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Lessons From A Transnational Community***

By

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Department of City and Regional Planning
University of California at Berkeley

February 1994

A Publication of the
Chicano/Latino Policy Project



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The Chicano/Latino Policy Project is an affiliated research program of the Institute for the Study of Social Change at the University of California, Berkeley. The Policy Project coordinates and develops research on public policy issues related to Latinos in the United States and serves as a component unit of a multi-campus Latino policy studies program in the University of California system. The Policy Project's current priority research areas are education, health care, political participation and labor mobility with an emphasis on the impact of urban and working poverty and immigration.

The Institute for the Study of Social Change is an organized research unit at the University of California at Berkeley devoted to studies that will increase understanding of the mechanisms of social change and the development of techniques and methods to assist the direction of social change for the general improvement of social life. It has a particular mandate to conduct research and to provide research training on matters of social stratification and differentiation, including the condition of both economically and politically depressed minorities as well as the more privileged strata.

About the Author Rafael Alarcón is a doctoral student in the Department of City and Regional Planning at the University of California at Berkeley. He has written extensively on issues of International Migration and co-authored the volume, Return to Aztlán: The Social Process of International Migration From Western Mexico. (University of California Press, 1987)

Author's Note: Research in Los Altos de Jalisco region is the result of an investigation conducted at El Colegio de Jalisco and funded by the Ford Foundation. I was able to do field work in Tlacuitapa and California while I was a Visiting Research Fellow at the Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies at the University of California, San Diego between 1988 and 1989. I participated in a research project directed by Professor Wayne Cornelius to whom I am grateful for his guidance and valuable comments. As a result of this project I wrote the paper, titled: "Migratory Tradition, the Simpson-Rodino Law and Economic Crisis in a Mexican Region," that was prepared for the Commission for the Study of International Migration and Cooperative Economic Development. This working paper draws on many ideas and data developed in this unpublished paper. I was able to write this working paper thanks to the support of the Chicano/Latino Policy Project of the University of California, Berkeley.

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the relationship between regional development and labor migration to the United States in the context of NAFTA. To this end, mainly through ethnographic work, the migration experience of people from Tlacuitapa, Jalisco is analyzed to see whether or not this flow can be reduced through the implementation of NAFTA.

The paper develops two principal arguments. First, the current migration process between Mexico and the United States is not only the result of push-pull economic factors, as is generally assumed, but also the result of well-developed social networks and the implementation of government policies in both Mexico and the United States as manifested by the formation of a number of "transnational communities," like Tlacuitapa. The term transnational community describes rural Mexican communities that specialize in the production and reproduction of international migrant workers. This observation leads to a second and related argument: the additional job creation resulting from NAFTA would not necessarily stem the international migration flows in regions with a long tradition of migration to the United States.

Although manufacturing jobs have been created in a city near Tlacuitapa, the migration flow has not been affected in this community. Tlacuitapa is compared to other communities in the Los Altos de Jalisco region that have successfully stemmed migration flows to the United States. These cases reveal that international migration can be reduced in transnational communities by facilitating the establishment of small businesses and cooperatives. However, NAFTA might cause an opposite effect by affecting these small-scale enterprises negatively.

The case of Tlacuitapa suggests that the creation of transnational communities is an important aspect of the integration between Mexico and the United States. Since labor mobility across national borders like international trade is part of the consolidation of a global economy, migration from Mexico should be part of the agenda in negotiations between the two countries. Since NAFTA by itself will not play a significant role in deterring emigration from traditional sending areas, labor mobility should be addressed in the mutual interests of people from both countries; otherwise NAFTA will become another pipe dream of immigration deterrence like the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986.



I. INTRODUCTION

Illegal immigration from Mexico continues to be one of the most delicate and controversial issues affecting relations between Mexico and the United States. In California, the preferred destination for most undocumented Mexican immigrants, different groups have expressed their concern over what they perceive as an unstoppable flow of illegal workers. These workers, in their view, compete with citizens and lawful residents in the labor markets and deplete the coffers of cities and the state due to their use of social services. Some advocacy groups argue that California's fiscal deficit is caused in part by the arrival of great numbers of immigrants who are public service consumers.

The image of this unstoppable flow of undocumented immigrants has intensified with the realization that the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA) failed to reduce illegal immigration. Congress passed IRCA in part to stem the flow of illegal immigration. Its supporters argued that this legislation would solve the illegal immigration problem since it contained measures that would affect both the supply and the demand side of the process, besides providing a generous amnesty program that would benefit a large number of undocumented people who were already in this country. However, there is a growing consensus that IRCA has not brought about the sought-after reduction of undocumented immigration from Mexico. Apprehensions at the border--an imprecise measure of actual flows but a good indicator of trends-- rose sharply in 1990, showing that the reduction in the number of apprehensions observed between 1987 and 1989 was only a fleeting result of legalization.

In addition, several academic studies have found little evidence that the new law has deterred illegal immigration. In a study conducted in three traditional sending communities in Western Mexico in 1988, Cornelius (1990b) found no evidence that IRCA had reduced the traditionally heavy flow of workers to the United States; on the contrary, he found that IRCA seemed to have augmented that flow, at least in the short term, through the legalization programs. Bean, Edmonston and Passel (1990) concluded that the studies they collected generally suggested a decrease in the flow of illegal migrants as a result of IRCA. However, they indicated that a large proportion of this decrease was due to the legalization programs and that some recent data suggested that undocumented migration flows continued to grow in the post-IRCA period. Donato and her associates (1991) more emphatically stressed the failure of IRCA. Their study based in seven Mexican communities showed little evidence that IRCA had significantly deterred undocumented Mexican migration. In their view, the few small effects that they uncovered were little to show for the millions of dollars and thousands of hours that IRCA invested in an effort to stem the tide of Mexican migrants to the United States.

In this context, President Carlos Salinas de Gortari in 1991 proposed the establishment of a North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) that, among other things, would bring about a reduction of immigration from Mexico because "Mexico prefers to export its products rather than its people." President

Salinas considered NAFTA essential for the creation of jobs in Mexico that would reduce the pressures for emigration to the United States.

The debate over the ratification of NAFTA, which Congress narrowly approved in November of 1993, generated a number of studies that examine the agreement's effects on migration patterns from Mexico. Calva (1991), for instance, foresees a chaotic situation for Mexico as a result of NAFTA. In his opinion, free trade in agricultural and livestock products will cause the virtual demise of Mexico's domestic production of its most important grains (corn and beans) since their production costs in Mexico are higher than those in the United States and Canada.¹ Calva predicts that this liberalization of agricultural trade will eliminate 10 million cultivated hectares in Mexico, which in turn will lead to the emigration of three million *campesino* families who depend on the production of these grains. In Calva's view, if NAFTA permitted the free mobility of those expelled from the rural areas, nearly 15 million people would go to the United States and Canada. But since these governments are not willing to receive these displaced workers, they will emigrate clandestinely or go to Mexican cities where there are already 9 million people unemployed.

On the other hand, Cornelius and Martin (1993) argue that, even with the anticipated dislocations in small-scale agriculture, future levels of total Mexican migration to the United States (both legal and illegal) will increase in the absence of trade liberalization. The authors provide four reasons to explain why Mexican emigration may not increase significantly despite restructuring and displacement from traditional agriculture. First, many rural dwellers already have diversified their sources of income, making them less dependent on income earned from producing agricultural commodities. Second, a free trade zone will induce more U.S. agricultural producers to expand in Mexico in the 1990s, creating additional jobs there, instead of in the United States as they did in the 1980s. Third, the links between internal and international migration are not as direct as is often assumed, so that, even if economic restructuring increases internal migration, this shift may not translate into a great deal of international migration. Finally, following the European experience, free trade and economic integration can be structured so as not to cause significant emigration.

Hinojosa-Ojeda and Robinson (1992), analyzing economic models that address the potential effects of NAFTA on wages and employment in Mexico and the United States, conclude that while complete liberalization will increase U.S. agricultural exports to Mexico, this will also speed up out-migration from rural areas of people who will show up in Mexican urban and U.S. labor markets. For this reason they propose a long transition period for Mexican agriculture to allow time for needed infrastructure investments in rural areas and to smooth the process of labor absorption in the Mexican industrial sector.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the relationship between regional development and labor migration to the United States in the context of NAFTA. I develop two principal arguments: First, the

¹According to Calva (1991: 32), in the 1987-1989 period, while the production cost of corn per ton was \$258.62 in Mexico it was \$92.7 in the United States. Similarly, the production cost of beans was \$641.17 in Mexico and \$219.5 in the United States. The production costs of wheat were similar in both countries.

current migration process between Mexico and the United States is not only the result of push-pull economic factors as is generally assumed but also the result of well-developed social networks. In addition, government policies in both Mexico and the United States have facilitated the development of a migrant flow that now seems unstoppable. In particular, these policies led to the formation of "transnational communities." The term "transnational community" describes some rural Mexican communities that have specialized in the production and reproduction of international migrant workers; after a long tradition of migration to the United States, these communities have developed "daughter" communities in the United States through the concentrated settlement of families. Transnational communities have evolved in a more complicated fashion than simple push-pull economics can explain. In particular, sending communities are located in regions that have experienced economic development, yet they nevertheless persist in sending large numbers of migrant workers to the United States. This observation leads to my second and related argument: the additional foreign investment, domestic growth and job creation resulting from NAFTA will not necessarily stem the international migration flows in regions with a long tradition of migration to the United States, given the complex nature of the migration process.

The paper is divided into four sections. The first part reviews the history of migration policies of the governments of Mexico and the United States from the turn of the century to the 1990s as they relate to the creation of transnational communities. This section pays particular attention to the recommendations of the Commission for the Study of International Migration and Cooperative Economic Development, created by Congress to examine the "push" factors that impel undocumented migration from major sending areas. The second section focuses on the case of Tlacuitapa, a transnational community in Los Altos de Jalisco region, to examine to what extent unauthorized migration from this village can be reduced through the implementation of NAFTA. In the third section, Tlacuitapa is compared to other communities in the same region that have been able to stem migration flows to the United States. The fourth section draws on these findings to make policy recommendations that are sensitive to both the economic and social realities of the migration process.

I. IMMIGRATION POLICIES IN MEXICO AND THE UNITED STATES AND THE FORMATION OF TRANSNATIONAL COMMUNITIES

To understand the current migration process, one must trace the way government policies have historically shaped its development. This historical survey reviews three phases of immigration policy in both the United States and Mexico regarding labor migration from the latter. (1) In the period between the 1880s and the 1930s the "open borders" policy of the United States faced the initial opposition of Mexico to the development of this process. (2) Between the 1930s and the mid-1960s, despite the massive deportations of Mexicans during the Great Depression both governments encouraged temporary labor migration through the implementation of the Bracero Program. (3) Beginning in the 1970s, while

immigration policies in the United States have become more restrictive, the Mexican government has tried to maintain emigration flows from Mexico. One important result of the combination of these policies is the consolidation of transnational communities.

"Open Borders" Policy in the United States versus Mexican Nationalism (1880-1930)

By the end of the 1800s, immigration to the United States had changed from a colonization movement to a steady flow of labor from peripheral countries. Besides the "traditional" sending countries of Northern Europe, new sources of immigration developed in the 1890s in the rural areas of Italy, Greece, Poland, and Russia. These areas later became the major suppliers of immigrant labor (Portes and Bach 1985, 29). At the same time, Mexico was becoming the United States' main source of foreign labor for the Southwest and some areas in the Midwest.

From the turn of the century to the Great Depression, the policies of the Mexican and the U.S. governments were at odds. While the U.S. government promoted immigration, its Mexican counterpart tried to discourage it. During this period, an informal "open border" policy toward Mexico was implemented, as was an active process of recruitment. Mexico began to provide employers with a growing pool of both legal and illegal workers for farmwork, mining, and railroad maintenance in the United States. Particularly instrumental was the construction of railways that provided an incentive to recruit labor from Mexico. Labor recruiters, or *enganchadores*, were sent to the Central Plateau states in Mexico to hire workers for railroad construction (Cardoso 1980; 14). The process of recruitment was so effective in promoting migration that after a few years several rural communities in the states of Central Western Mexico, where recruitment was especially intense, became the future transnational communities.²

Prior to 1880, Asia had provided abundant labor for employers on the West Coast; however, a surge of nativist sentiment after 1880 cut off this source. In 1882 Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Acts, and in 1907 the U.S. and Japanese governments signed the "Gentlemen's Agreement" that banned labor migration from Japan. The U.S. government implemented several migration policies to further attract Mexican workers during this period. The history of intentional lenience began with the exemption of Mexicans from the literacy test requirement of the 1917 Immigration Act (Bilateral Commission 1989). Furthermore, between 1917 and 1922, the U.S. government unilaterally launched the first "Bracero program,"³ a massive recruitment of Mexican workers to compensate for the labor shortages created by World War I. Mexicans also were exempted from the National Origins Acts of 1921 and 1924. The 1921 Act limited the annual number of legal immigrants to 3 percent of the foreign-born population of each nationality as enumerated in the 1910 census. Since this Act also barred the entry of persons with more than 50 percent Indian blood, immigration authorities simply classified all incoming Mexicans as "white" (Cardoso 1980, 128-129).

²Central Western Mexico comprises the states of Aguascalientes, Colima, Guanajuato, Jalisco, Michoacán and Nayarit.

³The term *bracero* ("helping arms") referred to Mexican workers in the United States.

It is important to emphasize that the policies implemented in the United States during the first three decades of this century were aimed at attracting temporary workers rather than permanent immigrants. Bustamante (1983, 16) found that in 1910, the Dillingham Commission recommended the temporary migration of workers but rejected the promotion of permanent immigration based on racist assumptions. Similarly, the creation of the Border Patrol in 1924 led to certain restrictions on illegal immigration.

In the context of the intense nationalism that arose after the 1910 Mexican revolution, migration was considered a disaster for the future of Mexico. This stand also reflected a fear of U.S. expansionism that had existed since Mexico lost half of its territory as a consequence of the U.S.-Mexico War of 1847. The post-revolutionary Madero government that took power in 1911 after the expulsion of dictator General Porfirio Díaz, passed legislation empowering the executive to acquire property for the purpose of encouraging the repatriation of migrants and to create a nationwide system of employment offices.

Another policy that Madero continued from pre-revolution days was the dissemination of notices that described unfavorable conditions for workers in the United States (Cardoso 1980). In 1911, for example, the mayor of Chavinda, a small village in Michoacán that later became a transnational community, received a circular sent by the Mexican Secretary of the Interior, that said, "I am requesting you to alert the Districts of that State, that laborers should not go to the United States in search of work, because they will not find it and workers will be deported (. . .) I am informing you of this in order to avoid predicaments to the working class."⁴

President Carranza continued the policy of advising would-be immigrants of the problems they would find in the United States, and he initiated the policy of protecting those who had already left Mexico and aiding returning workers by giving them free railroad passes home. The protection of Mexican workers in the United States started when the Mexican government began to realize that it was impossible to stop migration and that migration acted as a "safety valve" that alleviated poverty in some Mexican regions (Cardoso 1980).

During the 1920s, President Obregón had to deal with the repatriation of Mexican workers that took place in 1921 due to an economic recession. He formed the Department of Repatriation and sought to use the mutual benefit societies formed in expatriate communities to help defend the rights of Mexicans. In the first decades of the century, there were no important differences between the Mexican immigrant population and the U.S.-born population of Mexican descent; for this reason, they belonged to the same organizations. However, during the 1920s a sector of this population began to consider themselves as Americans. This identity led to the formation of organizations such as LULAC (League of United Latin American Citizens) and to a disassociation from the migrant population.

⁴Records of the Municipality of Chavinda Michoacán. Government Files. File # 9, 1911, cited in Alarcón (1989, 89).

From Anti-Immigrant Hysteria to an Agreement: Deportations and the Bracero Program (1930-1964)

During the Great Depression, approximately half a million Mexicans were deported from the United States including many U.S. citizens of Mexican descent (Hoffman 1974, 126). Jobs that remained were given to U.S. citizens, and economic relief was denied to Mexicans, who were repatriated voluntarily or by coercion. Deportations were particularly severe in southern California, the Midwest and Texas: the actions in these areas were highly decentralized since they were organized by local public and private welfare agencies (Acuña 1988, 202). In response to this, the Lázaro Cárdenas administration (1934-1940) launched a powerful drive to attract Mexicans in the United States back to their home country through agrarian reform and expropriation of foreign investments.

However, the entry of the United States into World War II revitalized the massive recruitment of Mexican labor. In 1942 the governments of Mexico and the United States established a temporary-worker arrangement known as the Bracero Program, which lasted until 1964. The U.S. government had two alternatives to meet the labor shortage caused by the war: open the border or enter into an agreement with the Mexican government to negotiate the importation of workers. While growers in the United States favored the first alternative because they wanted to have access to labor at the lowest possible cost, the Mexican government insisted on an agreement to protect the rights of its workers (Acuña 1988).

In 1942 both governments signed the first of many short-term agreements called the Emergency Labor Program, under which both governments would supervise the recruitment of Braceros. Despite these agreements, conflicts between U.S. growers and the Mexican government continued in the late 1940s and thereafter. The 1947 agreement allowed U.S. growers to recruit workers without the intervention of the government, but in 1948 Mexican officials refused to sign Bracero contracts if workers were not paid better wages. The Mexican government also was concerned with racism in Texas and wanted recruitment in the interior of Mexico. As years passed, growers gained more concessions from Congress at the expense of Mexico. To Ernesto Galarza (1977, 374), a Chicano scholar and a farm worker leader, "the Bracero system was a cover up of the government as the junior partner of agribusiness." In 1951, Public Law 78, which renewed the Bracero program, charged the U.S. federal government with the task of overseeing the employment of Braceros, thus weakening the influence of growers (Acuña 1988). Despite the efforts to attract Mexican workers, the U.S. government conducted "Operation Wetback" in the early 1950s, when once again many undocumented workers were deported to Mexico.

During this period, the Mexican government used the Bracero program to dilute the development of insurgent social movements. For instance, Mexican officials allocated more than 50 percent of the Bracero contracts to rural residents of traditional sending states which accounted for only 25 percent of Mexico's rural population because this was an area where the Sinarquista movement had great support (Cross and Sandos 1981, 35)⁵ In addition, given the scarcity of government aid, small landholders and especially

⁵The Sinarquista movement was a counterrevolutionary movement that opposed land reform and socialist education, among other things.

*ejidatarios*⁶ saw temporary work in the United States as the source of money they needed to cultivate their lands. In this sense, money earned in the United States began to subsidize agricultural production in many future transnational communities.

In the 1940s, Mexican officials retreated from advocating the rights of Mexicans in the United States. Saragoza (1980, 4) believes that this shift was consistent with domestic policies in Mexico that led to a substantial decline in real wages, the suppression of dissident unions, and the promotion of foreign investment.

By the end of the Bracero program in 1964, some 4.5 million contracts had been issued. During this period, people in Mexican rural communities, besides gaining experience in migrating to the United States and establishing contacts with employers, began to depend on income earned in this country. The termination of the program in 1964 resulted from several factors, including increased opposition by U.S. domestic labor, election of a Democratic president in 1960, and the mobilization of some Chicano organizations that claimed that Braceros were used to oversupply the labor market to depress wages and to break strikes. Finally, the introduction of labor-saving techniques in agriculture eliminated the need for a massive pool of farm workers (Acuña 1988, 265-266).

The Path Toward Restrictionism in the United States and the Laissez-Faire Policy in Mexico (1965-1990)

The Bracero program was dismantled unilaterally by the United States in 1964, and one year later the Mexican government implemented the Border Industrialization Program (BIP), now commonly known as the "maquiladora program." This program was designed to promote local economic development in border cities and to provide jobs for those Mexicans who could no longer be expected to work in the United States. The BIP allowed foreign and Mexican investors to import temporarily duty-free all the inputs, machinery, and replacement parts needed for assembly as long as they ensured their reexportation (Wilson 1992, 37). Because *maquiladoras* mostly employ young women, these plants have not played an important role in deterring illegal immigration, which draws heavily on pools of young males.

In 1965, the Immigration and Nationality Act abolished the national origins quota system established in 1924 but maintained the principle of numerical restriction, limiting Eastern Hemisphere immigration to 170,000 and placing for the first time a ceiling on Western Hemisphere immigration of 120,000. This legislation set a per country limit of 20,000 and also established a preference system for relatives of U.S. citizens and permanent residents to reunify families and for persons with special occupational skills to meet labor market needs in the United States. In the end, neither the preference system nor the per-country limit was applied to the Western Hemisphere (U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, 1991, A.1.14-15).

⁶Ejidatarios are peasants who benefited from the agrarian reform.

Since the mid-1960s, both legal and undocumented migration rates from Mexico have continued to escalate. Legal migration began to rise in the mid-1960s, when former Braceros took advantage of more liberal immigration policies that allowed them to acquire residence documents. Between 1961 and 1980, 1.1 million Mexicans immigrated legally to the United States, and another 1.6 million entered in the period from 1981 to 1990. In 1991, in great part due to the legalization process, nearly one more million Mexican migrants were admitted as legal residents (U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service 1991).

Undocumented migration had begun to grow rapidly during the 1950s, as the demand for Bracero visas exceeded their supply. The best estimates suggests that 2.1 million undocumented aliens were included in the 1980 U.S. Census. Eight years later, after legalization under IRCA was implemented, Woodrow and Passel (1990, 63) found that 1.9 million undocumented immigrants (1.1 million from Mexico) were included in the June 1988 Current Population Survey.⁷ This estimate may be too low because it does not include any of the applicants for the Special Agricultural Workers (SAW) program contained in IRCA, most of whom were Mexican.

In the 1970s, a social movement to restrict immigration originated in the United States. Even though this movement has focused on illegal immigration, its scope has expanded toward working for the reduction of immigration in general. The Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) has played a key role in this movement. Congressional approval of IRCA in 1986 was the result of a compromise between restrictionists like FAIR and migrant advocates. IRCA included three principal measures: (1) amnesty for undocumented workers; (2) sanctions against employers who hire undocumented workers; and (3) increased enforcement at U.S. borders.

The amnesty was administered under two programs. The "general amnesty" program was offered to undocumented people who had resided in the United States since January 1, 1982. The Special Agricultural Workers (SAW) program was designed for people who had worked 90 days in agriculture of perishable products between May 1985 and May 1986. As a result, more than 3 million people (the majority from Mexico) were granted legalization.

Under IRCA, immigration policy for the first time focused on the demand or "pull" side of illegal immigration by imposing employer sanctions on those who "knowingly" hired undocumented workers. These sanctions were accompanied by increased border enforcement efforts.

While the legalization process and the restrictionist content of IRCA have been well-publicized, its economic development component is less known. Congress also sought to address the "push" factors of migration by emphasizing that the ultimate solution to illegal immigration was to promote economic development in sending countries. An interesting precedent for IRCA's effort to promote economic development in sending communities was the Arizona Farm Workers Union (AFW) initiative in the early

⁷According to Woodrow and Passel (1990: 65), analysis of the 1980 Census results suggested that 20 percent to 40 percent of the undocumented immigrants residing permanently in the United States were not included in the Census; therefore, a similar range may be reasonable for the Current Population Survey.

1980s. In the view of the AFW, Mexican workers were forced to migrate to the United States due to economic conditions in Mexico; accordingly, they included an economic development clause in their collective contracts with farmers. Every farmer was to pay 10 cents per hour per worker to create an economic development fund to be used in the Mexican regions from which the workers came. In the summer of 1980, the AFW channeled \$45,000 to four areas in the states of Sinaloa, Guanajuato and Queretaro (Sánchez and Romo 1981). In the end this project failed because the AFW lost many contracts with farmers, and ultimately the migration process proved to be more complicated than anticipated.

In Congress' view, "economic development and the availability of new and better jobs at home is the only way to diminish migratory pressures over the long term" (Commission for the Study of International Migration 1990, 107). Congress implemented this mandate by creating the Commission for the Study of International Migration and Cooperative Economic Development (hereinafter "the Commission").⁸ The Commission, which concentrated its efforts in Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean, consisted of twelve members and was chaired by Diego C. Asencio, former assistant secretary in the U.S. State Department.⁹ Over a period of three years the Commission held nine international consultations as well as several research workshops and hearings in the United States. In addition, the Commission funded 79 research papers that were written by researchers from different countries. The final report, titled Unauthorized Migration: An Economic Development Response, was published in July of 1990 and allegedly reflected the ideas and suggestions gathered in the process.

In its final report the Commission states that "the 1980s witnessed unprecedented levels of global migration --much of it unauthorized-- from developing to developed countries. [These movements] have created regional tensions, exacerbated economic problems in host countries, taxed international humanitarian support systems, and created what some refer to as 'compassion fatigue' in many receiving countries" (Commission for the Study of International Migration 1990, 9). Acknowledging the impact of the economic recession, the Commission indicated that it was well aware of the national fiscal situation and sought whenever possible to make recommendations that would not result in immediate budgetary deficits in the United States.

The Commission's most important recommendation was its support for the establishment of NAFTA. Barkin and Lopez (1991) argue that the Asencio Commission was so interested in promoting

⁸The following paragraph describes the tasks of the commission: "The Commission in consultation with the governments of Mexico and other sending countries in the Western Hemisphere shall examine the conditions in Mexico and such other countries which contribute to unauthorized migration to the United States and (shall explore) mutually beneficial, reciprocal trade and investment programs to alleviate such conditions" (Section 601 of the Immigration Reform and Control Act, Public Law 99-603, November 6, 1986).

⁹The other members of the Commission were: Donna M. Alvarado, President, Quest International; Toney Anaya, former governor of New Mexico; Eric H. Biddle, Jr., attorney; John Bryant, Congressman, 5th District, Texas; Garner J. Cline, attorney; Dale S. de Hann, former United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees; Theodore E. McCarrick, Archbishop of Newark, New Jersey; Edward C. Rivera, International Technical Service; Michael S. Teitelbaum, Alfred P. Sloan Foundation; Art Torres, California state senator; and Esther Lee Yao, University of Houston.

NAFTA that 30 percent of its recommendations centered on the issues of free market and trade integration. Among other things, the Asencio Commission recommended quota allocations for textiles, apparel, and steel to encourage Mexican exports of manufactured goods. The Commission also recommended that the United States support Mexican requests for funds to develop *maquiladora* activities, although it urged the two governments to be vigilant about protection of workers' rights and labor standards. The Commission further suggested that the United States condition bilateral aid to sending countries on their taking the necessary steps toward structural adjustment.

Besides the firm support for NAFTA and its macroeconomic effects, the Commission made several recommendations dealing with regional and local economic development. In this context, the Commission recommended three strategies to foster economic development as a way to diminish the pressures for undocumented immigration:

1. Targeting migrant-sending regions for economic growth. Since migratory flows originate in specific regions, the Commission suggested that development efforts be targeted not at resource-poor areas with meager development prospects but at nearby regions with greater potential to offer improved economic alternatives to prospective migrants. The Commission concluded that financial institutions should give priority to development projects that focus on decentralized growth in Mexico's poorer regions.
2. Developing small business. Since the informal sector often serves as a refuge for the urban poor and provides employment to an increasing number of women, the Commission suggested that national and international development agencies work with governments to reduce legal and bureaucratic impediments to the development of small business. In addition, the Commission encouraged private commercial banks to finance small business.
3. Channeling remittances into productive small businesses. The Commission found that most migrant remittances are used to pay for basic necessities, and little goes to productive investment. The Commission recommended that individual migrant remittances be complemented by other financial resources from official and private institutions to support the development of the small business sector. The Commission singled out the Agency for International Development to take the lead in fostering such cooperative financing arrangements.

These recommendations were made in the context of current U.S. immigration policy that is based on the provisions contained in the Immigration Reform Act of 1965, the Refugee Act of 1980 and IRCA. Vernez and McCarthy (1990, 11) argue that current U.S. immigration policy seeks four main objectives: to reunite families, to address labor needs, to resettle refugees and accept asylum seekers for both humanitarian and foreign or domestic policy reasons, and to facilitate trade and economic and socio-cultural exchanges with

other nations. However, the Immigration Reform Act of 1990 emphasized the importance of the human capital characteristics of new legal immigrants instead of family reunification considerations.

Since the end of the Bracero program, the Mexican government has pursued two main goals: to keep the "safety valve" open and to protect the rights of migrants. Castañeda (1988, 315-316) contends that the official view in Mexico has been that the country's authorities should protect the human and labor rights of undocumented Mexican migrants. But Mexico has been reluctant to press this issue with the United States for fear that such efforts would inevitably lead to pressures to regulate this flow by restricting emigration and patrolling its side of the border. Rico (1990) points out that Mexico played a minimal role during the process that led to IRCA. Even though Mexican authorities insisted on including migration on the agenda of almost any meeting that took place between representatives of both countries and emphasized the need for "bilateral solutions" to this problem, they refused to be involved in consultations about legislative reform. They were concerned about the possible consequences of what they saw as the tightening --if not complete closing-- of the borders.

In keeping with Mexico's reluctance to participate directly in U.S. discussions of immigration reform, Castañeda (1990, 322) believes that there is no support in Mexico, other than abstract and moral, for Mexican-American causes, nor have any serious attempts ever been made to organize Mexican Americans or Mexican nationals living in the United States as a "Mexican lobby." Only recently has the Mexican government turned its attention to the migrant population living in the United States. In February 1990, the Mexican government established the Office for the Mexican Communities Abroad (*Dirección General para las Comunidades Mexicanas en el Extranjero*) as an entity of the Foreign Ministry.

The formation of this office reflects the economic and political importance to Mexico that transnational communities achieved in the 1980s. According to an estimate of total remittances from the United States, Mexico received \$3.371 billion in 1990. The money migrant workers sent to Mexico (including Social Security payments) represented 1.5 percent of Mexico's gross domestic product for that year and exceeded the value of agricultural and livestock exports and foreign investment the same year. The amount of remittances is comparable to Mexico's income from foreign tourism and is just \$200 million less than the value added by the maquiladora industry (Lozano, 1993, 63). From the political perspective, the outcome of the 1988 federal elections in Mexico prompted many Mexican immigrants in California, who supported the opposition party *Partido de la Revolución Democrática*, to show their preoccupation with affairs in the homeland (Martinez, 1993).

The economic restructuring in both Mexico and the United States has finally led the two governments to agree on at least one aspect of immigration policy: in both countries it is widely assumed that NAFTA will be an important part of the solution to the problem of unauthorized immigration from Mexico to the United States. However, a closer examination of the evolution of one transnational community suggests that this optimism may be displaced.

II. TLACUITAPA: THE DEVELOPMENT OF A TRANSNATIONAL COMMUNITY

This section will focus on the experience of a Mexican rural community which supplies a large number of migrants to the United States. Tlacuitapa, located in the traditional sending region of Los Altos de Jalisco, is used here to illustrate how a transnational community reacts to regional development efforts and to evaluate the likely impact of NAFTA and the Ascencio Commission's recommendations in stemming the flow of undocumented immigrants to the United States.

The Presence of El Norte

To someone arriving in Tlacuitapa, the immediate presence of *El Norte*¹⁰ is evident. Due to the absence of young males, women and teenagers drive pickups that transport cattle feed. Most of these pickups have California plates, although there are some from Oklahoma and Nevada. The fifteen satellite dishes in this town of 374 households demonstrate the availability of money and the competition for status. One neighbor states "Thanks to God and to *El Norte*, the people of Tlacuitapa have been able to make progress." According to a 1988 survey, Tlacuitapa had 2,322 inhabitants; nearly half (47.7 percent) of those aged 15 or older had gone to the United States on at least one occasion.¹¹

People in the village combine corn farming with dairy cattle raising; nevertheless, many households depend on remittances that arrive from the United States. For this reason, every day at three in the afternoon, people gather around the store where the mail is distributed to receive the news and the money sent by migrant workers.

According to the 1988 survey, the majority of the homes (63.1 percent) and of the lots (65.0 percent) that were not inherited had been acquired with income from the United States. For this reason, people in the town bury U.S. coins in the foundation of their homes as a symbolic gesture to acknowledge that housing has improved because of money from the United States.

Apparently, remittances from the United States have substituted Mexican government credits and are used to sustain agriculture and livestock. The government extensionist in the area considers that the Tlacuitapa *ejido* is the most prosperous in his zone because of money arriving from the United States. According to him "in Tlacuitapa the people do not live off their parcels of land; their parcels of land live off *El Norte*."

Cattlemen, Knitters and Migrants

Tlacuitapa was originally a settlement of peons and sharecroppers who worked in nearby haciendas. The community received *ejido* land in 1937, during the most active phase of Mexico's agrarian reform. By

¹⁰*El Norte* (The North) is the popular term used by people in sending communities to refer to the United States.

¹¹A little more than half (53.7 percent) of the 374 households in Tlacuitapa were surveyed. In cases where empty houses were found, an attempt was made to interview the families in their places of residence in California.

1988, the community had a total of 157 *ejidatarios* who worked 2,248 hectares. Only 5 percent of the land is irrigated, 67 percent is rain fed, and the rest is pasture land or has other uses.¹² The survey found that 44 percent of the economically active population whose primary residence in 1988-1989 was in Tlacuitapa worked in agriculture, while 14 percent were employed in services, 8 percent in retail commerce, 8 percent in construction, and 26 percent in light manufacturing, mostly in-home garment-making (Cornelius 1990a, 9).

As in the whole region of Los Altos de Jalisco, given the poor quality of the soil and lack of water, cattle raising for milk production has been more important than crop cultivation. Since the 1940s, milk has been sold to large processing plants located in the city of Lagos de Moreno, nearly 20 miles away. The dairy producers range from those who sell 2 liters of milk a day to those who deliver 200. Households involved in the production of milk generally implement two kinds of arrangements. First, while men go to the United States, the elderly and women are in charge of agricultural production. They hire day laborers to perform the work. Since many of these day laborers have moved from smaller surrounding localities, they replace the migrants who are either absent or not willing to work in Tlacuitapa after having worked in the United States for higher wages. Second, when the whole household moves to the United States, animals are left in the care of relatives and land is given to sharecroppers.

Like other women in the region, Tlacuitapeñas have long engaged in domestic handicrafts. Embroidery and knitting are activities inherited from Spanish ancestors. In the 1950s, substantial domestic production began when a merchant from San Juan de los Lagos, a nearby city, took embroidery frames to Tlacuitapa for production of bedspreads. Women later began to embroider shawls to sell in the market. This work ended in the mid-1960s, when women were allowed to enter churches without covering their heads. Since the beginning of the 1970s, the knitting of baby clothes has expanded in Tlacuitapa. At present, almost half of the working women in the town knit as a principal or secondary occupation. Women knit in their homes with yarn given to them by merchants or by other women who pay them for the work completed. Women who work in this activity say they do not earn very much.

Social Networks and Labor Markets in the San Francisco Bay Area

Since the beginning of this century, Tlacuitapeños have been increasingly integrated in employment in the United States. Three generations of migrants have worked at various jobs and in different places. At present, Tlacuitapeños concentrate in several areas of the United States. A city in the San Francisco Bay Area has the largest concentration. There are other smaller, related communities in California --near Sacramento and in Los Angeles-- as well as in Oklahoma, Texas, Nevada, and Oregon. Table 1 shows the distribution of the people from Tlacuitapa according to their place of residence in 1988.

¹²Information provided by Secretaría de Agricultura y Recursos Hidraulicos, Lagos de Moreno. 1988.

Table 1
Place of Residence of People Born in Tlacuitapa, ages
15 and 64 years, 1988. (n = 774)

Place	Male (%)	Female (%)
Tlacuitapa	52.48	81.84
Other place in Mexico	1.31	2.56
Northern California	16.71	8.18
Southern California	7.57	2.3
Nevada	1.83	1.53
Oregon and Washington	2.35	0.51
Oklahoma	7.83	2.05
Texas	6.01	0.26
Illinois	2.87	0.77
Other place in the U.S.	1.04	0
Total	100	100

Source: Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies Household Survey, 1988.

Table 1 illustrates the extent of migration to the United States. Nearly half the males (46.2 percent) and 15.6 percent of women born in the town resided in the United States in 1988. Although migration by women has been increasing as more families settle in the United States, men still migrate more.

Of all of the current concentrations of Tlacuitapeños in the United States, the most populous and institutionalized is the one in the San Francisco Bay Area, where close to forty families have settled. The San Francisco Bay concentration began at the start of the 1970s with the gradual displacement of Tlacuitapeños who had previously settled near Sacramento. The principal reason for displacement was a desire to leave farm jobs that were seasonal to seek urban employment that was more permanent and higher paying.

After three decades of work experience, the San Francisco Bay migrants have managed to gain access to the labor market in the region. Most of them work in restaurants and hotels and in janitorial work. A few, especially those who were already legal residents, work as permanent and temporary workers in a salt factory, in companies that build chain link fences, or in construction. Others work in a mattress factory or as farm workers in flower growing and nurseries. Women, besides doing farm work in the flower industry, work in dry cleaning and in housekeeping in hotels, restaurants, and private homes. They also provide child care at home.

The social life of Tlacuitapeños, which includes cooperation and conflict, is intense in this city and centers on a charismatic Tlacuitapeño whose house has a garden next to the street. This place, called the *Plaza de Tlacuitapa* or the "gossip," is very important to the interrelationship of Tlacuitapeños who exchange information and favors there. In years past, a soccer team, the "Tlacui-boys" also has served to solidify the community.

III. REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND MIGRATION IN LOS ALTOS DE JALISCO

One can argue that NAFTA and the policies suggested by the Asencio Commission can be successfully applied in a village like Tlacuitapa to reduce the massive flow of migrants. The local economy is based on primary activities that do not require large numbers of workers, and the industrial activities carried out by women at home are low paying. However, two observations call into question this assertion. First, Tlacuitapa is located in an already economically dynamic region that has seen the proliferation of small businesses, many of them formed with migrant remittances. Second, the rapid growth of the manufacturing industry in the nearby city of Lagos de Moreno has not affected the migration patterns from Tlacuitapa. In this sense, the experience of Tlacuitapa and the Los Altos region in general seems to undercut some of the Asencio Commission's recommendations.

Los Altos de Jalisco: A Dynamic Economic Region with an Old Migratory Tradition

Tlacuitapa is part of Los Altos de Jalisco, a region located in an arid plateau in the northeast of the state of Jalisco.¹³ Like other regions in Western Mexico, Los Altos de Jalisco is considered a "traditional sending region" with a hundred-year-old history of U.S.-bound migration. A number of researchers have long recognized the importance of Los Altos de Jalisco as a migration region. As early as the 1930s, Paul Taylor (1933), an economist from Berkeley, conducted the first study in Arandas where he found that recruiters played a key role in developing migration from that town.

The region has specialized in cattle raising since colonial times. At the beginning, this activity was aimed at producing meat and draft animals destined for the mines of Guanajuato and Zacatecas. In the last four decades, the area has become one of the principal dairy production regions in Mexico due principally to Nestlé's setting up a plant in the early 1940s in the city of Lagos de Moreno.

The establishment of the Nestlé plant prompted cattle ranchers to shift from meat production to milk production. Besides large farming companies that produce for the national market, there are three types of dairy production farms that operate on different economic levels. *Large production units* have a substantial number of first-class livestock, excellent technical conditions to produce fodder crops, and a steady workforce of contract salaried workers. Because of the farms' capital, they can raise dairy cattle at a high profit or redirect their investment if this activity becomes unprofitable. *Medium-sized farms* are the units that predominate in the region and are preferred by the local enterprises that process milk. These production units engage in cattle raising activities that are complemented by the cultivation of fodder crops

¹³The Los Altos de Jalisco region comprises the following municipalities: Acatic, Arandas, Encarnación de Díaz, Jalostotitlán, Jesús María, Lagos de Moreno, Mexicacán, Ojuelos de Jalisco, San Diego de Alejandría, San Julián, San Juan de los Lagos, San Miguel el Alto, Tepatitlán de Morelos, Tzucaltiche, Unión de San Antonio, Valle de Guadalupe, Villa Obregón, Villa Hidalgo, and Yahualica de González Gallo. For more on the analysis of the regional context, see Alarcón, Cárdenas and Vega, (1990).

that in most cases are insufficient. These units tend toward installation of a mechanized dairy stable, the production of fodder and the diversification of activities that permit them to operate even during times of crisis. *Family farms* are the smallest peasant units that cultivate corn and beans intended for their own consumption and for their livestock. Work on these farms is generally carried out by the household unit itself, which is barely able to subsist and therefore expels a significant portion of its workforce. According to researchers of the Instituto de Estudios para el Desarrollo Rural Maya (1985), the sale of labor in the United States is what permits the reproduction of these units and even a modest expansion; thus, remittances sent by family members represent a significant income without which these farms would not survive.

Besides dairy production, the manufacturing industry began to grow rapidly in the region in the 1970s by setting up enterprises dedicated to the production of dairy products and to dressmaking. Four of the most important manufacturing firms in the state of Jalisco are located in Lagos de Moreno: Pasteurizadora L de M and Cremería La Danesa, which produce dairy products; and two transnational corporations, Nestlé and Swissmex Rapid, S.A., which produce metal products (Alba 1986).

There are also several medium-sized industries, as well as a great number of small family workshops dedicated to producing clothes and knitting, work shoes and gloves, and dairy products. The proliferation of small workshops has radically changed the economic profile of many towns. The most extensive clothing industry in Los Altos is based on small *maquila* workshops and home work in which women have a predominant role. Beginning also in the 1970s, the southern part of the region, around the city of Tepatitlán, developed a new type of entrepreneurial poultry farming that requires large financial resources and channels its production toward the large urban centers of the country.

The city of Lagos de Moreno, located 20 miles away from Tlacuitapa, has experienced the most rapid industrial development in the region. Table 2 shows that the manufacturing industry in Lagos de Moreno grew faster than that of the state of Jalisco in the period 1960-1990. However, the newly created jobs there have not attracted the population from Tlacuitapa, which continues to migrate to the United States in great numbers. Instead, the industrialization of Lagos has attracted numerous population groups from neighboring rural communities. The few families from Tlacuitapa who live in Lagos de Moreno moved there in order to start businesses.

Table 2
Employed Population by Industry in Lagos de Moreno (Municipality) and Jalisco (State), 1960-1990

Industry	Lagos de Moreno		Total % Change	Jalisco		Total % Change
	1960	1990		1960	1990	
Agriculture	11,380	8,492	-25.38	393,116	234,016	-40.47
Mining *	101	90	-10.89	7,255	11,669	60.84
Manufacturing	1,624	7,467	359.79	118,413	372,498	214.58
Construction	642	2,490	287.85	33,686	124,512	269.63
Commerce	1,209	3,186	163.52	84,045	242,790	188.88
Transp. and communic.	400	757	89.25	24,723	67,211	171.86
Services	1,355	5,819	329.45	91,716	447,452	387.87
Not specified	139	1,090	684.17	4,047	53,054	1210.95
Total	16,850	29,391	74.43	757,001	1,553,202	105.18

* Includes oil and gas extraction and public utilities.

Source: *General Census of Population and Housing, Mexico, 1960 and 1990*

Alternatives to International Migration

The fact that the creation of manufacturing jobs in Lagos de Moreno did not attract people from Tlacuitapa calls into question the Asencio Commission's conclusion that development prospects in nearby regions could offer improved economic alternatives to prospective migrants. Despite the case of Tlacuitapa, some communities in the region of Los Altos de Jalisco have broken their dependency on income earned in the United States through the establishment of small businesses. Those are the cases of Los Dolores in the municipality of Arandas, a community studied by Juan Luis Orozco (1992), and Villa Hidalgo, a small city studied by Wayne Cornelius (1990a).

Los Dolores was originally a community of dairy farmers with heavy migration to the United States. In 1979, on the advice of priests and members of a nearby cooperative, residents of Los Dolores began to organize a cooperative to buy livestock feed; along with two other cooperatives, they began to make their own livestock feed, which was better and less expensive than the feed they purchased. In 1984, the three cooperatives bought a plant to process milk, and three years later the cooperative was able to produce 800 kilograms of cheese.

In 1988, the cooperative had 240 members, 80 of whom were from Los Dolores. No member receives any share of the profits, which are reinvested, but the cooperative offers the highest price for milk and buys all the members' production. Additionally, the cooperative employs 80 people (11 of whom are from Los Dolores) and tends to hire members or children of members.

Juan Luis Orozco (1992, 381) believes that the cooperative has played a key role in reducing the flow of migrants to the United States, a flow that peaked in the period 1968-1978. Today a family can enjoy a relatively good standard of living by remaining in Los Dolores and participating in the cooperative. Despite all of this, young people still go to the United States for short periods of time when they have to save for a wedding or construction of a house.

Villa Hidalgo provides another example of a city that successfully reversed the trend toward out-migration to the United States. Although, Villa Hidalgo lost population during the 1950s and 1960s, the city gained population through immigration in the 1970s because a large number of jobs were created in approximately 200 small, family-owned textile and garment factories established beginning in the late 1960s. The industrialization process began when a former migrant worker invested his savings in two manually operated cloth weaving machines. At the end of the 1970s, the town became a key supplier of clothing to major department stores in large cities. Cornelius (1990a, 31-32) states that the initial investment came from savings accumulated through employment in the United States, although commercial bank credit became available later. He considers that jobs could have been created faster and in larger numbers with Mexican government and international agency support through low interest loans, training, and assistance in developing domestic and export markets. However, Cornelius suggests the need to be cautious in generalizing from this case. A similar initiative, that of Nochistlan Zacatecas production of clothing and shoes, failed because local producers were unable to compete with large producers from bigger cities.

In contrast to the experiences of Los Dolores and Villa Hidalgo, Tlacuitapa remains a substantial source of international migrants despite the growth of manufacturing and the proliferation of small business in Lagos de Moreno. Thus, the Tlacuitapa story requires a closer assessment of the Asencio Commission's claim that economic development will deter migration to the United States.

IV. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The historical review of the policies implemented by the U.S. and Mexican governments on labor migration reveals that the United States has always taken the initiative in the policy making process through well-defined immigration legislation that is often used to favor particular interests. Mexico's policies have largely emerged as a response to U.S. immigration policies. From the turn of the century to the mid-1960s, U.S. immigration policy encouraged temporary Mexican labor migration. This was the overall intention despite the deportations that took place in the 1930s and 1950s. The restrictionist push to limit immigration crystallized in IRCA, but this legislation still contains many concessions for farmers in their search for cheap labor. In the case of Mexico, the short period of the nationalist stand that opposed emigration ended in the 1940s and gave way to a policy that tacitly has sought to maintain the migration process. Despite this long-standing laissez-faire stance that keeps the "back door" open to emigration, Mexican officials have recently proclaimed that Mexico prefers to create jobs rather than export people. This argument has been used as one of the principal justifications for the establishment of NAFTA.

The migration process from Los Altos de Jalisco, like all social processes, resists simplification. In contrast to the widespread conception in both Mexico and the United States, the case presented here calls into question the image of Mexican workers forming a mass of poor and unemployed who come to the

United States desperately seeking work. Labor migration from Los Altos de Jalisco takes place in the context of a region that has experienced economic growth and where dedication to work has distinguished a population that in the last fifty years has made up one of the most important dairy regions in Mexico despite an adverse environment. In addition, the development of a number of large and medium-sized manufacturing firms and the proliferation of small workshops have created jobs that captured part of the labor displaced from agriculture. However, the massive emigration from the region both to other cities in Mexico and to the United States shows that the rate of regional economic growth has not been able to keep pace with the expectations of a large segment of the population.

The case of Tlacuitapa demonstrates that there are a number of rural communities in Western Mexico that are fully integrated into the United States. These transnational communities as shown in this paper have largely resulted from policies implemented by the United States and Mexico. First, direct recruitment in Western Mexico and the implementation of lenient immigration policies on the part of the United States initiated the formation of these Mexican communities. Later, for twenty-two years, the Bracero program strengthened the linkages between U.S. employers and many Mexican workers and expanded the migration experience and the economic dependence on money earned in the United States of many rural communities. During this period of time, the Mexican government allocated disproportional Bracero contracts in the Western region. Later, the maturation of social networks and the U.S. immigration policy that facilitated family reunification reinforced the formation of "daughter communities" in the United States.

A transnational community is the result directly from the maturation of social networks inherent in the migration process. Migration has its own dynamic: once international migration begins, social networks develop to make foreign employment increasingly accessible to all classes of a sending society. These networks consist of social ties that link sending communities to specific points of destination in receiving societies. These ties bind migrants and non-migrants within a complex web of complementary social roles and interpersonal relationships that are maintained by an informal set of mutual expectations and prescribed behaviors. Social networks based on kinship, friendship, and community origins ease the cost of migration and provide a good environment for new immigrants (Massey et al, 1987).

In this context, I consider transnational communities as the sites where social networks have reached a very high level of development. The social science literature has documented the existence of several transnational communities. In Michoacán the following communities have been identified: Chavinda (Alarcón, 1992), Jaripo (Fonseca and Moreno, 1984) Gomez Farías (López, 1986), "Guadalupe" (Reichert, 1981) and Aguililla (Rouse, 1988). Corralillos (Orozco, 1992) and Tlacuitapa (Cornelius, 1976) are located in Jalisco. Finally Mines (1981) and Goldring (1992) conducted research in Las Animas, Zacatecas.

In general, these communities experience similar processes in Mexico: (1) since people achieve a better standard of living through work in the United States, they become dependent on these remittances¹⁴; (2) local economies experience dynamic growth or stagnation due to the infusion of dollars (the direction of the trend depends on the regional context); (3) international migration predominates over internal migration as people in the community gain more access to labor markets in the United States; (4) people adapt their social and cultural structures to make migration possible; and (5) the migration process evolves from a temporary and seasonal migration pattern to a more permanent settlement (Alarcón 1992).¹⁵

A transnational community consists of a "parent" rural community in Mexico and one or more "daughter" communities in the United States. Since there is a very active circulation of people, money, information, and goods among these communities, it is very difficult to consider them as separate (Rouse 1988). For members of transnational communities, some processes in the United States have become more relevant than processes occurring in Mexico. For example, the creation of jobs in the United States is more important for these Mexicans than the existence of similar opportunities in Mexican cities. Thus, Tlacuitapa is "closer" to the San Francisco Bay Area in California than to Guadalajara or Mexico City.

Policy makers should be aware of transnational communities that are located in the most important sending areas of Western Mexico. Some areas in this region and therefore some transnational communities could benefit from NAFTA through the arrival of foreign investment, the relocation of U.S. plants, or the expansion of competitive Mexican industries that enhance the creation of jobs. However, the case of Tlacuitapa demonstrates that although jobs are created in a nearby city, the international migration flow from transnational communities is not affected. In theory, migrants from these communities will stop migrating when they can earn salaries that provide the same standard of living that they have achieved through work in *El Norte*. This level of prosperity is difficult to achieve through NAFTA, since U.S. firms will locate in Mexico primarily to take advantage of low wages.

In this vein, Cornelius (1990a, 35) has argued that the only realistic objective of government intervention in these transnational communities is to try to create viable alternatives to international migration for would-be first-time migrants to the United States. For this reason, he proposes that resources should be channeled to promote development in places not yet integrated into the transnational migration network. The industrialization of Lagos de Moreno has shown that the new jobs created in the manufacturing industry attracted people from communities that had not developed strong networks with labor markets in the United States.

The cases of Los Dolores and Villa Hidalgo reveal that international migration can be reduced in transnational communities by facilitating the establishment of small businesses and cooperatives. The

¹⁴Reichert (1981) uses the term "migration syndrome" to describe how the improved standard of living, itself generates a demand among the population for maintaining such a living standard thus perpetuating the migration process.

¹⁵In a previous article (Alarcón 1992) I called "nortehización" the process by which a Mexican community becomes integrated into the United States. As a result of the influence and interaction with Goldring, Martinez (1993), Rouse, and Smith, I now consider the term "transnational community" more appropriate.

Asencio Commission suggested that governments should reduce bureaucratic impediments to the development of small businesses, that ways should be sought to encourage commercial banks to finance these businesses, and that migrant remittances should be complemented by other financial sources from official and private institutions. However, the establishment of NAFTA, so strongly supported by the Asencio Commission, might end up causing an opposite effect by affecting negatively enterprises such as those in Los Dolores and Villa Hidalgo. The question remains as to what extent the livestock, dairy and clothing industries in the Los Altos de Jalisco region will be able to compete with their U.S. and Canadian counterparts when NAFTA is finally implemented.

Hinojosa-Ojeda and Robinson (1992, 97) found that all the models they surveyed generated plausible scenarios in which wages rise in Mexico and the United States as the result of the implementation of NAFTA. This contradicts trade theory that predicts that, even without international mobility, there should be movement toward wage convergence, with Mexican unskilled wages rising and U.S. unskilled wages falling. In this context of optimism, it is important to notice that economic development and labor migration seem to have an uneasy relationship. Conventional wisdom states that the former is the solution to the latter; however, this issue becomes very complicated in regions like Los Altos de Jalisco where migration to the United States has become an important element of regional development. Massey (1988) has suggested that policies to promote additional economic growth in sending nations will not reduce immigration to the United States in the short run; indeed, these policies may increase migration. For this reason, he believes that it is in the interest of the United States to promote rapid economic development and also to accept relatively large number of immigrants from Mexico.

The case of Tlacuitapa suggests that the creation of transnational communities is an important aspect of the integration between Mexico and the United States. Like international trade, labor mobility across borders is part of a global economy, and migration from Mexico should be included in negotiations between the two countries. Because NAFTA by itself will not play a significant role in deterring emigration from traditional sending areas, labor mobility should be addressed at greater length in the mutual interests of people from both countries; otherwise, NAFTA will become another pipe dream of immigration deterrence like IRCA (Castañeda and Alarcón, 1991).

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