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Alienation, Resistance and Transnationalism

ALI MODARRES

Edmund G. "Pat" Brown Institute of Public Affairs
California State University, Los Angeles
5151 State University Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90032

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ABSTRACT

Focusing on the historical dimension of Mexican immigration to the U.S., this paper attempts to illustrate how transnationalism can be understood as resistance to the alienating forces of modernity and as a transcendent response to the demands of nationalism. Moving beyond the traditional push-and-pull arguments and their associated demographic analysis, immigration can be interpreted as a purposeful in-between-ness that dislocates and reconstructs ethno-national identities as a form of politicized hybridity.

Keywords: Immigration, Transnationalism, Mexico, U.S.

INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of the new millennium, the growth of state policies to tighten national borders, while global migration continues to rise, is creating a number of human rights and policy issues that question the dual standard that allows for flexible international capital flow (and its increasingly borderless pattern), while remaining rigid for the mobility of labor. Suffering from a nationalist discourse of bounded identities, migrants and their hosts face daily dilemmas regarding appropriate allegiances and the gradual erosion of what they have known as socially constructed “homes.” In their journeys from modernity, with its rigid geometries of nation-states and constructed nationalism, to the homelessness of post-modernity, migrants of all social classes face more than the traditionally imagined push-and-pull factors of migration. They must also negotiate through various discourses of class, race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, and other ambiguous identities (Balibar and Wallerstein, 1991). For many, the trauma and alienation begin at home, and they may experience exile before ever leaving their own countries (Hoffman, 1999). For others, various social, political, and identity crises increase en-route and at destination. Suffering at home yet alienated in a new land, migrant cultures begin to produce texts, arts, and narra-

tives that reflect a hybrid existence. The expression of this condition should be regarded as the legacy of the 20th century as well as an emerging global subculture of the 21st century. Migrants and their transnational cultures appear on every continent and in many countries; however, in the west, especially in the U.S, we will almost certainly witness a flourishing of these hybrid texts in the years to come. As suggested in this article, we may learn as much from these narratives as we do from the demographic, economic, and political analyses that are the mainstay of migration studies.

In this paper, I argue, however, that transnationalism and hybrid identities have to be understood differently from what appears in recent academic literature (e.g., Desipio and Pachon, 2003, Vertovec, 2001, Portes, et al., 1999, and Conway and Cohen, 1998). I view transnationalism as neither the manifestation of operation within two or more countries, nor as the simple holding of multiple citizenships. Furthermore, sending money home (i.e., remittances) is not a sign of transnationalism either. Here, I am in search of transnationalism as it manifests in the act of transcending nations—building upon what Lawason (1999) presented in the case of Ecuador. I agree with Vertovec (2001) that transnationalism is an over-used word, but also a confused term in the current academic discourse. In popular language also, words such as “transnational firms” have demeaned “transnationalism” to simple borderless-ness. Yet transcending nations requires its own lexicon. Since by “transnationalism” we basically mean, in most categories of usage, “bi-national” or “cross-national,” it may be appropriate to give to transnationalism an alternative meaning; one rarely discussed. Transnationalism in the post-national world could be an appropriate terminology for identifying the behavior of those individuals who deny nation-states their demanded allegiances. Used in this manner, transnationalism cannot be a term appropriate only to émigrés. In this paper, I hope to illustrate that transcend-

ing nations, i.e., transnational behavior, is equally visible in various socioeconomic circles. Having passed through urbanization, state formation, and nationalist identity discourse, hybridity and transnational identities may be the next phase in our cultural transformation. In the case of Mexican migrants to the U.S., this tradition is not a recent phenomenon, either. I will illustrate that ambiguities in allegiances to Mexico and the U.S. can be viewed as a form of transnational behavior that resists alienations felt in both countries. I will overview the history and narratives of migrants' everyday life to offer a transnational interpretation of their experience. Since I do not intend to delve into the larger political economy of Mexican migration to the U.S., it is important to indicate at this juncture that my historical narration is selective and purposeful. I will also connect this specific case to the large immigration picture globally, and when necessary, provide a comparison of Mexican experience with others.

REDEFINING TRANSNATIONALISM AND HYBRIDITY

In her 1989 novel about Russians in Los Angeles, titled *Trespassers Welcome Here*, Karen Karbo tackles the migrant experience in the U.S. through humor, and examines exiles not as subjects of assimilation and acculturation, demographic generalizations, political rights, or even as part of the political economy of migration, but rather as humans experiencing longing and desire, riding the waves of known and unknown alienations. The book begins with Yuz Bogoga telling his story in Russianized English:

“No Soviet emigrates for any real reason. Okay, Solzhenitsyn, Sharansky. But they are movie stars of emigration. No usual émigré has their problems. Usual émigré leaves because one night he starts talking. He is drinking and he is sad. He is in bad news with his boss, let's say, or some friend has disappeared forever into psychiatric hospital. No Ameri-

can can understand such sadness. This man is bathtub drain with bathwater swirling down it all at same time... Suddenly I am making applications for visas. I am sitting in offices, waiting for signatures. I even say I am Jew to emigrate. Jews then were letting out. Can you imagine, saying you are Jew to get out of persecution? But there I am. I have become Bogogowicz.” (Karbo, 1989. p. 7)

For Yuz Bogoga, hybridity begins at home, even if this hybridity is a forged one. Yuz does not need to leave home to feel like an exile. Being marginalized and assuming hybrid and/or forged identities is a way of surviving the oppressive conditions under which Yuz and others like him must survive. To add to political and economic problems, everyday life, regardless of location, imposes other layers of deceit and indignation that pave the way to failure. For Yuz, not only does America become a puzzling place, but it also soon becomes clear that his wife, Bella, never meant any of the promises she made when she instigated their immigration to the U.S. The false promises of his wife and the American dream soon become clear for Yuz—neither of them live up to their words. Yuz dies outside Bullock's Wilshire department store on the four-month anniversary of his departure from Moscow. This is death by browsing, or shopping to death. His beloved young wife writes home some time later to inform a friend about his death:

“I have some horrible sad news. First, I could not find that black-and-white Norma Kamali T-shirt dress you asked me about in your last letter. Also, dear Yuz died three weeks ago Sunday” (Karbo, 1989, p. 100)

Later, Bella imagines her jealous friend, eyes glittering with pity, saying: “What a relief! Life in emigration *is* worse than Soviet Union.” (Karbo, 1989. p. 102) Here Bella illustrates that the conditions of in-betweenness and self-doubt—about the choice of migration—that haunts most migrants.

As the story dissolves into an ending where expatriate Soviet intellectuals turn an academic conference into the theatre of the absurd, we realize how romantic nationalism and the politics of the old country seem to diffuse into an everyday life experience redolent of desire and longing, alienation and overcoming, hurting and mending; and above all, of resisting the demands of home and the new country—living on the edges of the new society, affected by the old and haunted by history. What remains are nostalgic backward gazes, mixed with the trauma of immigration, leading to landscapes of wounds whose meanings cannot be shared either with people at “home,” or those in the new country. In carving out the new places, immigrants embrace different degrees of hybridity to protect themselves from “inside” and “outside.”

Yuz and Bella could be migrants from anywhere, residing anywhere: they could be Nigerians in Atlanta, Indians in London, Vietnamese in Sweden, Turks in Germany, Iranians in Norway, Chinese in India, or Mexicans in the U.S. The emerging migration surge, mixed with years of overdosing on ethnocentric and nationalist narratives, is about to manifest the dilemma of rigid identities and pastoral assumptions about place-based alliances. The “placefulness” of immigrants’ new homes, wherever they raise their tents or houses, is but a message of a future of hybridity. Desiring the “other,” yet longing for the lost “we,” immigrants are nomads of the identity landscape, occupying the fringe until there is nothing left but the fringe. Passing through urbanization, state formation, and nationalist identity discourse, hybridity and transnational identities may be the mark of our next cultural transformation. Humans are migrating as never before and their spatial journeys may enable them to gradually transcend national identities.

Transcending nations is not an easy task. A century of nationalist education and standardized narratives have invented the nomenclatures that define the ethno-national identities of many immigrants. In migration

studies, we have affirmed these identities through demographic analyses that use these “invented” categories as a natural grouping variable (e.g., “Mexicans”). After a century of scientific studies of migration, we may be ready for more contextualization through textual, visual, and oral narratives. As Bailey (2001) and Lawson (1999) suggest, the growing body of work on transnationalism in the 1990s points to a new intellectual arena within which discourse on global migration can even be situated in post-colonial, post-structural narratives of transnationalism. While transnationalism is viewed cautiously by many respected academics (e.g., DeSipio and Pachon, 2003; and Portes et al, 1999), I believe that this topic is still under-theorized, and is dominated by analyses that always return to the dialectical tradition of forced and voluntary, legal and undocumented, economic and political migration. In this context, it appears that we have done an inadequate job of critiquing national, ethnic, and racial identities as rigid categories. A continued focus on issues of political and economic integration have produced pluralist models that simply attempt to minimize the alienating language of cultural assimilation, while assuring a level of coexistence among the “host” and the “immigrant” cultures. Pluralism, however, rarely critiques the use of ethno-national identities as the basis of cultural taxonomy. If the only identity nomenclature available is that of a country (e.g., Mexican) or a continent (e.g., Asian), hyphenated with the word “American,” how can we question the inherent instability of national identities and their alienating forces? It is no wonder, then, that transnationalism has come to simply mean operating successfully within two or more countries. Such a limited interpretation of transnationalism, which is not only a simple expansion of assimilationism and pluralism, is also an uncritical voice of nationalism. This conceptualization has led some researchers to believe that immigrants’ transnational character can be measured by whether ex-nationals vote in the U.S. and

in their country of origin (as in the case of DeSipio and Pachon, 2003, for “Mexican-Americans”). While this interpretation of transnationalism is well within the political definition of citizenship, it neglects to examine, or even grasp, how the act of migration could be rooted in processes that transcend nations and the obligations of citizenship (Bailey, 2001).

We stand at an interesting moment in the history of humanity. By now, South Asian, East Asian, Middle Eastern, and Latin American immigrants can be found in every continent. While the 1990s blue-collar Iranian community in Japan may have been relatively new, Indians have been in Latin America, the Caribbean Islands, and Africa for many decades. The large number of people with Indian ancestry from Kenya to Trinidad is evidence of a tradition of diaspora that competes with that of the Chinese. These individuals are not easily hyphenated. In fact, hyphenation is creating its own ideological permanence, where, in a culturally correct atmosphere, assigning two identities to one person is easily exercised without much thought. Sometimes, in total desperation to invent a new identity for a group, one of the identities is allied with a whole continent (e.g., Asian-Americans and African-Americans).

In this paper, I have chosen to focus on Mexican migrants, because within the 20th century epic of departure, loss, alienation, resistance, and overcoming, the importance of their experience is undeniable. Recent statistics in the U.S. attest to that. Of the 33 million foreign-born inhabitants of the U.S. in 2002, over 10 million came from Mexico. This represents about a third of all foreign-born individuals in the U.S.; just as significant, it represents about 10 percent of Mexico’s population in that year (Bureau of the Census, 2002).

While there is no shortage of articles and books on Mexican migration to the U.S., and the demographic nature of this phenomenon has been examined unabated for a century, in this paper, I will argue that the songs and stories of the migrants and their descendants pro-

vide an eloquent glimpse of their collective history and memory of this human experience, in a way that simple statistics cannot. I will further illustrate that even academic texts on Mexican migration, especially those written in the early 20th century, can be re-read for their inter-textuality and the deeper meaning they reveal in terms of identity negotiations and cultural/nationalist attitudes. My primary purpose here is to situate the Mexican experience within a transnational discourse and argue that privileging émigrés as the only individuals experiencing such a transformation may not be warranted. In fact, such an attribution embeds class structure within a global pattern of cultural transformation. Hybridity and transnationalism can be fully examined within the case of all migrants, and in this paper, I will engage in such a task for Mexican-Americans and Chicano/as.

To be clear, in what follows, I am not denying the political economy of migration and its impact on migrants. I only suggest that since migrants are not simple political and economic pawns, their identities should not be singularized. Migrants are not simply from Mexico. They are from specific spatio-temporal-cultural places within this geographically defined political unit. To understand their experience, we need to explore their constructed memories of “home,” which is not necessarily conceived of or narrated in the same manner by those left behind. In other words, while Mexico may be the socially constructed home, to many, home is a specific place within that political space.

Furthermore, I would like to suggest that hybridity is not a product of migration—that it is not an outcome, but rather a necessary tool for encountering the destabilizing forces of desire and longing (for a lost home and a better future), as well as the rigidity of race, the entrapments of ethnicity and gender, and the obligations of nationalism both in the U.S. and in Mexico. The curse of every migrant is a double judgment by both old and new nations. Hybridity is a way of denying or accommodating both.

In the following section, I will provide a history of Mexican migration to the U.S. from a specific demographic and cultural perspective. My re-narration is an attempt to build a case for reconsidering the sources of hybridity and the transnational behavior of this population. However, in order to situate this interpretation within a specific theoretical framework, I will precede the discussion of Mexican migration history with a brief presentation of alienation and resistance theories and their relevance to transnationalism and hybridity. In this manner, the prism through which I come to understand migratory experiences—especially transnationalism—are established prior to discussing the specific case study of Mexican migrants.

ALIENATION, MIGRATION, AND RESISTANCE

Given the pronounced alienated condition among Mexican migrants and people of Mexican ancestry, a brief consideration of various theories of alienation, especially those of Marx, Nietzsche, and Simmel, may be appropriate. Judy Cox (1998) argues that we can detect four aspects, or dimensions, of alienation in Marx's *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*. These are: alienation 1) from the product of labor, 2) within the labor process, 3) caused by our fellow human beings, and 4) embedded within the human nature.

The first dimension refers to the worker being alienated from the product s/he produces. Here, we can extend the argument and suggest that as labor becomes separated from the product, and in lieu of that receives payment, laborers need not concern themselves with improving the product, but rather with their skills. In this process, laborers improve their skills in order to sell themselves in the job market. This is a double alienation, since the laborers do not own their labor and are also separated from what they produce. Clearly, Mexican laborers experience this dimension of alienation.

The second form of alienation relates to the absence of control over the labor process. Since work is separated

from the ownership of the products, managers are driven to make laborers work harder. Efficiency and the use of technology become instrumental to higher levels of production, and, in turn, capital. As a result, labor becomes fragmented over time. The development process in most countries directly contributes to this form of alienation and its associated "othering" process, as well (Modarres, 2003). Within this dimension of alienation, Mexican labor was (and is) affected not only by development in Mexico, but also by industries—including agriculture—in the U.S.

The third alienation emanates from the emerging class structure within each society, where people alienate each other. We are typically alienated by those who exploit us. In fact, given the roles assigned to us by the capitalist process, in the words of Bertell Ollman: "We do not know each other as individuals, but as extensions of capitalism" (cited in Cox, 1998). Within this category, the condition of Mexican migrants extends into every aspect of their experience.

The fourth alienation, which refers to what Marx called species being, reveals that, in fact, our labor is coerced and many of us do things that we do not want to do. What makes us human is to consciously shape the world around us, but as factory and farm laborers, we engage in activities that do not translate to what is keen to our senses, but provides us with money to buy various commodities. This process translates to yet another form of alienation, experienced more readily by the disempowered.

While Marx's four types of alienation are quite helpful in understanding the Mexican labor experience in the U.S., his theories of alienation are not necessarily comprehensive. In fact, we need a few other theoretical sources to create a broader understanding of the trans-migratory and transnational Mexican migrants in the U.S. For example, Georg Simmel's concept of alienation as the relationship between individual and society (Simmel, 1910) can be employed to understand the degree to which

transnationals negotiate their relationship with their multiple nations of affiliation. It is fascinating that various literary pieces produced to reflect the daily life of transnationals, including Mexicans (and those of Chicano writers), contain characters that portray their alienation from their multiple “homes.” For example, while Paredes (1978) illustrates how Mario Suarez’s character from *El Hoyo* (circa late 1940s) tells us that places do not own people, but people own places, a recent fiction by John Rechy, *The Miraculous Day of Amalia Gomez*, appears to repeat this message in multiple forms in the case of a fictional Chicana, whose life in El Paso and East Los Angeles brilliantly manifests this act of place ownership.

Of course, the sources of alienation are certainly not exclusively contained within political and economic processes. As Overend (1975) argues, Marx—we could also include Simmel—assumes that humans are naturally good and are corrupted by external forces. Nietzsche helps us out of this idealism and introduces us to additional sources of alienation, such as religion. Not only does he expose the alienation imposed on us by the religious structure and its construction of morality, but he also opens the door for further examination of human alienation. It is striking that Tomas Rivera’s *y no se lo targo la tierra* (*And the Earth Did Not Part*), which won the first Quinto Sol literary award in 1970, directly deals with religion, as does Rechy’s *The Miraculous Day of Amalia Gomez*. The critical views of the Catholic Church were and are still alive in the Chicano literature. However, not every Chicano author has engaged in a direct assault on religion. Rudolfo Anaya’s *Bless Me Ultima* returns to a mixture of Spanish and Indian cultures, including their religions, folkloric symbols (*la llorona*—the weeping woman) and many other images. Here, the universalist forces of Catholicism are mixed with mysticism and the mythical features of native American religions to create a uniquely hybrid religion that embodies the Mexican experience and its transmigratory cultural characteristics.

Alienation, whether externally imposed by processes such as capitalism or religion, or internally created, often appears because of a separation between a normative and an experiential life. What distinguishes Nietzsche, and even psychoanalytics and existentialists (Barakat, 1969), from a Marxist interpretation of alienation is the degree to which the latter focuses on external sources and the former on the internal sources of alienation. Anxiety, despair, and feelings of loneliness are external signs of alienation, both internally and externally caused. While we can theoretically connect alienation to human irrationality and normative expectations, for Nietzsche, understanding alienation allows him to construct what we can call de-alienation and overcoming (for a discussion of this topic, especially as it is employed by Henri Lefebvre, see Shields, 1999). If the distance between a constructed ideal and an everyday life experience gives rise to alienation, overcoming that and arriving at the “total human” necessitates acts of resistance (either to the distance or to what causes the distance).

Following Lefebvre, we can use Nietzsche, Lacan, Freud, and Sartre, as well as Marx, to construct a humanist Marxist interpretation of alienation, one that deals directly with the predicament of migrants. For example, Lacan’s concept of desire as a destabilizing force, which causes alienation (e.g., Lacan et al., 1977), is also relevant to the migrants’ experience. After all, migration is acting upon a portion of ones’ desires. The separation caused by this act, the added alienation of work, and the societal alienations caused by the nation-centered demands of two or more countries, can bring an immigrant to the verge of a crisis. To overcome this crisis is to deny the causes/sources of powerlessness. Thus, hybrid cultures emerge at the cross-section of desire and despair. Feelings of exile and homelessness, mixed with the “placefulness” of a new “home,” in many cases, become narrated in hybrid texts or expressed in hybrid—fusion—arts. From *Corridos* to Chicano literature, Mexican mi-

grants have expressed this hybrid—between placeness—well. At times, they must deny both nations and embrace their multiple local identities that defy homogeneity and celebrate multiplicities.

RE-NARRATING “MEXICAN” IMMIGRATION

While we can point to the early 19th century and the sociopolitical dynamics before and after the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo to examine the migratory practices of the Mexican population and the attitudes of Anglo-American and Mexican populations toward each other, especially as manifested by the newly arriving Americans to the Southwest (e.g., the language of Stockton’s 1846 proclamation and the 1853 letter by Benjamin Hayes against the appointment of Don Antonio Coronel to the office of Indian Affairs; see Caughey and Caughey, 1977), I will begin my analysis from the 1920s, when anti-immigration/nativist movements in the U.S. culminated in one of the most comprehensive yet restrictive policies toward specific immigrant populations (i.e., the 1924 Immigration Act) in the U.S. In the course of my narration, however, I will return to the 19th century selectively, when it is relevant to various issues raised in this paper.

In the first two decades of the 20th century, a number of authors began to write about Mexicans in the Southwest, but attention to this phenomenon grew after the passage of the 1924 Act and the Mexican Revolution. While Scharrenberg (1927), Abbott (1927), and Thompson (1928) delved into Mexican immigration to the U.S. with special reference to the 1924 Immigration Act, Bloch (1929) provided one of the earliest numerical discussions of this migration. Pointing to the fact that Mexican immigrants were not subjected to the quota requirements of the 1924 Act (nor were immigrants from Canada, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, the Canal Zone, and independent countries of Central and South America), Bloch (1929) proceeded to distinguish between documented

and undocumented immigrants from Mexico, which was already a recognized phenomenon in the 1920s. Bloch estimated that about 100,000 undocumented Mexican immigrants, along with 41,490 documented immigrants, had arrived in the U.S. between 1901 and 1910 (though his methodology is questionable, his paper has a historical meaning that is more important than the numbers it

Table 1.
Historical Data on Mexican Immigration to the U.S.

	Total Immigration to the U.S.	Documented Mexican Immigrants
1881-1890	5,246,613	1,913
1891-1900	3,687,564	971
1901-1910	9,795,386	49,642
1911-1921	6,541,039	249,762
1922	309,556	18,246
1923	522,919	62,709
1924	706,896	87,648
1925	294,314	32,378
1926	304,488	42,638
1927	335,175	66,766

Source: Bloch, 1929.

Disaggregating 1911-1921 to 1911-1920 and 1921, using data from Abbott (1927):

1911-1920	—	219,000
1921	—	30,762

	Foreign-Born Population of the U.S. from Mexico	Increase Over Preceding Decade	
		Number	Percent
1870	42,435	—	—
1880	68,399	25,964	61.19
1890	77,853	9,454	13.82
1900	103,393	25,540	32.81
1910	221,915	118,522	114.63
1920	486,418	264,503	119.19

Source: Bloch, 1929.

offers). He based his calculation on the fact that between 1900 and 1910, the number of people with Mexican ancestry had grown from 103,393 to 221,915. Between 1911 and 1920 (the revolutionary period in Mexico), he noted that the official net migration was 152,541; however, by 1920, 486,418 people of Mexican ancestry were enumerated by the Census Bureau. Bloch then reported the difficulty of patrolling the border. As Mexico reconstituted itself through the formation of a new political and economic structure, it appears that the U.S. need for labor, both in industry and agriculture, was enhancing a migratory process that would only grow in magnitude. Bloch ended his article with a prediction that Mexican immigration would shift to California due to the growth of agriculture.

Table 2.
Mexican Immigration and Emigration, 1911-1926

	Immigration (into Mexico)	Emigration (from Mexico)
1911	35,000	35,000
1912	55,000	55,000
1913	30,000	30,000
1914	9,000	8,000
1915	14,000	5,000
1916	40,000	40,000
1917	92,000	20,000
1918	40,000	34,000
1919	44,000	45,000
1920	65,000	55,000
1921	105,000	10,000
1922	53,000	33,000
1923	86,000	85,000
1924	105,000	58,000
1925	78,000	44,000
1926	68,000	58,000

Source: Gamio (1929)

While the sentiments expressed by Bloch reflect an emerging popular fear among Americans regarding Mexican migration (mixed with nationalist sentiments) and delineate various pros and cons of Mexican labor migration (Abbott, 1927 and Scharrenberg, 1927), it is interesting that around the same time many authors began to discuss the Mexican government's disapproval of the 1924 Immigration Act and its impact on Mexican labor emigration (Scharrenberg, 1927).

One of the most comprehensive studies of Mexican immigration was conducted in 1926 by Dr. Manuel Gamio, of Mexico City, with funding from the Social Science Research Council. Published in 1929, Gamio's study identified the Mexican immigration phenomenon as a vital interest to the U.S. and offered a couple of interesting observations:

- Mexico cannot be a country of great migration
- Statistics on Mexican immigration are unreliable, since
 - They do not offer any information on how many migrants returned to Mexico
 - The census is taken in autumn when seasonal migration is at its highest (note the awareness of the migratory nature of immigration).

Working with the Bureau of Statistics in the Mexican Department of Migration (Sr. D. Andres Landa y Piña), Gamio produced an interesting longitudinal table of Mexican immigration and emigration. Gamio's portrayal of Mexican immigration as a migratory phenomenon was brilliant: according to this research, more people arrived in Mexico than left!

Gamio pointed to the American industry and its inducements for attracting the Mexican labor as explanation for the rise in the number of Mexican migrants to the U.S. According to him, the Congressional Committee on Mexican Immigration had heard from business-

men who estimated that more than 5 billion dollars in U.S. capital would be retarded if the supply of Mexican labor were cut off. He further suggested that American exports would be significantly hurt.

An important dimension of Gamio's research was his methodical effort to document the level of remittances to Mexico. He estimated the annual total remittance to Mexico during the 1920s at \$5,000,000. Given that a significant amount of this funding was funneled home to serve specific individuals and families, and hardly any to invest in the country, or specifically for the sake of Mexico, it is important to realize that by definition, Gamio was documenting and describing a condition of transnationalism and transmigratory practices, as defined by this paper, among Mexican migrants to the U.S., as early as the 1920s. Gamio must have seen some of the early signs of transnationalism among the Mexican migrants. In one part of his report, he points to racial attitudes in the U.S. and suggested that once Mexican immigrants realized that no amount of cultural assimilation, citizenship status, and socioeconomic improvement would make their relationship with the white Anglo-Saxon better, they would refrain from becoming citizens and permanent residents, and would instead remain transitory migrants.

Redfield (1929) built on Gamio's research and suggested that Mexicans who remained in the U.S. often manifested a strong sense of American patriotism, while maintaining their Mexican folklore and cultural heritage. He highlighted Gamio's reference to well-known Mexican *Corridos* written by immigrants as a sort of collective travel diary. Almost fifty years later, Paredes (1978) also pointed to *Corridos* as an important source for textual (or in postmodern terms, inter-textual) analyses of the experience of Mexicans in the U.S. He suggested that the gaze toward the south as home should be situated within the context of American patriotism exhibited by Chicanos and other "Mexican-Americans," which goes as far back

as the Spanish-American War of 1898, during which some of the New Mexican authors "proclaimed their allegiance to the United States and their willingness to take up arms against the 'mother country'" (Paredes, 1978, p. 83). Paredes (1978) also highlighted an emerging sentiment among some authors in the earlier era (followed later by some Chicano authors) to create a new culture that was neither Hispanic-American nor Anglo-American, but a mixture of the two. In re-interpreting his analyses, we can point to this literature as evidence of the emerging desire for hybridity, which was in turn a resistance to the demands of both the mother country and the new country for an undivided alliance. By the 1930s, a number of Chicano authors had begun writing in English. For example, Paredes points to Juan A. A. Sedillo's *Gentleman of Rio en Medio* and even earlier fictions by Maria Cristina Mena, such as *Marriage by Miracle* and *The Vine—Leaf*, which appeared in 1916 and 1914, respectively. Others included Robert Torres and Roberto Felix Salazar in the '30s. Paredes indicated, however, that the new writings captured the sounds and feelings of Spanish within the English language. This emerging composite appeared after the 1940s when the issue of hybridity is tackled by authors in stories such as Josephina Niggli's *Mexican Village*. (More recently, we also observe this practice in Sandra Cisneros's *Caramelo*.) Here, hybridity appears as defiance or resistance to the landscape of wounds, which Mark Seltzer (2003) and Jackson (1980) point to as an important aspect of identity discourse.

While Gamio's concern for emigration, on the one hand, and access to job markets in the U.S. on the other, manifested itself in his support for temporary migration, albeit through various control measures and responsibilities in both countries, it is clear that the transmigratory Mexican community and its relation to the multi-generational Mexican community in the U.S. meant that transnationalism would find an early expression among this population. This appeared either as remittances that

were sent to serve family needs (not national needs) or as hybrid texts that celebrated neither America nor Mexico, but rather the unique experience of the migrants. In these practices, migrants transcended both nations and their imaginary border, focusing on their own needs and negotiating their own identities.

This search for alternative narratives and practices is understandable, since the larger political economy that fueled the engine of migration was created by forces external to the migrants. For example, as Handman (1930) documented, the increasing need for agricultural products and the corresponding rise in agricultural land value left California growers with one option to compete in the market: cheaper labor, especially from Mexico (in part because the rural population in the U.S. was declining at that time). The Mexican Revolution and the economic problems in the northern states meant that this demand would be met with the Mexican supply of labor. The emerging migration was a natural result of an economic imbalance. Therefore, while Handman (1930) also pointed to the role of remittances in rebuilding the fragile economy of Mexico at that time, we can argue that remittances were only tangentially beneficial for the country, since the direct recipients were the families of migrants. At most, the smaller localities where a significant number of migrants were from benefited marginally from such moneys.

By the late 1920s, the Mexican migrants were becoming a sizable community in the U.S. This meant that the possibility for forging a new ethnic-American identity was ripe. Between January 1, 1920 and June 30, 1929, immigration from Mexico totaled 468,889 (Batten, 1930). With tightened immigration from Mexico, the number of smuggled aliens apprehended by the Border Patrol rose from 10,686 in 1927 and 18,000 in 1928 to 29,568 in 1929 (Batten, 1930). It appears that not only were agriculturists successful in attracting a large number immigrants, but so were their counterpart industrial compa-

nies. Mexico also was complacent about this process, since the migrants' search for employment in the U.S. provided breathing room for the government. However, despite Gamio's studies and a number of economists' support for the labor movement, something began to go wrong by 1930. This was evidenced by the forced deportations of Mexican migrants back to Mexico in the late 1920s. This reversal of fortune can be explained by a number of factors:

1. The onset of an economic depression coincided with articulated connections between native unemployment and the Mexican immigration job market presence;
2. Assumptions regarding the availability of Mexican labor upon another rise in American needs;
3. Heightened nativism among Californians, especially after increased internal migration to this state in the 1920s and the 1930s; and,
4. Increased union activities and strikes among the Mexican labor population.

In this economically and racially charged atmosphere, many of the recent migrants left the country. Among those forced out were also a large number of American citizens of Mexican ancestry (Takaki, 1993).

Voluntary return to Mexico was also motivated by an additional factor. President Ortiz Rubio (1930-1932) proposed to repatriate Mexican laborers and offer them land so they could practice the new, technologically advanced agricultural know-how that they had acquired in the U.S. Batten (1930) observed that during the first month after this announcement, 12,000 Mexicans in Texas and 4,700 in California applied for the proposed land grants.

This was an intense period of transmigration and transnationalist behavior. As migrants left, voluntarily or by force, a number of songs appeared that indicated

their feelings of alienation arising out of their treatment in the U.S. and how the U.S. was affecting their lives in Mexico. Simmons (1953) suggested that a number of *Corridos* appearing from 1847 to 1914, when the U.S. Marines assaulted the city of Veracruz, seem to memorialize these feelings of alienation. The American government was perceived to have meddled too much in Mexican political affairs during the 1920s, motivated by the desire to tap into Mexican natural resources, especially oil. Simmons (1953) pointed to the awareness among Mexicans in Mexico and the U.S. of America's thirst for Mexican oil. There was no escaping the fact that Mexicans and their natural assets, including their labor, were exploited both in Mexico and in the U.S. Later, when the Mexican government prepared to help the U.S. during WWII, the Mexican public's sentiments toward the U.S. and involvement in the war were mixed, at best. It is not difficult to see their point of view and the irony of having to help the U.S., given how Americans had treated Mexicans. By the 1940s, Mexican-Americans—whether born in the U.S. or migrants—were fully racialized and their segregated treatment, albeit less noticeable in northern cities such as Detroit (Humphrey, 1944), was severe in the southwest. The facts that the citizenship rate was much lower among Mexican-Americans in the southwest and that ties to their places of origin remained strong point to a migratory condition, feeling of impermanence, and full awareness of their condition in the U.S.

For Mexican migrants, "home" remained a place to gaze upon while enduring a colonized life. After all, from the early 19th century until 1942, when the Bracero program was implemented, the U.S. interacted with Mexico (pre and post revolution) in a unique way. From an outsider's perspective and reflecting on what appears in history books, demographic research, and ethnic and literary studies, one has to understand Mexico's history as multiple layers of colonization. Following an obvious colonial history during the Spanish and French occupa-

tions, the presence of the U.S. in Mexico and Mexican life manifests multiple dimensions. The U.S. annexed not only Mexico, but also Mexican laborers. This was a brilliant capitalist displacement that took land where Mexicans numbered fewest, but was close enough to the Mexican labor pool in Mexico to invest in agricultural industry in the Southwest (while remaining cognizant of the scarcity of the American labor population in this area). This is America's double colonization of Mexico. In this light, the so-called Mexican aliens in the U.S. can be more aptly seen as alienated Mexicans in the U.S.

Not only did the U.S. rely heavily on Mexican labor, it took them for granted (see Takaki, 1993, for detailed discussions). It made every effort to destabilize the Mexican government for over a decade after the revolution had ended and a constitution had been written. Mexico did not necessarily face a militarily hostile neighbor in the 20th century, but instead dealt with an economic detractor that tapped its labor population and natural resources, and left the country to political and economic misfortunes. The Mexican agricultural economy was one victim among many.

Despite the maltreatment and deportation of Mexican migrants and Mexican-Americans in the late 1920s, in the early 1940s, when Mexican-Americans had to go to court to have equal access to education in the U.S., the Bracero program was established to recruit labor from Mexico. If the period from 1940 to the late 1970s can be considered an era of significant economic restructuring in Mexico (Wiggins, et al., 1999), during which the country developed at a rapid rate, then why would Mexico agree to a loss of labor? Portes suggests that this was a massive lower-class emigration, which acted as a safety valve to relieve the pressure of surplus labor in a transitional economy (quoted in Frisbie, 1975). While this suggests a level of complacency among Mexican government officials, the complexity of the agricultural market needs to be considered, as well. Frisbie (1975) illustrates that if

we were to examine the data on documented and undocumented migration to the U.S. (see Table 3), we would find that the ebb and flow of the undocumented migrants is a function of the relative level of economic vigor in agriculture (in both countries), wages paid to farm workers, Mexican farm prices and American capital investment in agriculture. Most of these variables are controlled by the U.S. and, given the uneven economic landscape of Mexico, this scenario translates to specific areas losing population to migration.

Bustamante (1977) and Dagodag (1975) have analyzed this geographic characterization of migration. It appears that a majority of undocumented immigrants in this period originated from the same area that the Bracero program drew from (Jalisco and Michoacan were the source for 48% of those apprehended). The rural conditions of Michoacan were discussed by Bustamante (1977). However, he also points to a stepped migration process, where migrants come to the northern states, especially Sinaloa and Sonora, prior to departure. By the late 1970s, when Mexico was about to hit troubled economic waters, it became apparent that its rural population surplus was in need of economic uplifting, and migration was a solution. Bustamante's study showed that over 40% of undocumented migrants were landless agricultural workers in 1972, and as the share declined to about 36% in 1975, this group made up the majority of those deported.

Migration trilogy is a demographic phenomenon manifested in many countries, and Mexico is no exception. This is a specific process within which rural to urban to international phases of migration are completed. While this has been highlighted by demographers, we can also view the identity consequence of this process, which is manifested in the three levels of local, national, and transnational identities. Since each of these phases attempts to maintain a hold on the individual migrant's alliance, the end result is multiple layers of alienation, which promotes hybridity rather than assimilation or ac-

Table 3.
Documented and Undocumented Immigration from Mexico (1946-1965)

Year	Documented Immigrants	Undocumented Immigrants	Total
1946	6,805	90,162	96,967
1947	7,775	174,406	182,181
1948	8,730	173,420	182,150
1949	7,977	259,428	267,405
1950	6,841	421,505	428,346
1951	6,372	458,136	464,508
1952	9,600	475,934	485,534
1953	18,454	751,780	770,234
1954	37,456	1,022,267	1,059,723
1955	50,772	221,674	272,446
1956	65,047	62,625	127,672
1957	49,154	38,822	87,976
1958	26,712	32,556	59,268
1959	23,061	25,270	48,331
1960	32,684	22,687	55,371
1961	41,632	23,109	64,741
1962	55,291	23,358	78,649
1963	55,253	31,910	87,163
1964	32,967	35,146	68,113
1965	37,969	44,161	82,130
Total	580,552	4,388,356	4,968,908

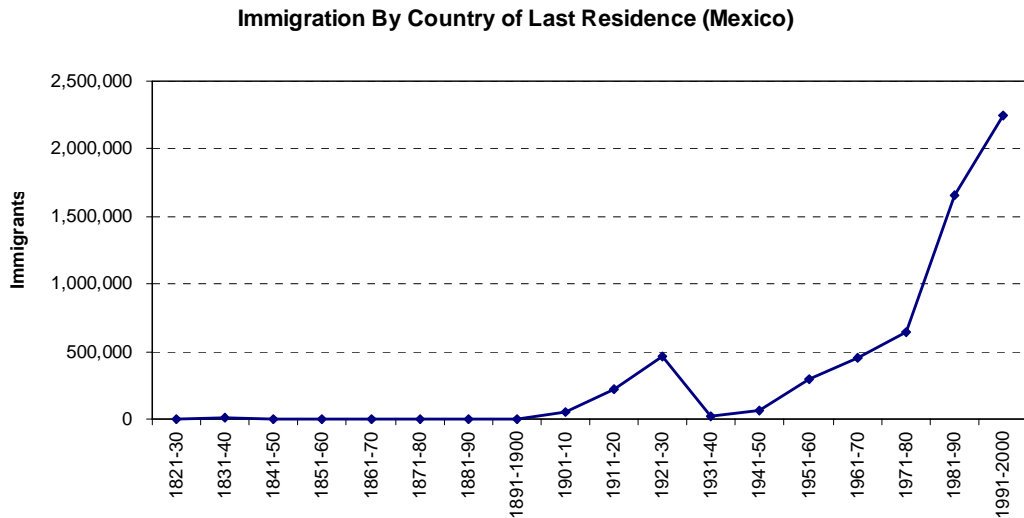
Source: Frisbie, 1975.

Notes:

1. Total Undocumented and the Total column are off by 1,000 compared to the original document.

Possible explanations for large number of undocumented immigrants in 1953 and 1954:

- 1953-1954 increased deportation and border patrol
- Severe drought of the 1950's



Source: Immigration and Naturalization Services

Land arrivals not completely enumerated until 1908.

culturation. It is important to note that transnationalism is not necessarily a form of cosmopolitanism that affects the upper and middle class migrants and literati; it also affects less-well-to-do migrants who are tormented by their rural alliance when they are in provincial cities, by their provincial associations when in other provinces, and by their national origin when in “other” countries.

According to Wiggins et al. (1999), the agricultural policy liberalization of Mexico had a significant impact on the rural communities of Mexico after 1982, especially after 1988, when protective farm policies were liberalized. Wiggins et al. (1992) point to globalization and Mexican attempts to become internationally competitive as factors having a devastating impact on rural poverty conditions, and hence migration. Whereas migration from the 1940s to the late 1970s was a result of urbanization and economic growth that excluded the landless rural population, starting in the 1980s, the less than satisfactory economic growth made migration an economic solution, albeit an imagined temporary solution. This means that the transmigrant Mexican population increased in the '80s and the '90s, and will continue to increase in the years to come. From such a perspective, the

transnational identity of Mexican migrants should become an important source of identity research. Upper-class émigrés benefit from transnational identities, but so, too, do the migrant workers, who in their spatial journeys encounter otherness and become aware of their multiple identities.

THE EARTH DID NOT PART AND THE SKY DID NOT FALL

Not unlike the boy in *y no se lo targo la tierra*, migrants continue to leave their motherlands and gradually break ties, especially to their respective governments and citizenship obligations, and the earth does not part beneath them. Indeed, it seems firmer through an affirmation of how they construct new identities that are partially rooted in the old, the new, and the cultures they meet during the time and space of their migration. No migrant ever visits home without feeling that something has changed. It is liberating and at the same time painful to find out that when they were missing their “home,” they were simply missing themselves in it (Vaziri, 1993). This is the longing and the lasting wound of displaced desires. The gaze south reveals the history of what is

missing and will be missing from all migrants' lives: the simplicity of having never left. However, in their journeys, migrants discover their alienations and gradually overcome them. Migrants do not assimilate. They simply exercise blind obedience to both the old and the new from their lives. In a Nietzschean manner of speaking, the "total human" arrives when all layers of alienation are overcome (albeit gradually). In entering new countries, migrants take citizenship not for nationalist obligations, but to better themselves.

Reaching 200 million in numbers, these global migrants are hardly ex-nationals or expatriates. They are indeed the beginning of a new political culture (or rather of a humanized politics) in which nations are gradually transcended and replaced by hybrid identities. They are global and local, everywhere and nowhere, and above all, they are at new cultural coordinates of in-between places: the purgatory of national identities. Their transnational identities are less a function of their class and more of their migratory practices, crossing spatio-temporal moments of globalism, capitalism, modernism, and nationalism, bursting into fantastic moments of post-modernism. Farm laborers from Mexico and European émigrés have one thing in common. They left their placeful "homes" to fulfill a desire of being elsewhere—to be at another moment and in another space—a post-now and a post-here. Assimilation may never have been, and never will be, on their minds. In-between-ness appears to be what they desire the most. This is a place of selective attachments; a lonely place filled with southerly gazes and northerly pre-occupations. These nomads of time and space are growing in number and their lot will determine the next phase of our cultural evolution.

As the migration drama plays out in an expanding global arena, to the tune of advanced capitalism, Mexican migrants in the U.S. appear as important actors, whose roles can hardly be ignored. From 1981 to 2000, close to 4 million documented Mexican immigrants ar-

rived in the U.S. Additionally, by 2000, of the 7 million estimated undocumented residents in the U.S., 4.8 million, or over 68%, were from Mexico. In 2001, the migrant community remitted 9.9 billion dollars to Mexico (Migration Policy Institute, 2003). Even though this amount constitutes only 1.6 percent of the country's GDP, as Bailey (2001) argues, moneys sent home by migrants (including those from Mexico) are hardly an investment in the country, but rather an unbalanced capital infusion (Bracking, 2003) to specific individuals in particular places. Migrants from Mexico and elsewhere will generate nuanced layers of social classes, inter-dependency across space, and new identities whose degree of attachment to specific countries is determined by the political economy of migration. Policymaking in this emerging atmosphere may have to remove itself from notions of constrained citizenship and nationalism, embracing in its place the next phase in human cultural evolution: the mobility of labor and the existence of populations between borders that graft disparate homes onto a new and broadening space. The age of prescriptive planning and policymaking (Gunder, 2003) may be over. Hybridity and fluid identities are the mark of overcoming decades of capitalist, nationalist, and modernist alienations.

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