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MEXICANS ON THE MOVE

Migration and Return in Rural Mexico

Frances A. Rothstein

Mexicans on the Move

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MEXICANS ON THE MOVE

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To Bob, Jonathan, Dylan, and Avery

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Introduction: Understanding Mexican Migration

Abstract: *This chapter describes when, where, why, and how Mexicans came to be living in the United States and how the pattern of Mexican migration has changed, especially since the 1980s. It then discusses various broad theories of migration and return migration and how globalization, the increased flow of capital, commodities, ideas, and images within and between nations have contributed to an increased flow of people. It also emphasizes the importance of supplementing a broad theoretical view with an "emic" or inside view. A major strength of an anthropological approach is the deep immersion of the anthropologist in the communities he or she studies. This allows us to listen to what people say and view their lives and communities in terms of their categories and understandings.*

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I first went to San Cosme Mazatecochco, a rural community in central Mexico, in June 1971, to do my dissertation research on political factions. Although the community was characterized by factionalism and I did write my thesis on political factionalism, I also found something I had not anticipated. On the surface, the community appeared to be a rural one of small-scale subsistence cultivators as was true of rural Mexico in general. Most of the houses were built of adobe, the streets were not paved, and everywhere there were cornfields. Although the community was an agricultural community, by 1970, over a quarter of the economically active population were men working in textile factories in Mexico City (sixty miles away) or Puebla, a city about fifteen miles away (INEGI 1971). Over the next fifteen years, my research focused on the impact of factory work on the community.

Then, in the 1980s, when globalization began, many of the textile factories closed and the factory workers lost their jobs. By 1990, many families had begun producing garments in small family workshops. During the mid-1990s, however, as the Mexican economy experienced a crisis, those workshops began to face problems. By the early 2000s many were forced to close.

In the early 1990s the husband of a woman from Mazatecochco whom I had known since she was a child called me in New York and said he was living in Flushing, New York. He was from the neighboring community of Papalotla and had recently arrived in New York City with his brother and several friends who were also from Papalotla. He returned to Mexico a few years later. Then, when I was in Mexico in 2001, I heard about other people, also from Papalotla, who had migrated to the United States, but the small-scale garment business in Mazatecochco had improved and I did not hear of anyone from Mazatecochco who had migrated. When I returned a few years later in 2005, however, I learned that many San Cosmeros/as had since moved to the United States, especially to New Jersey. I gave my phone number to a friend whose granddaughter was in the United States, and shortly after I returned to New York, the granddaughter called. She was living in "Riverview,"[1] a medium-sized city in central New Jersey. When I visited her, I learned that there were hundreds of people from Mazatecochco who were also living in Riverview.

San Cosmeros/as are what are referred to as "new migrants" from new sending areas living in new receiving communities. Until recently, most Mexican migrants were men. Today's migrants, including those from Mazatecochco, are almost as likely to be women as men. Furthermore, in

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the past when few women migrated, if they did, they were what analysts called "associational migrants" who followed men—husbands, lovers, or fathers (Kanaiaupuni 2000). Today, many Mexican migrants are women and they have come not to follow husbands, lovers, or fathers. They have come for the same reasons as the men—for jobs. In the past also, most Mexicans who came to the United States came from "historic" or "traditional" sending areas in western Mexico. Few people from central Mexico had migrated to the United States. To understand how and why the pattern of Mexican migration broadened to include women as well as men from central Mexico going to new receiving areas such as New Jersey it is necessary to look briefly at the history of Mexican migration.

Growth and changing patterns of Mexican migration to the United States

Mexicans are not new to the United States. As many Latinos in the United States point out, "We did not cross the border, the border crossed us" (Gutierrez n.d.). Mexicans lived in areas including California, Nevada, Texas, Utah and parts of New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado and Wyoming, which became part the United States as a result of the war between Mexico and the United States in the mid-19th century. Migration from Mexico did not take place to any significant extent until the second decade of the 20th century when it grew during the Mexican Revolution. The Bracero Agreement between Mexico and the United States from 1942 to 1964, brought temporary agricultural workers to the United States. But even by 1970 only 1.5 percent of the US population was Mexican (Hanson and McIntosh 2009). It was not until the 1980s that the annual number of Mexican migrants reached over a hundred thousand a year (Martin 2005). The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 led to the legalization of many who had arrived in the 1980s. But, it also brought new restrictions which made it illegal for employers to hire undocumented workers and strengthened the US Border Patrol, making it more difficult to cross the border.[2] Despite these difficulties, however, in the 1990s and during the first few years of the 21st century, migration from Mexico continued to be high. Then, in what a Pew Hispanic Center report on Mexican migration called a "notable reversal of the historic pattern," more Mexicans left the United States between 2005 and 2010 than arrived (Passel, Cohn, and Gonzalez-Barrera 2012). Although many

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San Cosmeros/as have stayed in the United States, many have returned home. Since then, fewer Mexicans have come to the United States (Passel et al. 2014; Passel and Cohn 2015).

Most Mexicans live in "traditional" destinations in the United States, such as Los Angeles, Houston, Chicago, Tucson, and San Antonio. Increasingly, however, since the 1990s, Mexicans are living in new regions, including New Jersey. Riverview, the city where many of the people from Mazatecochco now live, has experienced one of the largest increases in the arrival of Mexicans in New Jersey. Initially, a few people from Mazatecochco arrived in Riverview about twenty years ago after having lived in Chicago or New York. Today most new arrivals come directly to Riverview.

Not only are Mazatecochco's migrants representative of new patterns of migration because they come from a new sending community and go primarily to new destinations, New Jersey and Connecticut, but today many are women and they have come for jobs. To understand migration, settlement, and return for San Cosmeros/as and for Mexicans more generally, we must look at various theories of migration.

Theories of migration and return: macro-level and middle-level theories

Much of the theoretical literature on migration has consisted of what migration specialists refer to as "push-pull" approaches. These functionalist approaches include push factors such as population growth, limited economic opportunity, and political repression in the sending countries and pull factors including the demand for labor, economic opportunity, and political freedom in the receiving areas. Although economic opportunities and political factors are no doubt important in migration as indicated earlier for Mexican migrants,

> ...it is never entirely clear how the various factors combine together to cause population movement. We are left with a list of factors, all of which can clearly contribute to migration, but which lack a framework to bring them together in an explanatory system. (Skeldon 1990:125–126)

Similarly, a number of recent discussions place contemporary migration in the context of changes in the labor markets in both sending and receiving countries (Sassen 2003; Delgado Wise 2004). As Kyle argues,

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however, we need to conceptualize an overarching system that is greater than just the sending and destination countries (2000:48).

The concept of globalization provides such a framework. Discussions of globalization show not only an increase in international labor flows but also an increase and intensification of global flows of capital, commodities, images, ideas and people moving not only to migrate but as tourists, students, and businesspeople. Some studies have specifically examined the relationship between the flows of capital and migration (Sassen-Koob 1988; Sassen 2003; R. Cohen 2007), images and migration (Appadurai 1996; Ma 2001; Smith 1998; Stephen 2007), ideas and migration (Flores 2009), and commodities and migration (Miller 1997; Grimes 1998; Mills 1999; Lee 2008). Few researchers have looked at the complex and cumulative ways in which the intensification of all these global flows can impact the growth and diversification of migration. In addition, a major concern of contemporary theorists is not only that the flows of capital, commodities, people, images and ideas are greater but what flows are most crucial.

The approach used here, following David Harvey (1990), begins with the struggle between capital and labor and the current form of capital accumulation, what Harvey and others call flexible accumulation. This pattern of accumulation is characterized by a flexible commitment of capital to particular places and workers. This flexible commitment is evident in the frequent movement of productive capital, the frequent threat of movement to new places and new workers, and the frequent movement of finance capital to new markets. Consequently, my analysis sees the flow of capital as crucial. But, along with the flow of capital, we must also acknowledge the struggles of labor. Much of the recent movement of capital has been in response to the struggle of labor. We will see how Mazatecochco's workers, like workers elsewhere, have struggled in many ways. Their struggles have ranged from migrating to nearby cities to work in factories as their land became inadequate and using their union ties to bring many improvements to their home community. They also used their factory wages to buy land that has protected them from some of the adverse effects of wage work including low or loss of wages. More recently they have struggled by migrating to the United States as jobs in Mexico declined and wages deteriorated. More recently, during the recent US recession, many returned home where the economy has been improving. The economy has been improving not only in Mexico but also in Mazatecochco. At home, social and cultural patterns, including

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family and kin sharing and caring networks, are significant sources of support which help San Cosmeros/as deal with economic difficulties.

It is important to stress that San Cosmeros/as, like people everywhere, struggle in diverse ways. To understand some of the alternative and/or supplemental forms of struggle, it is necessary to go beyond just the economic conditions that influence migration. Here, following Harvey and Castles, among others, I look at social and cultural factors that facilitate migration to the United States and encourage their return to Mexico. As Harvey, citing Simmel (1978), suggests:

> It is also at such times of fragmentation and economic insecurity that the desire for stable values leads to a heightened emphasis upon the authority of basic institutions—the family, religion, the state ... Such connections are, at least plausible, and they ought, therefore, to be given more careful scrutiny (1989:171–172)

Similarly, Castles points out:

> The social transformation processes crucial to the reordering of labor relations are mediated thru local historical and cultural patterns, which allow people to develop specific types of adaptation and resistance. These can take the form of religious or nationalist movements, but also of individual- or family-level strategies as well as collective action against exploitation. (2011:319)

Macro-economic conditions, especially global flows of capital, set the stage for contemporary migration by influencing the demand for labor.[3] How people respond, however, to changing labor conditions, as both Harvey and Castles stress, involves other institutions, including the state and the family. The state, including the sending nation-state and the receiving nation-state, plays crucial roles in migration because of its role in regulating the flows of both capital and people, especially international migrants. The family can also play important roles in encouraging and facilitating or discouraging migration.

Research on migration, including discussions of Mexican migration to the United States, has suggested that family plays a role in migration in two important ways. First, families are seen to be important in decision making about who migrates and when. Second, family networks are seen as facilitating migration by providing help as a person migrates. As suggested by the new economics of labor migration approach, families or households often make the decisions about family members' migration. There has been a great deal of emphasis on the family as the unit that decides whether a person should migrate. There is little research,

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however, on such decision making that shows that migration decisions are actually made by the household or which family members are involved and how. As de Haas and Fokkema have suggested, "the inherent flaw of household-centered migration theories is that they tend to 'reify' the household, that is, to construct it as an entity with clear plans, strategies, and aims,.. based on equality of power and commonality of interests" (2010:543). As de Haas and Fokkema go on to point out, migration decisions are often made by individuals or members of the household with more power who are likely to be senior male household members. Indirect evidence from the kinds of communities from which Mexican migrants often come suggests that decision making about migration is likely to vary with the composition of the household and the pattern of authority in the community. Until recently, Mexican migration was largely from agricultural communities. Families in these communities were usually patrilocal extended families (i.e., households in which one or more married sons and their families lived with the husband's parents). Often, the parents, especially the senior male, made many of the decisions for the household. In one of the few studies that asked about the decision to migrate among a small sample (twenty-four returnees), the decision to migrate had been made by parents for one-third of the returnees. But the remaining two-thirds said that they had made the decision themselves or jointly with their parents (Tucker et al. 2012). In addition, more and more Mexican migrants are coming from cities and communities such as Mazatecochco that are close to Mexican cities (Hamilton and Villarreal 2011) and in which married couples and sometimes single men and women are living apart from their families. Often these men and women had already left their home communities in search of employment and/or education. As employment conditions deteriorated in these areas, as they did in Mexico during the 1980s and again in the mid-1990s, many decided to migrate to the United States where the demand for Mexican labor was increasing. A second way in which family often influences migration is in providing support networks for migrants both in the migrating phase and in settlement. There is a huge body of research that shows the importance of social networks. Much of the research has been based on the data collected by researchers associated with the Mexican Migration Project (MMP).[4] This research has stressed family and/or people from the same community as influential in these networks.[5] A recent study found, however, that while family members provided lodging or financial assistance for

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about 50 percent of undocumented male migrants, a little more than a quarter were helped by friends. The remainder were either helped by people who came from the same community, or they received no support from social networks (Flores-Yeffal and Aysa-Lastra 2011). Of course, many got help from kin, since many of the migrants from Mazatecochco were single and had been employed in Mazatecochco, Puebla, or Mexico City at the time they migrated, yet some made the decision to migrate themselves. They relied on networks of friends they knew from work or school, which had taken them out of the community to Papalotla, the neighboring community, Puebla, Tlaxcala, or Mexico City. When they arrived in the United States they counted on both kin and friends to help them get settled, especially to find housing and employment. However, as economic conditions in the United States deteriorated during the 2007–2009 recession, those who did not have kin ties, especially immediate family members, were more likely to return home. Thus, as both Harvey and Castles suggest, a combination of economic conditions and family factors are important.[6]

Explaining return migration

Despite the potential impact of return migration on both home and host regions, until recently, little attention has been paid to return migration. As King suggests, return migration was "structurally invisible" (2000:7). Research on return migration has grown so that by 2007, Brettell could suggest that "The topic of return migration has finally 'arrived'" (2007:57). But, although return migration has now been extensively studied for some areas, especially the Caribbean,[7] return migration to Mexico has received little attention. Until recently, Mexican migrants have been primarily men involved in circular migration. They were expected to return and usually did so within a short time.

Most of the research on male circular migrants focused on the use of remittances and migration and development.[8] Furthermore, the emphasis was usually on the use of remittances sent by active migrants (those who were still away) from traditional sending communities rather than the impact of returnees. The use of remittances versus what happens when migrants themselves return may be different. A study in Bolivia that compared returnees, nonmigrants, and active migrants found that returnees invested more than either nonmigrants or active

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migrants because of their networks and participation in the community (Jones 2011).

In a review of research on return migration, Fernandéz Guzmán noted the scarcity of studies of return migration in Mexico (2011:35). He also mentioned that the change in Mexican migration within the past few decades from circular migration to more permanent migration had led to more research on return migration to Mexico. Particularly after the onset of the US recession, return migration increased and eventually led to the reversal noted earlier with more Mexicans leaving the United State than arriving.

Almost two decades ago, Lindstrom (1996) found that economic opportunities, especially investment opportunities, are important for understanding return. It was not until relatively recently, however, with the growth of research on return migration, that support for his findings has emerged. Papail (2002) suggests that migratory work led to changes from waged to nonwaged migratory work in Mexico's west-central region. More recently, in a study of Oaxacan return migrants, Salas (2013) found that opportunities for investment were significant, and Masferrar and Roberts (2012) found that many returnees who were salaried before they migrated started small businesses when they returned. Fernández Guzmán (2011) describes how return migrants in Michoacan invested in various businesses, including baths, beauty parlors and Internet services. Similarly, Montoya Arce, Salas Alfaro, and Soberón Mora (2011) found that migrants in the state of Mexico may return with new ideas and skills which they use to invest in small businesses. In some cases, however, they found that the skills with which migrants returned could not be applied at home because the community lacked the productive and credit infrastructure to do so. An understanding of what Massey and Roberts call an "entrepreneurial shift" (2012:492) and the conditions under which it can occur have important theoretical and policy implications.[9]

Discussions of gender and migration have, until recently, been few.[10] Initially, most Mexican migrants were male. But, more than thirty years ago, Cornelius (1981) noted that in the 1970s and 1980s a shift had occurred and more Mexican women were migrating to the United States. At this time too feminist scholars began to stress the need to study women and migration (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2011). Although the scholarship on gender and migration is now substantial, not surprisingly given the focus on Mexican male circular migration, and despite a growing

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body of scholarship on gender and Mexican migration, little has been written about women's return migration.

Research in Mazatecochco indicates that men have returned more than women. National Mexican studies have similarly found significantly more male than female return migrants (Gandini, Lozano Ascencio, and Gaspar Olivera 2014).[11] Why women return less than men, however, is unclear. Much of the literature on Mexican women migrants in the United States frequently suggests that women have more freedom in the United States than at home and thus they are more likely to want to stay there (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994; Durand 2006; Wilson 2009). This research has often been based on assumptions about gender relations in the United States in comparison to Mexico and oversimplified "home-host dichotomies" (Barajas and Ramirez 2008) which neglect change and variation within Mexico and over time (Guttman 2004; Rodriguez 2010). Several recent studies, especially those which have looked at gender patterns both at home and in the United States suggest more complex and varied patterns both in the United States and Mexico.[12] Some recent studies suggest that gender relations in the United States vary depending on such factors as public transportation, support services, and fear of deportation.[13]

Employment data and conversations with migrants in New Jersey and return migrants in Mazatecochco suggest that Mexicans in the United States were hit hard by the recent recession. Unfortunately, there is little information available on gender and unemployment among Mexican migrants in the United States. Overall, the loss of jobs for the Mexican-born population was greater than the overall loss of jobs (Kochhar 2012:Table B9). Although the recession was officially over in June 2009, and unemployment of immigrant Mexicans decreased 1 percent between 2009 and 2010, unemployment of Mexicans remained high (12 percent in 2010) (CONAPO 2011:252). Furthermore, between 2008 and 2010 the proportion of Mexican immigrants working less than forty hours almost doubled from 9.8 percent to 19 percent (CONAPO 2011:256). Not surprisingly, this decline in the hours of work was associated with a decline in wages (CONAPO 2011:257). Not only did wages decline and unemployment increase, but given the fact that most Mexican migrants, including the vast majority of those from Mazatecochco, are undocumented, they are concentrated in informal or precarious work, especially landscaping and construction for men and domestic work for women. As Munck, Schierup, and Delgado Wise have pointed out, informality is "at the root of the precarious work which is now the norm" in the global north as

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well as the global south (2011:253). Precarity, as well as unemployment, may influence migrants' decisions to return home.

Although both women and men from Mazatecochco are employed largely in precarious work, studies of Hispanic workers' employment during the recession show Hispanic men's employment dropped more than Hispanic women's employment between 2007 and 2009 (Kochhar 2012:Table B4). The industry that had the greatest number of Hispanic-born workers, and in which many of the men from Mazatecochco are employed, in 2007 was construction where the greatest number of jobs, 25 percent, were lost (calculated from Kochhar 2012:Table B4). During that same period, "Personal and Laundry Services and Private Household Services," the industry in which foreign-born Hispanic women, including most of the women from Mazatecochco in New Jersey are likely to be found, actually gained jobs by almost 10 percent. Conversations with migrants in New Jersey confirmed these general patterns.

At the same time that conditions for many Mexican migrants in the United States declined, since 2010 the Mexican economy (Gould 2011) and the economy of Tlaxcala, the state in which Mazatecochco is located, have been showing signs of recovery (*El Sol de Tlaxcala* January 15, 2012). According to newspaper accounts, the Tlaxcalan economy grew more than the national economy (5.1 percent compared to 3.9 percent) in 2012 (Jiménez Guillén 2012:3). Although recently the Mexican economy declined, predictions for 2015 are positive.[14] Interviews with return migrants in August 2012 and in 2014 indicated that they were all currently working. Many were working in the local garment industry. This was a sharp contrast to the decline in the local small-scale garment industry in the late 1990s and early 2000s that had originally contributed to the growth in migration from Mazatecochco beginning in the 1990s (Rothstein 2010; Montiel 2011).

Although most studies point to the importance of economic factors in migration and return, many suggest that non-economic factors are also significant. A recent study that examined a combination of factors found that although economic factors, as measured by human capital and economic integration in the United States, influenced return, social capital—as measured by marital status, household size, and the presence of children in the United States—was more closely associated with return (Van Hook and Zhang 2011). Other studies have also suggested that social capital is important (Massey and Espinosa 1997; Plaza and Henry 2006). Van Hook and Zhang (2011) found that gender and marital status too

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were significant factors in return. Unmarried men or men who were not living with their wives were more likely to return than men living with their wives. The same pattern was noted for women.

National studies indicate that a lower proportion of women returned to Mexico than men (28.8 percent vs. 32.5 percent) (INEGI 2010:Table 30). In the state of Tlaxcala the difference was even greater: 26.1 percent of the women who migrated returned compared to 34.2 percent of the male migrants. Although some of this difference is due to the fact that more men are deported (Boehm 2008), conversations with return migrants suggest that family reasons are important in voluntary returns. A mother was lonely; a daughter was getting married; a father was ill. A man returned because he heard that his wife was living with another man. When I talked with returnees about living in the United States many stressed on the absence of family, especially when times are difficult. Life in the United States, everyone pointed out, requires money and without money or family here, they could not get along. "Mucho bills," said one woman. Although gender and return migration have received little attention, a rich body of scholarship on gender and settlement has been emerging (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994; Malkin 1999; Segura and Zavella 2011; Hirsch 2002; Zentgraf 2002; Mahler and Pessar 2006; Donato et al. 2006; Zlolniski 2006; Stephen 2007; Dreby 2010; Gordillo 2010; Boehm 2012). This scholarship offers useful insights and directions for the study of gender and return migration. Of particular relevance to my research is the growing body of scholarship on gender and social networks among migrants in the United States. The literature on migrant women in the United States suggests their importance in developing and maintaining social networks (Kibria, 1994; Hagan 1998; Reyes 1997; Dealuney and Lestage 1998; Menjívar 2000; D'Aubeterre 2000; Ariza 2002; Wilson 2009).

Research in New Jersey among Mazatecochco's migrants found that women are more likely than men to be living with their family, either because they came with or joined husbands or parents or they have formed families here. The major difference in the ratio of Mexican men to Mexican women (66 percent vs. 44 percent) in the United States (Donato et al. 2011) means that Mexican women may have an advantage in finding a partner. Without families and women who do what di Leonardo (1992) calls "kin work" and organize fiestas for life cycle and ritual events, it may be more difficult to develop and maintain social networks that can help increase social capital. Fewer networks, especially

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in economically difficult times, may be a factor in men's greater rates of return. The presence of women and older children not only means more wage earners but also a greater likelihood of building social networks. Therefore, in addition to looking at migrants' earnings, work histories, and gender relations in the United States, particular attention is paid in this study to whether migrants have spouses here and/or in Mexico, the nature of their relations with family members, and their broader social networks in the United States.

Anthropology and migration: anthropology's contribution to the understanding of migration

A major strength of an anthropological approach is the deep immersion of the anthropologist in the communities she or he studies. This allows us to listen to what people say and view them in terms of their categories and understandings. Living in the community gives us the opportunity to get an "emic" or "inside" view of life. The approach used in this book derives in part from a broad theoretical view of globalization that stresses political economy. But that "outsider" view is heavily influenced and modified by the views and actions of the people in Mazatecochco.

Over the many years that I have been doing ethnographic research or ethnography, what Spradley and McCurdy (2012:392) describe as "the task of discovering and describing a particular culture," I have found that whatever I thought I would study when I planned my research turned out not to be what people in the community thought, talked about, or were doing because the community or culture was constantly changing. When I first went to Mazatecochco, I thought I would study political factions. What I found, however, was that although factions were important, the community was changing from an agricultural community to one characterized by factory work. It was the factory work that men were doing that led to factionalism. Similarly, in the early 1980s, I went back to Mazatecochco to study the growing participation in left politics that I had seen emerging on a visit a few years earlier. But, all everyone wanted to talk about was "la crisis," the slowdown in the Mexican economy, the loss of the men's factory jobs, and government cutbacks on spending for health, education, and welfare.

Although my research has always involved a variety of methods including informal and formal interviews and household surveys, to

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really capture the emic or inside view and views and to see how views and cultures change, the most important method we use is what Tony Whitehead (1999) calls "participatory hanging out." Eating breakfast around the table of the family I usually stay with and listening to the five or more immediate family members and the brother and father of *Doña* Maria, the mother in the household, who came every morning, I heard them talking about local, regional, national, and even international events. I first learned about the small-scale garment industry that was growing in the community when I came for a weekend in 1993 to visit *Doña* Maria and her family before attending a conference in Mexico City. Shortly after my arrival she took me off to see her niece's garment workshop. That first visit to a garment workshop led to a return trip to Mazatecochco to study the small-scale garment industry.[15] Similarly, I learned about San Cosmeros/as in the United States when I visited, again briefly in 2005, and a friend mentioned that her granddaughter was living in New Jersey.

Participatory hanging out is the first step in "discovering" a culture and it continues throughout the time that the anthropologist is in the field whether the field is a rural community in Mexico or an urban area in the United States. What one discovers from participatory hanging out can then be studied more systematically with informal and formal interviews. In today's globalized world, what we see one day frequently changes the next day. And one doesn't have to be in the field (in Mexico or New Jersey) to continue discovering a culture. I now get regular notifications of events on Facebook. I can see Carnival celebrations in Mazatecochco and Connecticut and New Jersey on YouTube and can view political candidates campaigning in the community, also on YouTube. But to understand what I see and hear on the Internet, I will always need to return again

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Notes

1 The name of the city and individuals mentioned who are not public figures are pseudonyms.

2 Although some San Cosmeros/as have come to the United States with papers, usually as tourists, most come without documents.

3 There is a large body of literature that demonstrates the importance of labor demand in both the sending and receiving areas. Among recent analyses see Borjas (1999); Hansen (2006) (FR get these from Villarreal 2014); and Villarreal (2014).

4 The Mexican Migration Project that started in 1982 consists of teams of interdisciplinary researchers who gather data on social and economic information on migration between Mexico and the United States.

5 Despite the early recognition of the importance of friends in Massey's seminal article in 1986, as recently as 2012, the question on the survey used by the MMP about networks involving family and friends had seven categories of relationships of which six were family and one was friends: uncles, cousins, nieces/nephews, siblings-in-law, children-in-law, parent-in-law, and friends.

6 That family as well as economic conditions need to be considered is supported by Canales' analysis (2012) which found that although the rate of emigration of Mexicans from the United States increased from 1.3 percent at the end of the 1970s to 1.6 percent between 2005 and 2010, that rate was not much higher than the rate of return at the end of the 1990s (2012:127). What, according to Canales, affected the percentage of Mexican migrants in the United States was not an increase in returns than a significant drop in the rate of growth of emigration from Mexico. The crisis reduced the flow of Mexican migrants to the United States by almost 60 percent leading to an equilibrium between the number who left Mexico and returned (2012:119).

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7 See, for example, Flores (2009); Thomas-Hope (1999, 2002); De Souza (2006); Plaza and Henry (2006); Gmelch (1980); Gmelch and Gmelch (1995); Gmelch (2006).
8 For useful discussions of this literature see Massey and Parrado (1998); Binford (2003); and J. Cohen (2011).
9 See also Hagan, Hernández-Leon, and Demonsant (2015).
10 Although the study of gender and migration has grown in the past few decades, as Hondagneu-Sotelo, among others, has pointed out, "much of immigration scholarship shows continuing andocentric blindness to feminist issues and gender" (2011:219).
11 But see Andrews (2014). She found that more women than men from a Mixtec community in Oaxaca had returned. This may, however, be related to their particular circumstances of being more dependent on their husbands and feeling that they had less autonomy in the United State than in Mexico.
12 See, for example, Hirsch (2002); Malkin (2004, 2007); and Boehm (2012).
13 See Dreby and Schmalzbauer (2013); Parrado and Flippen (2005); Schmalzbauer (2009) (cited in Andrews); and Andrews (2014).
14 http://www.forbes.com/sites/nathanielparishflannery/2015/02/09/how-will-mexicos-economy-perform-in-2015/2/
15 See Rothstein (2003, 2005b).

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2

San Cosme Mazatecochco, 1940s–1990s: The Impact of Globalization and Neoliberalism

Abstract: *This chapter discusses how Mazatecochco changed from a community of* campesinos/as *(small landholders) who grew primarily squash, beans, and corn to a community of* obreros (*factory workers*) *in the 1940s and 1950s. When globalization began in the early 1980s many of the textile factories in which San Cosmeros/as worked closed. In the late 1980s several families began making garments in small home workshops* (talleres) *which they sold at regional markets. Ten years later, however, the Mexican economy declined. Many of the garment workshops closed or laid off workers, and hundreds of San Cosmeros/as migrated to Riverview, a small city in New Jersey or New Haven, Connecticut.*

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The decline of the family economy

Mazatecochco was a community of *campesinos/as* (small-scale cultivators) who practiced traditional agriculture dependent on rainfall on small plots of land. Everyone planted corn for *tortillas*, the bulk of their diet, along with squash and beans. Between 1940 and 1970 the population of the community doubled with growth accelerating especially between 1960 and 1970 as increased access to medical facilities led to a decline in the death rate. For an agricultural community with a growing population on a limited land base and little access to improvements, which could have increased productivity, each year more families found that the amount of land available to them was inadequate.

It is important to stress that during this period (1940–1970), although agricultural productivity in Mazatecochco and other subsistence farming communities did not improve, elsewhere in Mexico agricultural productivity was growing. Large landowners, however, who controlled 28 percent of the arable land had 45 percent increase in the value of their production between 1950 and 1960. Smallholders, such as the *campesinos/as* of Mazatecochco who accounted for 50 percent of the holdings

FIGURE 2.1 *Calle Principal (1971)*

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FIGURE 2.2 *Family returning from fields*

but only 13 percent of the arable land, experienced a decline in the value of their production during the same period (Hansen 1971: 79–80). As Hansen points out, the Mexican government's agricultural policy favored large landowners. A small segment of agricultural producers, the large landowners, had their agriculture modernized while as many as 85 percent of the aggregate private and *ejidal*[1] holdings continued to be farmed without any modern inputs (Hansen 1971: 77). San Cosmeros/as, like other smallholders, received little help from government to improve their production.

At the same time that families in Mazatecochco, especially those with less land, were experiencing difficulties, there was a significant growth in the demand for textile workers, as a consequence of a national textile boom in Mexico during World War II. Most of Mexico's textile factories were located in Mexico City (sixty miles from Mazatecochco) or Puebla, ten miles from the community. In the 1940s a few men from Mazatecochco whose families had less land began to migrate weekly to Mexico City or daily to Puebla for work in the textile industry.

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Factory work in Mexico City and Puebla

By 1980, 48 percent of the men over twelve in Mazatecochco were working in textile factories in Mexico City or Puebla (Rothstein 1982: 82). Although the wages of factory workers were low with 30 percent of the *obreros* earning less than the minimum wage, their earnings were significantly higher than those of the *campesinos/as.* Whereas two-thirds of the factory workers earned more than the minimum wage, very few of the *campesinos/as* did so (Rothstein 1982: Table 14). Furthermore, since most of the *obreros* used part of their wages to buy land to supplement their agricultural holdings, they also continued to grow at least enough corn for *tortillas* for their families. They were thus able to use their earnings to modernize their housing—replacing adobe houses with those made of cement blocks, to invest in raising chickens and hogs, and to buy gas stoves and televisions and refrigerators (to use when electricity became available).

Of even more significance than their increased earnings, however, was how the factory workers used the political contacts they were able to establish through their union leaders to regional and national politicians to increase community authority and services. In 1943 through such contacts, San Cosmeros/as were able to have San Cosme Mazatecochco established as a free *municipio* (municipality), independent of San Francisco Papalotla, the municipality of which they had been part. By the late 1960s they were also able to use their political contacts to get electricity, potable water, drainage, and paved streets for the community.[2]

Until the early 1970s, Mazatecochco had only one school from first to fourth grade. In the 1970s two new schools (from first to sixth grade) and a kindergarten were built. Before higher-level educational facilities were available locally, elsewhere such facilities were available. Hence many of the factory workers sent their children to middle school, high school, and for higher education, such as teaching, nursing or other professional-level training, by having their sons and daughters live with godparents or other relatives with whom the proletarian families had established kin or *compadrazgo* (co-godparenthood) relations through the men's factory work . Eventually, factory workers' efforts over the next twenty years led to increased educational opportunities in Mazatecochco from the one fourth grade school in 1970 to two elementary schools, a kindergarten, a middle school, and a high school. Although, as we will

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see, a few of Mazatecochco's sons and daughters later left the community to migrate to the United States, many became teachers, nurses, accountants, lawyers, physicians, and other professionals in Mazatecochco and elsewhere in Mexico. Some visited the United States not as migrants, but as tourists. To understand these two diverging paths, we must turn to the 1980s economic crisis in Mexico.

The 1980s economic crisis and the decline in the textile industry

During the 1980s Mexico experienced a severe economic crisis. Falling oil prices and rising interest on their debt led to the announcement in 1982 that they could not service their debt. As a consequence, and under pressure from the United States, a new strategy of neoliberalism was developed for Mexico and later other countries of the global south when they too experienced problems servicing their debt. This strategy, often referred to as "The Washington Consensus," resulted from a meeting in Washington, DC, involving the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the United States. The strategy called for a series of four structural adjustment policies that would supposedly increase economic growth: austerity (cutbacks in government spending on health, education, and welfare); privatization (the selling off of state enterprises, such as the Mexican telephone company); encouragement of manufacturing and agriculture for export; and free trade (which would eliminate tariffs and facilitate manufacturing and agriculture for export). In 1994, the North American Free Trade Agreement involving Mexico, the United States, and Canada was signed making free trade among the three countries official.

The consequences of structural adjustment for the majority of the Mexican population, including the people of Mazatecochco, were disastrous. San Cosmeros/as were particularly affected by the competition brought by the introduction of free trade. As a result of the liberalization of trade, 80 percent of Mexican textile firms closed and more than 100,000 jobs in the national textile industry were lost between 1982 and 1984 (Becerril 1994; Chavez 1995). Employment of men from Mazatecochco in factory work dropped from almost half of the economically active men in 1980 to 29 percent in 1994.[3] Even those who kept their jobs had their hours reduced. In addition, the austerity measures

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introduced led to cuts in government subsidies of food and gasoline and reduced government support on health, education, and welfare services. Thus, it became harder for families to get along.

Families adopted a variety of strategies to deal with "*el crisis*." Families of factory workers that earlier were less intensively cultivating their land began cultivating more intensively. They went more frequently to weed and they planted squash and beans as well as corn. They also relied on weeds from their fields to feed animals and to use as fuel rather than purchased animal food or wood. Instead of newly married couples moving into separate households, which had become the pattern among factory workers in the 1970s, in the 1980s more families became extended family households. Women's formal and informal labor force participation also increased. The number of income generators per household doubled between 1980 and 1994 (Rothstein 1995: Table 1) largely because of women's increased formal and informal employment. In 1980 only 9 percent of the women twelve and over reported being in the labor force or self-employed. By 1989, the proportion had almost doubled (to 17 percent) and by 1994 it had risen to 34 percent. Among women twenty-five and under, almost half (48 percent), were in the labor force or self-employed (Rothstein 1995).

Small-scale garment production

In the late 1980s a few families that had been involved in buying clothing wholesale and selling them at various regional markets began producing garments in their own small home workshops (*talleres*). By the mid-1990s hundreds of families were producing garments in their own home workshops. Most relied primarily on family labor with the wife usually designing or copying a design from a purchased item and the husband cutting the material. Other family members sewed, removed loose threads, and folded the finished garments. The husband with the wife and/or teenage children or a hired worker sold the garments at local regional markets or farther away in Oaxaca, Chiapas, Veracruz, or Guanajuato. Most of these workshops were small and relied on family labor. A few grew and relied on hired workers to supplement family labor.

By the early 2000s there were hundreds of mostly small garment workshops in the community. Some of the larger garment merchants began subcontracting to other households to assemble the pieces that

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FIGURE 2.3 *Small workshop owner*

the garment merchants then sold at the various markets. As demand for workers increased, the larger merchants began going to other communities looking for cheaper labor to sew the garments. As competition among the merchants grew and as merchants increasingly looked for cheaper labor in other communities, the local garment business began to decline. Some of the merchants who expanded production by subcontracting the sewing of the garments and selling at various markets throughout the country or diversifying their economic activities into new areas such as real estate, trucking, or catering halls became quite successful.[4] Many of the smaller owners and those who had been doing sewing for others struggled to get along. Some of the workshop owners who had borrowed money to finance their activities ran into difficulties as interest rates rose, and they could not repay their loans. They, along with many who had worked for them or had small workshops that could not compete with the larger workshops and the cheaper labor in other communities, began to migrate to the United States.

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International migration

As indicated earlier, in Chapter 1, San Cosmeros/as are "new migrants" from a new sending area, central Mexico. Until the 1980s, 70 percent of Mexican migrants came from western Mexico. By 2005, central Mexico, including the state of Tlaxcala, accounted for 50 percent of Mexico's undocumented migrants. Mazatecochco's migrants are new also in that until recently most Mexican migrants were men. Today, almost half of Mexican migrants, including those from Mazatecochco, are women (Donato et al. 2011). To this day, migrants from Mexico are increasingly coming to new receiving areas of the United States such as New Jersey and Connecticut. Between 2000 and 2010, Riverview, the city in New Jersey where most San Cosmeros/as live, experienced a growth in its Mexican population of 242 percent (*New Jersey Star-Ledger*, May 26, 2011). New Haven, the other city to which San Cosmeros/as are likely to go, has also experienced an increase in its Mexican-born population of 85 percent between 2000 and 2012 (Buchanan and Abraham 2015).

A few San Cosmeros/as came to the United States in the mid-1980s with friends or relatives from one of the neighboring communities from which Tlaxcalans had begun migrating in the early 1980s. Several who came in the 1980s became legal residents and stayed in the United States until they retired and returned to Mazatecochco twenty years later. In the 1990s, as workers and owners in the local garment industry began to experience difficulties, the number of people migrating from Mazatecochco began to grow. Although San Cosmeros/as continue to migrate with people from other communities, whom they have often met through work or school elsewhere, for the past two decades most have come with friends or relatives from Mazatecochco and often live with them in the United States. Initially, in the 1980s the earliest migrants went to traditional receiving communities in Illinois or California. Then, as some migrants from Mazatecochco who had been elsewhere in the United States settled in New York City; migrants began coming directly to New York, either to Brooklyn or to Spanish Harlem, from Mexico. Some then moved on to Riverview, a city in New Jersey, about seventy miles from New York City. Today, most migrants from Mazatecochco go directly to Riverview or New Haven, Connecticut, where there are communities of hundreds of San Cosmeros/as.

Although more men than women have migrated from Mexico to the United States, the disparity has been declining. As of 2011, 47 percent

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of Mexicans in the United States were women compared to 45 percent in 1990 (Gonzalez-Barrera and Lopez 2013). Despite the increase in women's migration most discussions of Mexican migration have and continue to focus on men. When Mexican women migrants are discussed, they are often seen as associational migrants, who came with or followed a husband or parent, usually the father (Cerrutti and Massey 2001). As Kanaiaupuni (2000: 1336) has suggested, however, the assumption that women migrate primarily with men ignores several important points. First, she suggests: "Often . . . economic motivations are hidden under the pretext of an associational move, which not only represents the 'proper' reason for migrating but also the mode that most facilitates entry into the United States." She also found that education increased the likelihood that women but not men migrated and that marital status was an important factor influencing women's migration. Single women and women separated or separating from spouses were more likely to migrate. A recent study which examined employment in Mexico lends support to the importance of economic motivations. Feliciano (2008) found that female migrants were more likely to have been employed in Mexico than female non-migrants.[5]

These patterns—more women migrants who are single or divorced and who were employed in Mexico—are apparent among women who have migrated from Mazatecochco. Although more men than women have migrated from Mazatecochco, particularly since the beginning of the 21st century, more women are also migrating. *Doña* Candida, a thirty-five-year-old divorced woman who had worked in a garment workshop and had grown children, came to the United States in 2000 with a friend from Mazatecochco because of the decline in pay in the local garment industry. They lived with other San Cosmeros/as in Spanish Harlem for six months and then she moved to Riverview. *Doña* Juana, also divorced with grown children, came to New York in 2001. She and her former husband had borrowed money to invest in their garment workshop but when interest rates rose, they lost their business. She came to New York with a former worker in her workshop from the neighboring community, Papalotla, and they lived in Brooklyn for several months. Then, she moved to Riverview where she continues to live today. Her twenty-three-year-old university-educated daughter, Cecilia, who worked in the tourist industry in Mexico, subsequently also came to the United States. She stayed in New York City where she is now living with an Israeli man and their daughter. Her partner owns a restaurant where she works as a

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chef. Petra came to Riverview in 2008. She had worked in a beauty salon and her family's small restaurant in Mazatecochco. In New Jersey she did domestic work, married, and had one child. She and the daughter's father separated in 2010, and in 2011 she and her daughter returned to Mazatecochco because Petra's father was ill. She is again working as a hairdresser and on weekends she works in her family's restaurant.

The men who migrate are usually unmarried younger men or married men in their twenties, thirties, or forties. Although some of the younger men come for the experience of living in the United States, most of the men, who have come in the late 1990s and the first five years of the 21st century, like the women who have migrated, came because of deteriorated economic conditions in Mazatecochco and the region. Pedro, an unmarried man in his mid-twenties, came because working in others' workshops was low paying and insecure. He decided to come to the United States in 2000 to try to accumulate money to get married and to buy machines to have his own small workshop. He returned in 2012, got married, and opened a small workshop. Tomas, a married man with several children, came to the United States in 2003, also to accumulate money for a workshop. He returned five years later. He is now a partner with several other men who design and cut the pieces for garments, send them out to be sewn in neighboring communities, and market their products weekly in Moroleón, a city in the state of Guanajuato about 200 miles north of Mazatecochco.

In the five decades between the 1940s and the 1990s Mazateochco changed from a community of small-scale cultivators to a community where a majority of the men became factory workers. When free trade began in the 1980s the textile factories in which they worked closed. Families began producing garments in small family workshops. Then, in the 1990s, an economic downturn and increased competition led to the closing of many of those workshops. Gradually, more and more men and women migrated to the United States. More recently, many, especially men, have returned home. How they have fared in the United States is the subject of the following chapter.

Notes

1 *Ejidal* holdings are smallholdings of land that were redistributed to villages as a result of the Mexican Revolution. Although communally owned, the land is usually farmed individually.

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2 See Contreras (2013) for more about the changes in Mazatecochco in this period.
3 Author's household surveys (1980, 1994).
4 See Montiel Torres (2011, 2013) for useful discussions of these strategies.
5 Hagan, Hernández-León, and Demonsant (2015:89) also found that after the 1995 economic crisis women as well as men gave economic factors as their primary reason for migrating.

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3

Life in New Jersey: Continuities and Change

Abstract: *This chapter describes family, work, and leisure patterns of migrants in Riverview and shows that although migrants' lives are different in the United States, there are important similarities. Despite working long hours and not having much leisure time, San Cosmeros/as continue to celebrate events such as baptisms and religious holidays such as Carnival. This allows them to solidify and build their social networks and social capital. As the economy in the United States worsened during the recession, people had fewer resources to spend on such events. Consequently, at the time when networks could be particularly important, they became more difficult to maintain. Despite the difficulty, however, families continued, to the extent possible, to hold the gatherings at which they maintained and developed their social networks.*

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This chapter describes the family, work, and leisure patterns of migrants in Riverview and shows how although migrants' lives are very different in the United States than at home, there are important similarities. Despite working long hours and not having much leisure time, San Cosmeros/as continue to periodically celebrate life-cycle events such as birthdays and baptisms and religious holidays such as Carnival and the community's Saints' Day. At these events in New Jersey and sometimes Connecticut they solidify and build their social networks and social capital. As the economy in the United States worsened, however, during the recession, people had fewer resources to spend on such events. Consequently, at the time when networks could be particularly important, they also became more difficult to maintain. Despite the difficulty, however, families did continue, to the extent possible, to hold the gatherings at which they maintained and developed their social networks.

Work in New Jersey

Men and women from Mazatecochco come to the United States to work. As indicated in Chapter 2 a few people came in the 1980s but it was not until the 1990s and especially the early 2000s that more San Cosmeros/as migrated. When the Mexican and local economies increasingly led to declining profits for garment merchants and the loss of jobs or cutbacks in the number of hours worked, more men and women began thinking of going to the United States. Despite the fact that work for men as well as women in Mazatecochco and in the United States is insecure, they usually can find work. Thus, both men and women usually worked for pay at home and they do that in Riverview as well. In the United States men work mostly in construction or landscaping and women work usually as domestic workers. Both men and women often work long hours when they can. Especially during the warmer months men frequently work long days and on weekends as well as during the week. The women who work as domestic workers sometimes also work on weekends. Pay for men may rise to $15 an hour, but most of the women earn $8 an hour, and some more experienced workers earn $10 an hour. Although women earn less, they are usually employed throughout the year whereas men who work primarily in gardening and construction often do not work in the winter months. Occasionally, they may find

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other jobs. If it snows, some earn money clearing snow. But many must just wait out the winter.

During the US recession, migrant men were hit hard. Most of the men who worked in construction lost their jobs completely. Some men who worked in landscaping lost their jobs; others had their hours cut. Women were less likely to lose their jobs, but sometimes they too would have their hours cut. As we will see later in Chapter 4, many of the men, especially those who were here without families, returned to Mexico. Although some women also returned to Mexico, fewer did so. In order to understand life in New Jersey and the factors that contributed to returning or not returning home, it is necessary to understand the role of family for San Cosmeros/as at home and in the United States.

Families and building social networks in the United States

To understand family relations and life among migrants from Mazatecochco in New Jersey, it is necessary to consider the ideas and behaviors that migrants bring from home. San Cosmeros/as have, what I have elsewhere (1999) called, a flexible kinship system. This system is characterized by three important patterns: kinship is important both in practice and ideology; kinship is flexible in that for most kinship relations what is expected of whom, when, and under what circumstances is not determined by rigid rules; and genealogical relationship does not necessarily coincide with the nature of actual kin relations. People do generally maintain contact with kin related through bilateral descent, marriage, and ritual kinship (godparenthood). That contact often involves various forms ranging from inviting relatives to fiestas for birthdays and other life-cycle events and asking closer relatives to help at fiestas. Relatives also help each other by taking care of each other's children, including grandchildren and cousins or sick relatives, and sharing food. For example, if someone has gone to a fiesta and been given *mole* (a traditional dish often served at birthday celebrations, weddings, celebrations of the community or section's Saints' Day), the person who has received it often shares it with their siblings and married daughters and sons who live apart. Similarly, if someone goes and cuts *elotes* (corn in an earlier stage when it is boiled and eaten as is and before it is dried and harvested for *tortillas*) they will give some to parents, siblings, and other

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relatives. Kin also help each other find jobs and kin may provide housing for family members to go to school or work away from Mazatecochco. The embeddedness in such a network thus provides individuals with a web of people who provide various kinds of help ranging from labor, food, money, political support, and other forms of aid. The flexibility in the kinship system allowed it to continue when San Cosmeros/as became *obreros* and then when they became migrants to the United States.

Few migrants in New Jersey have the extensive kin networks in the United States that San Cosmeros/as have at home where it is not unusual to have hundreds of people at a birthday, Saints' Day celebration, or wedding. However, a few have no relatives or friends from Mazatecochco in Riverview. Unless they are men in the United States without a wife or other female relatives, through ritual kinship, marriage, and new friendships, they establish reciprocal patterns of behavior like those San Cosmeros/as have at home. Women are needed to do most of the work of having a fiesta. The woman who is organizing the event asks relatives or friends in New Jersey (like they do in Mazatecochco) to come and help prepare *mole* for a birthday celebration. The family that received that help later reciprocates. In one case, for example, when a family was making *mole* for the celebration of Carnival, *Doña* Marisol, the wife, invited a young woman who was a friend to help her and her two daughters with the preparations. A few months later, when the friend was making a birthday party for her daughter, *Doña* Marisol reciprocated. In another case, the Contreras family, who were not from Mazatecochco but were friends with the Lara family through their daughters who were in the same class in school and who had a bigger house, invited the Lara family (who lived in very cramped quarters) to use their house for a birthday celebration. When Manuel Contreras later left to find work in another part of the United States, his wife and daughter went to live with the Lara family who had subsequently moved into a larger house. They stayed there for about a month until Manuel was established in the new location. In another case, several families lived together in a large house. Although each family took care of their own meals, often the older children took care of the younger children whether they were their own siblings or not. The parents of the children being cared for reciprocated in various ways, including driving those who did not have their own cars or doing errands for them.

Ever since Douglas Massey pointed out what he called the "cumulative causation of migration" in 1990 the concept of social networks has

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figured prominently in discussions of migration. Massey showed that as more people from a particular community migrate, the costs for new migrants are reduced and the likelihood of migration increases because the earlier migrants provided various kinds of assistance for the new migrants.

The literature on social networks and Mexican migration is enormous and it does lend a great deal of support to Massey's notion of cumulative causation,[1] but until recently most of that literature focused on men, relied heavily on quantitative studies with narrow conceptions of networks, looked primarily at how networks affected the initial decision to migrate, and, if it addressed settlement, it looked mainly at how networks influenced finding and/or improving men's employment.[2] The use of networks by migrants in the United States for such other purposes as getting information about housing, health services, or help with caring for children, the aged, and/or ill relatives was rarely discussed in these studies. This section discusses the earlier literature and then analyzes how more recent research, especilly qualitative research, often by feminists and/or women and on women and networks, has suggested other new and important modifications in our understanding of migration, networks, and assistance that are applicable to San Cosmeros/as in the United States.

Studies that focused on networks in the settlement process are also often problematic because they relied primarily on measures of networks such as whether migrants come from established versus new sending areas[3] or the number of close and and/or distant relatives (usually measured by geneological distance rather than the actual nature of the relationship) and friends who had experience in the United States regardless of whether these people were in the United States at the time migrants were there.[4] As recently as 2007, when the number of Mexican women migrants had increased and stricter border enforcement reduced the frequency of circular migration, Amuedo-Dorantes and Mundra (2007) still suggested that their study (based on MMP surveys in Mexico between 1982 and 2004) was based on interviews with men because of the "limited number of observations on women in the MMP", and they argue that "using return migrants is justified because of the circular nature of Mexican migrants" (2007:851). Although circular migration did characterize the earlier part of this period, it declined significantly because of stricter border enforcement during the later years of this period. Similarly, the proportion of women among Mexican migrants

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varied over that twenty-two-year period with a decline in the 1980s and then a slow rise in the 1990s (Donato et al. 2011:Figure III).

Much of the research on migration and networks has looked, in addition to focusing on men and employment, at the effect of what Granovetter (1973, 1983) has characterized as "weak" versus "strong" ties with the assumption that weak ties that link members of different social groups are more useful than strong ties that link genealogically close relatives. In his classic article on "The Strength of Weak Ties," Granovetter argues that weak ties are more important for job mobility than are strong ties because the former "are more likely to link members of different small groups" (1973:1376). Close or strong ties are less likely to provide a person with "access to resources or information beyond those available within one's own social circle" (Granovetter 1983:209). Ties that span wider genealogical, geographic, and social distances are more likely to bridge groups with different possibilities from different communities and classes. As Ryan (2011) points out, however, weak ties do not necessarily mean a connection with someone who has different resources. She also suggests that we need to differentiate not only strong versus weak ties but also whether weak ties link people from different social locations or not. That is, we need to differentiate vertical and horizontal weak ties (2011:711). Similarly, Granovetter later pointed out, he was not arguing that all weak ties serve the functions he described earlier but rather "only those acting as bridges between network segments" (1983:229).

Another problem with much of the research on networks is that the nature of most of the studies that dominate our understanding of Mexican migration is such that how networks change over time is often not addressed.[5] In his 1983 article that revisits his original discussion of weak and strong ties, Granovetter suggests that "the most pressing need for further development of network ideas is a move away from static analyses that observe a system at one point in time to pursue instead systematic accounts of how such systems develop and change" (1983:229). Boyd (1989) similarly argues that networks are too often viewed as static and little attention is paid to change or what influences changes in networks.[6]

My research over time and place also suggests that neither weak nor strong ties should be viewed as static categories. Weak ties may become weaker or stronger and strong ties may become stronger or weaker. In addition, the social location of a person in one's network or networks may change over time. In the example mentioned earlier of the woman

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from Mazatecochco who married an Israeli man who owned a restaurant, she changed her social location from a domestic worker to a chef who could sometimes help others get a job in that restaurant.

Many of the migrants from Mazatecochco in Riverview are men who live with other single or married men in apartments or rented houses who are here without their families. Women are more likely to be living with kin, either because they came with or joined husbands or parents or they have formed families here. Men also form families in the United States, but the ratio of Mexican men to Mexican women in the United States (56 percent vs. 44 percent in 2000) is to women's advantage (Donato, K. et al. 2011:Figure 3). Sometimes, in larger houses, there may be some women, single or here without their families. Parents who are here with their unmarried children live together either in their own apartment or with other individuals or families in a larger house. Sometimes, relatives live near each other. For example, a couple and their unmarried sixteen-year-old daughter lived in a three-room apartment about half a block away from their married daughter and her husband and children until the daughter and her family moved farther away. Most people do not live near other relatives or even San Cosmeros/as or other Mexicans. Public transportation in Riverview is not very good so even if one has relatives or friends in the city, getting around requires a car or taxi. Few of the women drive; they rely usually on taxis or walking to get to their jobs. Many of the men do have cars or they get picked up by their employers. Those with cars may drive to work and they drive their families to shop and occasionally to socialize. Because they do not usually have licenses, they do not drive far from Riverview where they might be bothered by the police.[7] Migrants also spend many hours working and do not have much time to socialize. But, San Cosmeros/as in Riverview and Connecticut do develop and maintain social networks. Although networks are always important, social networks are particularly important in difficult times such as the recent US recession. The development and maintenance of social networks depend to a great extent, however, on what di Leonardo (1992) calls 'kinwork." As di Leonardo points out, it is women who do kinwork.

Gender, migration, and networks

Kinwork involves "the conception, maintenance, and ritual celebration of cross-household kin ties" including "the organization of holiday

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gatherings; the creation and maintenance of quasi-kin relations; decision to neglect or to intensify particular ties; [and] the mental work of reflection about all these activities" (di Leonardo 1992:442–443).

Research in Mexico has demonstrated the importance of women's reciprocal labor exchanges in ceremonial activity and in generating surpluses that can be invested in ceremonial institutions (Stephen 2005 :151). As Stephen points out for the Oaxacan community that she studied, "Through ritual kinship ties, Teotiteco women are able to extend the range of kin they can count on for aid in specific economic, ritual, and political projects both in Teotiteco del Valle and as they increasingly settle into other parts of Mexico and the United States" (2005:150). There is also a growing body of research on migrant women and networks that has examined the importance of women's social networks in securing employment for themselves and/or family members as well as for accessing other economic and social resources in the United States (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994; Ibarra 2007; Zlolniski 2006; Wilson 2009; Gordillo 2010; Rothstein 2015).

Although men build networks, especially through work and sometimes through sports,[8] unless these ties also incorporate women, the range and depth of ties is likely to remain weak. As mentioned earlier, Granovetter has suggested that weak ties may be useful for job mobility. But men's ties through work and sports are likely to be to people who are very similar to themselves and have the same contacts and information. Women's ties may also be with people with whom they work. But, since women are employed primarily in domestic work, their ties through work are few. Although they may have several different employers, their relations do not extend outside that work relationship. Women, however, often come in contact with people through health, educational, and other services that may enable different contacts and information. For example, a woman who has a disabled daughter and has worked with a local social worker to get services for the daughter developed a relationship with the social worker and invited her to various family events. When another family member needed help getting into a better high school, she spoke with the social worker and the girl subsequently changed schools.

When women organize a celebration for a birthday, Christmas, Carnival, or other life-cycle or ritual event, they often bring together a more diverse group of family, friends, *compadres* (godparents), coworkers, and acquaintances of the various members of their families (Figures 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3).

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FIGURE 3.1 *Christmas in New Jersey*

FIGURE 3.2 *Carnival in New Jersey*

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FIGURE 3.3 *Carnival audience*

Although men may occupy the official positions, for example, in the Carnival celebrations, they rarely organize the meals that are an important part of such events. Nor do they invite the guests for the celebratory meal. Male cargoholders in Connecticut have organized large functions for the celebration of Mazatecochco's Patron Saints, San Cosme, and San Damien. These larger and more impersonal events are less likely to generate new contacts. The fiestas are held at a catering hall and each person who attends pays the cost of their meal. Although busloads of San Cosmeros/as from Riverview have gone to these events, they are invited by others as well from Riverview, and they usually sit together with those they already know from Riverview. They may encounter someone they know from home but the large number of people who attend and who are seated at different tables make it difficult to connect. In one case, however, after a visit to Connecticut a young woman, Juana, did run into a woman she had known in Mazatecochco. The woman told Juana that there was room available where she was living for another roommate and there were also jobs available in the razor factory where she worked.

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Gender relations among migrants

Despite the importance of women migrants in income generation and network building, relations between migrant women and men in the United States are not necessarily more egalitarian in the United States than at home. Nor, however, are they necessarily less egalitarian. Scholars have frequently commented on the impact of migration on gender relations. Much of the research on gender relations has suggested that women have more, and men less, freedom in the United States and thus women are more likely to want to stay here (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994; Durand 2006). This research has often been based on assumptions about gender relations in the United States in comparison to Mexico and oversimplified "home-host dichotomies" (Barajas and Ramirez 2008) that neglect change and variation within Mexico and over time (Guttman 2004; Rodriguez 2010). Several recent studies, especially those that have looked at gender patterns both at home and in the United States) and "different contexts of reception" (Dreby and Schmalzbauer 2013) suggest more complex and varied patterns both in the United States and Mexico. Hirsch (2002:181) points out that "there is not one story about gender, power, and migration, but rather several." Stephen (2007:208) suggests that

> Whether or not women achieve greater gender equality within their marriages and families once they migrate to the United States is difficult to assess. What is most often on their minds is simple survival. If they feel a sense of solidarity with and support from their husbands, children and other extended family, that is an important resource in helping them cope with daily challenges.

Research Mazatecochco and among San Cosmeros/as in New Jersey similarly suggest that gender relations are more complex and varied. Not only do they vary between the United States and Mexico but they vary also over time in Mexico and, as Dreby and Schmalzbuar (2013) suggest, over place in the United States.[9] To understand gender relations among migrants from Mazatecochco, it is useful to note how gender relations have changed in the home community and how the ideas and behaviors that migrants bring from home interact with their new environment.

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Changing gender relations: from *Campesinas* to housewives to the double day

As indicated in Chapter 2, when I first went to Mazatecochco, most households depended on agriculture. Women and men and young and old played important roles in subsistence production. All participated in planting and harvesting usually with different tasks for young and old and male and female. Men and older boys usually carried out the activities involving larger animals: plowing and transporting. Women and children cut the points of the corn plants and later cut the dried cornstalks, which were used for fuel. Women and children, often assisted by men and teenagers, shucked the corn. Then, women and girls took over the preparation of corn and other foods. Animal raising was similarly done by everyone with different tasks according to age and sex. Younger children often fed the chickens. Adult women and men slaughtered them and women cleaned and cooked them. Adult men usually fed the pigs and slaughtered them. Women usually cooked pork in small quantities, but when the pork was used for *carnitas* (which were made by cutting a half or whole pig into pieces and braising for a few hours in a strong fire), men did the preparation.

Most families relied primarily on what they themselves produced. Some items were purchased with money from selling corn or animals or, less often, selling one's labor by working in someone else's fields. Both men and women sometimes sold their labor for planting or harvesting. A few families had small stores in which men and women and sometimes older children worked.

Within the home, relations between women and men were relatively egalitarian with each in charge of their own sphere. Since couples lived initially when they married with the husband's family, the father told the sons what to do and the mother told the daughters and daughters-in-law what to do. Outside the home, neither men nor women had any power or authority. Until the 1940s Mazatecochco was part of the municipality of Papalotala and subject to their authority. No one, male or female, from Mazatecochco had positions of power or authority. Even after Mazatecochco became a separate municipality, local authorities tended to be subordinate to regional and national authorities until, as we will see in the pages that follow, men became factory workers.

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The important community positions were those involving the religious cargo system, the community religious system in which community members fill positions responsible for the performance of various rituals for different saints including the patron saints of the community and of each of the sections of the community. Although men hold the official positions in the cargo system, because the positions require that the cargo-holder's family give a feast that is organized by his wife, if a man's wife does not agree, he cannot take on the position.[10]

As we saw earlier, as the population grew on a limited land base, beginning in the 1940s, some men went to work in textile factories in Mexico City or Puebla and their families began to rely more on their wages than on the family's own agricultural production. Through their unions and union ties to regional and national politicians, proletarian men began to play important roles in local politics. Women, thus, became increasingly dependent on men and their earnings and their political influence and power.

Although *campesinas* continued their participation in agriculture, proletarian women usually did not. In the 1970s, televisions showing urban domesticated women and government programs stressing homemaking for women became more frequent. The idea that women should stay home and take care of their houses and children began to dominate in Mazatecochco. In the early 1970s, a teacher from another town told me that women elsewhere were more modern because they stayed home and took care of their families, did not nurse their children, and did not work in the fields.[11] In addition, as proletarian families were more likely to move out of the households of the husband's parents sooner than had families earlier, senior women lost their control over younger women. Older men similarly lost their control over younger proletarian men.

Since the 1980s, however, when the textile factories began to close, more women are involved in paid work. Many women are involved in paid work either in their family's garment workshop, in someone else's workshop, or other paid work ranging from professional employment as doctors, lawyers, and teachers to domestic workers, usually in the homes of other families in Mazatecochco. At one point when I was having my hair cut, I asked the three women there (all in their late twenties, one the owner, one employee, and the other a client) whether the lives of women were better or worse today. They all quickly responded in unison, "Better. " They attributed the improvement to the fact that women work for pay now.

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Today, the idea that women as well as men work outside the home is common. And women of all ages suggest that this gives women advantages. One older woman suggested that a woman who works outside the home does not have to suffer physical abuse. But the idea of women's sphere being the home and men's paid work still prevails in the community and most households. As both women and some, particularly younger, men point out, women in Mazatecochco are still responsible for the home. In the garment industry, although both women and men are usually heavily involved, the role of women there is viewed as less important and women are subordinate to men. If one asks who is the owner of a garment workshop, the answer, from both the husband and the wife, is usually the husband. Outsiders usually refer to a workshop by the husband's name.

Among some of the better-off families, one or two women are often hired to do much of the domestic work, but the wife is expected to oversee their activities and held responsible for what they do or don't do. One woman in a very successful merchant family who plays a major role in the designing and oversees the making of the patterns was ill during a pregnancy and was resting in bed. Her husband insisted that she get out of bed and work. Subsequently, she lost the child. The local view was that the child died because the father had refused to let the mother rest. Except for some of the younger, usually more educated women and men, the idea of separate spheres for women and men with women responsible for the private (domestic) sphere and men the public (political and economic) sphere that emerged in the previous period when men were factory workers and women's role was unpaid work in the home still prevails in the broader as well as the local culture and continues to influence most households in Mazatecochco and families from Mazatecochco in New Jersey.

Gender relations among migrants in New Jersey

Gender relations in Riverview are influenced by the ideas and behaviors of the home community as well as by their new context. Just as gender relations in Mazatecochco have and continue to change, gender relations among San Cosmeros/as in New Jersey are not static. Like women at home, migrant women also work outside the home or do paid work at home, such as caring for the children of others. Like women in

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Mazatecochco, participation in paid work does not necessarily bring about more egalitarian gender relations. Women continue to be responsible for cooking, cleaning and caring for children. In addition, although migrant women have important roles in network building, they do not have a great deal of autonomy inside or outside the home. In large part this is due to the difficulty in getting around the city in which they live. But this is due also to the fact that while the men drive, women from Mazatecochco in New Jersey rarely do so. One man, for example, who owns a car and drives without a license, has told his nineteen-year-old daughter that she can't drive because "women are crazy drivers." His wife does not drive either. Nor does his other daughter drive despite the fact that she is married to a man who has a car and drives. The only Mexican woman I know in Riverview who does drive is a legal resident (residency gained through a previous husband) who is now single and does not come from Mazatecochco.

Women in Riverview are more constrained by long work hours, fewer kin to call upon for everyday help such as childcare, and difficulty getting around. Despite what might appear to be advantages of Mazatecochco, we see that men are more likely to return home than women.

The recession and return migration

Men and women from Mazatecochco come to the United States to work. As indicated in Chapter 2, a few people came in the 1980s but it was not until the 1990s and especially the 2000s that more San Cosmeros/as migrated when the Mexican and local economies increasingly led to declining profits for the merchants and the loss of their jobs or cutbacks in the number of hours worked. The vast majority of Mazatecochco's migrants are in Riverview, New Jersey. As indicated earlier, men's work was more adversely affected by the US recession when employment in construction was significantly reduced.

Men who live with their families have a safety net that those who are in the United States without family members lack. Not only do men who are here with their families usually have wives who work outside the home, but daughters and sons, often as young as sixteen, also work outside the home. In addition, even though the recession may have cut down on the number of celebrations a family can make, if they have two or more family members generating incomes, including a wife, they can

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make various celebrations. They are therefore more likely to participate in others' celebrations. Men here without a woman to do the kinwork and/or families that did not have at least some income for networking participated in fewer fiestas. They, thus, had fewer opportunities to develop or even maintain their networks. During the recession, most families in Riverview already had developed some networks. San Cosmeros/as living in New Jersey were less likely to spend the extra money to go to Connecticut for fiestas during the recession but many still attended and/or made fiestas in Riverview and, thus, continued to maintain and develop new networks. *Don* Ricardo, for example, had for years worked in construction for a firm building houses. During the recession, he lost his job. His wife and daughter continued to work as domestic workers and the family continued to have some fiestas and were invited to the fiestas of others. Through one of the events they attended, he found a job in construction for a company that had a contract to maintain railroad tracks and was therefore not affected by the decline in housing construction.

Shortly after the recession was officially over (December 2010), I attended three fiestas on Christmas eve. The first was organized by three unrelated families that lived together in a five-bedroom house. While we were there, about twenty visitors arrived. Including the fourteen people who lived there, about thirty-five people were present. The second was a small dinner organized by two married sisters at which there were about fifteen people, mostly kin. The third was organized by three sisters in the house of two of the sisters and their families. About fifty people, all couples or families, ate *tomales*, *arroz con leche* (rice with milk), and *atole* (a beverage made of ground corn and milk) and carried a statue of the Baby Jesus around the block. Altogether ninety men, women, and children were at these parties. All but six men who worked with one of the men who lived in the first house were couples and families. These six men interacted among themselves on in an enclosed front porch and had little contact with the larger group in the kitchen.

It is important to note the contrast in the patterns of interaction of these six men and the others at that same event. My husband and I were invited by Maria, one of the women who lived in the house with her daughter whom we knew from Mexico. I had never before met any of the others who lived there. But that night, I conversed with all of the men, women, and children who were in the kitchen at some point. Although my husband and I had said hello to the men who were on the

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porch when we arrived, we did not talk with them. The interactions in the kitchen facilitated the development of what Lynn Stephen (2007:18), using a concept developed by Arturo Escobar, describes as "meshworks." She points out that "Unlike networks, which may be focused from person outward, the idea of meshworks is about understanding interlinked networks and the total effect they can produce as a system." Although Maria has returned to Mexico, I have maintained contact with one of the other women and her family who were there that night.

As we will see in the next chapter, many San Cosmeros/as, like other Mexican migrants in the United States, returned to Mexico during the recession. Some of the returnees were couples and women but most of the return migrants were men, especially men like the six mentioned earlier who were in the United States without families. Not only were men's jobs more adversely affected by the recession, but men who were in the United States alone or with only one or two sons have fewer networks that can help one get through difficult times.

Notes

1 Recently, as more Mexican migrants are coming from urban areas, there has been some modification of the idea but it is still applicable in many communities. See Fussell and Massey (2004) for a discussion of this issue. It should be noted that the definition of urban also varies. By Fussell and Massey's measure of 15,000, Mazatecochco is not urban. Others, however, use 2,500. See, for example https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sconcerns/densurb/Defintion_of%20Urban.pdf

2 Much of the research on migrants from Mexico in the United States is based on the Mexican Migration Project, a binational research effort since 1982 that gathers data on social and economic patterns related to migration. Although some of their research involved ethnographic research, most of their work is based on survey data and until recently focused on male household heads.

3 The assumption was that networks would be more developed in traditional sending areas than in new sending areas. As I have suggested elsewhere (Rothstein 2010), such a perspective ignores the changes that many Mexican communities have experienced with globalization that have increased and broadened social networks beyond the home community. See also Wilson (2009) on the broadening of networks in northern Mexico with internal migration.

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4 See Amuedo-Dorantes and Mundra (2007:850) for other definitions of networks including living in an area in which many others spoke the same language.
5 Some studies, such as Massey (1986), look at how networks change by looking at the nature of networks of migrants in different time periods, but not at how individual migrants' networks change over time.
6 See also Hagan (1998).
7 Politics in Riverview are controlled by the same people who employ the migrants. Therefore, the police seem not to bother the migrants unless they are doing something obviously illegal. For example, an undocumented man got caught going through a stop sign. He did not have a driver's license but the police just fined him. I have heard from several people that if men are standing at a site waiting for work, the police warned them if "la migra" (US immigration officers) were coming so they could disperse.
8 For a discussion of networks based on sports participation, see Massey (1986).
9 See also Malkin (2007).
10 See Rothstein (1983) for a fuller discussion of gender relations in three peasant communities, including Mazatecochco.
11 When I did household surveys in 1971 and asked what work women did, I was given a long list including planting, harvesting, cooking, and taking care of animals. In 1980 when I asked the same question, I often received the response, "nada" (nothing).

Further reading

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4

When Migrants Return: Who Returns, Why, and How They Reintegrate

Abstract: *Before turning to discuss who has returned and how migrants reintegrate, it is useful to look at the impact of migrants' absence on their families. This chapter discusses men's and women's employment in the United States and Mexico and why men return more than women It goes on to focus on migrant men's and women's lives at home, especially with regard to family, in comparison to their lives in the United States, and how gender differences influence how men and women respond to being home.*

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Before turning to analyze who has returned and how migrants reintegrate, it is useful to look at the impact of migrants' absence on their families. This chapter discusses why men return more than women and considers men's and women's lives at home in comparison to their lives in the United States.

When migrants are gone

Although it is not the same as international migration, it is important to remember that San Cosmeros/as have been on the move for decades. Consequently, even before San Cosmeros/as began migrating to the United States, many of one's kin had not always lived in the community all the time. As we saw in Chapter 2, beginning in the 1940s, with a growing population on a limited land base and little government support for agricultural development for small-scale cultivators, some men from families with less land went to work in textile factories in Mexico City (sixty miles away) or the city of Puebla (ten miles away). Less frequently, unmarried or separated women also migrated to Mexico City to work as domestic workers. The women rarely came home but the men who worked in Puebla came home every day and the men who worked in Mexico City on weekends. Depending on their shift, they usually returned on Saturday and left Sunday night. Although some men married women from elsewhere and returned home less often, most of the *obreros* married women from Mazatecochco or brought their wives back to their home community. The women who worked as domestic workers usually also eventually returned home when they stopped working in Mexico City.

Many in the next generation became professionals who often found jobs even farther from home. For many years during the 1970s, for example, a man who was an only child taught in Baja California and returned home only for long holidays such as Christmas and summer vacation. His wife and children lived with his parents. Eventually he found a teaching position closer to home. In another family, Tomas, the youngest son, went to school in the state of Mexico (where he was able to live with his sister, a teacher who had been placed there to teach) and became a medical doctor in that state. He stayed there with his wife who was from the area and their two sons. As the *xocoyote* (youngest son) he inherited the parents' house in Mazatecochco and the

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responsibility of taking care of his parents. He eventually built a new house on the same property as the parents' old three-room house. The parents now live in the new nine-room house with three bathrooms. At least a few times a year, usually for fiestas such as the community's Saints' Day, the house is occupied also by the son's family and his sister, Mercedes, and her family who also live in the state of Mexico. The sister is in the process of building another house, adjacent to her brother's, on land she also inherited from her parents, so that when she and her family come to visit, they do not have to stay in the brother's house. She recently purchased another property adjacent to the property that has her house and the brother's house. She is planning on building a house for her married daughter to stay in when she and her daughter come to visit with her family.

Because of internal migration, many people from Mazatecochco have not lived in their home community for many years. Most who have moved, however, like the family members described, frequently come to visit, and their families visit them. Recently, for example, the parents of *Doña* Mercedes, their daughter, who lived about 200 miles away, traveled with another daughter and a grandchild (who lived in Mazatecochco) to celebrate the birthday of Mercedes' 4-year old grandson. Whole families often go on trips together. A couple who lives in Mazatecochco traveled with their daughter and her husband who live four hours away, and two other married daughters and their families who live in Mazatecochco, to Chiapas. This family, sometimes with other family members, have also traveled together to Oaxaca, Veracruz, and elsewhere.[1] When the daughter of another family married a man in a town about six hours away, where she had been working as a nurse, her parents rented a bus to transport family and friends from Mazatecochco to the wedding. That same family (parents, their daughter, and her family, including her in-laws) traveled together on a luxury bus to vacation in Cancun.

Other than the men who commuted daily to Puebla, internal migrants, like international migrants, are not there on an everyday basis to provide affective, economic, or other aid. But they can and do return when someone is sick or relatives from Mazatecochco visit them. For example, when a daughter gives birth, a mother may visit for several weeks. Sometimes, children whose parents are living elsewhere in Mexico stay with their grandparents in Mazatecochco to be cared for and to help and provide company for their grandparents.

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As these cases show, both international and national migration may interfere with family members' caring for and assisting each other, but other family members usually pick up the slack. By looking at the relations in one family we can see a variety of ways that kin who are present every day care for each other. The Lara family consists of the parents, *Don* Julio and *Doña* Sofia, and their six adult children (their children and grandchildren). Five of their sons and daughters live in Mazatecochco. Alexandra, the oldest daughter, visits her parents almost daily. She is a retired nurse and checks their medicines and gives her mother injections for her diabetes. Her siblings who live in Mazatecochco also frequently visit their parents and help with domestic tasks (including assistance for fiestas as well as everyday tasks such as shopping). Their son, David, helps with agricultural tasks, driving his parents to doctors' appointments or to shop in the nearby city.[2] In addition to caring for grandchildren and great grandchildren, *Doña* Sofia sends her son and daughters (who live in Mazatecochco or elsewhere in Mexico) who are visiting home with prepared foods. Sons and daughters in the United States are also sent food by their mothers.

Initially, especially in the past, most couples lived with the husband's parents when they got married. Although the parents and married son and his wife usually have separate sleeping rooms, they share a kitchen. Eventually, unless the son is the youngest one, the couple builds their own house, usually on the same site as the parents' house in a pattern that Blim (1990) calls "modified extensionality." Where a married couple lives with the groom's parents, either because the couple recently married or because the husband is the *xocoyote,* even more everyday caring is apparent. *Doña* Esperanza who is married to the *xocoyote* has lived with her in-laws since they married more than forty years ago. She cooks all the meals and, until recently, her mother-on-law always made the *tortillas*.

The impact of absent kin who are international migrants is similar in many ways to that of San Cosmeros/as who live or lived and/or work elsewhere in Mexico. For example, a sixty-year-old man who was never married and had no sons or daughters got sick and needed to be hospitalized. One of his brothers and several of his nieces and nephews are in the United States. His other brother and two sisters and their three adult sons and daughters and many adult grandchildren live in Mazatecochco or elsewhere in Mexico. The nephews and nieces (and great nephews and nieces) who live elsewhere in Mexico or the United States did not visit or assist with his care. Everybody else shared the responsibility of staying

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with him in the hospital and later when he returned to his own house to feed and to watch over him.

Doña Antonia, an eighty-five-year-old woman who has difficulty walking and is hard of hearing lives with her unmarried fifty-year-old son (the *xocoyote*). Another son works in Mexico City. He returns weekly to his wife and children who live next door to his mother, but except for criticizing his mother for being too easy on his brother, he spends little time with her. The daugher-in-law sometimes invites *Doña* Antonia for dinner, and her married daughter regularly bathes her grandmother. The son with whom *Doña* Antonia lives sometimes provides food for her, and neighbors and friends often bring her food and *pulque* (an alcoholic drink from the maquey cactus). Her only daughter is in the United States with her husband and three adult children. The daughter rarely speaks to her mother and the money she sends back is being used to build a new house for her husband and herself and their youngest son if he also decides also to return. Although her daughter's daughter lives only a few blocks away, she seldom visits her grandmother. She is, however, overseeing the building of her parents' new house and hoping to make a surprise visit to them if she can get the necessary papers and is looking into having her adolescent niece return from the United States to go to school in Puebla.

Most migrants, whether national or international, maintain contact with their families at home through telephone calls and the Internet. One woman said her son, who has been in the United States for ten years, calls her every day. Their families often send them special foods, such as homemade *tomales* (Figure 4.1).

Internal migrants are and were, however, much more likely to maintain kin and caring relations with family members at home.

Although most migrants to the United States send money home to their spouses or parents, the lack of documents for most migrants from Mazatecochco limits the extent that international migrants can directly participate in kin and caring relations at home. The greater distance and very high financial cost, as well as the latent danger for undocumentand international migrants returning periodically exacerbates the effect of absent family. The presence of and the importance given to other family members, however, usually reduces the effect of international migrants' absence. This applies to most of the cases of absent spouses, absent offspring, or absent parents. The extent to which married couples and children are surrounded by kin through descent and marriage mitigates

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FIGURE 4.1 *Express packages*

the consequences of an absent spouse or absent children, or parents. This is noticable especially with married sons and daughters. Even if they are not living with the man's parents, since most new houses are built on the parents' property, children are very often cared for by the husband's parents and siblings. Whether the grandchildren live in the house or compound with the grandparents or not, it is not uncommon to see grandchildren at their grandparents' house, even if both their parents are in the community. Recently, several families living in the United States who had relatives or friends with documents sent their US-born children with these relatives to visit with grandparents when the children were on their summer vacation from school. In addition, some children of international migrants live or lived for a period with their grandparents. Some of their parents have returned to be with their children and some have returned to bring their children back with them to the United States. There are some families in which one of the parents, either their mother or the father, has been away for a long time. The remaining parent and the children usually live with or very near one of the parents' families. For example, Pedro has been in the United States for more than ten years with little contact with his wife and children. They live,

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however, in a compound with his two brothers and two sisters and their families. The wife has a store on the family's property on the main street. There are very few children of migrants who have lived for long periods in Mazatecochco while both their parents were in the United States.

In some commnities where husbands or sons have been away for a long time, contact with their families may be rare. Now, most families in Mazatecochco have at least some (and usually most) adult family members still living in or near Mazatecochco. These kin can and do take care of each other and older family members and sometimes of children of parents who have migrated. The situation for a wife whose husband is away and is living with the husband's family may be more problematic because there are are sometimes tensions between the wife and mother-in-law, which is often a difficult relationship. The presence of the husband, however, does not always lessen those tensions. In addition, it is not uncommon for women who are separated or divorced, whether the husband is in the United States or at home, to return to their natal households.

In some Mexican communities families are still heavily involved in agriculture. The absence of family members, especially men, is problematic because other family members may need to take over additional responsibilities that the migrant would have handled.[3] Fewer and fewer San Cosmeros/as are practicing much agriculture today. If they have fields, whether they are migrants or not, they often hire others (usually *campesinos/as*) to do their fieldwork or they rent their land to a *campesino.* Since increasingly women in Mazatecochco are employed in the local *talleres* or involved in commercial activity, they usually have their own earnings as well as some money that their husbands have sent unless their husband has formed a new family in the United States. During the US recession women and parents in Mazatecochco sometimes sent money to their husbands or sons in the United States. Other than these few cases, wives and occasionally husbands or parents usually receive some money from their husbands, sons, and daughters in the United States.

Why men return home more than women

When I went to Mazatecochco in the summer of 2012 to do preliminary research on return migration I was surprised to find that fewer women

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than men who had migrated had returned home. As noted in Chapter 1, return migration has not been the subject of much research. Gender and return migration has even more rarely been discussed in any of the literature. Occasionally, some writers have suggested that women are less likely to want to return than men or to find it harder to adjust because they were employed while they were away and there are fewer job opportunities for them in their home country.[4] But a few studies have looked systematically at women and return migration.

In 2012, I found that although economic problems in the United States were not unimportant, most male and female migrants said they had returned for family reasons.[5] A mother was sick, a father had died, a wife had gone off with another man, or a daughter was getting married. In one of the few recent studies of return migration to Mexico, nostalgia and family were the main reasons cited for return (MATT December 2013).[6] Like most other studies of return migration, the MATT study did not look at gender.

I came back in 2014 to look more systematically at gender and return migration. Most migrants have not returned, but among those who have returned, men are still more likely to have done so. Several national Mexican studies of return migration have also found that a higher proportion of male migrants have returned than female migrants. An analysis by the Mexican National Institute of Statistics and Geography (IRCA), focusing on the period between 2005 and 2010, found that a lower proportion of women migrants returned to Mexico than men (28.8 percent vs. 32.5 percent) (INEGI 2010). In the state of Tlaxcala, the difference was even greater: 26.1 percent of the women who migrated returned compared to 34.2 percent of the male migrants (INEGI 2010).

When I talked to men and women who returned, everyone of them stressed the fact that in the United States one had to have money. Money for rent, money for food, money to get around. As one woman commented, "mucho bills." In Mazateochco, one always has a family and a roof over one's head, and for at least part of the year, corn and other products are available in the fields or wild mushrooms can be found on the mountain. Migrants in New Jersey not only had to have money for food, housing, and other necessities but also had to experience job security: men's work was more adversely affected by the US recession than women's work. Even after the recession was officially over in June 2009 and unemployment among immigrant Mexicans had decreased 1 percent between 2009 and 2010, unemployment of Mexicans in the

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United States was high (12 percent in 2010 compared to 5.5 percent in 2007) (CONAPO 2011:252). Underemployment had also increased. Between 2008 and 2010 underemployment of Mexicans increased from just under 10 percent to 19 percent (CONAPO 2011:256). Unfortunately, underemployment statistics by gender are not available. Discussions with women migrants suggest that although their hours were sometimes cut, domestic work was not as badly affected by the recession as construction and other men's work. The decline in hours led to a decline in wages from an average annual salary for Mexican immigrants from $22,579 in 2007to $21, 224 (CONAPO 2011:257).

There is little information available on gender and unemployment among Mexican migrants in the United States. A recent Pew report found that Hispanic men's employment dropped more than Hispanic women's employment between 2007 and 2009 (Kochhar 2012:Table B4). That report also shows that the industry that had the greatest number of Hispanic-born workers in 2007 was construction where the greatest number of jobs, 25 percent, were lost (calculated from Kochhar 2012:Table B4). During that same period, "Personal and Laundry Services and Private Household Services," the industry in which foreign-born Hispanic women are likely to be found, actually gained jobs by almost 10 percent (Kochhar 2012:Table B4). Most of the migrants in Riverview work in construction or household services.

Not only were men more likely to experience job and income loss, but were less likely than women to be living with a partner (either in a consensual or legal union). Although many migrant men were living with wives whom they had married in Mexico or met in the United States, the presence of more Mexican men than Mexican women in New Jersey, as in the United States in general,[7] means that Mexican women have an advantage in finding a partner. A few of the women I met in New Jersey were not living with a partner (almost always men from Mexico) whom they had married at home or met here. Many of the men, whether they had wives at home or not, lived not with a partner but with other men. Most of the male migrants who returned had not been living with a partner in the United States. Not only does the presence of women and older children mean more wage earners but, as indicated in Chapter 3, women do the kinwork that is necessary for building and maintaining social networks in the United States.[8] Without families and women to do kinwork and organize fiestas, one's social network is less. Women's kinwork helps develop and maintain social networks. Especially during

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the recession, social networks that can help increase social capital may help find work. Fewer networks, especially in economically difficult times, may be a factor in men's greater rates of return. Although men, like women, who had returned stressed family reasons, most of the men also talked about the recession and its negative impact on the availability of employment.

At the same time that employment for many Mexican migrants in the United States declined, since 2010 the economy of Tlaxcala, the state in which Mazateochco is located, has been showing signs of recovery. According to recent newspaper accounts, the Tlaxcalan economy has been growing more than the national economy (5.1 percent compared to 3.9 percent) (Jimenez Guillén 2012:3). Between 2010 and 2013 too, the unemployment rate for both men and women declined (INEGI 2013). Although women's unemployment rate was almost the same as men's in 2013 (5.9 percent for women to 5.5 percent for men), before that it was higher (7.6 percent for women compared to 5.9 percent for men). Despite the fact that women's employment in the state has been increasing, women's wages and access to benefits have not.[9]

When migrants return, like others in the community, they reside in a variety of living arrangements. Both unmarried women and unmarried men who return usually return to living with their natal families. In cases where a couple returns, they move back into the house where they had been living before they migrated. If they had been living with the husband's parents, they usually move into a new house built with remittances. In one case a woman who returned with a daughter was able to live in a house that her sister and brother-in-law owned but were not using. The father of the daughter had also returned and he helped support his daughter. His wife had left him (because of his extramarital relationship) but he moved back into the house he and his first wife had been living in and he appeared to have close relations with his married son and daughter-in-law who lived in the same house as well as with other family members who live nearby. In another case, a married woman migrated, and while she was away, she married another man, and now she returned to her former husband and grown children in his family's house with the child she had by the second husband.

Although not all of the men who have returned have experienced economic success, most seem to be doing well and all are employed or involved in their own businesses. The women who have returned have all been able to find work in or near Mazatecochco: the women are

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more likely to work for others usually in the local low-paid and insecure garment industry whereas the men often begin businesses of their own. It is important to note that the regional economy has been growing and the community appears to be thriving. The streets are lined with numerous commercial activities ranging from stores selling cellphones to tortillas. The local garment industry that had been declining fifteen years earlier is now thriving.

The absence of family and kin and other social networks is more problematic for migrant men in the United States, but women, like men, also often say that they returned home for family reasons. For women, however, family and social networks can be a source of strain. As Malkin has suggested, "networks can replicate both the good and the bad" (2010:665). Zontini points out for Italian families that "the kind of kin and caring work which Italian families carry out is predominantly, although not exclusively, women's work. Such work . . . may be experienced by some of them as unwanted burden" (2010:823). She goes on to suggest that the maintenace of traditional practices may enforce gender and generational practices.

Many women in Mazatecochco have stories about how their mothers-in-law forced them to do certain tasks. One older woman described how her mother-in-law stayed home talking to her friends and drinking *pulque* while she sent her daughter-in-law to work in the fields. A younger woman, whose son is just starting college, told him that when he gets married if he and his wife want to live with her, they (particularly the daughter-in-law) will have to follow her rules or live elsewhere. Other women stressed that men's mothers are often bad influences because they constantly wait on their sons and expect daughters-in-law to do the same.

Although patrilocal residence is not without problems, especially for the daughter-in-law, it does provide a great deal of affective and economic support as well as assistance with everyday caring and domestic activities. In households where there is a family business, such as a *taller* or a store, frequently, the parents and the married son and daughter-in-law too work in the *taller* or store. Although tensions may exist in such situations, most families eventually work out their differences or separate their businesses as well as their households. As indicated earlier, married sons and daughters and their children who live apart frequently come to their grandparents and the parents frequently go to their houses to help with cooking, child care, farming, or a family business.

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Mothers-in-law in Mazatecochco rarely exert the kind of "oppressive control" described by Hellman (2008:51) for a rural community in Puebla, or that characterized Mazatecochco more in the past. Life in the United States, however, may offer some advantages for women compared to life at home. Furthermore, problematic gender and generational practices are not confined to mothers-in-law. At a fiesta for the Saints' Day of the barrio, a woman who had returned because her father was sick and who later said she preferred the freer life she had led in New Jersey (despite being a single mother), spent the whole day in the kitchen with her mother making the food and then serving it to the guests. Her brothers and their families spent the day socializing with the guests. Another woman who left her husband and children in the 1980s to go to the United States with another man returned recently with her second husband and their teenage son. Her family, especially her grown children, refuse to speak to her but her husband's family has overlooked her transgression.

The situation for women when they return is complicated by the different norms that have prevailed in Mazatecochco, like elsewhere, for many years for women and men. In addition to the expectations that women do most of the kinwork (including everyday caring of their families), a double sexual standard and gender discrimination in employment persist. Men have often had other wives, and their extramarital relations rarely lead to their being overtly criticized by family members or others (although gossip is rampant). Women, too, have often had extramarital relations. If their relations become known, however, women were and are more likely to be criticized and, as in the case mentioned, especially if their extramarital relations lead to leaving their children, ostracized by their families.

The circumstances for women in Mazatecochco is not as inhibiting as that described by Geraci where wives of migrants continue to live with in-laws 'to quell gossip among community members who might think 'bad things'" (2011:116),[10] but women's behavior is scrutinized more carefully than men's. Whether they are single or married, the small-town atmosphere in Mazatecochco makes women, especially unmarried women who have returned from places such as Riverview—a medium-sized city where people are anonymous—feel less free. Although Mazateocochco, with a population of 10,000, is defined as "urban," walking on the street, one is likely to meet someone who knows you. Mazatecochco's closeness to Puebla allows those whose lives take them

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there to work, shop, and/or meet with friends to be anonymous. There are a growing number of women as well as men in Mazatecochco who are univesity students and professionals and other women who frequently shop or go to the city to sell in the markets, but most of the women who migrate to the United States, like most of the men who migrate from Mazatecochco, are not professionals and a few have other activities that take them often to the city. For many women also, if they do go to the city they are accompanied by husbands or other family members.

Not only are migrant women in the United States less likely to be scrutinized by their neighbors but although, like everyone else, they must buy food, housing, and other necessities, they are more likely to have a partner with whom to share expenses. In addition, women's role in developing and maintaining social networks expands their (and their partner's) universe of contacts. These contacts can help provide a safety net when times are tough. More of the migrant men are living not with a spouse but with other men. Very few of the women who migrated are living without a spouse or their parents.

Migrant men's lives at home

Not all of the men have experienced economic success but most seem to be doing well and all are employed or involved in their own business. It is important to note that the regional economy has been growing and the community appears to be thriving. According to recent newspaper accounts, the Tlaxcalan economy began growing more than the national economy in 2012 (5.1 percent compared to 3.9 percent) (Jimenez Guillen 2012:3) and although growth slowed in 2013 and 2014, it continues to grow (Case and Martin 2014). Job opportunities and investment possibilities for men, however, are better than those for women. One man, Gerardo, returned after six years in the United States because his mother was ill in 2006. Since his return he has built a house for a new wife and the two children who followed. The house was paid for with money from his work in the United States and was built on land he inherted from his parents. His wife's family gave them a small space on a side street just off the main street on which they opened a stationery store. Several years later, they were able to buy a larger space on the main street, also owned by her family, and they

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appear to be doing well. While he was in the United States he worked in a company installing electrical wiring. When he returned home, although the skills he had developed were not useful in the industry in Mexico that was not using the same techniques, he applied them to their new store and installed a more sophisticated wiring system than was customary in the community.[11]

Another man, Pedro, whose family always made and sold bread lived in the United States with his two adult sons. He returned after eight years in 2008 because his wife did not want to move to the United States. He is back in the business of baking and selling bread. One son who more recently returned has joined him in the bread business. The father was recently elected to the local town council. The other son also returned and went back to school to study information systems. He subsequently opened an Internet café, got married, and had a child. He was recenlty elected to head the parents' committee at his son's school.

Guillermo come to the United States in the 1990s when his garment workshop failed. He returned home in 2006 when his daughter got married. Although his wife left him while he was away because he was living with another woman in the United States, he has fixed up the house he left, which had deteriorated, and is back in the garment business with his daughter and son-in-law. He has always been interested in the community's culture and history. When he was in Riverview he helped start the celebration of Carnival there. Upon his return to Mazatecochco he has been active in the efforts to preserve the community's cultural heritage. He recently participated in an event in the state of Oaxaca where he and other community members from Mazateochco performed Carnival dances and his dance group has been invited to participate in a number of other cultural events. With the help of a friend who has numerous government contacts, he is looking for international events in which his dance group might participate.

Hector migrated in 2003 and returned in 2010 for his mother's birthday. When I saw him in 2012 he said he had returned to live out his dream which was to be an artist. In 2012 he had completed three oil paintings and one large banner. He had also been hired to do a sand scene for a fiesta in front of the church and he was working in construction. By the summer of 2014 he was teaching painting and English to youngsters (ranging in age from nine to fifteen years old) three days during the week and Saturday and Sunday. He earns 20 pesos per student per day. The day I visited duirng the summer, there were seven

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students in his painting class. With the support of the municipal president he arranged an exposition of his students' artwork in the local community museum and then again on the day the community was celebrating its Saints' Day, in the church courtyard. He has also developed ties with other artists in the region, particularly in the nearby city of Puebla where there is an active artists' community, and he has sold paintings to members of the local community as well as in Puebla. Now he also teaches English in the afternoons at the local secondary school.

Some of the men who have returned are less successful but they have or are building houses and they are employed. Miguel, a younger man (twenty-eight-years old) who came back in 2012 bought an embroidery machine (with the help of his uncle), got married, and he and his wife are expecting their second child. He built a house with the money he had saved on the land he inherited from his mother. The embroidery business did not work out and he is now working full time for a large local garment producer earning $150 pesos per day ($900 pesos per week).[12] When I asked him if he wanted to return to the United States, he was the only man who indicated that he might want to do so.

Pedro, a young man of twenty who had been living in New Haven, returned in 2012. Although his brother and his brother's family were there, he wanted to return home. He missed his parents and friends. He has been working for a local garment merchant operating a stamping machine. He has been living with his parents. With the money that he earned in the United States and his current earnings he is building a house on the land he inhertied from his parents.

Some research has suggested that migrants' absence from home can lead to loss of access to social networks and social capital. Hagen, Hernández-León, and Demonsant, for example, note that some migrants who had been gone for a long time said that they lost social networks (2015:168). On the contrary, in their study of Egyptian migrants Wahba and Zenou found that "Although migrants may potentially lose their social capital, their accumulated savings and experiences overcompenstated for their loss" (2009:23). The men who have returned to Mazatecochco, most after a ten-year or lesser absence, have lost social capital; but, as the examples suggest, their networks are important sources of support, including financial support, housing, land, and other kinds of assistance, when they return. The situation for women, unless they are married, is less positive.

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Women's lives at home

As noted earlier, unnmarried women, like unmarried men who return, usually move back in with their natal families. Married women move into their in-laws house or the couple moves to their own house. The migrants who seem to be experiencing greater economic difficulties when they return are the few single women (with or without children) who have come back to the community. Although they have been able to find jobs, they are usually low-paid, insecure jobs in the local garment industry. Unlike the men and couples, they do not open their own businesses probably because they generally earn less than men in the United States and therefore return with less savings.[13] All the women who have returned have been able to find work usually in Mazatecochco, but whereas the men often begin businesses of their own, the single women are more likely to work for others usually in the local garment industry. Even when men work in the garment industry they earn more than women because their jobs differ. Women ususally sew the garments; men cut and work with the merchants bringing goods to the markets. A few married women who have returned have started businesses, such as a pizza restaurant, with their husbands.

Not only are the unmarried women who return likely to feel that their behavior is being scrutinized; their role in kinwork is different from that of other family members. They do not organize fiestas. They may assist their mothers or married sisters with fiestas that these women organize but they are less likely to organize them themselves because they lack the economic and social resources to do so. Other unmarried or widowed women who are teachers, nurses, and other professionals do organize such celebrations. Many have built houses for themselves, usually on land they inherited from their parents. These women also participate in politics and public religious events such as *posadas* (religious celebrations). They are also more likely to spend time in Puebla or Tlaxcala meeting friends, shopping, and going out to dinner. Some have traveled as tourists to Mexico and to other countries.

Conclusion: the advantages and burdens of networks and caring

Mazatecochco's migrants return primarily for kin and caring reasons. Although women return for the same reasons as men, they are less

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likely to return. Especially when times are tough in the United States, as they were during the recent recession, kin and their networks help migrants survive. Not only did the recent recession affect women from Mazateocochco less because their jobs, usually as domestic workers, were more secure, but they tend to prefer life in the United States. As discussed in Chapter 3, much of the research on Mexican migration has suggested that women prefer the United States because there is greater gender equality in the United States. Others have argued that gender relations have changed in Mexico and that in both countries they are more complex than many of the earlier discussions recognized. This is true also of Mazatecochco.

Gender relations in Mexico *have* changed significantly over the past four decades When asked how they think women's lives in Mazatecochco today compare to the lives of the previous generation of women, women in Mazatecochco unanimously agree that it is better for women today. They all attribute the change to women's increased employment outside the home. Especially the younger and more educated women, however, point out that they are still expected to take care of the work in the home. It is not only men who expect them to do so but also other women, especially mothers and sisters. Although this is true also of migrant women in the United States, since many are in the United States without other family members, the burden, like the help, of family is less.

What appears to bother single women who return, however, is not only the expectation that they will help their families at fiestas or with other duties. What they also object to is the small-town environment where what a woman does in and out of the home is often known to many in the community. The greater anonymity they experience (and the greater freedom that gives them) in Riverview is preferable. Unlike women in Mazatecochco who are teachers, doctors, lawyers, and nurses and who have friends elsewhere and go to places, such as the city of Puebla or Mexico City or who travel abroad where they have more anonymity, the lives of migrant women who return, especially single returnees, are more confined to Mazatecochco. Although single migrant women, like migrant men and couples, do return to Mexico for family reasons and obligations, when they do so they may be more likely to regret their decision.

In the next chapter we will learn more about migrants' return and why women are more likely to regret their having returned.

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Notes

1 See Rothstein (n.d.).
2 Although some women in Mazatecochco do drive, most do not. Those who do often also drive family members to shop or get medical care.
3 See Radel et al. (2012), for a discussion of the role of women in agriculture when the men of their households are away, and Andrews (2014), for a discussion of indigenous women who returned from the United States and, in the men's absence, became active in local politics.
4 See, for example, Grasmuck and Pessar (1991) who mention that Caribbean men more than women want to return, but nothing is said about who actually returns. Similarly, Gmelch (1980) who notes that little research has been done on women who have returned suggests that women who have been employed while they were away find it hard to return because they are less likely to be employed in their home country.
5 Gmelch (1980) similarly suggests family was the main reason for most return migration. More recently, Hagan, Hernández-León, and Demonsant (2015:40) also found the majority of return migrants in their study in Guanauato, Mexico, also attributed their return to family reasons.
6 The MATT study also found deportations were only 11 percent.
7 The ratio of Mexican men to Mexican women in the United States is 56 percent versus 44 percent (Donato et al. 2011).
8 See also studies of other migrants including Kibria (1994); Reyes (1997); Delaunay and Lestage (1998); Menjívar (2000); D'Aubeterre (2002); Ariza (2002).
9 See INEGI (2010).
10 Mummert (1994) suggests that similar fears about gossip are frequently found in migrant-sending communities.
11 See Hagan, Hernández-Leon, and Demonsant (2015) for similar experiences when migrants learned new skills that could not be transferred to Mexico
12 The peso was equivalent to about 13 US cents.
13 Since most of the women who migrate from Mazatecochco work as domestic workers, their earnings vary from $8.00 per hour (less than the New Jersey minimum wage) to $12.00 per hour with the majority earning less than the minimum wage. Men's earning (in construction or landscaping) usually range between $10.00 and $15.00 per hour.

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5

Final Thoughts: Globalization and Migration

Abstract: *This chapter summarizes the major changes San Cosmeros/as have experienced and how they have dealt with them since the 1940s—at home, in the United States, and at home again. Although Mexicans have migrated to the United States for at least hundred years, globalization has led to a greatly increased acceleration of migration of men and women from more communities, including Mazatecochco, and to more regions of the United States. More recently, it has led to the return of many of these migrants. Today San Cosmeros/as are returning to a community and region that is experiencing economic growth that is conducive to migrant investment. The chapter concludes with a discussion of what lessons for the future are suggested by the migration experience of San Cosmeros/as.*

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This chapter summarizes the major changes San Cosmeros/as have experienced and how they have dealt with them since the 1940s—at home, in the United States, and at home again. Although Mexicans have migrated to the United States for at least hundred years, globalization has led to a greatly increased acceleration of migration of men and women from more Mexican communities, including Mazatecochco, and to more regions of the United States. More recently, it has led to the return of many of these migrants. Today San Cosmeros/as are returning to a community and region that is experiencing economic growth that is conducive to migrant investment. The chapter concludes with a discussion of what lessons for the future are suggested by the migration experience of San Cosmeros/as.

The past

By looking at the community of Mazatecochco over time we can see how one rural community, dependent on small-scale agriculture, changed from a community of *campesinos/as* to a community of industrial textile factory workers. And then, in the 1980s, globalization led to the decline of the Mexican textile industry and the loss of jobs for many textile workers, including those from Mazatecochco. At the same time, globalization brought *maquiladoras* (in-bond assembly plants), in which women were the preferred workers, to Mexico. The availability of these new jobs and the fact that families could no longer count on men's wages led to an increase in the number of women working for wages. While some women from Mazatecochco went to work in *maquiladoras*, families began producing garments in small home workshops that the men usually sold at regional markets. A worsening of the Mexican economy in the mid-1990s and increased competition in the local small-scale garment sector that had developed led to the failure of some *talleres*. Those garment merchants who survived were those who went to other communities for cheaper labor and better markets farther away from Tlaxcala and Puebla. The local women and men who worked in the *talleres* lost their jobs completely or worked fewer hours for less pay. In the 1990s many *maquiladora* workers, mostly women, also lost their jobs as assembly plants moved elsewhere in Mexico or to Asia.

Meanwhile, in the United States the demand for low-paid flexible workers increased as employers in the United States looked for cheaper

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labor. Mexicans could easily find jobs in the United States especially in construction and gardening for men and domestic work for women. Initially, some San Cosmeros/as migrated with the help of networks with people in neighboring communities in Mexico who had been migrating since the 1980s. Then more San Cosmeros/as migrated using networks of other San Cosmeros/as who had begun migrating in the early 1990s. Eventually, hundreds of men and women from Mazatecochco were migrating in the 1990s and early 2000s, especially to New Jersey and Connecticut. The recession of 2007–2009 in the United States meant loss of many jobs, particularly men's jobs in construction. As the Mexican economy began to improve in 2010, many migrants, though mostly men, returned to Mexico.

The present in Mazatecochco

Mazatecochco today is almost nothing like the community I came to more than four decades ago. The streets are paved and lit. The main street is now almost all storefronts. The main street is lined with stores selling everything from *tortillas* and chickens to wine, *micheladas* (beer-based cocktails) (Figure 5.1), and commercial sewing machines and supplies (Figure 5.2). A hotel was built by a family who came to the community from another town in Tlaxcala. It accommodates family members who live elsewhere, business people, and others who visit the community (Figure 5.3). Almost everyone under sixty has a cellphone, and Facebook and other online social networks are frequently used.

Many of the returnees, especially the men who returned with some savings that could be used for various kinds of investment, are doing well at home. Although few women who migrated to the United States have returned, among them are a few older women who came to the United States in the 1980s. The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA) enabled them to became legal residents. This gave them access to better jobs and social security benefits. Some women who were internal migrants who had lived in Mexico City or elsewhere in Mexico also returned with more resources. One woman has built a new house and opened a store on property she inherited from her parents. Another, also with land from her parents, built a new house and an event space. Similarly, many others in the community, including nonmigrants and families of migrants who have not returned, are also taking advantage of the region's improved economy.

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FIGURE 5.1 *Micheladas (beer-based cocktails)*

FIGURE 5.2 *Sewing machines and supplies*

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FIGURE 5.3 *Hotel*

US migrant couples who have returned are also generally doing well. A pizza and cappuccino café is one of the businesses owned by a couple who returned from the United States. (Figure 5.4). Another couple has an Internet café. Single women return migrants, however, like most women in the region, are limited to the lowest paying jobs and have less freedom than they experienced in the United States. In addition, they are less likely to have returned with money that they could use for investment. They, more than men, regret that they have returned. They, however, are a small segment of the community.

The male and female migrants have brought with them new ideas, practices, and technology. What Flores calls "cultural remittances," "the ensemble of ideas, values, and expressive forms [that are] introduced into societies of origin by remigrants and their families as they return" (2009:4) are very evident. It is also important to note that such ideas, values, and expressive forms are found not only among return migrants. Many who have not been to the United States are influenced by electronic communication or contact with migrants and others from the United States. Although many migrants in Mazatecochco are what Cerase called "carriers of change" (cited by Hagan, Hernandez-Leon, and Demonsant 2015:8), others in the community who did not migrate to the United

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FIGURE 5.4 *Pizzeria*

States are also taking advantage of new ideas, new technology, and other possibilities brought by globalization. Although one is more likely to see examples of such cultural remittances in the various commodities that are now available, new ideas, values, and images from afar are evident in other places as well.[1] A woman who has never been to the United States but whose professional life brings her into contact with people from the

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United States and other countries who have settled in parts of Puebla has borrowed building ideas from her experiences with them. Through her work she has met with foreigners in their homes in Mexico. Many of these homes have been built according to U.S. and European tastes. Her new house is based on the designs she has seen in their houses and that she has followed up on through online architecture magazines.

Ideas about other aspects of life are also increasingly noticeable. When I discussed gender relations with a middle-aged teacher, who had never been to the United States, she suggested that women in Mexico are changing their ideas and demanding equality because of the ideas about gender they have gotten through the Internet. As indicated, however, in Chapter 4, single or divorced women who have returned to Mazatecocho after living in the United States do not see much change. They often object to the fact that their behavior is more closely scrutinized at home than in the United States.

It is important to stress several factors that have worked to the advantage of most San Cosmeros/as both in Mazatecochco and when they are elsewhere. One factor is the location of the community. Mazatecochco is ten miles away from Puebla, a major city, that is easily accessible by car, bus, and *convi* (small collective buses). Puebla has several major markets, universities, and has, over the years, provided employment to San Cosmeros/as in factories, stores, educational institutions, and medical facilities, among others. The community is also only sixty miles from Mexico City, and the transportation by very frequent public buses or private cars on a major highway is excellent. This not only enabled weekly migration to their textile factories but today San Cosmeros/as go to Mexico City to buy goods ranging from pharmaceuticals to textiles as well as for study, medical services, and increasingly for pleasure. Access to Puebla and Mexico City has allowed the community to live in what in many ways is still a semirural community,[2] but its inhabitants are very aware of urban amenities and take advantage of what the nearby cities offer.

Another important factor for Mazatecochco's adaptation to new circumstances is that they have benefitted from the flexibility San Cosmeros/as have always practiced with regard to their behavior and beliefs. They have maintained many of the ideas and behaviors that the community had in the past, but they have also modified them over time and place. For example, as I suggested earlier, they continue to celebrate festivities such as Carnival that not only maintain religious beliefs and

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practices but are also important in maintaining and developing social contacts and social capital. To do so, they change some aspects of their celebrations to fit their new environments whether those environments are Mexico or the United States. In the past, the celebration for the community's Saints' Day was held on September 26. When the men began working in factories in Mexico City, initially they took off that day for the celebration. As factory owners began to object to their absence, the day of the celebration was changed to the Sunday before or after the actual Saints' Day. Carnival is held traditionally weeks before Lent. Today, however, in New Jersey it is celebrated in May because migrants can have access to the town square in Riverview then and it is warm enough for an outdoor fiesta. Similarly, San Cosmeros/as have continued to hold on to their land and to buy more if they did not have enough for agriculture (in the past) and housing (increasingly in the present). Even in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s when many families purchased most of their goods and services with the money the *obreros* earned in the factories, they continued to raise at least some corn for *tortillas*.

Today the community appears to be thriving. Not only has the small-scale garment industry grown stronger but many people from the community and elsewhere have taken advantage of local prosperity to begin new commercial activities. New kinds of services, such as zumba, knitting, and karate classes, are offered. Stores now include several upscale cafés, many pizza and other restaurants, and numerous Internet cafes. Outsiders have also come to take advantage of the local economy to sell roast chickens, bread, cappuccino, and cellphones. This environment is conducive to migrants' reintegration, especially for men and couples.

I have stressed the flexibility of San Cosmeros/as. I do not think, however, that they are unique. People everywhere are adapting to change, changing their own lives and the lives of their families, and changing what goes on around them. What is also important, however, are opportunities for people to seize and use to their advantage. San Cosmeros/as have benefitted from the relative prosperity of the community to which they have returned and their access to some capital through savings and/or profits from a business or the sale of land. As Montoya Arce, Salas Alfaro, and Soberón Mora (2011) point out in their study of return migrants to a rural community in the state of México, migrants may not always be able to apply their new skills and productive ideas

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because of lack of capital and/or infrastructure to do so. Although not all San Cosmeros/as have prospered, many, including most of the male returnees and the returning migrant couples, are doing well.

The present for those in the United States

San Cosmeros/as who are still in the United States sometimes talk about going home. One couple has been planning to return for five years. Their two daughters who are with them in New Jersey chipped in and bought their father a GPS several years ago for the trip back to Mexico. The couple has been sending money to their married daughter who is in Mazatecochco to have their house enlarged and fixed up. She is overseeing the work. Although the house is almost finished, the parents are all still in the United States. The two daughters who are also in the United States are now married and have their own families. The married daughter at home is doing well in the garment business. Recently, she formally registered the business to show a stable and decent income so that she might get the papers to come to the United States to visit her parents and siblings. A lawyer in Mexico told her that if she was invited to an event in the United States she could get papers to visit. I arranged for her to receive such an invitation but she is still trying to get the papers to travel as a tourist.

A lesson from the past for the future: not just migrants

While hundreds of San Cosmeros/as have migrated to the United States in search of work, others are traveling throughout Mexico and elsewhere as tourists. These tourists are almost all retired factory workers, and their sons and daughters benefitted from a very different time. In Mexico, as in many other parts of the word, after World War II, a Keynesian approach to the economy and the state, very unlike the neoliberal approach that prevails today, saw the state as responsible for the welfare and education of its people. In the late 1960s and 1970s, many of the sons and daughters of Mazatecochco, especially of the *obreros*, continued their studies at publicly supported institutions to become teachers, nurses, doctors, accountants, lawyers, and other professionals.

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The retired *obreros* and their professional sons and daughters are not rich. Their houses and lifestyles are less luxurious than those of the very successful garment merchants who have large houses, some with swimming pools, send their children to private schools, and drive fancy cars. However, the generation of professionals have modest modern homes and, despite cutbacks in education, their salaries and for many who are retired, their pensions, along with some land to farm themselves or rent to others, allow them to travel, not as undocumented migrants to the United States for low-paid, insecure jobs, but as tourists in Mexico and occasionally beyond.

When I compare the *obreros* and their families of the past to the international migrants of today I am struck by some similarities as well as many differences. Both began migrating—the *obreros* to Mexico City and the migrants of today to the United States—because of declining opportunities locally. For the *obreros* it was inadequate land and for the contemporary migrants it was the deterioration of paid employment opportunities and increased competition in the small-scale garment industry. A major difference, however, between then and now was that factory work led to adequate wages and benefits such as health insurance and pensions and the political contacts to bring about significant change in their home community including electricity, potable water, and improved educational opportunities for their sons and daughters. Another important difference is that *obreros*' lives remained geared to their home community. Very few stayed in Mexico City. Even men who had another family in Mexico City usually maintained their families at home and most ultimately returned to Mazatecochco.

Many of the international migrants, especially the men or couples who come without their children, are similar to the migrants of the past in that they remain oriented to their home community and families there. Although San Cosmeros/as have not developed the kinds of hometown associations that other migrants in the United States have developed, their remittances and very frequent contact by telephone and electronically keep many closely tied to home. It is those ties that also lead them home to their families. Those who are fortunate enough to return with capital and/or skills that can be beneficial at home, such as the return migrant who now owns two taxis and another who is giving English and art classes, are doing well. The women who have returned with or to their husbands and work with them, for example, by establishing a business in which they both participate, also appear to be reintegrating successfully.

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Single women usually return from the United States with few new skills and less savings and end up working in garment workshops or as domestic workers. They also find the closeness (of family and neighbors) a burden and occasionally talk about returning to the United States.

Conclusion

San Cosmeros/as have been on the move for more than fifty years. Initially, men migrated to Mexico City beginning in the 1940s to work in textile factories. In the 1980s, free trade led to the closing of hundreds of textile factories. Most of the men from Mazatecochco lost their jobs. Many families began producing garments in small home workshops that they sold at regional markets. In the 1990s competition grew and garment makers looked for workers in other communities where labor was cheaper. Many, especially the smaller garment makers, could not survive in the new environment and former garment workshop owners and workers began to migrate to the United States. Hundreds of San Cosmeros/as migrated to New Jersey and Connecticut to work primarily in construction and gardening (men) and domestic work (women). The 2007–2009 recession in the United States led to the loss of many of their jobs, especially for the men. Some found other work or got through the recession with the help of other family members. Many returned home. Now the majority of the returnees are doing well in Mazatecochco. Hopefully, the local and regional economies will continue to enable them to do so.

What can we learn from the migration experience of San Cosmeros/as? First, there is no single experience of migration. Male or female, married or single, in the United States with a family or not—are always important differences but they were especially important during the recession. Men who were here with their wives were helped by the fact that women's employment was less affected by the recession. In addition, women's role in building and maintaining social networks could provide help to men in finding work. Second, returning home can be a viable option for many migrants. San Cosmeoros/as are fortunate in that the community and region offer economic possibilities for return migrants if they have some savings and/or new skills that can be applied at home when they come back.

As D'Aubeterre has suggested, when we look at migration we need to consider the "specificity of the regions involved" (2002:149). The

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Puebla-Tlaxcala region is the fourth largest metropolitan zone in the country and has attracted major Mexican and international manufacturing firms. It is also an important center of higher education.[3] Although limited, research on return migration suggests that opportunities, especially for investment, are important factors influencing return (Lindstrom 1996; Papail 2002; Salas 2013; Masferrer and Roberts 2012). Hagan, Hernández-León, and Demonsant (2015) similarly found that many migrants from Guanajuato were able to transfer skills and ideas brought back from the United States to various entrepreneurial and service activities at home. They also found that the possibilities offered in the region to which migrants returned influenced their success. Being near the tourist town of San Miguel de Allende provided opportunities that might not exist elsewhere. They also found, however, that the experiences of men and women differed. Some women benefitted by transferring English-language capital and social skills they had gained in the United States. However, Hagan et al. point out, women "were well aware of the difficulties of labor market reintegration, which is why they were less enthusiastic about their return compared to men" (2015:200).

The experience of return migrants in Mazatecochco similarly suggests that investment opportunities in a prospering community and region facilitate successful reintegration for those who return with some savings. Women from Mazatecochco were less likely, however, to return with savings or with the kind of language and social skills that some of the women from Guanajuato had acquired. As Masferrer and Roberts point out, an understanding of the change that they call "an entrepreneurial shift" (2012:492) has important theoretical and policy implications. However, vested political interests may resist change (Cassarino 2004). I would add that gender discrimination, both in the United States and Mexico, also adversely affects migrants' earnings in the United States and job possibilities at home. Montoya, Salas, and Soberon (2011) found that migrants in the state of Mexico may return with new ideas and skills which they use to invest in small businesses. They suggest, however, that Mexican government policies should be designed to be more helpful for this population. Another important point is that of Bhatt and Roberts who point out that "Giving migrants' rights to remigrate will reduce fears of returning, investing and engaging in circular migration" (2012:176). They go on to suggest that:

> Enduring return will necessitate a conscious leadership, a battle plan and a hope that policy makers across the world would collaborate to make return

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> migration sustainable, since it makes little sense in facilitating return if migrants are likely to be force to emigrate again. (2012:178)

On another important issue of relevance to policy and remigration Wheatley (2011) found that voluntary returnees were more likely to return with greater economic resources and were therefore better positioned to start small businesses than deportees. She notes that often deportees are forced to return without any of the resources they have accumulated.[4]

Although most Mexican migrants do not return home, there is no doubt that many do so and they can reintegrate successfully. Many more would probably do so if the costs (in money to pay the *coyote* and dangers of apprehension by US immigration authorities, heat, drug violence, and sex traffickers) to come back to the United States were not so high. In a globalized world characterized by the increased and intensified flow of capital, commodities, ideas, images, and many people (tourists, wealthy investors, students), why can't labor also move more freely?

Notes

1. Some research suggests that return migrants may return with new ideas about political behavior and the role of the state in helping its citizens. After several years, however, they realized that their neighbors at home who had not migrated did not support their new ideas and they stopped engaging in their new political behaviors (Pérez-Amendáriz 2014).
2. According to the Secretaría de Gobernación (SEGOB), communities with a population of 2,500 or less are rural. Those with 15,000 are urban, and those with a population between 2,500 and 15,000 are semirural (2010: 48).
3. See OECD Territorial Reviews: Puebla-Tlaxcala, Mexico 2013. Accessed July 23, 2015. http://www.oecd.org/mexico/oecd-territorial-reviews-puebla-tlaxcala-mexico-2013.htm .
4. See also Bhatt and Roberts (2012) for a discussion of the potential for other problems among involuntary returnees.

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