903 in 1980, while various estimates put the early 1980s undocumented Mexican population between 80,000 and 150,000 (De León 1989; Feagin 1987; Rodríguez 1993, 1997).

As much as it accounted for its success, Houston's structural position in the world economy also explained its coming crisis. Feagin has best summarized this structural position, contending, "As a leading center for the operation, production, and technological diffusion of the U.S. and world oil industry, Houston [was] probably the largest metropolitan area directly and massively affected by investment and production shifts in the world oil-market system" (Feagin 1985:1221). Such a shift occurred in the 1980s, when the world price of oil started to drop from a high of $34 (in November 1981) to $16 in 1985–86. All sectors of the Houston economy were affected—from oil extraction and refining to retail and real estate. Moreover, industrial production and oil refinery use declined while unemployment rose well beyond the national average. By the end of the crisis in 1987, Houston had an unemployment rate of 10 percent and had lost 200,000 jobs. In the context of an excess capacity accumulated during the boom years, the restructuring strategy deployed by oil and petrochemical corporations included mergers, shutdowns, and cutbacks as well as concentration in the production of higher value added chemicals. While the Anglo white-collar workforce fled Houston, the central city's Latino population continued to grow from 281,331 in 1980 to an estimated half million by 1989. The 1990 census reported more than 700,000 Latinos in the metropolitan area (Hagan and Rodríguez 1992; Hill and Feagin 1987; Shelton et al. 1989).

The economic boom of the 1970s and early 1980s was accompanied by massive investments in real estate, particularly in the construction of office buildings. Surplus capital from the national and international financial sector and the oil and gas industry was the primary source of these investments. According to Feagin (1987), more than 80 percent of all office buildings in Houston were constructed during the 1971–87 period. As oil prices declined dramatically and the urban economy entered its most severe crisis in 1982, the overproduction of office space and other real estate developments became evident, resulting in high vacancy rates and bankruptcies (Feagin 1987).

The economic downturn also propelled the out-migration of Anglo white-collar employees who lost their jobs in the midst of the crisis. Their flight evidenced that overproduction had occurred not only in the office building sector but also in the housing sector, specially in the construction of apartment complexes destined for white middle-class consumers. In Houston’s Westside, apartment complex owners and managers turned to new Latino immigrants arriving during the 1980s, hoping to attract them as tenants. Targeting a lower-income immigrant tenant population, owners slashed rents, posted signs in Spanish, hired Spanish-speaking staff, and offered free English classes. Many of these new renters were refugees and economic migrants from Central America who were fleeing civil wars and political violence in countries like El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. These newcomers helped diversify the Latino population in Houston, which had been traditionally dominated by Mexicans. As Rodríguez (1987) has noted, Central Americans were incorporated into the low-paid occupations of the service industry and not in the declining heavy manufacturing sectors of the metropolitan economy. Central Americans settled in traditional Hispanic neighborhoods but also established their presence in areas that were new to Latinos, such as in the above-mentioned apartment complexes of the Westside. As the urban economy recovered in the late 1980s, owners moved to restructure their tenant population by raising rents and evicting units with families (Hagan 1994; Hagan and Rodríguez 1992; Rodríguez 1987).

Mexican immigrants continued to arrive in Houston during the 1980s and 1990s, working not only in industrial plants but also in construction and the service industry (i.e., cleaning, retail, restaurants). Rodríguez (1993) has noted the large number of single Mexican women who migrated to this city and who joined the ranks of the low-paid workforce in services, such as office and household cleaning. Immigrants settled in the traditional Latino neighborhoods of the Eastside (Magnolia and El Segundo Barrio), where an entire spatial and economic ethnic enclave made their presence less conspicuous. Their arrival also helped expand the economic base of the enclave, as newcomers demanded an array of products and services. Over the past twenty years, new arrivals established residence in ethnoburbs (Li 1998), that is, sections of the metropolitan area with an increasing Latino and Mexican population but where other national and ethnic groups were also present. This was the case of Summerland, located in the northwest section of the city, where many immigrants from La Fama and Monterrey have settled.

The Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986, which
 offered amnesty to those immigrants who had been continuously in the United States since 1982, also affected recent Mexican immigration to Houston. More than ninety thousand undocumented Mexicans sought to legalize their status through IRCA. Even though IRCA offered obvious benefits to the newcomer population, it also restricted—through employer sanctions—the labor market possibilities of recent arrivals, further marginalizing them (Rodríguez 1993). But as Hagan and Baker (1993) observed, by creating a sizable legal and permanent population, IRCA's amnesty program enhanced the social capital available to future entrants and therefore provided the basis for the continuation of migration. This has certainly been the case for Mexican immigrants in Houston. By 2000, Harris County had the third-largest concentration of foreign-born Mexicans in the United States with nearly four hundred thousand, trailing only the counties of Los Angeles and Cook (Chicago) (U.S. Census Bureau 2005).

Still, despite their economic contributions and demographic weight, Mexicans in old and new settlements in Houston lacked sufficient political representation and strong organizations facilitating political mobilization and were largely excluded from mainstream political institutions. In contrast with Mexican immigrants in Los Angeles and Chicago, in this “corporate-dominated city in a right-to-work state” (Meyerson 2004: 130), immigrants could not count on the powerful and well-organized Latino-led labor movement present in Southern California or the network of hometown associations and Democratic machine politics characteristic of the Windy City (Cano 2002; Meyerson 2004; Rodríguez et al. 1994). Houston has only been marginally integrated into the diaspora politics of the Mexican government. Absent from this city's landscape are the state federations that have been at the center of immigrant activism in major U.S. urban areas in recent years. Cano (2002) attributes this absence to the fact that most Mexican immigrants in the Bayou City come from nearby border and northern states, such as Nuevo León, Tamaulipas, and San Luis Potosí, and to Houston's own proximity to the border, a geographic marker that increases the mobility and floating component of the Mexican immigrant population. In sum, Houston does not have the network of binational organizations present in other important centers of the Mexican diaspora in the United States.

Today, Houston remains the global city of the energy industry—still home to many of the top producers of oil and oil-related commodities and operators of crude oil pipelines—but the city's economy is less dependent on the fortunes of the petroleum world market. Houston boasts a less specialized economy. A recent Los Angeles Times article reported that oil-related employment in the Bayou City declined from 150,000 jobs in 1982 to the current 105,000. At the same time, a more diverse urban business base now includes information and high-tech industries and professional and medical services (Calvo 2005: C1).

**SOCIAL NETWORKS OF URBAN MIGRANTS: KINSHIP AND NEIGHBORHOOD TIES**

*Regiomontanos* are not concentrated in a single area or neighborhood of the Bayou City. In fact, I found these immigrants settled in different sections of the Houston metropolitan area: in the historic Mexican neighborhood of Magnolia, employed as precision welders in the nearby ship channel; in the northeast section of the city, working as aviation mechanics at the George Bush Intercontinental airport; in the northwest Houston transition ethnoburbs abutting I-10, living side by side with Koreans, Vietnamese, and white residents, where they formed roving crews of asbestos removal laborers but also worked as machinists in the many small machine tool shops dotting the area's industrial parks. Such a pattern of dispersal comes as no surprise given that this flow originates in different neighborhoods and sections of Monterrey, one of Mexico's largest cities. Thus, this migratory stream is not organized through a single network of extended family members and *paisanos* but by multiple social networks; many of which—it is safe to argue—are simply not linked to each other.

**Fathers and Siblings**

Still, networks have played a fundamental role in the social organization of the Monterrey-Houston connection in anticipated but also unexpected ways, challenging the prevailing findings of the Mexico-U.S. migration scholarship. In La Fama, I asked respondents of my survey about the most important sources of assistance utilized by household heads to migrate internationally. As expected, family members and relatives residing in the United States topped the list across different types of assistance: offering general economic support, providing room and board, and finding work on behalf of newcomers. In fact, La Fama households could draw from an extensive pool of migration-specific human and social capital, gauged from the proportion of kin with U.S. experience. As shown in table 5, among households with at
to settle in Monterrey. Their U.S. experience had taken place a long time ago—thirty or forty years before their children's own sojourning—and could hardly be used as active and useful migratory social capital. In contrast, the presence of families with a large number of siblings who had lived and worked in the United States without parental antecedent was highly conspicuous in this neighborhood as well as in Houston.

The Role of Women

Women's involvement in the networks connecting La Fama and Houston deserves particular attention. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, women constitute 30 percent of the U.S. migrants identified in the neighborhood. Still, the qualitative as well as the survey evidence suggest that women played an important role as purveyors of social contacts for men, primarily spouses, who lacked migration-specific human and social capital. A relatively evident explanation for such a role has to do with the still emergent nature of this migratory circuit: Given the absence of widespread and long-established networks, some men resorted to contacts provided by women. The fact that women possessed their own set of contacts to relatives and friends with migratory experience can be easily gauged from table 5.

Described at length in the previous chapter, the case of Pedro, the quality control supervisor who lost his job with the closure of Fundidora Monterrey, clearly illustrates his dependence on his wife's migratory support networks. During my interview with him, sitting inside the taxi he was driving upon his return to Monterrey, Pedro described in detail how after looking for a job similar in salary and benefits to the one he had lost, he, his wife, Lupita, and her parents jointly decided that it was time for him to try his luck in Houston. In addition, her brother would host Pedro and help him find a job. Needless to say, what is noteworthy in this account is Pedro's complete reliance on his wife's contacts, who were involved in every step of his migratory process, from decision making to arrival and job search at the destination. It is not difficult to grasp how such dependence on her networks provided Pedro's wife a measure of social control upon his expected behavior—to work hard and send money home—especially since his spouse and children were to stay behind. In other words, relying on his wife's networks prevented Pedro from becoming a desobligado, that is, someone "who clearly and repeatedly has stopped fulfilling his familial responsibilities" (Durand 1994: 307-308, my translation).

### Table 5. The Social Capital of La Fama Households with U.S. Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relatives and nonkin with U.S. experience (%)</th>
<th>Household head (n = 58)</th>
<th>Spouse (n = 56)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandfather</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandmother</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sibling</td>
<td>47.4</td>
<td>35.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse of sibling</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse of child</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncles and aunts</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cousins</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>26.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nephews and nieces</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbors</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>57.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coworkers</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** The percentages in each kin and nonkin category reflect the existence of at least one individual with at least one past or ongoing U.S. trip.

**Source:** Survey of La Fama households, 1997-98.
The conspicuous role of women as sources of networks for men stems not only from the scarcity of migratory social capital but also from the exogamic marriage practices that prevail in urban settings, which contrast with the endogamy of rural communities. Here, it is worth taking a brief detour to explicitly compare and address the relevance of exogamic versus endogamic marriage for network formation, an issue that the scholarship on Mexico-U.S. migration has largely ignored, even in the prolific vein of studies of rural contexts as source areas for migratory streams. This literature has long identified two types of networks as the basis for the social organization of migration in small towns, ranches, and hamlets, namely, kinship and *paisano* (hometown) ties. In practice, however, these two kinds of networks may be difficult to differentiate because men and women often marry within the hometown. With each new marriage, kinship and *paisano* ties become increasingly intertwined, reinforcing each other.

I observed these dynamics not in Monterrey, but in a small town one hundred miles southeast of the city. This town—I shall call it El Naranjo—has a long history of U.S.-bound migration. There are groups of Naranjenses all over the United States, with new destinations in Georgia and Virginia. As I followed and interviewed Naranjenses in one of these new destinations—a suburb of the Atlanta metropolitan area—I noticed the constant repetition of a handful of last names among the respondents. As I reconstructed family trees with the help of female interviewees, I realized that marriages had occurred between twice-removed cousins and occasionally even between first cousins. More important from an ethnographic point of view, Naranjenses had developed their own folk categories to distinguish those who were kin from those who were not, suggesting widespread endogamy. Naranjenses spoke of various individuals, saying *son de la gente* (they are of the people) to signify *de nuestra gente* (of our people). The strong ties that people had with each other, capable of supporting and spreading migration, derived from the multiplex quality of such connections: People were *paisanos* and *parientes* (relatives) and cooperated on a variety of economic activities, such as agriculture and production of traditional crafts.

I use the case of El Naranjo not as an in-depth case study but rather as a point of reference to advance my interpretation of what I see as distinct in the urban environment. In La Fama, I did not find a persistent pattern of endogamic marriage—not even among those whose lives were closely connected by virtue of their long ties to the neighborhood and the factory. Although there were a number of families who had been in La Fama for generations, most people had settled there because they had been recruited as textile workers from other regions of Mexico or because of straightforward internal migration. In this neighborhood, as it is in urban contexts in general, the norm was exogamy. And even though exogamic marriage did not lead to the formation of strong, multiplex ties, it did facilitate the spread of migratory social capital via *parentesco político*, creating links between different tightly knit family groups in a way that is similar to what Granovetter (1973) characterized as the bridging capacity of weak ties.

**Neighbors as Sources of Weak Ties**

In La Fama, the ties that residents have sustained with each other for years as neighbors proved to be a key source of migratory social capital. In contrast with the prevailing notion that urbanism is not conducive to the formation of social networks capable of sustaining and diffusing migratory behavior, in La Fama, neighbors supported each other's migratory endeavors in different ways. As Table 5 suggests, people were aware of the migration of fellow neighbors and, I should add, of the U.S. destinations they had chosen. Still, it was my ethnographic fieldwork in Monterrey and Houston that uncovered the depth of friendship- and neighborhood-based networks in the social organization of this migratory circuit. The in-depth interviews and life histories I conducted with pioneer migrants revealed how their assistance had played a crucial role, supporting and virtually allowing for the sojourning of other La Fama residents. This was the case of Juan González, considered by his neighbors to be the first U.S. migrant from the section of La Fama known as El Tambo. As described in the previous chapter, after settling in La Fama, Juan moved to Chicago and later on to Houston. In these two cities, Juan's home provided shelter to numerous neighbors from La Fama and nearby barrios. According to him,

> When we arrived in Houston [coming from Chicago in 1981], all of a sudden there were groups of six or eight people, or at the very least three. They were from here [La Fama], and they would bring their friends crossing through the desert. Upon arrival they would come straight to our house, we were acquaintances, the closest from this whole area [in La Fama]. They would arrive and it was impossible not to give them shelter there, right? So they could sleep in the living room, a few here and few there, and we also fed them. With the help of God, we were able to give them food while they would find work and contribute some money. Once they had money, three or six of them would get together to rent a small house and so on...
the folks, all the people from La Fama, many, many, not only a few, many of them stayed in our house while they were looking for a job, and they would stay for some fifteen days. (Emphasis added.)

Juan's description of the assistance he provided to acquaintances and neighbors from La Fama is a classic example of the types of support migrants receive from other network participants. In addition, his statements shed light on the sense of obligation he felt toward neighbors and friends, clearly expressed in his assertion that "it was impossible not to give them shelter there, right?" Needless to say, Juan has also provided assistance to many of his relatives who migrated to the United States.

A similar sense of obligation and expectations was expressed by other members of this neighborhood-based network in more casual circumstances and yet in the same direct way as Juan. During one of my visits to La Fama, someone mentioned that a fellow neighbor had purchased a house in Houston, an occurrence rare enough to make it worthy of local commentary. Later that day, I met the new homeowner's brother, Beto, chatting with friends outside his mother's home. He confirmed that his brother had just purchased a house in the Summerland area of Houston, adding without pause: "Ahora la raza ya tiene a donde llegar." (Now the crew has a place to crash).

Support from friends and residents from La Fama and surrounding barrios was also channeled through local neighborhood institutions, particularly soccer clubs. Studies such as Return to Aztlán (1987) have noted the role of Mexican soccer clubs and leagues as spaces for networking and information exchange among immigrants in U.S. urban centers. In Monterrey, where the soccer club is not an ethnic institution as much as it is a neighborhood association, the clubs received invitations from Houston teams led by immigrants from La Fama to play in special tournaments celebrated during Mexican national holidays. These invitations would be used by the organizers to obtain tourist visas at the local U.S. consulate. Once in Houston, visiting club players would be hosted by friends and former neighbors from La Fama. When some of the guests decided to stay and try their luck in the Houston labor market, they could normally count on the assistance of their hosts to provide them with lodging and tips about potential jobs. Still, even if the visitors returned home, the trip to Houston provided networking opportunities that could be capitalized on later.

Raúl Treviño, one of the pioneers showcased in the previous chapter, began organizing these matches between neighborhood soccer clubs from La Fama and its vicinity and region montano clubs in Houston as early as 1973. He was joined in this activity by Abelardo Lerma, a son of Elena Lerma, the female pioneer of this migratory circuit also documented in chapter 3. Abelardo owned a hardware store and had a life-long interest in amateur sports. Although moving to Texas was always a possibility—his mother was a U.S. citizen—he never left Mexico, perhaps because of a disability caused by a childhood bout with polio. For years, Abelardo would charter a bus to travel to Houston. The players, visas in hand, had no trouble crossing legally into the United States. In the Bayou City, Raúl and his brothers happily awaited their visitors, many of whom were former classmates and childhood friends. Inevitably, a few players would stay and not return to Monterrey. Although some were responding to their friends' invitation to stay, others had obviously planned the move beforehand. Thus, the soccer clubs—a truly neighborhood institution in the working-class districts of Monterrey—became a vehicle for many to cross the border legally through their regular visits to play in Houston.

The case of Rodrigo once again illustrates this phenomenon. During his stints in the United States, Rodrigo worked with a contractor he actually met at one of the soccer tournaments in the 1980s. Just like Raúl and Abelardo, Rodrigo and a friend organized such tournaments once a year, typically during Mexican Independence Day (September 16). Invitation in hand, the two of them would assemble a team, rent a van, and head for Texas. The connection with the contractor continued through the reciprocal visits of Houston-based teams to La Fama. Rodrigo did not seize on this contact until his future as a Textiles Monterrey worker started to look shaky in the late 1990s. When he decided to make the move and try his luck in Houston, he called on his friends and acquaintances in the Bayou City, who found him a job and welcomed him with a cookout.

Notably, this phenomenon did not develop in La Fama and nearby barrios alone. According to the testimonies of several interviewees, people from other colonias in the metropolitan area arranged similar schemes. In these other neighborhoods, some organizers had begun to charge money to those individuals who wanted to make the trip and be included on the team roster. According to Abelardo, the whole thing had become a form of coyoteaje (human smuggling), a realization that prompted him to discontinue this activity, given the obvious potential legal problems. Rodrigo provided similar reasons for ceasing his involvement in the organization of the trips. Still, the participation of
soccer clubs in binational amateur tournamets continues, and it has
even become a regular feature of urban districts in Monterrey with a
tradition of U.S. migration. More important, the example of the soccer
clubs illustrates how networks and institutions established in the midst
of an urban neighborhood were transformed by friends and vecinos into
social capital that reduced the cost of migration and diffused migratory
behavior. Once restricted to the neighborhood, these ties evolved into a
translocal network embedded in a binational context, facilitating travel
and border crossings and entry into the U.S. labor market.

The Strengths and Weaknesses of Neighborhood Weak Ties

These ethnographic findings beg two questions: What accounts for the
capacity of neighborhood ties to sustain international migration in La
Fama? And, are the ties between vecinos [neighbors] the urban equivalent
of rural paisano networks? I contend that both residential and
employment stability were fundamental conditions for neighbors to
develop a nexus with many of the characteristics often attributed to
paisano ties: trust, reciprocity, and a sense of obligation. The anonymity
and heterogeneity historically associated with urbanism were the excep-
tion rather than the norm in La Fama. It is worth recalling, as shown
in chapter 3, that the barrio had little internal differentiation and was
highly homogeneous, particularly in terms of occupations. In La Fama,
people had lived side by side for decades, often attending the same pri-
mary and middle schools, working in the same factories under lifelong
 tenure systems, and joining a handful of neighborhood sports clubs.
In other words, well before migration to the United States had begun,
residents were connected to each other through multiple social ties, con-
firming what Balán, Browning, and Jelin (1973: 321) had identified in
their landmark study on internal migration and social mobility, namely,
that “it is the neighborhood rather than the entire city that represents for
nearly all Monterrey families the meaningful unit of social interaction.”

La Fama residents also displayed a strong identification with their
neighborhood’s history and local institutions. For instance, they were
keenly aware and proud of La Fama’s unique history as the cradle of
the region’s industrialization. Skilled workers like Pablo Gómez, the union
leader introduced in chapter 3, were history aficionados, or cronistas
(chroniclers), as they saw themselves, writing and publishing an array
of booklets about the mill and its workers and management, promi-

local characters. These amateur cronistas often received support from
municipal authorities, the staff of the city archive, and full-time cul-
tural activists to help publish these booklets. As figure 3 illustrates, the
neighborhood’s annals were not only recorded in such booklets but also
displayed in the murals that dotted the streets surrounding La Fama’s
plaza. These murals evoke the nineteenth-century stone aqueduct, built
to bring water to the original textile mill. Although the aqueduct was
destroyed, three of its arches remained, becoming an emblem of sorts
for local residents.

Still, these neighborhood networks did not possess the same quali-
ties attributed to strong paisano ties. In the urban barrio, in contrast
with small rural settings, people were neither economically interdepen-
dent nor did they marry within the neighborhood. Barrio networks and
exogamic ties proved effective at making migratory social capital avail-
able to individuals and households without U.S. experience yet lacked
the enforceable trust and solidarity that rural networks—bounded by
paisanaje, kinship, and economic cooperation—possessed. As a result,
exercising social control upon individual behavior was a difficult
undertaking, while withdrawing support from fellow residents in the
context of migration was not met with the harsh penalties found with
closely bounded groupings. The case of Lino illustrates these arguments.
Lino left for Houston in 1983 when he lost his job as the barman of
La Atardeciera, La Fama’s most popular cantina, located within walking
distance of the mill. In Houston, Lino worked in construction, regular-
izing his immigration status through IRCA and quickly sponsoring the
migration of his family and his siblings. Although not a pioneer of the
circuit, Lino took pride in the shelter and clothing he provided his fel-

Despite these characteristics, which evidence the limitations of urban-
based networks, kinship and neighborhood ties combined proved very
effective in channeling sojourners from La Fama to Houston’s Summer-
land district. Thus, although regiomontanos in general were dispersed
throughout the metropolitan area, migrants from La Fama and surround-
ing neighborhoods formed their own daughter community (Massey et al. 1987) in Summerland. In doing so, they were not only supporting the cross-border migration of fellow friends and neighbors but also concentrating social resources and actively constructing the U.S. destination of their intermetropolitan migratory circuit (Massey, Goldring, and Durand 1994). In Summerland, immigrants congregated in a series of apartment buildings and single-family homes. The area’s main thoroughfare was dotted with remittance and transportation operations, including the courier vans specializing in servicing the Monterrey-Houston circuit (see chapter 5). Once in Summerland, women worked in a range of low-skilled, low-paying jobs, from stocking shelves at Wal-Mart to cleaning offices and houses and serving lunches at school cafeterias, whereas men joined the machine tool shops located near this district or the roving asbestos removal crews that labored all over the country, experiences to which I now turn.

THE LABOR MARKET INCORPORATION OF ‘REGIONMONTANOS’ IN HOUSTON

The findings of fieldwork I conducted in Houston, primarily in Summerland but also in historic Mexican neighborhoods such as Magnolia and El Segundo Barrio (the Second Ward), mirrored much of what I detected in Monterrey regarding the causes, characteristics, and social organization of migration in this binational circuit. Immigrants from Monterrey did not come from the ranks of the urban poor in that city. Instead, they belonged to the ample skilled and semiskilled working class that powered the industrial life of La Sultana del Norte. Just like the people I surveyed in La Fama, those I interviewed in Houston had worked in formal sector manufacturing pursuits at home, enjoying access to social wage benefits such as public and private health services, small loans, and low-cost owner-occupied housing. Their median education was equivalent to a middle school diploma—higher than the average Mexican immigrant—and was often accompanied by formal training in the vocational and technical schools that have long supplied industrial firms in Monterrey with much-needed skilled operatives. Employment stability had also characterized the occupational careers of regionmontanos before moving to the United States.

The interviews and ethnographic data I collected in Houston on the migratory patterns of sojourners from Monterrey were consistent with what I discovered in La Fama. Needless to say, to argue that Houston is the primary destination of immigrant regionmontanos borders on tautology, since this datum is based on observations gathered exclusively in the Bayou City. Still, the migratory histories of my interviewees confirm the direct connection that exists between Monterrey and Houston—one that is not mediated by staging areas or first arrivals in other urban or rural labor markets (i.e., the Rio Grande Valley, San Antonio, Dallas). Taking the Bayou City as the vantage point confirmed that the Monterrey-Houston connection is an entirely post-Bracero program phenomenon, maturing over the past twenty years as a result of economic transformations changing the face of urban-industrial Mexico. The urban-origin migrants that populate this circuit are not recurrent sojourners. They had undertaken one or two cross-border trips, often using tourist visas to gain entry into the United States and settling more or less permanently in Houston. Over time, some of those who overstayed their visas and those who were entirely undocumented obtained legal permanent residence, mainly through marriage and the provisions of the 1986 IRCA. More recent arrivals remained undocumented. In Summerland, the role of kinship- and neighborhood-based networks in the social organization of immigration is readily observable. In this district of the expansive Houston metropolitan area, family members reside within a few minutes’ drive or even walking distance of each other, and single friends from the old neighborhood room together in bachelor apartments, following the spartan lifestyle not uncommon among target earners.

What were the occupational experiences of these urban-origin migrants in the Houston labor market? How did the urban-industrial background of individuals and households figure in their incorporation into the local economy? The incorporation of these urban-origin migrants into the Houston labor market conforms yet also challenges the hypothesis that newcomers are generally employed in a secondary sector of low-skilled, low-wage, unstable jobs (Piore 1979). In Houston, regionmontanos were employed in an array of occupations and industries, some of which are typical of those open to an immigrant workforce in a dual labor market, or what Harris (1995) calls the “sweated trades in the developed countries”: waiters, cooks, and busboys in restaurants; domestic and home care attendants; laborers in construction and asbestos removal; low-skilled operatives in food processing and light manufacturing assembly plants; janitors and office cleaners; low-wage white-collar and service employees, such as security guards and cashiers; and teamsters and drivers in moving and transportation companies.

However, working-class immigrants from Monterrey had also devel-
opened a niche in the skilled trades of the oil tools and oil extraction industry of the Houston region. These were jobs that by all measures were high-skilled, well-paid, nonseasonal posts. Such positions were also highly segregated by sex, as women were for the most part absent from these occupations. The demand for workers and pay in such jobs were, nonetheless, largely determined by the cycles of the oil industry. It was during the boom period of the late 1960s and 1970s that regiomontanos were first recruited into these expanding sectors of the petroleum business. Their networks quickly replaced formal recruitment in extending the presence of workers from Monterrey as machinists, precision welders, industrial maintenance mechanics, and oil pipe repairmen.

The dramatic drop in oil prices during the early 1980s not only displaced thousands of native-born (both white and black), highly skilled service workers (Hagan and Rodríguez 1992) but also some of the high-skilled technical and blue-collar operatives from Monterrey. Those who lost their jobs or who could not find employment encountered different alternatives. Some returned to Mexico and waited for an upturn in the Houston economy, while others found work in the asbestos removal industry. This activity is unstable and dangerous indeed but offers wages that are twice as high as the salaries paid in other unskilled occupations of the service sector.

Despite the ups and downs of the metropolitan economy and the restructuring that followed the 1980s crisis in Houston, Mexican immigrants have increased their presence in skilled and semiskilled manufacturing occupations. Using census data from selected industries, table 6 shows how, in two decades, Mexican immigrants have more than tripled their participation in Houston's heavy manufacturing complex, from 4 percent in 1980 to 13.3 percent in 2000. In the metal industries subcategory in particular, the group's percentage contribution grew from 6 percent in 1980 to 22 percent in 2000. Similarly, an analysis of the 1997 American Community Survey (Capps 1999) shows that 23.3 percent of Mexican immigrants in Harris County (which contains the city of Houston) and neighboring Fort Bend County were employed as precision production, craft, and repair workers. Moreover, 13.7 percent were occupied as machine operators, assemblers, and repairers. When classified by industry, 12.5 percent and 5.8 percent of Mexican immigrants worked in durable and nondurable goods manufacturing, respectively. Taken together, these industrial categories are only surpassed by construction (22.3 percent) and retail trade (20.4 percent) (Capps 1999). In sum, these aggregate-level data also suggest that Mexican immigrants have made significant inroads into skilled manufacturing occupations and industries in Houston.

The fieldwork conducted in Houston also included ethnographic observations of two occupational niches created and reproduced by the networks of migrants from La Fama and Monterrey more generally. The first of such niches is located in the above-mentioned oil tools, technology, and service industry. What accounts for the formation of this niche? It developed through the initial arrival of a few pioneers during the late 1960s and early 1970s in response to active recruitment. As I described earlier, these pioneers became the foundation for the subsequent migration of relatives, friends, and neighbors from Monterrey. Ultimately, niche occupational incorporation cannot be explained solely on the basis of either the demand for skilled workers or the operation of networks. In addition to these networks, what made niche incorporation possible was the fact that regiomontano migrants possessed the industrial background and skills that allowed them to take on jobs as machinists, precision welders, sheet metal workers, and industrial maintenance mechanics. In fact, a distinct feature shared by many of my interviewees in Houston was the accumulation of long years of on-the-job training and experience in some of the largest and most technologically advanced industrial firms in Monterrey. Moreover, several machinists had actually received several years of formal training in technical and vocational schools in that city. The availability of a skilled industrial workforce south of the border was by no means an accident. In need of such a workforce, the Monterrey industrialists had invested much effort in establishing technological institutes and vocational schools, an effort epitomized by the founding of the Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey (popularly known as Tec de Monterrey) in
Although Tec de Monterrey is nowadays devoted to the education of business leaders and has expanded to the rest of Mexico and to other countries in Latin America, its original purpose was to produce the technical cadres and skilled labor force that industry needed.

Two vignettes selected from my Houston fieldwork illustrate the background and skills of these industrial workers now turned international migrants. Paco had completed formal studies as an automotive mechanic in Monterrey and had also accumulated many years of experience working for John Deere, where his job was to redesign agricultural machinery imported from the United States to adapt it to Mexican norms and systems. Prior to his job at John Deere, he had apprenticed at Chrysler in Mexico, where he had won a worldwide contest on auto mechanics. Despite these outstanding qualifications, Paco worked in a small auto repair shop in Summerland, his job mobility hampered by his undocumented status.

Much older than Paco, Ramiro was a machinist from La Fama who had completed a post-high school technical degree and had worked several years in local industries in Monterrey. His previous experience with manual, electrical, and fully computerized lathes allowed him to take on a job as a machinist in Houston, where he designed and produced high and low pressure valve parts for several oil companies and NASA. Still, most of his work consisted of programming numeric control machines. When I asked Ramiro about the single most important problem he faced at work, he paused for a moment and replied, “Trigonometry!” According to him, maintaining an adequate level of knowledge in trigonometry was necessary to solve most programming issues. Skills such as these explain the capacity of these manufacturing workers to create and maintain their own niche in the Houston labor market. It is worth noting that these immigrants had also developed weak ties based on occupation, which allowed them to exchange information about pay and other conditions across workplaces in Houston. This was particularly the case among machinists, who would move from one shop to the next on the basis of a salary increase and conditions that allowed them more control over the work process. Still, mobility and salary were also determined by legal status. Regardless of skill, operatives who lacked work and residency papers received lower wages and enjoyed fewer opportunities than their counterparts who were documented.

In some cases, these skilled industrial workers from Monterrey had colonized entire small manufacturing shops in Houston, ranging from the less to the more technically sophisticated companies, which used fully computerized machines. Early in my fieldwork in the Bayou City, I visited one of these shops, interviewing several operatives. In this workplace, machinists still used the less technologically advanced electromechanic lathes. Although the firm employed a truly small number of workers (there were three onsite during my visit), it is worth noting that all of them were part of a preestablished network of friends who not only shared a common place of origin in Mexico but had also attended the same machinist training school in Monterrey.

But not all the regionamontano industrial workers were able to find jobs in Houston that corresponded with their occupational background and skill levels. The second occupational niche, the asbestos removal business—an industry representative of the secondary labor market that typically incorporates most immigrants—reflected this reality. This industry rose as an alternative for a growing number of immigrants from La Fama and surrounding districts migrating in the 1980s and 1990s as the cycles of boom and bust forced the diversification of the Houston economy, making it less dependent on oil-related employment. Compared to other unskilled blue- and white-collar jobs, asbestos removal offered relatively high salaries. On occasion, asbestos laborers could even get a higher hourly rate than a skilled manufacturing worker, though these situations were rare. In 1999, regionamontano asbestos laborers were making $7.00 per hour, and by 2003, they made $13.50 per hour. Although workers used disposable protective suits and followed detailed safety protocols at jobs sites, asbestos removal presented serious health risks, such as lung and other types of cancer.

Viewed from the labor supply side, the business was organized through typical subcontracting arrangements in which a contractor assembled a crew that was then taken to different sites for work. Although Houston was the home base of these crews, they were also hired to remove asbestos almost anywhere in the United States, including other states in the South and places as far as the upper Midwest. This arrangement offered additional advantages for workers, such as higher hourly wages and paid room and board. Still, work was always temporary and had a seasonal component, with lower demand during the winter months. Asbestos removal was also segregated by ethnicity, with African Americans and Mexican immigrants making up most of the workforce. Mexican Americans and white Americans generally participated as supervisors. Migrants from La Fama and nearby neighborhoods in the Monterrey metropolitan area had also developed networks that channeled newcomers into this industry.
It is evident that due to the hazardous nature of the job, its lack of appeal to the native labor force (particularly whites), and the dominance of subcontracting, asbestos removal companies were very open to hiring undocumented workers, a fact that turned this activity into an easy gateway to the Houston labor market. Prospective laborers had to obtain a variety of falsified documents in addition to work and residency papers, including health assessments and certificates on how to handle hazardous materials. According to my observations and interviews with *regiomontano* migrants in Houston, these practices seemed more prevalent among asbestos removal workers than among machinists, welders, and other skilled manufacturing operatives. But as the province of undocumented workers, asbestos removal sites were also a frequent target of immigration enforcement and raids, which resulted in *regiomontano* laborers being deported from workplaces as faraway as South Dakota. By the middle of the current decade, as asbestos was effectively removed from buildings and other sites in most of the United States, jobs were becoming scarce and workers were moving to other types of jobs, especially in construction.

The evidence collected in Houston suggests that immigrants from Monterrey, and La Fama in particular, have become incorporated into a variety of industrial sectors and occupational niches. Most notable is their participation in the high-skilled occupations of the industrial manufacturing sector and the oil tools, technology, and maintenance industry. First attracted by the boom in the petroleum industry during the 1960s and 1970s and then propelled by industrial restructuring during the 1980s and 1990s at home, migrants from Monterrey have become part of the industrial working class of the Houston metropolitan area, transferring their technical know-how acquired in manufacturing settings south of the border.

**THE MONTERREY-HOUStON CONNECTION: TRANSNATIONAL COMMUNITY OR SEGMENTED IMMIGRANT POPULATION?**

Is the Monterrey-Houston international migratory circuit an instance of a transnational community? Should the heightened levels of cross-border contact, frequent trips, and binational social networks connecting Houston and Monterrey be interpreted as evidence of immigrant transnationalism? In some respects, the Monterrey-Houston connection is a poster child for both elite and grassroots transnationalism. The two cities are linked by a highly developed communications and transporta-

tion infrastructure. Several toll roads and highways connect Monterrey and Houston via the border cities of Laredo, McAllen, and Brownsville, Texas. Dozens of bus companies service the two cities every day. In late 2005, ten nonstop flights departed the Houston Intercontinental Airport for Monterrey daily. The *regiomontano* industrial elites and the city's upper middle class are frequent consumers of Houston's medical, professional, and commercial services, including its shopping centers and amusement parks. By the same token, physicians with practices based in Houston fly their patients to Monterrey to perform procedures not yet approved by U.S. authorities. Monterrey-based corporations have established branches and have acquired manufacturing facilities in Houston, while business leaders and officials from the Bayou City often conduct trade missions to La Sultana del Norte. Houston corporations also conduct head-hunting activities in Monterrey, which is northern Mexico's most important university center and home to the country's largest private university system—the Tec de Monterrey. It is not uncommon to find engineers and professionals recruited in Monterrey working for Houston-based firms, a trend bound to increase as a result of NAFTA and the exchange programs established by leading universities of these two cities (Greater Houston Partnership 2000).

The ease of the Monterrey elite and middle class in straddling the border, moving back and forth between countries, contrasts with the difficulties encountered by working-class *regiomontanos*. To be sure, the mostly working-class individuals and families from La Fama and other Monterrey neighborhoods who have migrated to Houston have developed an intense social field linking these two major cities of Mexico and the United States from below—to use Guarnizo and Smith's (1998) characterization of immigrant transnationalism. But while their networks effectively link and bridge these two cities across the international boundary, the border and, in this sense, the state loom larger than ever in their sojourning. Whereas the people of northeast Mexico moved back and forth across the border with relative ease during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, from the 1920s (a decade that includes the forced repatriations of Mexicans, preceded by the creation of the Border Patrol in 1924) to the present, the trend has been one of increasing curbs to immigration, hardening of the international boundary, and asserting state power and control over cross-border population flows in general (González Quiroga 1993, 2001; Mora-Torres 2001; De León 1989). Although the U.S. government has been a major actor in these historical trends, the Mexican state has also sought to control emigration, estab-
lishing guest worker programs and criminalizing undocumented migration and the use of Mexico’s territory as a staging area for clandestine entry into the United States by nationals of other countries (Hernández 2002).

The migration of regiomontano urbanites is firmly nested in and shaped by these sociohistorical forces. Thus, there is little in this migratory circuit that is trans, or beyond, the national and the nation-state. On the contrary, state institutions are present and engage migrants at every step of the social and political process of migration—with the host state erecting numerous barriers to entry and long-term immigration (Zolberg 1999). The reality I observed in this binational circuit is not of migrants transcending the national but one of migrants challenging the receiving country’s consistent effort to keep them out. Such uneven confrontation—what Rodríguez (1996) has called the “battle for the border”—has had long-lasting consequences for sojourners and their families, even when migrants can make it past the U.S.-Mexico border and when dependents have decided or have been forced by circumstances to remain in Monterrey. The most important of these consequences is the dispelling of the notion of a transnational community. Even when looking exclusively at the migrants from La Fama and their daughter settlement in Houston’s Summerland district, it is obvious that this otherwise highly homogeneous group (in class and occupation) is stratified by migratory legal status. As Menjivar (2006) has also argued in the context of Salvadoran and Guatemalan flows, such differentiation, imposed by the host state in the context of immigration, determines both the kinds of exchanges and the activity patterns individuals and families can sustain across borders and the experiences of incorporation (and nonincorporation) into the United States they endure. Instead of members of a transnational community, then, regiomontano workers have become part of a segmented immigrant population.

Citizens and Residents

Immigrants with U.S. citizenship and legal permanent residence engaged in frequent and diverse transborder contacts with the relatives, friends, and neighbors that remained in Monterrey. Taking advantage of the relative proximity between the two cities, these individuals and their families traveled the little more than four hundred miles separating the metropolises as often as two to four times a month—usually during weekends. Still, a more common pattern was one of a handful of trips scattered throughout the year. Visiting aging parents and young families left behind; attending family events, such as weddings, quinceañeras (sweet fifteen celebrations), baptisms, and funerals; seeing doctors and dentists; and conducting informal business activities, like bringing used clothes and other goods to sell in local flea markets and in private homes, were all reasons to travel to Monterrey. On any given weekend, walking the streets of La Fama, I observed the makeshift businesses migrants set up in the front rooms and porches of their homes, stocked with clothes, shoes, and used appliances, including refrigerators and stereo systems, originally purchased in Houston. Neighbors and passersby would stop to inquire about the price of these items. The neighborhood flea markets also had stands displaying similar merchandise.

Thus, men and women holding U.S. residency and citizenship documents sustained the most varied and frequent types of contacts, traveling with ease between Monterrey and Houston, taking advantage of the proximity and the sophisticated communications and transportation infrastructure connecting these cities. Hence, those sanctioned by the U.S. and Mexican governments to cross the border—bearing the most “national” of documents, passports and visas—were the most “transnationally” oriented migrants. Through their frequent presence in Monterrey, Houston-based individuals and families managed to participate and include relatives and friends in activities and events that not only contributed to reproduce their networks but also allowed them to assert their newly found social status derived from migration. Many of the immigrants in this cohort had moved to the United States during the early days of the Monterrey-Houston flow and had benefited from the sponsorship of employers, which enabled them to obtain a green card. Others had immigrated either before or right after the passage of IRCA and had secured U.S. legal residency through its amnesty and Special Agricultural Worker (SAW) programs. The case of José Lerma, son of pioneer migrant Elena Lerma and brother of Abelardo Lerma, the organizer of Monterrey-Houston soccer tournaments, illustrates this argument. Holding U.S. citizenship and living in Houston with his family, José began collecting recycled baseball items to donate to the baseball junior league in which he played during his childhood in Monterrey. This first venture was motivated by his intention to “repay” the league for the formative experiences of his early years in that city. The success of this endeavor motivated José to suggest to the principal of a local elementary school in Houston where he was a physical education teacher’s assistant the idea of a base-
ball players' exchange between the school's team and the junior league in Monterrey. The exchange incorporated children and adult members of the Summerland district in Houston and La Fama and neighboring districts in Monterrey and included reciprocal visits by each team. When the Texas team played in Monterrey, local families hosted children and guardians in their homes and prepared meals to celebrate their visit while neighborhood newspapers reported on the games against regionomontano teams. Even though U.S. citizenship allowed him to go back and forth between Houston and Monterrey, José's transnational activities could not be carried out seamlessly. Several of the primarily Mexican and Central American schoolchildren participating in the program from Houston were undocumented and could not risk leaving the United States. According to José, during the trip to Monterrey, Mexican immigration authorities did not grant entry to a Vietnamese child. Finally, once he lost his job as a teacher's assistant (and in the absence of a Houston-based regionomontano hometown association), José also lost the institutional support he needed to organize the baseball tournament, bringing his binational sports and community project to an end.

U.S. citizenship and legal residency allowed Houston families to turn to their relatives in Monterrey for long-term childcare, particularly during the summer school break. For immigrant parents, having their children spend the summer months in Monterrey was part of a strategy to deal with the risks of urban poverty—keeping their young away from gangs, drugs, and violence—and to manage the often difficult process of acculturation to the United States by instigating “Mexican cultural values” among their children. In my interviews, mothers and fathers often expressed concern and even outrage about the fact that their own children could bring charges against them when physical punishment had been used to solve a disciplinary problem at home. In this context, frequent visits to Monterrey and long stays under the supervision of grandparents and other relatives provided the opportunity to reproduce traditional child-rearing strategies and to reassert parental control.

Tourist Visa and Border-Crossing Cardholders

Contrast this group with those who have moved to Houston seeking employment or reunification with their families in the Bayou City, crossing the border with the help of a tourist visa or a border-crossing card (BCC). According to my neighborhood survey and the ethnographic observations conducted in both cities, this was a large segment of U.S.-bound migrants in La Fama. While the tourist visa tended to facilitate the border-crossing experience, these individuals had to use false papers or borrow authentic documents from relatives or friends to work in Houston. Even though these individuals did not consider themselves mojados (wetbacks), they were fully aware of their precarious status and behaved accordingly. Like undocumented workers who consciously keep a low profile, they followed a well-known daily routine of de la casa al trabajo y del trabajo a la casa (from home to work and from work to home) to minimize the risk of getting caught. Still, it is not surprising that a crucial aspect of their experience involved the very act of crossing the international boundary through a port of entry along the Texas-Mexico border.

Rafael and Rodrigo, two young men from La Fama whose reasons for looking for work in Houston were described in chapter 3, used tourist visas to cross the border legally. While Rodrigo had traveled to Houston a handful of times, first as an organizer of soccer games and later as a construction worker, Rafael had kept a job as machinist in the Bayou City for nearly ten years, returning to Monterrey every two weeks to see his wife and children. While holding a tourist visa allowed for this pattern of back-and-forth movement, such a visa did not fully guarantee uneventful admittance into the United States. Coming into the country through ports of entry along the Rio Grande, border crossers were required to apply for a six-month-long I-94 permit allowing them to travel inland. This was often a critical moment in the individual’s sojourning experience since it involved several minutes of interaction with a customs or immigration official. A man in the prime of his productive years, such as Rafael, would have to prove that he had a job back in Monterrey and submit upon demand evidence such as pay stubs and utility bill receipts. In addition, he would have to provide material proof that he was indeed a tourist: cash or other means of financial support, an invitation to a wedding or function if that was the stated purpose of the trip, and luggage that matched the alleged duration of the visit. If the applicant seemed hesitant, the official would conduct a highly invasive check of his wallet (or purse in the case of women), emptying its contents while looking for evidence that betrayed his stated intentions: a Texas-issued identification card, stubs, or receipts demonstrating previous presence in the United States. While conducting this check, the official would also verbally probe for clues demonstrating that the individual was lying, taunting him in such a way as to provoke contradictions and mistakes in his account. In this highly unequal interaction,
in view of everybody present in the offices of the port of entry, the immigrant would often be infantilized and verbally humiliated—an outcome I observed multiple times during my own coming and going across border cities from Laredo–Nuevo Laredo to Brownsville–Matamoros.

Although seasoned border crossers like Rafael were normally prepared for these eventualities, even experienced sojourners could make mistakes, such as having let the I-94 expire while still in the United States. In short, there was always the possibility of getting caught and, as a result, being denied entry and turned back or, worse, having the actual visa seized and cancelled. Those turned back could try their luck at some other port of entry, especially individuals with the flexibility of traveling in a private vehicle or in one of the many informal van courier services providing transportation to migrants in the Monterey-Houston circuit. For those crossing the border with a tourist visa, the perils of the migratory journey did not end with a seemingly uneventful passing through the port of entry, particularly when traveling by bus. A few miles inland, at the checkpoints along the main highways leading to Houston, the Border Patrol would still try to purge these busloads of people who, in the eyes of the agents, did not fit the profile of the short-term leisure traveler but instead were actual immigrant workers. Because of these heightened risks, even an uneventful crossing using a BCC was often followed by long periods of immobility, as going back to Mexico and then having to return to the United States would only bring the individual to face-to-face contact with immigration and other border enforcement authorities.

Needless to say, immigrants found creative alternatives, deploying resources from either side of the border to deal with such immobility. During one of my early fieldwork stints in Houston in the mid-1990s, I interviewed Guadalupe, a middle-aged woman who had crossed the border together with her family using a tourist visa. Although she could return to Monterrey anytime she wanted, she was keenly aware of the risk of being detected by U.S. immigration authorities if she attempted to reenter the country. Recently arrived and without credit or cash in hand, she was struggling to purchase the appliances she needed to set up her new household. In charge of domestic chores, her most pressing need at the time I met her was buying a washing machine. Unable to go to Monterrey and bring her own perfectly working household items back, she found out that she could use her Sears credit card, issued in Mexico, to purchase a washing machine in a Sears store in Houston. The appliance was delivered to her apartment in this city, while the sale was billed, in pesos, to her home in Monterrey. In taking advantage of the ubiquity of a multinational corporation, Guadalupe found a practical solution to a problem derived from her own immobility. Still, her experience also illustrates how the state casts its shadow on an immigrant's behavior long after a successful and even legal entry into the country. Here, the true transnational actor was not Guadalupe but Sears.

Resident Undocumented Population

While there was a clear discontinuity between citizens and residents, on the one hand, and tourist visa border crossers, on the other hand, there was a kind of continuum between border-crossing cardholders and undocumented sojourners. As shown above, a botched encounter with a U.S. government official could turn one of these visa holders into an undocumented immigrant. More important, however, is that legal entry was for many a first step into a clandestine existence in the United States. In Summerland, many people had first entered Texas using a BCC and overstayed their visas. They included unaccompanied male and female target earners who roomed with relatives in the many apartment complexes of the area as well as spouses, children, and even elderly parents joining a head of household who had moved to Houston first. Needless to say, there were some who had never had a tourist visa, having crossed the border clandestinely with the assistance of one of La Fama's local smugglers.

Although a few regiomontanos who had migrated during the late 1980s and early 1990s had been able to regularize their status through late amnesty provisions and to apply for legal residence on behalf of family members, many remained undocumented throughout the entire research period (1995–2005). The term transnational and its variants do not capture the essence of their social lives, whether viewed from the standpoint of the receiving country or from the perspective of the larger Mexico-U.S. migratory system. These men, women, and children had become part of the resident undocumented population in the United States. What struck me about this segment of the Monterrey origin population in Houston was not their transnational orientation but their social and physical immobility. Immigration and border enforcement policies (the Immigration and Welfare Acts of 1996 and Operation Rio Grande) and global events (9/11 in particular) that ensued during the 1990s and early part of the present decade appeared to trap undocumented immigrants inside the United States, significantly limiting their
ability to move and travel—if not impeding their cross-border mobility altogether.

In the absence of a new amnesty or legalization program that could change this situation, over the decade-long study period, conditions only worsened. Replicating border enforcement strategies first implemented in El Paso and San Diego, U.S. officials beefed up policing resources along the urban areas of the Rio Grande in 1997. In addition, the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) of 1996 further criminalized undocumented migration, increasing the penalties for document fraud and unauthorized reentry, expediting removal, and making retroactive a newly broadened definition of aggravated felony—a crime punishable with deportation (U.S. Department of Justice 1997). As a result of these increasingly restrictive policies, in 2003, those lacking papers would pay as little as $35 for a one-way trip by bus to Monterrey but faced a $2000 smuggler’s fee to return to Houston (with no successful outcome guaranteed). The smuggling fee was striking not only because of the relative proximity between the two cities but also because it had nearly tripled in less than ten years—up from $700 in 1993. Most of the undocumented could only afford this hefty expense and the risks of a clandestine reentry in the case of family emergency, such as the death of a parent.

The social experience and consequences of membership in this resident undocumented population varied depending on multiple factors, such as gender, marital status, whether the family was divided between Houston and Monterrey or all members lived under one roof in the United States, and the legal status of household members. I frequently encountered both single men and entire nuclear families as part of this resident undocumented population. The case of Teo illustrates the experiences of male target earners who had migrated to Houston, leaving their families behind. Teo was a skilled manufacturing worker with a background as an industrial mechanic and welder in Monterrey. During his first stint in the United States in 1993, he crossed into Texas using a tourist visa, and for eight months he worked removing asbestos in Houston. He went back to Mexico, where he set up his own taco stand, a business that failed two years later. Teo returned to Houston in 1996, again using his BCC. This time he found work in a wrought iron shop, a job in which he could use much of his knowledge as a welder. Teo did not go back to Monterrey to see his family until 2003. But when he tried to reenter the United States, immigration officials confiscated his tourist visa, forcing him to enter clandestinely after paying $2000 to a coyote.

Teo’s case is relevant because it exposes multiple dimensions of the social life of a resident undocumented individual. Teo is not a regular industrial welder. At the shop where he has worked since 1996, he has become a craftsman, creating many of the wrought iron gates and fences that adorn River Oaks and other highly exclusive neighborhoods in Houston. During one of my visits to his place in Summerland, he showed me a photo album with pictures of his creations, some of which are sold for tens of thousands of dollars. On this occasion, Teo also proudly shared with me photographs of a wrought iron stand he built for a museum exhibit in Amsterdam. The stand would support a projector for a multimedia show using light and photography. Even though Teo had not designed the structure, he had worked closely with the artist and was proud that his creation was showcased in an international venue. Despite this success, he was making $17 an hour at the shop. Teo was planning to establish his own business in Monterrey, saving and investing in tools that he purchased in Houston and shipped to Mexico with the courier vans traveling between the two cities several times a week. He also remitted about $1600 a month to his family in Monterrey.

When I first met Teo in 1996, he was sharing an apartment with other men from La Fama. Many of these men were married, were expected to send their earnings home, and were therefore living a spartan existence in Houston. Their living quarters were always sparsely furnished, with up to ten people cramming into the small two-bedroom apartment. There was never a phone line, so nobody would be left with a costly bill of international long-distance calls—an issue that became less important over time as wireless communications and calling cards became readily available. Residents would come and go, partly as a result of their work in asbestos removal, which took some of them away from Houston for weeks in a row. But in the absence of their wives and children, these men also behaved like unattached males, drinking heavily, especially on weekends, consuming marihuana at least sporadically, and establishing casual sexual relations with women in the neighborhood. Their rowdy behavior often got them in trouble with the managers of the apartment complex, who on more than one occasion forced them to move.

Women were aware of the perils of prolonged exposure to these kinds of conditions. Although I never met Teo’s wife, I did interview Nicolás’s spouse, Lilia. Nicolás’s reasons for migration were showcased in chapter 3. At the beginning of his migratory experience, Nicolás underwent a similar situation to Teo’s and the other lone target earners from La
Fama. As soon as Lilia caught up with him in Houston, she decided to move the family to Chicago. She explained the reasons for this move: “The men who have migrated from this neighborhood have not made any progress. People have not made any progress. The ones who leave [for the United States] are males and they do not get settled. A man has more freedom. When they leave by themselves, men just stagnate. They make good money working in asbestos; they make good money but spend it. They face no obligations, unlike married men. That’s why it’s so important that the couple migrates together, not the man alone.”

The concerns expressed by Lilia were obviously not new to people separated by migration. I argue, however, that the restrictive immigration policy and border enforcement strategies in place from the mid-1990s onward actually exacerbated and prolonged separation. In contrast with the Mexican sojourners of the undocumented era of Mexico-U.S. migration, whose border-crossing practices reflected the “revolving door” and “cat-and-mouse” strategies of border policing (Massey, Durand, and Malone 2002), the regionmontano migrants, many of whom had entered the United States during the post-IRCA era, could not afford a similar back-and-forth mobility. One direct consequence of this new environment is that while pre-IRCA Mexican migrants were able to spend a three-to-four-month rest period at home with their spouses and children every year, Teo and his fellow undocumented arrivals from La Fama endured separations lasting several years, a pattern that resembles Salvadoran and Guatemalan flows (Menjívar 2006). Thus, in the era of globalization and transnational migrations, these clandestine immigrants had become less and not more transnational than their mostly rural predecessors of the 1960s and 1970s. In addition, an even more stringent set of immigration and border enforcement policies appeared to be leveling out, at least in some respects, Mexican and Central American migrations, despite the distinct causes and geographic characteristics of these flows.

Undocumented families experienced an even more complex situation. In a country where immigration policy depends on the federal government, not on states and localities, and where enforcement is highly concentrated along the border, not in the interior, making it past the international boundary represented for these families the possibility of a progressive integration into the economic and social fabric of their new place of residence. The social lives of these families were not oriented toward a transnational social field: Clandestinely present in the country, they were unable to travel to Mexico; when families were reunited in Houston, household heads had few reasons to remit money to Monterrey. After more than a decade of presence in the United States, many of these families experienced a paradoxical situation. They were clearly not members of the American polity (Waldinger and Fitzgerald 2004), yet their lives by no means entailed a complete underground existence. On the contrary, adults had bank accounts, had taxes withheld from their paychecks, started their own business ventures, paid into Social Security accounts, received Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) vouchers, were credit-worthy customers of car dealerships and department stores, and, in some cases, had even managed to purchase a home. Their children attended public schools and, when born in the United States, were entitled to receive federal and state assistance.

In certain cases, the efforts of these undocumented immigrants to avoid detection led them to deepen their integration into local economic life. This was the experience of Javier Guzmán, a former computer systems supervisor at an auto plant in Monterrey. After twenty-seven years on the job, Javier and his wife and four children moved to Houston in 1988. Having arrived in this city during the implementation of IRCA, which included an employer’s sanctions program, Javier soon realized that many firms sought verification of his legal status, a situation also faced by his adult sons. To get around this circumstance, he decided to set up his own business: a used tire recycling operation in which he and his sons could be self-employed—and avoid immigration document inspection. The investments that this venture required, albeit modest (a truck, commercial permits, a few tools) increased, not diminished, Javier’s stakes in Houston, providing the means for a deeper incorporation into the United States.

Many of the families who were part of this resident undocumented population were also characterized by the mix of legal statuses of their members. Having moved to Houston first, the adult male members of such families often lacked any type of legal documentation. They had entered the country clandestinely and were holding jobs the same way. Women and children who had later followed the breadwinner using a tourist visa or BCC had also become undocumented after overstaying their visas. In contrast, younger members, whether children or grandchildren of the adult cohabiting couple, having been born in the United States, were American citizens. During the late 1980s and early 1990s, when many Mexican immigrants were readjusting their status under the provisions of IRCA, this blend of immigration statuses was often a temporary situation. But as the avenues for legalization closed, the wait-
A FAMILY'S EXPERIENCE

The experience of the González family illustrates how the cross-border activities of migrants and their families are affected by border enforcement policies. In my fieldwork in Houston in 1995, I met the González family, whose immigration history and experiences shed light on the challenges faced by undocumented residents and their families. The González family, like many others, entered the United States clandestinely, seeking better opportunities and a better life.

Felipa and Marcos migrated to Houston in 1988, following three of their siblings. They settled in Houston and began working in asbestos removal, a job that exposed them to health hazards. Despite the challenges, they managed to send their children to school and take care of their family.

In 1991, Marcos applied for regularization under the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986, which allowed undocumented immigrants to apply for legal status if they had been in the United States for a certain period of time. The process of regularization lengthened the period of enforcement, and the penalties for clandestine entry increased during the 1990s, the existence of the same household became a long-term reality.

Felipa and Marcos married in 1986, and in 1993, they welcomed their first child, Laura. They lived in a small apartment in a complex located on one of the main streets of Summerland, where many families were being hosted by Antonio and Raquel. Antonio's work in asbestos removal was subject to deportation and, if discovered, the consequences were severe. In 1997, in the context of the climate of fear created by the implementation of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1990 (INRA), and a series of Border Patrol sweeps in Monterrey and Houston, several undocumented families from La Fama decided to send women and children to Mexico, leaving behind adult men in Texas.

Felipa and Marcos moved to a more stable yet poorly paid work as a school custodian. They found no trace of a transnational life in Marcos's and Felipa's first child in 1993. Felipa and the baby joined Marcos in Houston, undocumented sister and her Texas-born children knew only the stamps, WIC, and a bank account. Still, having received food stamps, WIC, and Medicaid during their time in Houston and the United States, they were able to travel to Mexico with their undocumented parents and one sibling. Their-Texas-born children knew only the United States.

Marcos's and Felipa's experience illustrates how the cross-border activities of migrants and their families are affected by border enforcement policies. In contrast, Antonio and Raquel were able to travel to Mexico with their undocumented parents and one sibling. Their-Texas-born children knew only the United States.

In Houston, Antonio worked in asbestos removal, and Raquel found employment as a babysitter and later in a food-processing plant making frozen desserts. In 1993, Antonio became a permanent resident of the United States, and Raquel found a special permit. In contrast, Antonio and the two U.S.- born children were able to travel and visit family in Monterrey. When I first met Antonio, Raquel, and their four children, they lived in a small apartment in a complex located on one of the main streets of Summerland, where many families were being hosted by Antonio and Raquel. Antonio's work in asbestos removal was subject to deportation and, if discovered, the consequences were severe. In 1997, in the context of the climate of fear created by the implementation of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1990 (INRA), and a series of Border Patrol sweeps in Monterrey and Houston, several undocumented families from La Fama decided to send women and children to Mexico, leaving behind adult men in Texas.

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The Monterrey-Houston Connection

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trafficking and accelerated the deportation of so-called criminal aliens. This legislation did not become effective until 1997.

By 2000, Antonio had fulfilled the terms of his probation. That same year Raquel and her two oldest children received their permanent residency documents, ending a long period of what Menjívar calls “legal liminality,” namely, a situation in which the immigrant is “not fully documented or undocumented but often straddling both” statuses (Menjívar 2006: 100). With papers in hand, Raquel immediately visited her parents and siblings in Monterrey. With all the members of the family as either legal residents or citizens of the United States, Antonio and Raquel were able to take advantage of business opportunities requiring the back-and-forth movement across the border. Also in 2000, a popular courier van operation shuttling remittances, passengers, and parcels between Houston and Monterrey closed down after nearly twenty years of providing services to immigrants from La Fama and surrounding neighborhoods (see chapter 5 for a full account). Antonio saw this development as an opportunity to enter the business. Using his old Suburban, he started traveling to Monterrey every weekend, taking with him and his family used goods, remittances in cash, and a few riders. Sometimes, depending on the demand, his oldest son would drive a second vehicle. In my conversations with him, Antonio always downplayed the significance and profitability of this business. However, he told me that he could make $1000 profit per trip, an amount that clearly dwarfed his weekly income based on his $13,50 an hour asbestos removal job. Still, Antonio did not quit his regular job, a move that allowed him to remain relatively inconspicuous as he undertook his cross-border courier enterprise. Antonio’s attempt to keep a low profile stood in contrast with the important consequences this business had for his standard of living and his status among immigrants as well as stay-at-home individuals and families from La Fama. He was able to move into a single-family home in Houston in 2002—not too far from the apartment where he and his family had lived for more than ten years.

Being legal residents of the United States allowed the Gonzálezes to celebrate their only daughter’s sweet fifteen party, or quinceañera, in Monterrey—while earnings from the courier business allowed them to pay for it. For more than a year, as they traveled every weekend back and forth between Houston and Monterrey, Antonio and Raquel also planned Laura’s celebration. While Antonio delivered the remittances and parcels to households in La Fama and neighborhoods in the westernmost section of Monterrey’s metropolitan area, Raquel and Laura spent time organizing the religious ceremony and ballroom party that combined, make up the quinceañera celebration. While Raquel scouted for the church to hold the mass to give gracias a Dios and the ballroom for the fiesta, Laura attended catechism classes with the local priest and practiced the choreography she and her chambeñanes (male chaperons) would perform at the start of the dance. Laura was a very good student at her school in Summerland, where she earned top grades. Despite her intense transnational existence—attending school in Houston and spending weekends in Monterrey—she had told her parents that she wanted to join the U.S. Air Force after high school, a decision that worried and baffled her parents.

The day of the quinceañera, a limousine took Laura to the studio where a professional photographer took her picture and then to Monterrey’s Obispo (now a museum) dominating the entire city from the top of a hill. In the courtyards of the colonial-era monument, she was photographed wearing her light pink dress and tiara while holding a bouquet of white roses. She was late driven to the church, where she was the only quinceañera celebrated a mass. As Laura and her parents entered the building led by the priest their expensive outfits could only contrast with the small, austere church surroundings. The officiating priest seemed to pick up on such contrasts as he welcomed Laura and his family and apologetically noted the modestly furnished chapel. Laura and her mother wore long dresses, while Antonio and his oldest son wore matching off-white cowboy suits and hats—Antonio’s outfit alone costing more than $1000.

At the ballroom, a crowd of relatives and friends applauded as Laura and Antonio danced to an opening Waltz, followed by brothers, sisters and cousins who took turns briefly dancing with the quinceañera. Later, Laura changed attire to perform several choreographed pop, techne and merengue remixes with five chambeñanes. There were no damas (the quinceañera’s maids of honor) because most of Laura’s female friend lived in Houston and could or would not be allowed to travel to Monterrey. Wearing cowboy hats, baseball caps, and ordinary, working-class clothes, the guests danced away to the rhythm of cumbias, ranchera: and tejano tunes blasting off the sound system. After dinner, with Laura back in her quinceañera dress, a mariachi band entered the ballroom playing songs evoking the relation between parents and daughter. Antonio danced again with Laura and handed her a doll, symbolizing her last childhood present. The rest of the night belonged to the young who took over the dance floor until the end of the party.
To be sure, the *quinceañera* is a ritual involving multiple meanings, including the control of a woman's sexuality and body in the transition from childhood to adulthood, a socially constructed experience that Napolitano (1997) has called “becoming a mujercita” (becoming a little woman). But the celebration also carries meaning as “a demonstration of family status and prestige” (Napolitano 1997: 290). By holding the event in Monterrey, where more than three hundred guests attended the party, Antonio and Raquel demonstrated in front of their working-class family and friends their success in the United States and the economic mobility they had achieved through migration. In this sense, it is telling that Antonio and Raquel did not resort to the system of *padrinos* (godparents) to underwrite the cost of the beverages, the *quinceañera*'s dress, the ballroom rental fee, and other items. Raquel's siblings contributed to the celebration with a few hundred dollars, and Antonio's older brother paid for the mariachi band. Antonio and Raquel had come up with the bulk of the more than $10,000 invested in the event, a stratospheric amount for any working-class *regiomontano* (and even middle-class) family.

Their decision to hold the celebration in their hometown and the long and complex planning that led to the mass and party could also be interpreted as an affirmation of their ties to the kinship and friendship networks which originated in Monterrey. However, over the years, these networks had become binational in nature, while Antonio's economic fortunes had become progressively intertwined with them due to his cross-border courier activities. Arguably, Antonio and his wife did not need to use the *quinceañera* as an expressive statement of belonging to such networks. I recognize, however, that Antonio and Raquel could have different motivations for celebrating the *quinceañera* in Monterrey, as opposed to Houston. In my conversations on the topic with Raquel, she argued that the choice had to do with the fact that most of her siblings lived in Monterrey. In contrast, Antonio's own behavior was consistent with a “status and prestige” motivation foretold by his $1,000 outfit, including his $600 boots and $100 wallet, both made with crocodile hide.

CONCLUSION

Monterrey migrants have found in Houston their chief destination in the United States. But this fact is not the result of an accident or the natural outcome of the geographic proximity of these two cities. Responding to Houston's transformation into the global city of the oil industry in the 1960s and 1970s, local firms set out to recruit skilled manufacturing workers in Mexico, finding a plentiful source in Monterrey, the country's premier heavy manufacturing center. In La Sultana del Norte, a mix of kinship- and neighborhood-based networks has facilitated the U.S.-bound migration of new workers from the 1980s to the present. In this city, exogamous marriage appears to be expanding the migratory social capital available to men without prior sojourning experience. Contrary to what the scant scholarship on Mexican cities as sources of emigration has established, in La Fama and surrounding working-class districts, relations of friendship and vecinazgo have shown to be capable of sustaining international migration, a quality I attribute to the employment and residential stability and the emerging multiplex nature of ties established between neighbors.

In La Fama, even neighborhood institutions, such as the local soccer teams, have been used to organize and support migration to Houston. Still, despite their emerging multiplexity, these ties cannot be equated with the networks of rural Mexicans, for whom kinship and paisanaje (reinforced through endogamous marriage practices) and economic cooperation often overlap. As a result, if the beneficiary of assistance does not abide by certain norms of conduct, the provider of the aid can cut off the favor without fear of substantial consequences. Still, despite their limitations, these networks of friends and neighbors have been effective enough to channel emigrants from La Fama to a distinct number of neighborhoods in the northwest section of Houston and to specific occupational niches in this city's labor market.

Early migrant cohorts were incorporated into an array of oil-related industries dominating the economy of the Bayou City—from extraction to processing to oil tools and technology—which reflected the demands of the Houston labor market and the urban-industrial background of *regiomontano* workers. In these industries, immigrants have labored as machinists, mechanics, and precision welders, creating and maintaining the infrastructure of this nodal center of U.S. and global oil production and management. After the decline in oil prices of the 1980s and the ensuing restructuring of the Houston economy, new waves of mostly undocumented *regiomontanos* found employment in asbestos removal and other construction-related occupations. Despite these transformations, during the 1990s, skilled manufacturing workers from La Fama could still find employment as machinists and industrial mechanics in the Bayou City's large network of small- and medium-sized shops servicing the oil industry and NASA.
In Houston, neither people from La Fama nor immigrants from the larger Monterrey metropolitan area had established any kind of hometown association channeling collective cross-border activities. Correspondingly, neither the Mexican consular representatives nor the state government of Nuevo León were particularly keen on turning the Bayou City into a bastion of hometown politics. In the Monterrey-Houston circuit, cross-border activities were conducted individually and through families, households, and neighborhood-based networks in the form of private social and economic ventures. Still, an array of binationally organized cross-border activities occurred in this migratory circuit: charitable projects and sports tournaments, family celebrations, business enterprises, and cultural and religious exchanges. Although such a lively social field could be interpreted as proof of the existence of some sort of transnational community or of the transnational orientation of immigrants, I argue that the transnational label would mask a broader and more complex reality: The receiving state's immigration and border enforcement policies create an immigrant population segmented along the lines of legal status.

This interpretation is not devised to disprove the transnational approach to international migration—something that clearly cannot be done on the basis of a single case study. Rather, my aim is to argue that the contacts and exchanges that these urban working-class immigrants can effectively sustain with the sending country are largely (but not exclusively) contingent on their legal standing in the receiving polity—the United States. Not surprisingly, those regiomontanos who had acquired U.S. citizenship or permanent residence were, in fact, the leading transnationals in this circuit. In contrast, those who overstayed their tourist visas and undocumented sojourners were unable to participate in cross-border activities, or, at the very least, effective participation was made difficult. In the context of the hardening of border enforcement and an increasingly restrictive and punitive immigration policy, clandestine immigrants faced mounting obstacles to any cross-border movement. For these newcomers, the result was both social and physical immobility and long-term incorporation into the resident undocumented population in Houston.

These immigrants with their differentiated legal statuses interacted with each other in multiple and complex ways. As the case of the González family illustrates, multiple legal statuses could coexist under one roof for a long time, affecting what specific individuals but also the household as a whole could do. As legal statuses changed over time, new opportunities opened up for some while others saw their chances restricted. Thus, Antonio and particularly Raquel González and her Mexico-born children's acquisition of permanent legal status not only ended a lengthy period of immobility but also allowed them to initiate a business that entailed regular travel across the border, providing services to fellow regiomontanos whose undocumented status forced them to stay put. It is to these types of immigration-related services that I now turn.
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1 Conceptualizing the migration industry

Rubén Hernández-León

- The migration industry and the migration system’s cycle
- The migration industry in a field of “strange bedfellows”
- Conclusion

Migration theories have fundamentally ignored the role of the migration industry in the facilitation, regulation, control and institutionalization of international human mobility. The result is a gaping theoretical hole concerning the position, contribution and relations of profit-driven actors in the social organization of international migration. In recent years a spate of theoretical and empirical studies has begun to fill this gap. Concepts such as “migration industry,” “migration merchants,” “business of migration,” and “immigrant place entrepreneurs” have developed a new lexicon to theorize the actors and infrastructures that facilitate human mobility across borders. These efforts were pioneered by Robert Hamay, who coined the term “commerce of migration” to refer to the ensemble of labor, transportation and money brokers facilitating Italian emigration in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, his brilliant contribution came on the eve of a wave of studies on immigrant social networks which, by focusing on the relations of reciprocity and solidarity among migrants, largely overlooked the role of profit-driven brokers in the social process of migration.

In this chapter, I advance the theorization of the migration industry using two well-known constructs of the process of international migration and immigration. The first of these constructs, the “migration hump,” conceptualizes the rise and decline of a migratory stream through a series of distinct stages, each influenced by identifiable socioeconomic factors. The second construct, Aristide Zolberg’s “strange bedfellows of American immigration politics,” explains the positions and alliances of different actors in relation to immigration’s putative economic, political and cultural effects. Both constructs recognize the role of the migration industry, but only timidly and without a full-fledged consideration of the ways in which migration entrepreneurs, corporations and profit-driven private actors participate and connect with other stakeholders in the organization of international human mobility.

I engage these two constructs of migration and immigration to argue that the migration industry and its core and peripheral members play a more significant part in structuring international human mobility than has been acknowledged by most migration theories. I also utilize the migration hump and the strange bedfellows schemes to expand my prior work conceptualizing the migration industry. So far this work has focused on the role of migration entrepreneurs as facilitators of international human mobility and brokers of services demanded by sojourners in the context of migration. Building on Castles and Miller, I have defined the migration industry as the ensemble of entrepreneurs, firms and services which, chiefly motivated by financial gain, facilitate international mobility, settlement and adaptation, as well as communication and resource transfers of migrants and their families across borders.

However, the policies and practices of governments to regulate and manage migration also foster migration industries aimed at controlling and restricting cross-border mobility. For instance, Golash-Boza argues that private contractors, who “profit from massive enforcement expenditures,” form part of an immigration industrial complex functioning with a logic and dynamics similar to those of the prison and military industrial complexes. Historical and early sociological studies show that actors involved in migration facilitation and control have long intersected. For example, governments set up facilities at ports of embarkation and transportation hubs in order to separate out suitable and undesirable candidates for immigration. Governmental authorities rapidly realized that they could outsource some of these screenings and control tasks to steamship companies, a practice that nowadays has been extended to airlines. Recruiters and contractors have often fulfilled dual facilitation and control functions by not only assisting but also selecting and managing immigrant workers on behalf of employers and state institutions. As the introductory chapter argues, state control and enforcement functions are today outsourced to large corporations which profit from the incarceration, transport and deportation of migrants, and from the development of surveillance technology, software and data management to screen sojourners at airports, borders and coastal ports of entry.

Scholars have also analyzed the activities of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) invested in the rescue and rehabilitation of exploited and vulnerable mobile populations as yet another kind of migration
industry, the so-called “rescue industry.” Without profiting directly from either the facilitation or the control of migration, these actors have become salient players in the development of the interpretive frames and institutional infrastructures to manage particular kinds of migratory flows. Although often applied to the study of so-called trafficked migrants, the notion of a non-profit rescue industry can probably be extended to the analysis of actors involved in the resettlement of refugees. I locate this rescue industry in Zolberg’s scheme of “immigration allies.”

I illustrate the presence of a migration industry of facilitation, control and rescue in the migration hump and strange bedfellows theoretical constructs using contemporary and historical examples from the Mexico–United States and Central America–Mexico migratory flows. In the following section, I engage the migration hump to then analyze the migration industry in the field of “strange bedfellows of American immigration politics.” I close this essay by offering some concluding thoughts.

The migration industry and the migration system’s cycle

In its simplest version the migration hump posits that the number of people involved in a given migratory flow increases over time and reaches a zenith before it declines. The hump has four distinct stages: 1 initiation, 2 takeoff, 3 stagnation, and 4 decline (see Figure 1.1). Scholars using

The migration hump have been interested in the actors and mechanisms driving each stage as well as the overall “rise and demise” of the migratory cycle. Not surprisingly, different theories emphasize different, but not mutually exclusive, causal and intervening forces. For instance, network theory states that social ties are the most powerful factor spreading migratory behavior and allowing for the exponential growth of migration in the takeoff phase. In contrast, proponents of neoclassical economics might view networks as an intervening mechanism while ultimately attributing the increase in migration to wage differentials between countries. Similarly, while demographic theories might explain the decline of a migratory stream as a result of the exhaustion of the pool of emigration candidates, neoclassical economics would again explicate stage four of the migration hump as the likely outcome of wage convergence between sending and receiving areas.

Initiation

Migration scholars have long recognized the crucial role that migration entrepreneurs play in the initial stage of the cycle: often chartered by employers and governments, recruiters, smugglers and transporters search, stimulate, guide and move migrants, effectively connecting the demand and supply of migrant labor. In the absence of previously accumulated social capital, migrants rely completely on these brokers. But what exactly is the contribution of the migration industry in the initiation phase? Or, more precisely, do recruiters cause migration or do they only facilitate it, limiting their role to building the preliminary infrastructure for international mobility?

Recruitment played a seminal role in the initial stages of Mexico–United States migration in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. During this period, enganchadores (recruiters) traveled to western Mexico to find laborers for the booming US economy. The geographic area where these labor brokers concentrated their contracting efforts went on to become Mexico’s most important sending region. Although migrants soon developed individual knowledge and social networks that partly replaced the expertise of recruiters, the accumulation of migratory social capital would have been delayed for decades without the initial travails of labor agents.

As a path-dependent process, migration is shaped by decisions and events taking place in the earlier stages of its historical progression. This notion is at the heart of cumulative causation but has largely been applied to understanding how an individual’s migratory trip affects future sojourners by broadening the migratory social capital of the
collectivity. Using the same principle, I argue that the social capital that catapults the migration hump into a takeoff phase is fundamentally dependent on the knowledge and infrastructures deployed by recruiters in the initiation stage. Mexico–United States migration offers its own countercultural example. In contrast to the western region of Mexico, the southeastern section of the country was untapped by recruiters and other migration entrepreneurs. As a result, Mexico’s southeastern region remained the area with the lowest number of migrants bound for the United States. States located in the region, such as Veracruz and Yucatán, did not emerge as significant sending areas of US-bound migrants until the late twentieth century, and then thanks in part to the intermediation of recruiters.¹⁴

**Takeoff**

As mentioned above, theories and historical accounts of migration generally argue that the role of immigrant labor brokers subsides in the takeoff stage of the migration hump. Simply put, the maturation of kinship and friendship networks, the development of occupational niches and the increasing familiarity of newcomers with employment opportunities abroad make migrants less dependent on the services of recruiters.¹⁵ In his historical overview of European immigration to the United States, Bodnar contends that brokers who played such a critical role during the initial stages of migration were soon replaced by migrant networks, which had quickly become the depositories of migratory social capital:

Friends and relatives functioned so effectively, in fact, that they invariably superseded labor agents and “middlemen” in influencing the entry of newcomers into the industrial economy and were usually able to create occupation beachheads for those that followed.¹⁶

This interpretation is not incorrect so much as it is incomplete. To be sure, migration entrepreneurs do not disappear. On the contrary, their numbers grow, but once these entrepreneurs have sufficiently stimulated the supply of emigrants, they can manage and provide services based in the country of reception. This shift in the center of gravity of the migration industry from sending to receiving locations responds to changes characteristic of the takeoff phase: namely, the expansion of the migratory stream and the growth of immigrant satellite communities abroad. In turn, the exponential growth in the number of sojourners joining the flow offers entrepreneurial opportunities to the migrants themselves, who identify such opportunities by virtue of their membership in the social networks that sustain migration. In-group membership offers the chance to commodify solidarity; that is, to use migratory human capital as well as the individual migrant’s distinct position in a social network for personal monetary gain.¹⁷ This dual position as members of migratory networks and as leaders in the provision of migration-related services often allows contractors, transporters and smugglers to “blend in” (remaining invisible to authorities and even to researchers) and to take advantage of opportunities offered by the changing context of migration (i.e. increasing and shifting demand for immigrant labor). These migration entrepreneurs often begin their careers in a seemingly amateur fashion, prompted by fellow migrants and long-time employers who commission services on a casual basis.¹⁸ Still, the activities of some migration entrepreneurs might build on the networks and mobility infrastructures established by ethnic traders and contraband runners.

During the takeoff stage migration entrepreneurs find a growing clientele in the expanding immigrant settlements in the country of destination. In these settlements contractors and transporters can recruit immigrant labor, while immigrant banking, remittance and courier service providers thrive and operate intermingled with other ethnic and immigrant entrepreneurs. As the takeoff stage unfolds, mainstream businesses join this growing market of migration-related services, developing their own operational infrastructure but also partnering with ethnic migration entrepreneurs. This is the case of money transfer corporations, which become ubiquitous in immigrant neighborhoods by using ethnic grocery stores as points of sale.

States of destination respond to a growing stream and stock of immigrants by devising policies aimed at managing and controlling immigration. An unintended effect of these policies is the revitalization of migration facilitators who, working on behalf of either employers or sojourners (or both), provide the know-how and infrastructure to circumvent the obstacles raised by these policies. For instance, the introduction of employer sanctions in the US Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 revitalized the role of contractors in the United States as firms, and individuals sought to deflect legal responsibility for the hiring of undocumented workers. This was by no means a new phenomenon. The Foran Act, the 1885 legislation that prohibited admission of contract workers to the United States, increased the reliance of both employers and immigrants on labor brokers, who not only continued to recruit and direct newcomers to their jobs but also instructed them how to deceive immigration authorities at Ellis Island.¹⁹ The contemporary deployment of heightened control and enforcement measures at the US–Mexican border has reinvigorated the demand for
smugglers, whose skills are once again needed despite the vast reservoir of migratory social capital Mexican migrants possess. In general, immigration restriction during this phase of the migration hump ends up spurring the demand for informal and clandestine facilitators who either find loopholes in policies and legal frameworks or simply bypass the walls and barriers to mobility erected by states.

On the supply side, sending states also promote emigration policies that reanimate the migration industry during the takeoff stage. Intent on relieving population and employment pressures and capturing remittances, sending states tolerate informal migration entrepreneurs on the one hand, and often outsource the day-to-day management of emigration programs to private firms on the other hand. Whether by illicit or licit means (or a combination of both), these actors identify, recruit and train workers with the purpose of placing them in jobs overseas. In Mexico, the recruitment of workers for the United States’ H2A and H2B temporary visa programs (for employment in agriculture and labor-intensive services) is conducted by informal recruiters whose activities are tolerated by local authorities. Recently US farmworkers unions and newly established state government agents have sought to broker recruitment between migrants and employers in an attempt to organize the market and squeeze intermediaries out of the relationship.

Finally, the takeoff stage is typified not only by a thriving industry of migration facilitation, but also by the emergence and partial outsourcing of immigration management and control measures to private actors. As migratory flows grew dramatically during the nineteenth century, host country governments began to establish migratory control outposts at points of transit and embarkation. At the same time, they required private transportation companies to provide passenger lists and to weed out undesirables and people who could be rejected at ports of entry. Although the outsourcing of control served a then primarily qualitative purpose, it predated and established the foundations for today’s complex of migration control, which is focused on the regulation of large migratory flows and characterized by the transfer of extensive extraterritorial management functions to private firms.

Stagnation and decline

The migration hump’s third and fourth phases—stagnation and decline—signal a dramatic deceleration and subsequent drop in out-migration. Migration theories generally explain stagnation and decline as a result of demographic and economic factors. These factors include decreasing numbers of eligible emigration candidates in the sending country and wage convergence between sending and receiving countries. Labor market saturation and declining demand for immigrant workers at the destination are additional economic factors leading up to the slowdown and subsequent fall in migration characteristic of the stagnation and decline phases. With fewer sojourners, the migration industry handles smaller numbers of people and begins to run out of “clients.” In this context, migration entrepreneurs might take advantage of the infrastructures they helped put in place and turn to ethnic and “nostalgia” markets; that is, markets that cater to migrant and ethnic diaspora demands for food, clothing and cultural merchandise from the home country. Needless to say, some might simply run out of business.

However, stagnation and decline can also be the consequence of policies seeking to reduce migration, deter sojourners and redirect migratory flows. A thriving industry and expanding infrastructure of migration control has become an important component in the design and implementation of these policies as governments outsource traditional state functions (i.e. incarceration, in-transit detention, border surveillance and deportation) to private actors and even to third-party governments. Efforts to prevent unauthorized entry and deflect and deter migration not only force sojourners to use facilitators (who now charge migrants higher fees), but also give rise to “bastard” industries of extortion, trafficking and kidnapping of migrants. Criminal groups and networks involved in these activities use coercion to extract money from migrants.

However, instead of facilitating international mobility (and charging for the corresponding service), such actors end up contributing to deterrence. In a recent study of residents from a small town in southern Mexico, Keyes demonstrates that the decision to migrate to the United States is partially influenced by the increasing probability of dangerous encounters with criminals. Furthermore, over the past five years Central American and Mexican migrants have been the target of kidnappings at the hands of drug cartels and criminal gangs, which operate with the complicity of authorities and the drivers of inter-city bus companies. The bodies of those who cannot pay the ransoms are later found in mass graves. Journalistic and police accounts suggest that branches of these cartels are also involved in the trafficking of Central American migrants, taking “human cargo” away from traditional smugglers and kidnapping sojourners at the gates of migrant shelters. The recent decline in the number of Central American migrants detained in Mexico (a common proxy for fluctuations in the flow) is likely due, at least in part, to the dissuasive effect of organized and common crime (see Chapter 11, this volume).

I contend that these criminal groups and their activities constitute a “bastard” industry of migration control with important connections to
and effects on other parts of the migration industry. The actors that form this bastard industry benefit from state policies to restrict unauthorized flows because such policies have an unintended effect of channeling migrants to spaces controlled by criminals. In the case in point, the checkpoints that the Mexican government has set up along the country’s highways to identify and detain Central American migrants force sojourners to use alternative routes monitored by the cartels and populated by common criminals. At the same time, members of this bastard industry have demonstrated the ability to co-opt actors (i.e. smugglers) and colonize infrastructures (i.e. bus and railroad lines) traditionally associated with the facilitation of migration. The agents of the state (i.e. immigration officials, customs and local police forces) who used to extort money from facilitators (in the form of payment for the “right of way”) have been recruited as subordinates of large criminal operations (see Chapter 10, this volume). The end result is a bastard industry of migration control operating counter to facilitation and functioning as a deterrent to international mobility.

The migration industry in a field of “strange bedfellows”

In his “strange bedfellows of American immigration politics,” Aristide Zolberg maps out the positions of political actors vis-à-vis immigration. According to Zolberg, actors who perceive positive economic and cultural/political effects, such as employers and the immigrants’ co-ethnics, tend to adopt a favorable, “immigrationist” stance. In contrast, those who view newcomers as a source of economic competition and as a cultural threat tend to coalesce around restrictionist positions. A proxy for the migration industry, immigrant transporters, appears in the scheme alongside employers, noting the cluster of actors that clearly benefit economically from immigration (see Figure 1.2). By locating transporters and potentially other migration entrepreneurs in a field of well-defined coordinates, Zolberg’s framework allows for making inferences about the economic relations and probable alliances between the migration industry and key stakeholders in the politics of immigration.

However, Zolberg’s mapping exercise does not explicitly contemplate the movement of actors across quadrants and across the pro- and anti-immigrant divide. While the author recognizes the presence of migration facilitators (e.g. immigrant transporters), he keeps mum about the rescue and control parts of the migration industry. Also, since his scheme focuses on immigration in the American political landscape, his perspective only includes “legitimate” actors who can establish at times “strange” but still open alliances. As I have argued elsewhere, the study of the migration industry should consider how non-profit actors, such as advocates and government officials, shift roles and mobilize previously acquired knowledge and contacts to become migration entrepreneurs (see Chapter 9, this volume). It is also important to understand how a range of legitimate, informal and illegal actors establish tacit coalitions and organic articulations, often beyond the confines of a single nation state. I explain and illustrate these claims below.

Location and shifting positions of the migration industry

Most of the actors involved in the migration industry of facilitation can be located in the upper-left quadrant of the “strange bedfellows” figure, but in addition to traditional actors (i.e. transporters, contractors, immigrant realtors and remittance agents) benefiting economically from the constant flow of newcomers, co-ethnics and cosmopolitans can also shift their position and join the ranks of those who support immigration because of financial self-interest. Familiar at once with the world of the immigrant and the institutions of the host society, co-ethnics are well positioned to take advantage of the economic opportunities the migration industry offers. In contrast, cosmopolitans are more likely
to learn about the needs of newcomers through their involvement in political and cultural advocacy efforts. Newly acquired information can then be translated into actionable knowledge to establish different kinds of migration-related businesses.

In the United States it is not uncommon for co-ethnics and cosmopolitans who serve in immigrant advocacy organizations to subsequently establish legal advice, remittance, communications and real estate firms catering specifically to immigrants. I illustrate this point with the case of an Anglo-American immigrant rights advocate I interviewed some years ago. This activist learned about the many needs of indigenous Mexican migrants during the time he advocated for their housing and shelter rights in San Diego County. Prevented by their legal status, these immigrants could not return to Mexico and, in some cases, would go for years without seeing their families. After finishing his term as a housing advocate, he decided to set up a teleconference service with branches in southern California and Oaxaca so that migrants and family members could converse and see each other during the call.28

I argue that the “rescue” industry can also be placed in the upper-left quadrant of the strange bedfellows scheme. Composed of cosmopolitans and humanitarians likely to agree on the positive cultural effects of immigration and the moral imperative to aid immigrants, the members of this rescue industry do not profit from immigration in the strict sense of the term. However, they are capable of developing know-how and infrastructures that facilitate international migration, especially (but not exclusively) when the national groups and circumstances they target are the same favored by destination states. The victims of trafficking and refugees are often channeled through the infrastructures of this rescue industry, such as refugee camps and transitional housing, counseling, and language and employment programs. Needless to say, cosmopolitans and humanitarians can also commoditize the knowledge and social capital acquired rehabilitating and resettling migrants, redeploying these resources in the context of profit-seeking ventures. In addition, as Gammeltoft-Hansen and Sorensen argue in the introduction to this volume, actors and organizations of the rescue industry are becoming increasingly active in performing functions of control: screening asylum seekers and managing deportation and return migration programs. The rescue industry can ubiquitously straddle the line between facilitation and control in the name of orderly migration and humanitarianism (see Introduction).

Zolberg’s scheme does not explicitly contemplate other actors who, I will argue, also form part of the field of strange bedfellows and whose interests and actions are relevant for the study of the migration industry. The most notable omission is the firms that compose the growing complex of migration control and who profit from the detention and deportation of migrants and the enforcement of immigration controls at borders and ports of entry. These firms are often large, multinational corporations which benefit from a simultaneous global trend to devolve public functions to private actors, to control and restrict international migration and, more recently, to construe immigration through the lens of national security doctrines. The migration control industry should be located in the lower-left quadrant, perhaps above and to the left of Zolberg’s “traditional nationalists” (i.e. nativists, racists and isolationists), forming part of broader restrictionist coalitions. In fact, authors like Golash-Boza link corporations that profit from the incarcereation of migrants to conservative commentators and politicians as part of a large complex of increasingly privatized control.29

Another set of actors not explicitly considered in the strange bedfellows scheme are the consular officials and representatives of foreign governments, specifically of the migrants’ countries of origin, who play a role in the building of political and economic alliances in favor of immigration. Furthermore, local authorities and native workers are not always opposed to immigration and staunch members of restrictionist coalitions, as Zolberg seems to suggest. In the highly decentralized American political system, state, county and city governments can be found on either side of the pro- and anti-immigration divide at different points in time.30 The position and actions of local government vis-à-vis immigration are subject to the influence of contradictory forces and are likely to change as a result of different factors, including electoral politics and economic conditions. By the same token, the leaders and organizations representing native workers might not always side with those who oppose immigration. Faced with the steady decline of its membership and a weakened presence across workplaces in the United States, organized labor decided to support the legalization of undocumented workers and launch major campaigns to unionize industries populated by unauthorized immigrants.31

Alliances and articulations: strange and familiar bedfellows

Profit-driven migration facilitators and employers are familiar bedfellows indeed. To state the obvious, formal and informal, as well as legal and illegal migration entrepreneurs provide firms with documented and undocumented immigrant workers. Employers and profit-driven migration facilitators converge on the basis of their common economic interest: the continuation of migration. However, a sizable segment of the migration industry operates informally, if not clandestinely, preventing
facilitators from becoming part of legitimate immigrationist coalitions. In fact, the very existence and articulation of these actors with employers is often challenged by the state and even by formal and legal migration entrepreneurs and other immigration stakeholders. Two examples illustrate this point.

In the United States a large network of informal and illegal bus and van transporters deliver migrants to businesses across labor markets. Employers often work closely and make ad hoc arrangements with these transporters, but these so-called “curbside” operators are often the target of immigration enforcement raids and the subject of negative campaigns by the associations of legitimate service providers, which cite the poor safety records of informal transporters. In another example, during the mid-2000s former workers and Washington-based conservative law firms coalesced to sue Mohawk Industries, one of the largest carpet manufacturers in the United States. The plaintiffs accused the company of collaborating with contractors and smugglers to recruit undocumented immigrants and lower the wages of native workers. The complainants also sued for Mohawk to be tried using anti-organized crime statutes, arguing that the firm’s managers had conspired with smugglers and recruiters to commit illicit acts. Because of its alleged dealings with underground migration entrepreneurs, Mohawk had not found itself in the company of strange bedfellows so much as defending itself against strange adversaries. Nonetheless, over the past decade there have been several cases where the US immigration authorities have prosecuted large meat-packing corporations, accusing them of working with contractors to recruit undocumented immigrants.

According to Zolberg, employers and migration entrepreneurs on the one hand, and co-ethnics and cosmopolitans on the other, find each other strange bedfellows as they converge in immigrationist coalitions. Working in unions and NGOs, left-leaning co-ethnics and cosmopolitans would otherwise be ideological and political adversaries of exploitative employers and abusive migration facilitators. A focus on the migration industry demonstrates how these actors are connected regularly by multiple bridges and overlapping infrastructures. As I discussed in the previous section, stakeholders do not maintain a static position in the immigration landscape; co-ethnics, cosmopolitans and humanitarians often utilize the social capital acquired in immigrant support organizations to launch ventures and careers as migration entrepreneurs. Similarly, migration facilitators branch out towards the realm of pro-immigrant politics and culture, ultimately seeking to influence local governments, to garner support and give legitimacy to their business endeavors. In Los Angeles, for example, Korean and Chinese real estate entrepreneurs maintain a strong presence in ethnic associations and local governmental institutions. These entrepreneurs participate and use these institutions to influence policies favorable to their chief economic aim: to sell homes and neighborhoods in southern California as desirable destinations to middle-class immigrants from Asia. In pursuing these strategies, these actors open paths and interlock profit-driven and non-profit infrastructures in durable ways.

The actors and infrastructures of the migration industry are also connected through unanticipated and unintended forms of articulation and cooperation. The services of religious organizations assisting sojourners along the migratory trail provide a case in point. In reference to the assistance offered to undocumented Mayan migrants by several churches at a meeting place on the outskirts of Phoenix, Arizona, Wellmeier states that “[T]he volunteer services kept it [La Huerta] viable as a transportation hub, a collection point for entering migrants, and a convenience for the coyotes who always knew where to find customers.” Similar articulations occur at the migrant shelters (casas de migrantes) established by the Catholic Church along the Mexico–United States border and in Mexico’s interior states. While these shelters provide sojourners with room and board for a few days and are used by migrants as safe havens, they also unwittingly facilitate the work of coyotes, recruiters and transporters, who habitually meet and entice potential clients at these sites. Eager to buy time and save on costs while making arrangements to continue the journey and cross the border, smugglers also use these places as “depositories.” Not surprisingly, members of the bastard industry of migration control also now utilize these safe havens to find easy targets for holdups and kidnappings.

The remittance industry is a critical component of the complex of profit-driven migration facilitators. By sending money home, sojourners attain a key goal of migration. Remittances are also a fundamental resource in the financing of future migration. To the extent that they can access formal remittance mechanisms, immigrants can demonstrate their presence in the host society and engagement with its financial institutions. At the same time, the remittance industry comprises a heterogeneous range of informal and formal firms of different sizes and varying degrees of social and political legitimacy. The case of the remittance industry illustrates how profit-driven facilitators are linked to other stakeholders in immigration, such as migrant organizations and the consular representatives of sending-country governments keen on preserving and increasing the monetary flows expatriates send home.

In the Mexican–US migratory system, more than 90 percent of family remittances are sent using the services of wire transfer companies such
Conceptualizing the migration industry

global security firms are lobbying and bidding for contracts to develop the new technologies and infrastructures of border enforcement (see also Chapter 5 and Chapter 6, this volume).44

Finally, migration control firms are becoming overt partners of those who seek to devolve immigration enforcement functions from federal to state and local levels of government. For example, the CCA financed many of the politicians actively campaigning for the legislative approval of Arizona’s Senate Bill 1070 (SB 1070) in 2010. SB 1070 sought to deputize local police officers as immigration agents, allowing them to arrest individuals on suspicion that they were in the country without authorization. Although the legality and full implementation of SB 1070 has yet to be decided by the courts, the passage of this and similar legislative initiatives holds the promise of delivering more “clients” to CCA.45

Conclusion

In this chapter I have used two theoretical constructs of international human mobility—the “migration hump” and the “strange bedfellows” scheme—to conceptualize the role of profit-seeking actors in the social organization of migration. Through the lens of these constructs I have sought to understand why, how, and when different migration industry actors, firms and organizations arise and intervene to commoditize, manage and broker international migration. I have also expanded the analytical horizon of the migration industry to include four kinds of intermediaries with distinct aims: facilitators that straddle the formal/informal, legal/illegal lines; firms engaged in control and restriction; organizations involved in “rescuing” and rehabilitating refugees and trafficked migrants; and the largely illegal actors of a bastard industry of control. All of these actors sustain differentiated relations with key stakeholders, such as state institutions, employers, pro- and anti-immigrant organizations, and the migrants themselves.

The migration industry constitutes a highly dynamic set of actors in the social process of international human mobility, causing, facilitating and sustaining mobility across all stages of the migratory cycle. Contrary to the claim that facilitators are only involved in the initial phase of the migration hump, I argue that migration entrepreneurs are also present in subsequent stages, recasting their roles, shifting the locus of their activities and responding to new and distinct opportunities to commodify migration. However, facilitators are not the only actors active beyond the initiation stage. As the migration process unfolds and states seek to regulate and restrict immigration, a migration industry of control
begins to take shape. Ironically, but not surprisingly, transportation nodes double as infrastructures of facilitation and first sites of migration control. Mature migratory flows and the intent of states to restrict these streams result in new economic opportunities for the migration industry. Smugglers, recruiters, lawyers and migrants-turned-entrepreneurs provide the means and know-how to circumvent the obstacles to international migration, while the control industry assists in reinforcing such barriers. Moreover, a bastard industry of extortion wrests additional resources from migrants while functioning as an often deadly hurdle to mobility.

The migration industry sustains a multidimensional and transformative economic and political nexus with key stakeholders of migration. As Zolberg’s diagram suggests, the continuation of migration brings together migration brokers, employers, co-ethnics and cosmopolitans in the form of unusual immigrationist alliances. Conversely, the migration industry of control can be situated on the side of nativist organizations, national and local state institutions and displaced workers, all converging to establish restrictionist coalitions. Frequently found on the side of immigrationist partnerships, the “rescue” industry can straddle the line separating those in favor from those against newcomers, to participate in schemes seeking to regulate and control mobility in the name of humane and orderly migration.

A dense web of economic ties defines the interactions between the migration industry and other actors of the social process of international migration, shifting what in principle seem strange relationships into familiar affairs. Migration brokerage offers financial opportunities that can be realized by advocates who mobilize social capital for private use. In doing so, advocates-turned-entrepreneurs align even more closely with employers—both actors pursuing economic self-interest through migration. Additionally, migration intermediaries can colonize local institutions bringing municipalities into the migrant-friendly camp—not unlike what employers of foreign workers have long done. While migration facilitators have been a feature of international migration for quite some time, however, the current era of neoliberal governance and migration restriction has opened a new frontier for the commodification of migration. A thriving industry of control is at once the chief beneficiary of the devolution of public functions to private actors and the savor of tax-starved localities eager to “host” detained and soon-to-be-deported migrants.

Notes
14 Fred Krissman, “Immigrant Labor Recruitment: US Agribusiness and Undocumented Migration from Mexico,” in Immigration Research for a
30 Even in a much more centralized polity like France, national, regional, prefectural and local government institutions take different positions in relation to immigration.
32 The proliferation of subcontracting agreements, in which a small ethnic entrepreneur recruits, manages and pays fellow co-ethnics, has often fused the roles of migration facilitator and employer. See Jorge Durand, Política, Modelos y Patrones Migratorios (San Luis Potosí, México: El Colegio de San Luis, 1998).
37 Some of these dynamics can also be observed in the workings of the "rescue" industry, whether in rehabilitation of victims of trafficking or the resettlement of refugees.
40 Oscar Martinez, Los Migrantes que no Importan (Barcelona, Spain: Icaria Editorial, 2010).
The migration industry in global migration governance

Alexander Betts

- Global migration governance and private actors
- Labor migration
- Irregular migration
- Refugees
- Conclusion

The "migration industry" (defined as the range of actors who, primarily motivated by profit, engage in activities relating to human mobility) and "markets for migration" (defined as the way in which human mobility is increasingly subject to processes of commodification and competitive exchange) are playing a central and growing role in facilitation, control and rescue in the area of migration¹ (see also Chapter 6 and Chapter 11, this volume). From smugglers and "coyotes," to business associations, anti-immigrant vigilante groups, airline companies, border security firms, private interest groups, travel agents, human rights non-governmental organizations (NGOs), philanthropists seeking to improve the rights of migrants and refugees, academics, and employers, a range of private actors have a stake in the migration industry. Meanwhile, many of the functions of migration, traditionally associated with sovereignty and the state, are outsourced or privatized to private actors through competitive bidding processes (see Chapter 5 and Chapter 7, this volume).

These processes are significant and well documented throughout this volume. The existing literature on the migration industry and markets for migration—and most of the work in this volume—examines those processes within the context of migration governance within or at the border of the nation-state. It mainly explores ways in which the state delegates functions to private actors or ways in which a particular state’s sovereignty is bypassed by licit or illicit private actors. However, this chapter argues that these processes do not exist only at the level of
RETURN TO AZTLAN

The Social Process of International Migration from Western Mexico

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The Social Organization of Migration

Migration is not simply a movement of individuals responding to economic opportunities in their place of origin and at their destination, but an organized movement based on social and economic arrangements at both local and national levels.

Bryan Roberts (1974)

Our historical review of U.S. migration showed four very different communities gradually developing a common tradition of international cut-migration. Over the years, a growing number of families from a continuously widening variety of social backgrounds was drawn into the migrant stream, until U.S. migration touched virtually all sectors of society. The emergence of mass migration during the 1970s was made possible only by the prior development of a complex social structure that supported and encouraged it. This chapter undertakes a detailed analysis of that social structure, focusing on the organization and operation of migrant networks in the four communities. Using comparative historical, ethnographic, and survey data, we illustrate how social networks develop and expand over time to make U.S. migration accessible to all classes of society, transforming it from an isolated social phenomenon to a mass movement fundamental to community life.

THE SOCIAL BASES OF NETWORK MIGRATION

Migrant networks consist of social ties that link sending communities to specific points of destination in receiving societies. These ties bind migrants and nonmigrants within a complex web of complementary social roles and interpersonal relationships that are maintained by an informal set of mutual expectations and prescribed behaviors. The social relationships that constitute migrant networks are not unique to migrants but develop as a result of universal human bonds that are molded to the special circumstances of international migration. These social ties
are not created by the migratory process but are adapted to it and over time are reinforced by the common experience of migration itself.

The most important network relationships are based on kinship, friendship, and *paisanaje*, which are reinforced through regular interaction in voluntary associations. In moving to a strange and often hostile land, migrants naturally draw upon these familiar bonds to share the hazards and hardships of life in exile, and those left behind rely on the same ties to mitigate the loneliness and anxiety of having a loved one far away. As migration continues, however, these well-known social connections acquire new meanings and functions. They are transformed into a set of social relationships whose content and meaning are defined within the migrant context. Over time, shared understandings develop about what it means to be a friend, relative, or paisano within a community of migrants. Eventually these understandings crystallize into a set of interrelationships that define the migrant network.

**Kinship**

Kinship forms one of the most important bases of migrant social organization, and family connections are the most secure bonds within the networks. The strongest relationships are between male migrants interacting as fathers and sons. Faced with a hostile and alien environment, they have evolved well-established conventions of mutual aid and cooperation in the United States, practices that transcend the stem household itself. Long after sons have grown up to form their own families, fathers travel with them to el Norte, sharing the hardships and risks of undocumented life. From this common experience, the paternal bond is strengthened, and a new relationship between migrant fathers and sons develops, one that carries over into the home community. Throughout their lives, migrant fathers and sons are more likely to offer assistance, information, and services to one another.

Migrant brothers also establish a mutual collaboration that builds on and strengthens the fraternal tie. Facing many demands for assistance from various friends and relatives while abroad, migrants naturally display a preference for the tie of brotherhood. Between brothers there is a continual exchange of favors and help, one that cannot be measured in money alone. To a brother arriving in the United States without money, job, or documents, a series of obligations is owed. A place to stay, help in getting a job, the loan of money, or payment for the trip are just a few examples of how the ties of brotherhood are extended and tested in the migrant context.

The next most important family tie within migrant networks is that between a man and his brothers' sons. The strong relationships that brothers expect and maintain with respect to each other extend to their sons. Nephews are thus given preference over other relations in the offering of assistance. Arriving in the United States for the first time, a young man can generally count on the aid of his uncle; or an uncle may take it upon himself to accompany a young man on his first trip to el Norte. These ties also carry over to relationships between cousins. Among cousins linked through a common male relative there is a strong family identification, one reinforced by traditional practices of coresidence and mutual assistance between brothers. When parties of young men strike out for the United States together, they are often parallel cousins related through fathers who are brothers.

These kinship connections are reinforced through frequent interaction on important ceremonial occasions. Rituals associated with life milestones are especially important in linking settled migrants in the United States with their relatives back home. A wedding, a baptism, or the *quince* (fifteenth birthday) of a daughter provide opportunities for reuniting family members separated by migration. Relatives from Mexico are invited to share in the festivities, and friends and acquaintances from the home community who happen to be in the United States are also asked to join in, expanding the possibilities for communication and interchange. In this way, settled U.S. migrants lend greater permanence and coherence to the networks.

Kin assistance is generally extended freely and openly through parallel cousins. Among relatives more distant than these, the strength of ties falls off rapidly, however, and their roles in the migratory process are correspondingly smaller. The most important kin relationships in migrant networks are those between fathers and sons, uncles and nephews, brothers, and male cousins. Beyond these relationships, expectations more appropriate to friendship are relevant in governing behavior between two migrants.

**Friendship**

Because of its explosive growth, migration has outgrown a social organization based solely on the limited confines of kinship, and networks have increasingly incorporated other close social relationships. The closest bonds outside the family are those formed between people as
they grow up together. These are typically friendships between people of roughly the same age who lived near one another and joined together in play and shared formative experiences in church, school, or organized sports.

These formative relationships foster a closeness that becomes relevant when young men later become U.S. migrants, and the migratory experience itself strengthens the basic tie of friendship. A lifetime of shared experiences creates a disposition to exchange favors and provide mutual assistance that benefits both parties in the long run. Friends who find themselves sharing yet another formative experience—international migration—assist one another in a variety of ways: finding an apartment in the United States, sharing information about jobs, pooling resources, and borrowing or loaning money. Although initially concentrated among persons of the same age, friendships gradually extend to other generations, as migrants of all ages are drawn together by the common experience of life in a strange environment.

If migration becomes frequent among a group of friends from the same community, their relationships will eventually overlap with other circles of friends with whom they are brought into frequent contact. Important friendships are formed with migrants from other communities through shared experiences at work, at living (e.g., in grower-provided farm barracks), or at play (in cantinas, bars, dance halls, or other places of entertainment in the United States). In this way, interpersonal relationships within the migrant network are extended and amplified beyond those possible through kinship or local friendship alone. The bonds of kith and kin do not lose their meaning or importance; they are simply augmented by new and different relationships that expand the range of a migrant's social resources in the United States.

Among expatriates, regional allegiances within Mexico also favor the formation of friendships. Common origin from a particular region, such as southern Jalisco or the Zamora Valley, usually implies a series of common experiences, customs, and traditions that permit easy communication and friendship formation. Migrants from the same part of Mexico may even share common relatives or acquaintances or have attended the same fiestas and fairs. As one moves down the geographic hierarchy to more specific regional identities, however, one eventually arrives at another base of social organization that is very important in the migratory process: paisanaje.

**Paisanaje**

The feeling of belonging to a common community of origin, or paisanaje, is different from the other social relationships we have discussed in that it is a latent dimension of association in the home community. Origin from the same place is not a meaningful basis of social organization for people while they are at home. In general, within the community itself, the concept of paisanaje does not imply any additional rights and responsibilities to other paisanos that are not already included in the relationships of friend, family member, or neighbor. It is not a meaningful concept until two paisanos encounter each other outside their home community. Then the strength of the paisanaje tie depends on the strangeness of the environment and the nature of their prior relationships in the community.

Given the cultural distance between Mexico and the United States and the large number of Mexican migrants living and working abroad, it is not surprising that paisanaje has become an important social relationship in recent years. Common origin from Altamira, Chamilán, or Santiago creates a strong communal identity among migrants in the United States. In an unknown, alien, and often threatening milieu, migrants share a variety of life experiences that draw them together in the pursuit of common goals. Although this sense of paisanaje naturally depends on the nature of migrants’ past interactions (whether they were acquaintances, friends, or neighbors), relationships formed abroad have repercussions for social relations at home. They often produce new forms of association that not only promote the cohesion of migrants in the United States but also facilitate their reintegration into the community.

The best example of how paisanaje operates as an integrative force is the annual fiesta held in honor of each town’s patron saint. The patron saint, of course, is the personification of paisanaje, the symbolic representation of the town for all its citizens. The celebration held each year to commemorate the patron saint is thus more than a religious holiday. It is a reaffirmation of the community and its people. As such, fiestas have always represented an important integrative mechanism in rural Mexican society (Redfield 1936; Bals 1946; Brand 1953; Lewis 1960; Canclinar 1965; Foster 1967; Nutini 1968). With the advent of U.S. migration, however, the symbolic value of the patron saint has been shaped to the new reality of a migrant community, and the traditional importance of the fiesta has been greatly enhanced.

Throughout the months of work and loneliness in the United States, the fiesta of the patron saint looms large in the thoughts and conversations of migrants. It is one day of the year when all who are able to return home do so. Most work long and hard to earn enough money to return for the fiesta with presents for friends and family; in no small way, the fiesta sustains and encourages migrants through their long diaspora. Among the expatriates, it provides a symbolic focal point in
The Social Organization of Migration

on the air, and special song requests and dedications from migrants abroad are played for wives and sweethearts back home. Some migrants even telephone from Los Angeles with particular requests and messages. The ausente hour supplements the Saint's Day in providing an important symbol of the migrants' continuing membership in the community of paisanos.

Voluntary Organizations

Thus far we have considered various social relationships that make up the migrant networks, but no less important are certain institutional mechanisms that facilitate the formation and maintenance of social ties. A variety of voluntary associations established by migrants in the United States promote regular interpersonal contact, greatly facilitating the process of adaptation and mutual assistance. Although migrants belong to many organizations, probably the most important is the soccer club. It has risen to support international migration in many communities of western Mexico, including Altamira and Chamilán, but nowhere is it more important than in Santiago.

Most migrants from Santiago go to Los Angeles. In such a large and sprawling city, it is not easy to maintain regular contact with other paisanos. Migrants from Santiago have resolved this problem through their soccer club. People from Santiago originally learned how to play soccer from British technicians at the turn of the century, and this early exposure to the sport soon became a passion. During the early days of U.S. migration, townspeople in Los Angeles began to meet informally and sporadically to play soccer. As interest and attendance grew, the game became a regular weekly event and a club was formed with an affiliation in a local soccer league. Practice is now held once each week, when many paisanos drop by to watch, and a weekly game is played each Sunday before a large and enthusiastic crowd.

A viable soccer club must be able to count on the regular participation of at least twenty-five persons: a dozen players plus a few substitutes, trainers, and coaches. A really good soccer club requires the support of many more fans and supporters, however. Above all, these people provide the financial resources to pay the fees, reserve the playing fields, and purchase the uniforms and the soccer balls. Although the club always had the support of a good number of townspeople, its success on the field was due to its popularity to grow so that nearly all out-migrant paisanos became involved. For five consecutive years, the team from Santiago won its league championship in California.

Santiago's club is a social institution to which all out-migrant
paisanos belong as a right, and others may also join if they want to share in the fun, especially if they happen to be good players. The club is for all; it does not belong to a particular manager or owner. Decisions are typically made in assemblies with most members present. The club represents the home community, and all recognize this as its fundamental end.

The social functions of the club were greatly boosted when it secured the use of a practice field on which to train, part of a public park in the Los Angeles area. There, people from Santiago began to meet every Sunday, bringing their families for free diversion and entertainment. The field, nicknamed "Los Patos" ("The Ducks") by the townspeople, became an obligatory place of reunion for all paisanos. It became the focal point of the out-migrant community, the place where one made dates, obtained work, located friends, welcomed new arrivals, and exchanged news of the town itself. Little by little the field, which had previously been used by Anglos, became a Latino enclave. Eventually, migrants from Santiago began to buy houses close to the field of Los Patos, and the adjacent barrio became more and more a Hispanic enclave.

The club has served for many years as a focal point of life for townspeople in Los Angeles and as a tie to the home community. Frequently, teams from Santiago have journeyed to the United States to play those from Los Angeles. The club has also initiated many migrant careers, especially those of the best soccer players. Coaches in Los Angeles keep track of promising players at home through the migrant network and, when the time is right, invite them to come and play in el Norte. The team pays for transportation, supplies a coyote and arranges for housing and work. If the player is good enough, his only obligation is to play for the team.

The case of Santiago is not unique. In some years migrants from Altamira and Chamilán have also formed soccer teams to participate in one of the many leagues in Los Angeles. Sunday after Sunday, the players meet in the company of other townspeople to play or watch soccer and to socialize. This reunion breaks up the routine of work and isolation and provides a forum for communication and interchange. Migrants share experiences of the past week, discuss events of general interest in the town or in other places where paisanos go in the United States, and exchange information about job opportunities. Everyone enjoys the conviviality, and they all share expenses for refreshments and foods.

These encounters offer the opportunity to form friendships with people from other places in Mexico who also frequent the athletic fields. On some occasions, when there is a scarcity of players from Santiago, these people join the team and share in the party mood that prevails after each game. Like migrants from Santiago itself, they are also able to take advantage of the information and offers of assistance that spring from these reunions. The parts of the migrant networks that are based on kinship, friendship, or paisanaje thus are broadened and expanded by the soccer clubs. Through the weekly games, migrants from Santiago come into contact with migrants from other social circles and, hence, with new sources of information and exchange.

Through a variety of devices, soccer is also important in promoting the reintegration of migrants into the community. For example, in Santiago a great sporting event is held each year in which the soccer teams from Los Angeles are invited to participate. Young men who return to town after a period of absence typically reenter social life by joining a local soccer team. First they participate in practice, and later they compete in the official matches with teams from other towns. On occasion, men with U.S. migrant experience—some of whom are active members of the clubs in Los Angeles—are actively sought out as team members for a match with a neighboring town. These contacts bring migrants into close contact with numerous nonmigrants, greatly expanding the radius of the migrant network.

In short, the soccer club is an important part of the network linking the town and its daughter communities. It facilitates the movement of migrants back and forth, supports their integration in a foreign land, and later promotes their reincorporation into the home community. Different voluntary organizations may serve the functions of migrant cohesion and integration in other communities. Whatever their purpose, voluntary associations add an important dimension to migrant networks above and beyond the interpersonal ties mentioned before.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE NETWORKS

We have shown how basic human relationships have been adapted to play new roles in the migration process. The familiar relationships of kinship, friendship, and paisanaje are woven into a social fabric that provides migrants with a valuable adaptive resource in a strange environment. Through networks of interpersonal relationships, people,
goods, and information circulate to create a social continuum between communities in Mexico and the United States. The networks provide jobs, food, housing, transport, and social life to migrants abroad, and they have made international migration a basic fact of social and economic life in western Mexico.

Such extensive social networks are not created overnight. They emerge gradually as migration moves beyond a few adventurous individuals to involve a wider cross section of the community. The first few migrants return and on subsequent trips initiate others into the migrant process. Every new migrant creates a new set of people with potential connections to the United States. As more people migrate more often, the number of connections expands rapidly and the quality of the ties also improves as people adjust to life abroad. Eventually a few families or individuals settle in the United States, and very strong, direct links are established to particular locales. As the quantity and quality of network connections grow, the cost of migration is progressively reduced, encouraging others to try their luck. As more people take up migration, the number of people with network connections increases. Ultimately, the network expands until nearly everyone has a direct connection to someone with U.S. migrant experience.

The progressive development and elaboration of networks emanating from each of the four communities is clearly revealed in the ethnography. Table 6.1 examines the number of family members and paisanos that migrants reported knowing in the United States on their most recent trip. In order to show the development of the network over time, the data are broken into three periods based on the date of the trip: pre-1940, 1940 to 1964, and 1965 to the present. As the networks mature over time, we expect migrants to report a growing number of family and kinship ties in the United States.

Such a pattern is, indeed, found in each community. The earliest migrants had few social ties to draw upon in traveling to the United States, whereas recent migrants have at their disposal a large number of kin and friendship connections. The trends are best exemplified in Santiago, where the average number of family members in the United States increases from sixteen people among those whose most recent trip was before 1940 to twenty-six people among those whose last trip was after 1965. The number of paisanos that townspeople reported knowing similarly increases from about six before 1940 to eighteen in the most recent period. Similar trends are found in Altamira. In Chamilán, however, migrants reported knowing an unusually large number of paisanos in the United States before 1940. This number indicates the early importance of its Chicago networks, which were eliminated by the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community and number</th>
<th>Pre-1940</th>
<th>1940-1964</th>
<th>1965-1972</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Altamira</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean number of relatives</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean number of paisanos</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chamilán</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean number of relatives</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>19.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean number of paisanos</td>
<td>55.0</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>35.6</td>
<td>33.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santiago</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean number of relatives</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>33.1</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>25.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean number of paisanos</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Marcos</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean number of relatives</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean number of paisanos</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: MIGR, migrant household members enumerated in Mexico or California, including those in twenty-five extra households in Santiago.

Great Depression. As new networks were rebuilt after 1940, the number of paisanos falls and then increases. The data for San Marcos are difficult to interpret because the networks are not based there and because no migrants reported making their last trip before 1940. Nonetheless, the average number of paisanos increases considerably between the two most recent periods.

A more sensitive indicator of family connections within the networks is the percentage of migrants who report having a U.S. migrant parent or grandparent, which is classified by period in Table 6.2. The earliest migrants, of course, were the pioneers who had no prior family ties in el Norte. Among those migrating before 1940, none reported having migrant parents or grandparents, except in Santiago, where 11 percent had a migrant parent. Over time, migrant experience accumulates in the population, so that subsequent migrants are able to draw upon parents' and grandparents' knowledge and connections in migrating to the United States. In the most recent period, the percentage having parents with U.S. migrant experience rises to 37 percent in Altamira, 62 percent in Chamilán (where the migrant networks are most developed), 20
TABLE 6.2
PERCENTAGE HAVING PARENTS AND GRANDPARENTS WITH U.S. MIGRANT EXPERIENCE BY PERIOD, MIGRANTS FROM FOUR MEXICAN COMMUNITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community and relative</th>
<th>Pre-1940</th>
<th>1940-1964</th>
<th>1965-1982</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Altamira</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With migrant parent (%)</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With migrant grandparent (%)</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chamilán</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With migrant parent (%)</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>31.4</td>
<td>62.0</td>
<td>53.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With migrant grandparent (%)</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santiago</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With migrant parent (%)</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With migrant grandparent (%)</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Marcos</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With migrant parent (%)</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>29.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With migrant grandparent (%)</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: MIGIFLE, migrant household members enumerated in Mexico or California, including those in twenty-five extra households in Santiago.

percent in Santiago, and 33 percent in San Marcos. Similarly, the percentage having grandparents with migrant experience rises from 0 percent before 1940 to between 5 percent and 15 percent after 1965.

Family and friendship connections build up among migrants with time, therefore, providing new aspirants with a kind of "social capital" they can draw upon to begin a migrant career. The importance of kinship, friendship, and paisanaje in the migratory process is indicated in table 6.3, which shows how migrants obtained their most recent jobs in the United States. In Santiago and San Marcos, 46 percent of migrants said they got their last job through a friend, relative, or paisano. The respective figures for Altamira and Chamilán were 39 percent and 29 percent. In the two rural towns, labor contractors play a more important role, holding 21 percent and 17 percent of jobs, respectively. Only in Chamilán did a majority of migrants report obtaining their last job through their own efforts. Interpersonal ties are thus very important to migrants entering the U.S. labor market.

The importance of social connections is further highlighted by table 6.4, which shows where migrants turned for financial assistance when last in the United States. The vast majority reported asking a friend or a relative for financial assistance. In Altamira, 50 percent said they turned to a friend and 25 percent to a relative. The respective figures in Chamilán were 76 percent and 6 percent; in Santiago, 33 percent and
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18 percent; and in San Marcos, 20 percent and 40 percent. In short, family and friends are an invaluable socioeconomic resource for U.S. migrants.

Finally, as migrant networks grow and mature, we expect a gradual increase in the number of townspeople who belong to various U.S.-based organizations. As Table 6.5 shows, membership in voluntary associations does increase over time in each community except San Marcos. Moreover, the pattern is sharpest for the organization that is most important in facilitating network migration: the soccer club. In Santiago, the percentage of migrants reporting membership in an athletic club grows from 0 percent among those making their last trips before 1940 to 53 percent among those leaving after 1965. The increase is from 0 percent to 21 percent in Altamira and from 0 percent to 13 percent in Chamitlán.

These data demonstrate quantitatively what we previously argued from an ethnographic view: that recent migrants have at their disposal a wider array of social connections in the United States than did those who left earlier. Compared to the earliest pioneers, recent migrants have many more relatives, friends, and paisanos to whom they can turn for information and assistance while abroad. Moreover, these ties function with greater effectiveness than before, as soccer clubs have evolved to provide a dependable weekly forum for communication and interchange between people in the network.

FORMATION OF DAUGHTER COMMUNITIES

In each of the three towns we have studied, the emergence of established communities in the United States was a crucial step in the maturation of the migrant networks. The settlement of a few families transformed the migration process by directing the streams to work sites in particular U.S. towns and cities. Around these families a socioeconomic organization grew, drawing subsequent migrants in ever-increasing numbers to specific points of destination, a process Jones (1982b) has labeled "channelization."

The channeling of migrants occurs as social networks focus increasingly on specific communities. As daughter settlements of Mexican origin migrants develop, the social infrastructure linking them to the parent communities becomes more directed and refined and the network becomes self-perpetuating. More migrants move to a particular place because that is where the networks lead, and because that is where the social structure affords them the greatest opportunities for success. As more migrants arrive, the range of social connections is further extended, making subsequent migration to that place even more likely.

This channeling of migrants is clearly evident in the ethnosurvey data that we collected. Figures 6.1 through 6.3 depict the state of destination among U.S. migrants leaving Altamira, Chamitlán, and Santiago on their first U.S. trip from 1900 through 1982. In each case, the earlier periods display far more diversity in destinations than in later periods, by which time 90 percent to 100 percent of all migrants are traveling to California. Before 1940 the percentages of migrants going to this state were only 60 percent in Altamira, 40 percent in Chamitlán, and 33 percent in Santiago. Other prominent states in early periods of migration were Texas, Illinois, and Arizona. During the 1940s and 1950s, however, migration rapidly shifted away from these states and became directed almost exclusively to California. At present, driving through western Mexico during the months of December and January, one notices the large number of cars having California license plates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community and organization</th>
<th>Pre-1940</th>
<th>1940–1964</th>
<th>1965–1982</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Altamira</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In social club (%)</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In religious club (%)</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In sports club (%)</td>
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<td>5.4</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chamitlán</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In social club (%)</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In religious club (%)</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In sports club (%)</td>
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<td>2.9</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Santiago</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In social club (%)</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In religious club (%)</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In sports club (%)</td>
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<td>8.3</td>
<td>52.5</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
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<td><strong>San Marcos</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In social club (%)</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In religious club (%)</td>
<td>—</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>In sports club (%)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
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<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: MIGFILE; migrant household members enumerated in Mexico or California, including those in twenty-five extra households in Santiago.
These state statistics show the increasing specificity of the migrant networks over time, but only at a gross level. A better indication of the channeling process can be obtained by examining trends over time in more specific points of destination. Figures 6.4 through 6.6 examine the share of migrants going to different areas in California on their first U.S. trips from 1900 through 1982. Specific place names could have been used to illustrate the increasing specificity of out-migration. To protect the anonymity of respondents, we classified particular towns and cities into broader geographic areas; however, underlying these broad groupings are specific communities within California.

Points of destination for migrants from Altamira fluctuated considerably up through the 1950s. The very earliest migrants to California went largely to the San Francisco Bay area, but this early network was effaced during the Great Depression. With the advent of the Bracero program in the early 1940s, the Imperial Valley became the predominant destination. The connection with this agricultural area can be traced to the large bracero recruitment center at the border-crossing of Calexico-Mexicali, just south of the Imperial Valley, which was one of the first bracero centers established. The importance of the Imperial Valley declined steadily over the years, finally dying out when the Bracero Accord expired in 1964. During the late 1940s and early 1950s, two new locations began to emerge as important poles of attraction for migrants from Altamira: a city in the middle San Joaquin Valley and the Los Angeles urban area. These areas declined in importance during 1955-1959 and the diversity of destinations increased somewhat, as indicated by the rise in the “Other” category.

After 1960, however, the range of U.S. destinations steadily dwindled as Los Angeles and the middle San Joaquin Valley emerged as the two predominant destination areas. Los Angeles predominated during the late 1960s and early 1970s, peaking during 1965–1969, when 61 percent of new migrants left for that urban area. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the middle San Joaquin Valley increasingly came to the fore, capturing 58 percent of all new migrants after 1980. In each period since 1960, therefore, 50 percent to 80 percent of all migrants from Altamira have gone to one of these two U.S. destination areas.

Specific points of destination emerged earlier and in greater number among migrants from Chamilán. Since the 1940s, four destination areas have consistently received a significant share of the town’s migrants: the middle San Joaquin Valley (but a different community than that of Altamira), the San Francisco Bay area, the Los Angeles metropolitan area, and the Salinas Valley. The array of receiving areas remained quite...
The Social Organization of Migration

diverse, until 1960, as indicated by the relatively large percentage in the “Other” category.

Los Angeles and the Salinas Valley have remained important poles of attraction for Chamilán up to the present; however, the two other communities eventually came to dominate the outflow of migrants. Between 1955 and 1975, the San Francisco Bay area was the primary destination area. At its peak during 1960 to 1964, 55 percent of the migrants leaving Chamílán were going there. Since 1970, a town in the middle San Joaquin Valley has increasingly come to predominate. These two destination points have accounted for at least 55 percent of all out-migrants in each period since 1960.

Santiago displays the simplest trend in out-migration of the three sending communities. During the 1940s, the Bracero program recruited townspeople into agricultural areas such as the Imperial and the San Joaquin Valleys, but since 1950 Los Angeles has become the favorite destination of new U.S. migrants. By the most recent period, roughly 90 percent of all migrants were going to work somewhere in the Los Angeles urban area.

In each case, therefore, specific daughter communities ultimately developed around a core of settled migrant families. Settlement is an intrinsic part of the migration process, occurring as migrants build up significant amounts of time abroad. As people turn away from their former economic pursuits at home and specialize increasingly in U.S. wage labor, a life of seasonal commuting back and forth is difficult to sustain. At the same time, migrants become enmeshed in a web of social and economic ties in the United States that bind them increasingly to specific locations and employers, and settlement eventually occurs. The migrant brings his wife and children to live with him in el Norte, and a permanent residence is established.

These social processes take time to operate, so the daughter communities develop slowly at first, and then more rapidly as a critical mass of out-migrants anchors the networks more firmly to stable settlements, which then serve as magnets for further migration. This fact is illustrated by table 6.6, which classifies household heads in the California sample and all “settlers” from the Mexican sample by the date of their last trip to the United States (on which they presumably “settled”). “Settlers” are those with three continuous years of residence in the United States. In each community, the vast majority of these long-term U.S. residents settled after 1965. Regardless of whether one considers the settlers or the California household heads, 70 percent to 95 percent reported leaving after this date. In contrast, very small percentages (under 5 percent)
made the transition to settled U.S. life before 1940. Settlement thus begins at a slow pace and accelerates over time.

The emergence of daughter communities qualitatively changes the nature of the migration process. The permanent social infrastructure that they provide makes a strategy of recurrent migration—the repeated movement of migrants back and forth—viable on a mass basis. It also permits the widespread use of settled migration as a strategy, where young men may work in the United States for long periods—three, four, or five years—before returning home. Given the extensive links between the parent and daughter communities and the dynamic, fluid nature of the networks, recurrent or settled migrants may spend considerable time abroad without rupturing their ties to the home community.

The emergence of daughter communities also produces a qualitative change in the concept of paisanaje. With the emergence of U.S. settlements, men begin to acquire American-born wives and father a generation of sons and daughters born in the United States. The ideal of paisanaje must, therefore, be expanded to incorporate a class of people not born in the home community. Table 6.7 cross-classifies respondents in the California sample by U.S. legal status and position in the household. There are, of course, no native U.S. citizens among household heads. In U.S. agricultural zones, nearly 50 percent are documented and 50 percent undocumented, compared to 63 percent documented and 34 percent undocumented in metropolitan areas. A surprisingly high number of men have wives who are U.S. citizens: 42 percent in the agricultural zones and 10 percent in the metropolitan areas. The percentages of wives with and without documents are equal in each set of areas:

about 26 percent in agricultural areas and 40 percent in metropolitan areas. A telling indicator of the degree to which these families have become rooted in their new soil is indicated by the large proportion of children born in the United States; 86 percent of children in agricultural areas and 66 percent of those in metropolitan areas were born in California.

By 1983, therefore, the core of settled out-migrant families had developed connections to the United States not easily erased. They had begun to raise a generation of children with strong attachments on both sides of the border—born in the United States and raised in its schools and neighborhoods, but with strong ties to Mexico and the parent community, constantly reinforced through the circulation of people and information from home. These attachments inevitably extend to the parents, giving them a greater stake in U.S. society, drawing even those without legal documents ever more deeply into U.S. society. For example, roughly two-thirds of undocumented household heads in the California sample have children born in the United States. The deep roots that these daughter communities now have in the United States suggest that the networks they support are also permanent social fixtures and will continue to sustain migration to the United States for years to come.
CASE STUDIES OF NETWORK MIGRATION

The foregoing discussion has established the fundamental elements of the migration process as it has unfolded in three communities over the past five decades: the gradual emergence of a social structure based on the ties of kinship, friendship, and paisanaje; the concomitant development of social institutions supporting migration; the eventual appearance of a core of settled families about which an out-migrant community coheres; the channeling of migrants to these daughter communities; and the deepening of ties within the United States. All of these developments reflect the operation of international migration as an emergent social process.

Thus far, we have sketched the process of migration at a general level and illustrated it with examples and ethnographic data. These abstract processes are ultimately based on real-life experiences of actual communities; therefore, we present four case studies drawn from the historic experience of Altamira, Chamitlán, Santiago, and San Marcos. Through these case studies, the manifold processes we have described are exemplified and made real.

Altamira

In the mid-1970s, a small city in the middle San Joaquin Valley extended its zone of fruit cultivation by applying new intensive methods that provided higher profits for local growers. As cultivation increased and output expanded, the need for seasonal labor grew with it, since the work of harvesting and maintaining orchards could be done only by hand. Through prior contacts in the area, several workers from Altamira heard of the new opportunities and began to migrate there to take advantage of the strong seasonal demand for farmworkers. One of these migrants met and fell in love with a U.S. citizen, a daughter of Mexican parents, whom she eventually married. Through this marriage he was able to arrange his papers without difficulty, and he settled down to raise a family in the city.

Because of his knowledge of the agricultural scene in the middle San Joaquin Valley, his growing command of English, and his legal status in the United States, this worker was soon chosen by his employer, a large agricultural company, to be a field foreman. As such, he was the boss of a work crew that he had to recruit and supervise. To secure workers for his crew, he turned to his fellow townspeople and to other Mexicans whom he knew in the United States. Over the years, he recruited many relatives and acquaintances from Altamira, building up an assured pool of migrant workers who always enabled him to put together his crew without problems.

The pay of the foreman depended on the quantity and quality of his team’s work. His preference for paisanos stemmed not only from his affective ties with friends and former neighbors but also from the greater control he was able to exercise through the ties of kinship, friendship, and paisanaje. Drawing upon these bonds, he could elicit greater speed and quality from his workers without having to resort to coercive methods such threatening or firing. In this way, a community of interests between the foreman and workers was established, one that primarily benefited the company for whom they all worked.

In a short time, this place became the principal point of arrival for people from Altamira seeking work in the United States. When more paisanos arrived than the foreman could use for this team (about thirty-five persons), he placed them with other foremen he knew, and in this way the opportunities for migrants from Altamira expanded. Today there are two foremen from Altamira, and nine families have settled in the city permanently. Together they form a nucleus of people who support the growing social network by maintaining steady contact with seasonal migrants from Altamira.

Chamitlán

In Chamitlán, two networks have come to dominate the migration process. The first leads to a small city in the middle San Joaquin Valley. In the early 1960s, a campesino from Chamitlán who had worked regularly as a bracero went with several other paisanos to work in one of the agricultural fields near this city. After a few years of working as a common laborer, this person was chosen as a foreman on the condition that he gather together a group of workers and take charge of supervising them. The owners arranged legal documentation for him and his family, and they all settled in town.

With time, other families from Chamitlán began to settle in the city and the surrounding area attracted by the employment that this work offered.

The second network led to the eastern Shore of San Francisco Bay, where one finds the cities of Richmond, Berkeley, and Oakland. Within this area, there is a restaurant that employs many migrants.
from Chamilán. Employment in this restaurant was not the original reason for the congregation of people from Chamilán in the San Francisco Bay area; nonetheless, it has been very important in making the region an important magnet for out-migration from that Mexican community.

In the early 1970s, a campesino from Chamilán who had worked as a bracero for many years took a job in this restaurant as helper to the headwaiter. After a few years, this person himself became headwaiter, and the restaurant owner helped him arrange resident visas for himself and his family, who moved to the San Francisco Bay area to live with him. His position as headwaiter gave him the chance to offer work to friends, relatives, and paisanos from Chamilán. As word of his position in the United States spread within the home community, townspeople began to appeal to him in large numbers, and he became a man of some importance, a key contact for people seeking to enter the United States.

Over the past decade this restaurant has served as the principal point of entry for a large number of townspeople. Of the 250 workers who now work the restaurant’s three shifts, around 100 are from Chamilán. They are employed as dishwashers, cooks’ helpers, cooks, meat cutters, and janitors. Migrants use the restaurant as a launching pad for their new lives in the United States. Few stay at the restaurant permanently. After working for a time in the restaurant, adjusting to life in the United States, and acquiring work experience, most move on to other better-paying jobs available in nearby steel mills, hotels, or other restaurants. This single person, therefore, has been the principal conduit for most migrants from Chamilán to the San Francisco Bay area.

Santiago

In Santiago, the migratory process really began with the modernization of the textile industry in 1954. Before this time, there were only sporadic cases of international migration, especially among the town’s factory workers. The early contacts of these few solitary migrants were sufficient to provide the key links that enabled the later development of migrant networks. Moreover, there was also an extensive web of migrant contacts based in neighboring Ixtlán, which early on had become involved in the migrant process. From these two bases of support, migrants from Santiago constructed an intricate system of social relationships linking the town with specific U.S. destination points.

In spite of its industrial origins, Santiago is notable in having evolved social networks very similar to those in the two rural towns. Townspeople began to migrate in large numbers during the mid-1950s at the height of the Bracero period, and many obtained their first jobs as farmworkers through this program. Ironically, the development of the networks was greatly spurred by the crackdown on undocumented migration in 1954, when millions were deported during Operation Wetback. The hostility of the sociopolitical environment in the United States brought the migrants together for their mutual protection and made network connections even more valuable as socioeconomic resources.

From the start, however, migrants from Santiago preferred industrial over agricultural labor, and although many initially entered the United States as farmworkers, the migrant outflow was eventually directed to urban work in Los Angeles. Arriving in that city, townspeople first looked for textile factories but, finding none, took whatever jobs they could get. Little by little they were able to improve themselves, and one migrant eventually discovered a factory that made wire nets and screens, where he went to try his luck.

The result was surprising. In a few days he had learned to use all the machinery in the factory, which was very similar to that in Santiago’s textile mill, and in a few more days he had learned to control and work the raw materials. In subsequent years, many townspeople were recruited for work in this factory, finding jobs at first through this person, and later through many other townspeople who worked there. The prior factory experience of people from Santiago rendered them immediately qualified to be skilled workers, and the company was very satisfied with their work. This factory became the point of entry for many migrants in Los Angeles.

Another factory that served to initiate workers to the Los Angeles economy, and continues to do so today, is the lamp factory. As in the screen factory, one migrant worker from Santiago found a hearty welcome there because of his prior industrial training. Through the factory owner, he was able to obtain his residence documents, and since he had prior union experience, his fellow workers elected him as their union representative. Through this position, he was able to arrange work in the factory for many townspeople. Over the years, a true colony grew up around the lamp factory, and almost all townspeople passed through it, especially during their first few months in the United States. Because the work is very difficult and not well paid, employment there served as a springboard to better-paid and lighter work elsewhere.

In recent years, later generations of migrants have been employed in a variety of industries: metalworking, furniture making, automobile parts manufacturing, and food processing. In each case a similar process was repeated, with one person finding a job and then inviting other paisanos to come and work in the same firm. With time, a few became
foremen and gave preference to family members, friends, and townpeople. Currently, a few migrants from Santiago have even founded their own businesses in Los Angeles and have turned to fellow townspeople for employees.

San Marcos

The mechanisms that migrants employ in moving from Guadalajara to the United States are the same as those from rural areas. The difference is that the city in general, and the barrio of San Marcos in particular, do not generate their own social networks. Rather, migrants from the city use the long-established networks of their home communities, which have demonstrated efficacy. People from San Marcos migrate through contacts based in the town of their family's origin. Those not of campesino origin typically do not have access to a set of relationships sufficiently broad to enable them to migrate. Rather, they try to integrate themselves into existing networks, in which one of their neighbors is likely to participate.

The most effective network connections combine the bonds of kinship and paisanaje. Urban barriers do not have the same intense kind of community identification as towns, however. In an urban barrio, one generally knows one's neighbors but does not have contact with all the families that live there. In towns it is possible to know most residents, or at least to know of them. Moreover, the relationships of paisanaje are reinforced by kinship. Even if a paisano is not known directly, he can instantly be identified by his kin relationship to someone who is known. Friendly ties between urban neighbors may serve as a basis for the exchange of services and occasionally to support migrants, but they are not strong enough to sustain a whole network. In Los Angeles there are thousands of migrants from Guadalajara, but they do not form a group and are not integrated into any kind of association, as is the case for towns.

Neighbor status in a city implies weaker social solidarity than does paisanaje; however, it can sometimes be used for entry into existing smaller town-based networks. A person from Guadalajara may be able to "tag along" with a neighbor as he plies the networks emanating from his, or his father's, community of origin. Over time, urban-origin migrants who use such a network becomes completely integrated into the social system. They become enmeshed in the binational social structure based in the rural community, even though they were not born there. At times, social cohesion becomes so strong that these outsiders stay integrated into the system and the community after migration has ceased, even to the point of visiting the home community, just as if they were born there.

Considering the four case studies in comparative perspective, most migrant networks can be traced back to the fortuitous employment of some key individual. All that is necessary for a migrant network to develop is for one person to be in the right place at the right time and obtain a position that allows him to distribute jobs and favors to others from his community. Chance factors play a large role in determining where migrant networks eventually become rooted; after the network has begun to develop, however, a universal logic takes hold as the network is extended and elaborated, binding Mexican communities more tightly to specific destinations in the United States.

SUMMARY: SOCIAL NETWORKS AND MIGRATION

Mexican migration to the United States is based on an underlying social organization that supports and sustains it. International migration is an inherently social process that is organized through networks forged from everyday interpersonal connections that characterize all human groups. These connections include the common bonds of kinship, friendship, and paisanaje, which have been adapted to the new reality of mass migration. Together they compose a web of interconnected social relationships that supports the movement of people, goods, and information back and forth between Mexican sending communities and the United States.

The interpersonal relationships that make up the network are reinforced by institutional arrangements that bring migrants together on a regular basis in the United States. Voluntary organizations are particularly important in fostering regular face-to-face contact among migrants while they are abroad. The most important of these organizations is the soccer club, which brings migrants together on a weekly basis not only for recreation, but also for the exchange of information on jobs and housing in the United States. Soccer clubs also support reintegration of migrants into the home community through frequent team tours and the regular exchange of players. They also ensure the ongoing involvement of migrants in local affairs by encouraging the regular exchange of gossip and news.

One of the most important social institutions promoting contact and involvement with those at home is the fiesta of the patron saint. With the advent of mass migration, this yearly fiesta has become an important instrument of return migration and a symbolic demonstration of the
community's cohesion in the face of diaspora. The new social category assigned to los ausentes in the fiesta's proceedings serves as an important vehicle promoting the ongoing integration of migrants within the community of origin.

Migrant networks are gradually built up and elaborated over the years. In the beginning phases, social ties to people in the United States are few in number. Starting from a small base, they extend slowly at first. As migrant experience steadily accumulates in the population, however, the number of connections between migrants and others in the community expands rapidly. As time passes, a growing number of people have friends and relatives who are, or have been, U.S. migrants. Eventually a critical mass of migrants is achieved, one capable of supporting an extensive network of social ties. As the network expands, it incorporates more potential migrants under its umbrella of social relationships. By the late 1970s, nearly everyone in the communities under study could claim some social tie with a U.S. migrant through either kinship, friendship, or paisanaje.

An important step in the maturation of the migrant networks occurs when migrants begin to settle in the United States and bring their families north to live with them. With the definitive settlement of a few families, the flow of migrants is channeled more specifically to the settlement area. This process of settlement often accompanies the promotion of migrants to positions of authority, enabling them to offer jobs to friends, neighbors, and other paisanos.

The existence of a settled core of out-migrant families, in turn, accelerates the development of the network by giving it a solid U.S. anchor. The settled families' roots in the United States extend and deepen as a second generation is born and raised abroad, and the more existence of a settled core acts as a magnet to further migration. Points of destination are typically diverse in the early phases of network migration; however, migrants are increasingly channeled to specific points of destination that are linked to the home communities by highly developed social structures.

Migrant networks tend to become self-sustaining over time because of the social capital that they provide to prospective migrants. Personal contacts with friends, relatives, and paisanos give migrants access to jobs, housing, and financial assistance in the United States. As the web of interpersonal connections is extended and elaborated, this social capital is increasingly available to prospective migrants throughout the home community, progressively reducing the financial and "psychic" costs to U.S. migration. Landless jornaleros from a town such as Chamultán may be poor in financial resources, but they are wealthy in social capital, which they can readily convert into jobs and earnings in the United States. For someone from Chamultán, which has a particularly well developed migrant network, it is much easier to move and find a job in Los Angeles or San Francisco than in Guadalajara or Mexico City.

The self-feeding character of the migrant networks and the wealth of social capital they provide to people seeking entry into the U.S. labor market explain why U.S. migration has spread to involve all social groups in the communities under study and has become a common feature of life throughout western Mexico. As the costs of migration steadily drop, migration becomes more widely accessible and eventually emerges as a mass phenomenon encompassing all sectors of society. Through the steady growth and elaboration of migrant networks, then, international migration comes to be seen as a reliable resource on which families can regularly rely in adapting to changing economic circumstances.
DIFFERENTIAL MIGRATION, NETWORKS, INFORMATION AND RISK

J. Edward Taylor

ABSTRACT

The present study seeks to forge a link between risk and migration kinship networks. It is argued that contacts with family members in prospective migrant destinations play a crucial role in village household labor decisions primarily by providing the household with the information needed to formulate an effective strategy to reduce the risks associated with migration. A model of household labor decisions under uncertainty is presented as an analytical framework for explaining the effect of kinship networks, household characteristics, and attributes of household members upon the choice of alternative destinations. Empirical findings using Mexican village household data confirm that, consistent with

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