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Natalie M. Garza

December, 2014

MEXICO FLOTANTE: MIGRATION, CULTURE, AND NATIONAL IDENTITY IN POST-REVOLUTIONARY MEXICO

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department

of History

University of Houston

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the cultural impact of transnational migration at the intersections of race, class, and gender within Mexico from 1929 to the present. Reading the cultural production of Mexicans as text, this study utilizes music, film, and literature as primary sources alongside oral histories, and archival research from Mexico and the United States. I argue that the popular culture and media is both reflective of the migrant experience and contributes to the development of a transnational identity which challenges the official narrative of Mexican nationalism. In the post-revolutionary period, the Mexican government promoted a nationalism rooted in the racial identity of *mestizaje*, the social values of the middle class, and a gendered patriarchal order. Mexican labor migration to the United States de-territorializes national identity both for the migrants and the communities they leave behind. This lived experience combined with the media and cultural production which reflects Mexican migration serves to normalize the experience of movement, creating a sense of transnational identity for communities on both sides of the border even when one has never experienced the process of migration. Examining the role of migration in defining national identity complicates the official narrative to reveal that communities touched by migration develop a sense of rootedness in Mexico while simultaneously imagining a transnational existence.

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Introduction

"Identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within the narratives of the past."[1]

- Stuart Hall

The 1943 Mexican film, *Hotel de Verano,* introduced a new character by the name of Tin Tan to Mexican audiences. Tin Tan walked onto the screen wearing a grey zoot suit which consisted of a knee-length, double breasted coat, and high-waisted pants that ballooned out at the knee and tapered at the ankle. His thin tie lay on top of a white, wide-collared shirt. His accessories included a flower in his lapel and a black fedora with a large feather extending from the back. When Tin Tan finally spoke he engaged in a dialogue of misunderstood language with Marcelo Chávez, the supporting actor in most of his films. In the course of the conversation Tin Tan said, "Oye *carnal,* ¿no trae una *trola*?... ¿Una *torcha?...* Yo vengo de *Santa Moroca*…Conoce un *relativo* mio?" It takes Marcelo some time to deduce that *trola* and *torcha* mean match, *Santa Moroca* translates to Santa Monica, and *relativo* refers to a relative or cousin. Mexico's quintessential *pachuco*, Tin Tan embodied the clash of cultures that has emerged with Mexico-U.S. transnational migration, and demonstrated the impact this movement had on both the popular culture and identity of Mexico.

This dissertation examines the role of migration in defining Mexican nationalism at the intersections of race, class, and gender in the post-revolutionary era. Following the 1910 revolution, the Mexican government promoted a nationalism rooted in the racial

[1] Quoted from John Mraz, *Looking for Mexico: Modern Visual Culture and National Identity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), 4.

identity of *mestizaje*, the social values of the middle class, and a gendered patriarchal order. Utilizing a cultural analysis, I will argue that the cultural production relating to Mexico-U.S. migration both reflect migrant experiences and contribute to causative change in the development of a popular nationalism characterized by a transnational identity which challenges the official narrative.

The Mexico-U.S. relationship is transnational in nature, meaning interactions between the two countries exist beyond the political and geographic boundaries of the nation-state. This is not to say that borders do not matter, or that there are not real distinctions between the people and place of each country. As George Lipsitz explained, the nation-state remains crucial to transnationalism but there also exists a rupture between culture and place. He asserted that binary oppositions between the local and global are no longer rigid, finding that people maintain a local identity and local ties while also abandoning those ties as they become part of the global system through processes like migration.[2]

Migration is but one component of the transnational tie binding Mexico and the United States, but it remains the most personal. Therefore, the daily encounters with transnational material goods, images, ideas, political arrangements, and economic policies, all become personalized. These routine interactions in combination with connections to migrant relatives and knowledge of migration as portrayed in popular culture and the media, lend themselves to the development of an experience of transnationalism among those who have never migrated. In the context of real and imagined experiences of transnationalism, *Mexico flotante* references a deterritorialized

[2] George Lipsitz, "World Cities and World Beat: Low-Wage Labor and Transnational Culture," *Pacific Historical Review* 68 (1999), 213-231.

identity both in that people do not have to be attached to the place of Mexico to identify as *Mexicano*, and that evolving interpretations of what it means to be Mexican incorporates the experiences of those living beyond the nation-state. In this sense the transnational is localized and the local is transnationalized.[3]

Approach

In my approach to this study I explicitly argue that the cultural production of migration serves as a primary source in uncovering the changing conceptions of Mexican nationalism. In the absence of extensive documentation detailing the experience of migrants and how migration impacts communities within Mexico, this approach interrogates cultural representations for what they reveal about these "silenced" stories. Using the cultural studies method of reading literature, music, movies, photographs and political cartoons as text, emphasis will be placed on how the cultural consequences of Mexican migration to the United States both fit within the racial, class, and gendered narrative of Mexican nationalism and conflict with the state's definition of *lo Mexicano.* In challenging official conceptions of national identity, migrants develop a transnationalism that is woven into the tapestry of Mexican consciousness.

Emma Perez wrote in *The Decolonial Imaginary*, "There is a complicit and implicit understanding about what is privileged in current [historical] debates….Going outside the accredited realm of historiography means daring to be dubbed a-historical. It means transversing new territories and disciplines, mapping fresh terrains such as cultural

[3] See Rebecca Golbert, "Transnational Orientations from Home: Constructions of Israel and Transnational Space Among Ukranian Jewish Youth," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 27 (2001): 713-731. With this article, Goblert argues against those who claim transnationalism exists only in the maintenance of regularly sustained social contacts.

studies, women's studies, ethnic studies, and of course Chicana/o studies."[4] Transversing new disciplines is precisely the approach that Perez suggests for historians wanting to "give a voice" to those who might otherwise go unrecognized. In a rejection of the spatio-temporal models of studying history, Perez's work questions who legitimizes the sources, interpretations, and writing about history, in an effort to decolonize the historiography.[5] For a study seeking to examine the experience of working class labor migration, both documented and undocumented, and its impact on the Mexican psyche, Perez's approach proves useful.

Further support for the use of popular culture and media in the study of identity comes from those who write about Mexico. John Mraz asserts the belief that identity construction in Mexico is carried out through the modern visual culture of photography, cinema, and picture histories. He wrote, "Mexicans make themselves through – and have been made by – the webs of significance spun by modern media." Mraz went on to argue that all cultures are formed by the communications systems they create and within which they find themselves.[6] Similarly, Mexican journalist and writer, Elena Poniatowska, expressed her feelings about the importance of culture when she wrote, "The most intimate knowledge I possess about Latin America comes from its writers, moviemakers, photographers, painters, sculptors musicians, choreographers, dancers. The most depressing comes from its politicians and presidents."[7]

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[4] Emma Perez, *The Decolonial Imaginary: Writing Chicanas into History* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1999), xiv.
[5] Perez, *The Decolonial Imaginary*, 5.
[6] John Mraz, *Looking for Mexico: Modern Visual Culture and National Identity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), 2 and 11.
[7] Elena Poniatowska, "Memory and Identity: Some Historical-Cultural Notes," trans. Carlos Pérez, *Latin American Perspectives,* 19 (1992), 76-77.

The cultural production of Mexico-U.S. migration are those representations found in the popular culture and media which reflect the experience of migration, and serve as a means through which popular ideas intersected with those of the state in the public arena. People in Mexico and the United States create cultural representations of migration, and are often but not always individuals with the experience of migration. The cultural production of migration serves to educate the Mexican public on the process of movement, conditions within the United States, life for communities left behind, and U.S.-Mexico relations. These representations portray a varied and sometimes contradictory story of migration and people responded in multiple and unexpected ways that often serve the needs of their individual families or community. Whether or not it aligns with the national narrative, it fulfills individual definitions of *lo Mexicano.*[8]

It is also important to look at the political economy of popular culture and media as several cultural productions, particularly in music and film, are created with the intent of making money. When the funding for these representations of migration originates from powerful private sector corporations like film studios and record companies, does it change the meaning and impact of popular culture? Within the realm of culture studies there are two broad approaches that frame the arguments: that culture is created by outside forces of domination resulting in the re-affirmation of hegemony and that culture is created by the people from below as a form of resistance. An alternate view recognizes that many cultural representations are created by those in power but they do not always achieve their intended purpose of consumption, nationalism, or complacency because

[8] For the argument about how the public narrative has an impact on private identity construction see Pál Nyíri, "Expatriating is patriotic? The discourse on 'new migrants' in the People's Republic of China and identity construction among recent migrants from the PRC," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 27 (2001), 635-653.

people react to and interpret messages in unexpected ways. In the case of Mexico, there is direct evidence of the dominant classes attempting to utilize culture to reinforce a set agenda, as in the post-revolutionary period when the government asserted nationalist messaging in popular media. At other times, it appears that private corporations take a cultural form created by subordinate classes for subordinate classes and profit off of genres and messaging that are already popular. In either case, when it comes to the theme of migration in Mexican popular culture and media, it has the effect of making transnational migration common place.

The sheer volume of migrant themes within Mexican cultural production indicates the importance of migration in society. This perception was confirmed during a research trip to Mexico in 2008, where I found that ideas about migration occupy a space in the consciousness of many within Mexico. Whenever I told people about my research, I was met with a barrage of opinions, research suggestions, anecdotes, or jokes, but rarely with silence. In a nod to the difficulty of legally migrating to the United States, some individuals jokingly asked whether I would be willing to sneak them into the states in my luggage or the trunk of my car. Multiple acquaintances had family members who lived in the United States, while others knew of one town or another where nine months out of the year all men above a certain age were living and working in the United States.

Some opinions were highly critical of migrants and migration. A political cartoonist and educator at the Museo de la Caricatura in Mexico City characterized Mexican migration to the United States as unpatriotic. He argued that jobs existed in Mexico and criticized the irrationality of heads of household who justify their migration as an effort to care for their families when what a family really needs is for their father to

be present. Other members of the middle class held this same opinion, along with a defense of those in the U.S. government wanting a national identification system. I myself saw "help wanted" signs and questioned the narrative that people migrate because there are no jobs in Mexico. What I came to realize is these opportunities were primarily in metropolitan centers at restaurants or other service industries, which is to say the same positions available in the United States but for less pay. While it may prove factually correct that jobs exist in Mexico, the question arises whether these jobs pay a living wage or provide for a life beyond mere survival.

The experience of middle class migration perfectly demonstrates the fact that sometimes people migrate for reasons other than economic necessity, but out of a desire for social mobility or for a sense of adventure. While in Mexico I had dinner with a group of medical professionals contracted to work as nurses in California on the eve of their departure. All looked forward to the opportunity being offered by the job in the United States and expressed excitement for the journey in which they were about to embark. These migrants had a privilege of high paying, secure work and a status of legality, not available to many of the labor migrants referenced in this study. Still, these contracted nurses jokingly said they planned to start a *sindicalista* upon settling in California, using a tool of the Mexican proletariat to challenge the same American capitalist construct that promised upward mobility. While it lies outside the realm of my research, middle class and professional labor migration from Mexico is a topic deserving of further research.

Among the research suggestions I received, one came from a photographer and food lover who urged me to write about all the contributions that Mexican migrants and

their descendants made to the United States. Another recommendation came from a government official in the San Antonio consulate who insisted upon someone writing the story of migration from the Mexican perspective. Both men sought a shift in the narrative of migration to focus on Mexico and the Mexicans in the process. My guiding principal throughout research and writing has always been to understand the consequences of migration within Mexico. I found it inconceivable that families, communities, and a nation living the daily uncertainties of migration would not be affected by the departure of citizens and loved ones.

The area I found most intriguing in my research was the conversations of migration taking place in the Mexican media and cultural production. Given the overwhelming examples of Mexico-U.S. migration serving as a theme in the culture of Mexico, the question arose what this revealed about the experience and impact of migration within the nation state. Because of the difficulty in understanding how an audience receives and interprets culture I chose to focus on the investigation of identity construction. The examination of popular representations of migration placed within the context of nationalism reveals the role of migration in defining Mexican identity. Benedict Anderson wrote that nationalism is a "cultural artifact of a particular kind," and found that the reading of the newspaper served as a basis for imagining the community of nation.[9] Although the national consciousness of a society may not hold the same meaning for everyone, placing value in and participating in the same cultural experiences permits collective identification. Within Mexico in the post-revolutionary period

[9] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1991), 4 and 35.

multiple forms of media and popular culture served as the public space for conversations about migration and participation in a collective experience of nationalism building.

The study of themes such as culture, identity, and nationalism have garnered increasing interest in Latin American history over recent decades.[10] With a growing emphasis on understanding the history of the subaltern, scholars look to culture to inform and explain actions of the lower classes and the oppressed. In lieu of written documents, which these populations rarely produce, an analysis of culture provides historians with an invaluable insight into the past. When defined as a collective construct, culture engages individuals with a larger group or identity. Conceptions of culture and identity are fluid, but prove valuable to the study of history for what they reveal about the individual and collective consciousness of a people during a particular time in the past.

A number of works in various fields are beginning to look specifically at the experiences of migration as represented in popular culture. David Maciel and Maria Herrera-Sobek's edited volume *Culture across Borders,* argued that cultural production in Mexico and the United States reflects the migrant experience and deserves more thorough study. This is a multi-disciplinary anthology with contributions from scholars

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[10] A selection of these works include: William H. Beezley, *Mexican National Identity: Memory, Innuendo, and Popular Culture* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2008.); William H. Beezley, Cheryl English Martin, and William E. French, eds., *Rituals of Rule, Rituals of Resistance: Public Celebrations and Popular Culture in Mexico*, (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1994); Gilbert M. Joseph, Anne Rubenstein, and Eric Zolov, eds., *Fragments of a Golden Age: The Politics of Culture in Mexico Since 1940* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001); Claudio Lomnitz-Adler, *Exits from the Labyrinth: Culture and Ideology in the Mexican National Space* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); Claudio Lomnitz-Adler, *Deep Mexico, Silent Mexico: An Anthropology of Mexican Nationalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 2001); Julio Moreno, *Yankee Don't Go Home: Mexican Nationalism, American Business Culture, and the Shaping of Modern Mexico, 1920-1950* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Jeffrey M. Pilcher, *Que Vivan los Tamales!: Food and the Making of Mexican Identity* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998); William Rowe and Vivian Schelling, *Memory and Modernity: Popular Culture in Latin America (*London: Verso, 1991); Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo. *Mexico at the World's Fairs: Crafting a Modern Nation (*Berkley: University of California Press, 1996); Mary Kay Vaughan and Stephen E. Lewis, eds., *The Eagle and the Virgin: Nation and the Cultural Revolution in Mexico, 1920-1940.* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006); Eric Zolov, *Refried Elvis: The Rise of the Mexican Counterculture (*Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

in the fields of Literature, Spanish, Communications, Political Science, and History, all interpreting the meaning behind various cultural representations of Mexican migration. With *Mexico, Nation in Transit,* Cristina Sisk analyzed representations of migration in literature, film, and contemporary rock music to discuss Mexican identity and argue that migrants are perceived as part of Mexico.[11]

There are also some full length monographs that examine migration themes in music. Maria Herrera-Sobek's *Northward Bound* serves as an invaluable resource, providing the full text and translation of numerous corridos and canciones dating back to the early 1900s. Additionally, Herrera-Sobek organized the collection of songs by topic and provided her own interpretations. Martha Chew Sanchez's *Corridos in Migrant Memory* focuses solely on the corridos written by Los Tigres del Norte and the impact of these ballads on Mexican cultural identity for migrants and Mexican Americans. *Ni de aquí ni de allá* by María Teresa de la Garza studies corridos and canciones as a reflection of migrant experiences and contributor to identity construction for migrants. Finally, Cathy Ragland, in *Música Norteña,* sought to study migrant representations in a variety of musical genres of the borderlands, including corridos, cumbia, mariachi, and tejano conjunto.[12] My work builds upon these efforts by examining the cultural impact of identity formation for those left behind in Mexico.

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[11] David R. Maciel and Maria Herrera-Sobek, *Culture Across Borders: Mexican Immigration and Popular Culture* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1998); Christina L. Sisk, *Mexico, Nation in Transit: Contemporary Representations of Mexican Migration to the United States* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2011).

[12] Martha I. Chew Sanchez, *Corridos in Migrant Memory* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006); María Teresa de la Garza, *Ni de aquí ni de allá: el emigrante en los corridos y en otros canciones populares* (Mexico, D.F.: Laberinto, 2008); María Herrera-Sobek, *Northward Bound: the Mexican Immigrant Experience in Ballad and Song* (Bloomington: Indian University Press, 1993); and Cathy Ragland, *Música Norteña: Mexican Migrants Creating a Nation Between Nations* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2009).

Regional music within Mexico has a long tradition of reflecting the social history of the masses, particularly through corridos. There are a wealth of collections, both published and unpublished, documenting the lyrics of many corridos on migration.[13] Having resources published collections are extremely important in doing research on Mexican regional music because many of the older songs do not have official recordings or a known author. Rather, early corridos have been passed down from generation to generation with the lyrics tweaked depending upon the performer. Even contemporary corridos produced by major recording companies might be performed and changed by various musical groups.

In this study I made extensive use of the collection put together by Herrera-Sobek in *Northward Bound.* Her collection is broken down into two chronological parts from 1848 to 1964, and after 1964. Whithin these chronological categories Herrera-Sobek organized the songs thematically based on the topic of the narrative. For example, the title of some chapters are Repatriation and Deportation, The Bracero Program, and Border-Crossing Strategies. In addition, she provides some historical context along with brief interpretations of select songs. I read through each corrido and recategorized them based on the themes that I wanted to investigate like anti-Americanism, patriarchal beliefs, and consumption. The translations are largely those of Herrera-Sobek, except where otherwise noted. Other Mexican regional music collections contain the same songs found in *Northward Bound,* such as the collections of de la Garza, Ragland, and

[13] In addition to Herrera-Sobek's work see Gustavo López Castro, *El Río Bravo es charco: cancionero del migrante* (Zamora: El Colegio de Michoacán, 1995) which includes an extensive collection of songs broken down thematically into the various stages of migration including the causes of migration, the departure, crossing the border and life in the U.S., the return, and miscellaneous. This collection contains a short introduction and no additional text beyond the lyrics of individual songs, but is valuable in that it provides a much more detailed discography of authors, performers, and recording studio where that information is available.

Gustavo López. Each of these note some important works where the text of songs were originally found and would prove valuable for future research in trying to understand production of these cultural artificats.[14]

In addition to reading popular cultural production and media as textual primary sources, I also consult newspapers, migrant interviews, and government publications. U.S. based sources include government documents and reports from the Census Bureau, Immigration and Naturalization Service, Department of Labor, interviews of migrants living in the United States, and records of Western Union. From Mexico, the majority of sources included the text of songs, literature, and film, records from government entities such as the Banco de México, Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, Instituto Nacional de Migración, interviews of Mexicans impacted by migration; and newspaper articles, advertisements, and cartoons. Thus I use a mix of sources representing cultural production and government, newspaper, and corporate documentation.

Bibliographic Review

Scholars of Mexican migration focus on three major aspects of the experience: causation, settlement, and repatriation. While the historiography continues to uncover important experiences of those who settle in the United States and those repatriated through government programs, it is only beginning to tell the story of those households and communities left behind. The experience of migration shapes identities on both sides of the border. Histories of settlement examine identity construction for Mexicans and

[14] See *Cancionero mexicano* (Mexico City: Libro-Mex Editores, 1979-1980); Eduardo Guerrero, *Canciones y corridos populares*, *Corridos mexicanos,* and *Corridos históricos de la revolución mexicana desde 1910 a 1930 y otros notables de varias épocas,* all found in the Eduardo Guerreo Collection at the Biblioteca Nacional de México in Mexico City; Armando Jiménez, *Cancionero mexicano* (Mexico City: Editores Mexicanos Unidos, 1986); and the Archivo Particular de Álvaro Ochoa in Zamora, Michoacan.

Mexican Americans living in the United States. My work considers how migration and transnationalism is experienced on the other side of the border and fills a historiographical space in looking at the cultural impact of migration in Mexico.

Because historians identify economic necessity as the major cause for movement, the theme of labor dominates many studies of Mexican migration. One of the earliest works to address this topic is Ernesto Galarza's *Merchants of Labor*, which examines the legal, political, and economic factors that created the structure for migration in the Bracero Program. Writing about the years preceding Galarza's study, Mark Reisler's *By the Sweat of their Brow*, emphasizes the contributions Mexicans made to the development of the United States in railroads, agriculture, mining, and Midwestern industry. Both present an argument that resonates throughout the historiography on Mexican migration, that American businesses and government allow unrestricted migration of Mexicans as long as it is beneficial to the U.S. economy. Galarza explains that large agricultural farmers pressured the United States government, permitting immigrant labor. In an effort to create conditions that were to their own benefit, agriculturalists stimulated illegal migration, reduced wages to a level in which they became uncompetitive in a domestic labor market, and created a labor industry characterized as work that Americans will not do. Reisler showed that this labor dynamic existed even before the establishment of formalized agreements.[15]

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[15] Ernesto Galarza, *Merchants of Labor: the Mexican Bracero Story, An Account of the Managed Migration of Mexican Farm Workers in California, 1942-1960* (Charlotte: McNally and Loftin, 1964); Mark Reisler, *By the Sweat of their Brow: Mexican Immigrant Labor in the United States, 1900-1940* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1976); Another history of the Bracero Program comes from Deborah Cohen, *Braceros: Migrant Citizens and Transnational Subjects in the Postwar United States and Mexico* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011).

There are some important works on migration that place Mexico at the center of analysis when exploring the causes of migration. One example is Lawrence Cardoso's *Mexican Emigration to the United States, 1897-1931: Socioeconomic Patterns.* Cardoso examined political, economic, and social conditions within Mexico that prompted migration as well as Mexican attitudes towards and government involvement in migration. Mexican scholars have also addressed this issue, including Patricia Morales with *Indocumentados mexicanos: causas y razones de la migración* and Mónica Verea, *Entre México y Estados Unidos: Los indocumentados.*[16] In the first half of the book, Morales focuses on political and economic factors within Mexico that contributed to migration, arguing the primary cause lay in the principles of capitalist modes of production at play in both countries.[17] Within Mexico this leads to decisions that encourage foreign investment, concentration of land in the hands of the few, and an economy based on exports to fuel the more successful capitalist development of the United States. The consequences of Mexico's efforts at industrial development lead to the displacement of *campesinos* and artisans who find themselves in increasingly oppressive and unsustainable labor circumstances that they turn to migration as a way to survive. Verea similarly describes the Mexican economic growth model as one based on export of raw materials, and high investment of foreign capital that leads to a private economy. However, rather than framing her argument as part of the larger capitalist

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[16] Lawrence A. Cardoso, *Mexican Emigration to the United States, 1897-1931: Socioeconomic Patterns* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1980); Cardoso's study differs from others on causation in that he talks about "push" factors originating in Mexico. Patricia Morales, *Indocumentados mexicanos: causas y razones de la migración laboral* (Mexico: Grilajbo, 1989), Morales also provides some history of Operation Wetback; Mónica Verea, *Entre México y Estados Unidos: Los Indocumentados* (Ediciones el Caballito, 1982); For a study of economic causation on both sides of the border and the experience of undocumented migration see Julian Samora, *Los Mojados: The Wetback Story* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1971).

[17] Morales, *Indocumentados mexicanos,* 97.

system, she adheres to a push pull model in which the primary cause of migration is the need for cheap labor within the U.S. to maintain their economic development.

Other works shift their focus to the activities of the Mexican government, particularly in discussions of repatriation, but still fail to examine the consequences of migration for the people of Mexico. In his book *Unwanted Mexican Americans in the Great Depression: Repatriation Pressures, 1929-1930*, Abraham Hoffman documents repatriation efforts put forth by U.S. agencies as well as the Mexican government, noting the latter's empty promises of land in colonies set aside for repatriates. Additional studies examining repatriation efforts during the 1930s include Camille Guerin-Gonzales' *Mexican Workers and American Dreams,* and *Decade of Betrayal* written by Francisco Balderrama and Raymond Rodriguez. While Guerin-Gonzales examined the rejection of repatriates upon returning to Mexico, she emphasized how migrants overcame this and other obstacles in defining a culture and identity that continues to resonate in California. Balderrama and Rodriguez also wrote about the problem of reacculturation, and attempted to look at both the structural and subaltern perspective in examining how Mexican authorities responded to an overwhelming influx of repatriated Mexicans and the experiences undergone by the repatriates themselves.[18]

Several studies of Mexican American culture and life highlight the history of migration, focusing on issues surrounding settlement within the United States. Analysis

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[18] For a study of 19th century repatriation see José Angel Hernández, *Mexican American Colonization During the Nineteenth Century: A History of the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012). The 1950s repatriation is recounted in Juan Ramon Garcia's *Operation Wetback, the Mass Deportation of Mexican Undocumented Workers in 1954* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1980), where his emphasis is on U.S. immigration policy towards Mexico, its ineffectiveness and inconsistencies. A study of the increased militarization of the border and culminating in the history of Operation Wetback comes from Kelly Lytle Hernández, *Migra! A History of the U.S. Border Patrol* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010). For an account of the 1994 repatriation effort in California see Joseph Nevins, *Operation Gatekeeper: The Rise of the 'Illegal Alien' and the Making of the U.S.-Mexico Boundary* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

of settlement fall along a spectrum of adaptation between the uprooted to the transplanted.[19] With *Becoming Mexican American*, George Sánchez provides a cultural analysis of the process by which Mexican migrants began to develop the ethnic and cultural identity of Mexican Americans. David G. Gutiérrez examined in *Walls and Mirrors* the differences between Mexicans and Mexican Americans that shaped future relationships between citizens and migrants.[20] Both present a complex processes of the reception and settlement of Mexican migrants that do not fall into linear or uniform narratives. Migrant laborers faced varying levels of acceptance and hostility from white and Mexican Americans alike, and they responded to their circumstances by developing a culture and identity that incorporated differing aspects of American and Mexican traditions.

In the last decade, scholars in the fields of sociology, international studies, and anthropology have begun to investigate the consequences of migration for the people of Mexico, but their temporal focus is contemporary. An example of this is Jeffrey Cohen, whose book *The Culture of Migration in Southern Mexico*, examined the consequences of remittances in the Oaxacan valley from the late 1990s to the start of the twenty-first century. In her dissertation *Yalalag is No Longer Just Yalalag* Lourdes Gutierrez Najera questioned how migration contributed to recent transformations that challenge traditional institutions within a Mexican community. Based on ethnographic research of twenty-first

[19] The uprooted thesis was introduced by Oscar Handlin, *The Uprooted: The Epic Story of the Great Migrations that Made the American People* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1951), in which Handlin argues that migrants in the United States lived an existence entirely removed from their traditional culture and identity. John Bodnar, *The Transplanted: A History of Immigrants in Urban America* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1985), Bodnar found that migrants transplanted their culture and identity to life in the United States in order to navigate the capitalist system.

[20] George J. Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture, and Identity in Chacano Los Angeles, 1900-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); David G. Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants, and the Politics of Ethnicity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

century communities in Zacatecas and San Luis Potosi, Deborah Boehm's *Intimate Migrations* argues that the state plays a role in shaping intimate decisions and interactions of migration both within the U.S. and Mexico.[21] My research builds upon these efforts by historicizing cultural change in relation to migration.

Chapter Outline

The organization of this dissertation is thematic with two chapters providing context, the first detailing a broad history of migration between Mexico and the U.S., and the second outlining Mexican conceptions of nationalism following the 1910 revolution. The remaining three chapters examine the role of transnational migration at intersections of race, class, and gender through discussions of anti-Americanism, modernity, and patriarchy. Each of these chapters spans the time period from post-Revolutionary Mexico to the NAFTA era. In the 1920s, after the revolution, the state established and promoted a sense of *Mexicanidad* characterized by anti-Americanism, modernity, and patriarchy, and I am interested in how migration both maintains and challenges these modern definitions of nationalism. By engaging in the study of the popular culture of migration through the signing of NAFTA, I am able to examine changing conceptions of migration and what it means for *Mexicanidad* during a period that witnessed the largest increase in labor migration since the Bracero Program.

Chapter one, Perspectives on the Causes of Mexican Migration to the United States, analyzes the structural and individual factors that contribute to Mexico-U.S.

[21] Jeffrey Cohen, *The Culture of Migration in Southern Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004); Lourdes Gutierrez Najera, "Yalalag is No Longer Just Yalalag: Circulating Conflict and Contesting Community in a Zapotec Transnational Circuit" (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2007); Deborah Boem, *Intimate Migrations: Gender, Family, and Illegality Among Transnational Mexicans* (New York: New York University Press, 2012).

transnational migration. Beginning with the colonial period, this historical context recognizes that experiences of migration do not exist solely in the realm of identity construction, but are linked to material causation. Outlining economic, social, and cultural reasons behind migration, the chapter traces the history of U.S. economic intervention in Mexico, political instability within Mexico, and the development of a culture of migration as a result of the regularization of movement. The chapter demonstrates that the idea of migration permeates Mexican cultural production and media in a way that contributes to an imagined sense of familiarity with movement. In order to understand the development of this transnationalism, it is important to first outline the social and economic contexts within which it evolved, and this chapter provides that background.[22]

Titled *Lo Mexicano*: Writings on Mexican Nationalism, the second chapter provides an outline of Mexican nationalism as presented by the state and intellectuals in society following the 1910 revolution. Before examining how the popular culture of migration contributes to or undermines the official narrative of Mexican nationalism, we first need to define the official narrative. After the revolution, the state supported a national identity centered around the intersections of race, class, and gender. Promotion of official nationalism occurred through cultural production such as movies, muralist art, photography, and advertising. Along with chapter one, this chapter provides the structural context in which discussions about transnational identity can take place.

In the third chapter Mexico for the Mexicans: Anti-Americanism and Mexico's Case Against Migration, I argue that migrant cultural production reinforced nationalism

[22] Gerald E. Poyo, "*With All and for the Good of All":The Emergence of Popular Nationalism in the Cuban Communities of the United States, 1848-1898* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1989).

rooted in *mestizaje* by defining oneself in opposition to American society and culture. The ways in which the popular culture of migration expresses an anti-American sentiment includes the reporting of ill-treatment of Mexican migrants, romanticizing of Mexico as better than the United States, and criticizing of hybrid cultural practices. In the early half of the twentieth century the popular culture contributed to official efforts to dissuade Mexican migration while the governments of Mexico and the United States also participated in programs that facilitated migration. Rates of Mexican migration increased a great deal during this period, indicating working people did not blindly accept the state sponsored messages against movement. Much like the Mexican government, individuals adopted the rhetoric of *mestizaje* and *mexicanidad* while engaging in the seemingly contradictory existence of transnationalism.

Chapter four is titled *Ahí Vienen los Norteños*: Modernity, Consumption, and Remittances. This chapter examines the role of migration in both supporting and undermining the social identity of Mexican nationalism rooted in the proletarian. The social upheaval of the 1910 revolution promised a "modern" Mexico that would benefit the peasantry. Government rhetoric, social reforms, and state supported imagery in art, literature, music, films, and photography reflected the notion of a Mexico with the values of the proletarians. The working people of Mexico found that the socio-political reality did not always fulfill the promises of modernity and social mobility. Migration becomes a way to attain the material hopes and desires promised by the Mexican revolutionary nation, but by nature of movement simultaneously rejects the nation. The chapter focuses on the building of homes made possible by remittances, as the embodiment of the modernity and consumption developing in Mexico as a result of migration. With the

sending of remittances, households and communities that remain in Mexico begin to realize the modernity promised by the revolution, but often with an American influence creating a sense of transnationalism even for those who do not migrate.

The fifth chapter *¿Quien manda?*: Migration and Its Impact on the Patriarchal Order, uncovers how migration reinforces and challenges Mexican national identity rooted in patriarchy. The analysis in this chapter examines both the impact on the patriarchy of the state as well as the patriarchy of the family. Migration completely undermines the state as patriarchal figure that cares and provides for its people because in this process Mexican citizens move beyond the boundaries of nation state in order to survive and make a living. In regards to the patriarchy of the family, migration supports the traditional structure because the money earned by men allows them to fulfill their traditional roles as providers. However in so many ways migration also undermines the patriarchal order of families. With men absent as migrant laborers women are left behind as heads of household to care for the children, farm the land, and provide financially when remittances are not enough, infrequent, or non-existent. All too frequently women under these circumstances also turn to migration as a means of providing for their families, further disintegrating the traditional family structure. Women who migrate often become accused of "wearing the pants" or being too Americanized, further destabilizing the patriarchal notion of *Mexicanidad*. Many women, whether they migrate or not, develop a transnational consciousness with sons, fathers, brothers, and husbands living and working in the north.

Terminology

Stuart Hall wrote that the field of cultural studies defines culture, "as *both* the meanings and values which arise amongst distinctive groups and classes…*and* as the lived traditions and practices through which these "understandings" are expressed and in which they are embodied."[23] This study has been presented as a cultural history and it is therefore important to outline what is meant by the words cultural production and popular culture. The principal source throughout this study is Mexico's cultural production of migration, meaning the way in which Mexico-U.S. transnational migration is represented for a Mexican audience. These representations constitute the public conversation surrounding migration, that is to say the struggle over the meaning of migration for Mexico. Within the context of this dissertation, popular culture takes on a twofold meaning to include: productions created by ordinary people for the entertainment of other ordinary people and is also frequently referred to as "folk culture"; and media productions supported (if not created) by corporate interests and sometimes in conjunction with government, also conceptualized as "mass culture".

Throughout this work the term American is utilized to refer to citizens or entities of the United States of America, recognizing all citizens of the Americas are also Americans. In Spanish *estadounidense* references a citizen of the United States, but no English equivalent exists. Some studies use North American to reference citizens of the United States of America, but that terminology also includes people from Canada and Mexico. With no better alternative apart from American and North American, I have chosen out of personal preference to consistently use American.

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[23] Stuart Hall, "Cultural Studies: Two Paradigms," *Culture/Power/History. A Reader in Contemporary Social Theory,* eds. Nicholas B. Dirks, Geoffrey Eley, and Sherry B. Ortner (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 527.

The choice to use the word migrant rather than emigrant or immigrant reflects the conception of this work as one rooted in transnationalism. The idea that communities and ties exist between the United States and Mexico that transcend border constraints is a reality. Gloria Anzaldua wrote about the borderlands as both a real and metaphorical place, which is to say people live in this land straddling the border, and in their identity feel simultaneously a sense of belonging to two (or more) places and not belonging or dislocation from place altogether.[24] The experience of Mexican migration is not so simple as to be characterized as permanent departure and settlement, and my choice to not categorize it as such is conscious.

[24] Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1987).

Chapter One – Perspectives on the Causes of Mexican Migration

The historiography on Mexican migration to the U.S. points to political, social, and economic causation, giving primacy to the economic reasons people migrate. Factors that contribute to the decision to migrate are complicated and varied. Throughout this chapter, the reasons for migration will be analyzed at the structural and the individual levels from the United States and Mexican perspective. In order to understand the deterritorialization of identity that comes with migration, it is important to first identify the political and economic changes that undermine traditional conceptions of nationality.[25]

The traditional framework for analyzing the causes of migration is a push-pull model. Push-pull describes a process by which factors in the home country "push" people out, such as political unrest or poverty, while factors in the receiving nation attract migrants such as job opportunities and better pay. The problem with this framework is that it de-emphasizes the interdependence of nations within larger social and economic structures such as capitalism, and it ignores the personal decision making process in why individuals migrate.

There are variations of the push-pull theory which recognize that the economies of sending and receiving nations are intertwined. The most prominent of these perspectives is world system analysis, or dependency theory, which argues that there are core capitalist and industrialized nations that reach out to semi-periphery and periphery nations for labor and raw materials. This is a relationship in which the core maintains its

[25] Roger Rouse, "Mexican Migration and the Social Space of Postmodernism," in *Between Two Worlds: Mexican Immigrants in the United States* ed., David G. Gutiérrez (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1996), 248.

wealth at the expense of the periphery nations that remain underdeveloped, dependent on the core nation, and the workers of the periphery in poverty.[26]

Gilbert González and Raúl Fernández offer a thorough critique of the theories explaining the causes of migration in their article, “Empire and Origins of Twentieth-Century Migration from Mexico to the United States.”[27] In their critique of world system analysis, González and Fernández attack its emphasis on direct investment in the form of foreign captial, reasoning that this neglects analysis of private philanthropic investment, United States government investment, or economic development programs, all of which often have agendas and conditions that favor U.S. capitalism. They go on to critique world system theory for presuming that any modernization which occurs in Mexico is indigenous capitalist driven. This belief negates the history of imperial domination in Mexico. Rather, González and Fernández argue that Mexican elites who develop partnerships with U.S. financiers and government officials are not truly independent but participants in the perpetuation of U.S. capitalist domination. Their final critique of world systems analysis is that it too often is focused on post-1960s migration but United States economic domination of Mexico was a constant throughout the twentieth century.

González and Fernández extend this critique in their dissection of social capital theory. This theory implies that individuals have the agency to make choices whether to migrate or not, and that a culture of migration influences that choice as migration

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[26] For analysis of these theories see Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Enzo Faletto, *Dependency and Development in Latin America,* trans. Marjory Mattingly Urquidi (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979); Andre Gunder Frank, *Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America: Historical Studies of Chile and Brazil* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1969); William Roseberry, *Anthropologies and Histories: Essays in Culture, History, and Political Economy* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1989); and Immanuel Wallerstein, *World-Systems Analysis: An Introduction* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004).

[27] Gilbert G. González, Raúl Fernández, “Empire and the Origins of Twentieth-Century Migration from Mexico to the United States, “ *Pacific Historical Review,* 71 (2002): 19-57.

becomes the norm in some communities. The authors disagree with the idea that individual choice is a valid factor in why people migrate, on the same grounds that it negates the more than a century in which the United States dominated the economy of Mexico. The overarching argument of González and Fernández is that a U.S. capitalist structure, rather than arbitrary global capitalism, leads to dislocation and migration. Any argument which locates economic or social causation of migration within Mexico is critiqued by the authors for not comprehending that these factors only exist because of the colonial relationship of Mexico to the United States.

United States capital in all forms is the most dominating factor which creates the structure for Mexican migration to the United States. However, to dismiss the complicity of Mexican elites in facilitating the growth of American influence in Mexico is to ignore the full history. Furthermore, it is evident from Mexico's cultural production, government programs, and accounts of migrants themselves, that a culture of migration does exist. Negating the choices of Mexican migrants simply because those choices are made within the structure of the imperialistic capitalist system of the United States implies that their stories do not matter in understanding why people migrate. What follows in this chapter is a chronology of factors detailing why Mexican migration occurred during various points in history in an attempt to uncover the intertwining economic, social, and cultural causation.

Pre- 1910 Revolution

The movement of peoples throughout the Mexico-U.S. borderlands has a long history marked by persistent exploitive economic systems dominated by a foreign power

which to this day continues to force migration as a response to both the demands and oppressiveness of labor. Colonial studies of the region indicate that the indigenous migrated for some of the same reasons that exist today, such as labor and survival. Labor occurred through village farming, the encomienda system, repartimiento, and slavery, all of which forced the movement of peoples to fulfill labor obligations especially when disease killed off the local indigenous populations. As a result, migration to the borderlands comprised of indigenous peoples from the interior of Mexico, mestizos, and African slaves.[28] Migration also occurred throughout the borderlands as a means of material and sociocultural survival. New Spain's laboring classes utilized movement to escape oppressive labor conditions and find protection from raids by North American Indians.[29]

Throughout its colonies in Latin America, Spain developed a mercantilist economy in which it used a cheap labor force to extract raw materials while the wealth for these natural resources went to the crown and Spanish elites. In northern, colonial Mexico the primary labor demands were in silver mining and agriculture. In her study on eighteenth century Chihuahua, Cheryl Martin argues that because the need for labor outweighed the supply in this region, workers had leverage to negotiate economic incentives such as receiving credit.[30] The extension of credit could also be seen as a way for employers to place workers in debt, which in theory bound them to employers in order to pay off the debt. However, Martin observes that workers often used migration as

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[28] Susan Deeds, *Defiance and Deference in Mexico's Colonial North: Indians under Spanish Rule in Nueva Vizcaya*. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003), 82-83.
[29] Both Deeds and Cynthia Radding Murrieta, *Wandering Peoples: Colonialism, Ethnic Spaces, and Ecological Frontiers in Northwestern Mexico, 1700-1850* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997) discuss migration as a tool of survival.
[30] Cheryl Martin, *Governance and Society in Colonial Mexico: Chihuahua in the Eighteenth Century* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996).

a rebellious act to avoid repayment of these debts. Under the circumstances of oppressive Spanish labor, indigenous migration became an act of resistance.

After Mexico won independence from Spain in 1821, United States capitalism became heavily engaged in the northern territories of the new nation. Just as under colonial rule when raw materials were exported to Spain, after independence they were exported to the United States. In addition, the United States imported many of the region's products. Because of North American technology foreigners began to dominate Mexican mining and craftsmanship, effectively displacing Mexican and Indian work and artisanry. Lastly, increased settlement by United States investors in Mexico's northern territories indicated their economic interest in the nation.[31]

The Mexican government had a number of responses to the increasing foreign presence in the northern states, but in many cases the best thing they could do was try to control rather than eliminate United States interests. In response to the importation of American goods to Mexico, the government attempted to set high tariffs but regulations were always changing and often ignored. In response to American settlement in Mexico, the government tried to introduce colonization laws. The Mexican government recognized the need to colonize the northern territories in order to stave off foreign threats of occupation from France or the United States, and raids from North American Indians. However, Mexico did not have the population to migrate from the interior of Mexico to the north, so they permitted foreign colonization in the aftermath of independence. Between 1824 and 1828, Mexican colonization laws shifted from having high incentives for land and lenient citizenship requirements to having stricter citizenship

[31] See David J. Weber, *The Mexican Frontier, 1821-1846: The American Southwest Under Mexico.* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982), 122-146. Weber details the history of economic expansion in the northern territories of Mexico following Mexican independence.

requirements and restrictions on acquisition of land for non-citizens. The harsher citizenship requirements were never enforced and by the late 1820s foreign migrants already settled heavily in northern Mexico, particularly Texas.[32]

General Manuel Meir y Terán observed in an 1828 report that Americans outnumbered Mexicans in Texas, that American migrants were not assimilating, and suggested that Mexico take immediate control of the situation.[33] A law followed on April 6, 1830, which prohibited foreign immigration into Mexico, rescinded land contracts that had not been fulfilled, and prohibited slavery in Texas.[34] Government restrictions on slavery, immigration, and land acquistion contributed to growing unrest in Texas. Tejanos in general opposed the law with members of the Ayutamiento of Béxar drafting a petition in opposition to the law. These participants included José Casiano, Angel Navarro, José Antonio Navarro, Refugio de la Garza, José Maria Balmareda, and Erasmo Seguín.[35] In response, Mexican political elites such as Lorenzo de Zavala and José Antonio Mexía, who held land interests in Texas and relationships with American financiers, halted the anti-immigration clause with a bill passed in November 1833 and going into effect on May 21, 1834.[36] Mexican and Tejano elites joined with American migrants in opposition to the Mexican government because they wanted to protect the

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[32] Weber, *The Mexican Frontier,* 162-163.
[33] Terán's letter to the President of Mexico, June 30, 1828 found in Jack Jackson, ed., *Texas by Terán: the diary kept by General Manuel de Mier y Terán on his 1828 inspection of Texas,* trans. John Wheat (Austin: University of Texas Press, 200), 96-101.
[34] See Raúl A. Ramos, *Beyond the Alamo: Forging Mexican Ethnicity in San Antonio, 1821-1861* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 117; Mexican laws limiting slavery had been introduced at both the national and state level since 1823, but Texas managed to obtain exemptions up until 1830.
[35] See David J. Weber, ed., *Troubles in Texas, 1832: a Tejano viewpoint from San Antonio,* trans. Conchita Hassell Winn (Austin: Wind River Press, 1983) and Ramos, *Beyond the Alamo,* 124-125.
[36] See Alan Hutchinson, "General José Antonio Mexía and His Texas Interests," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 82 (1978): 137-138, for a detailed outline of the drafting and passage of the bill repealing restrictions. See also Mary Virginia Henderson, "Minor Empresario Contracts for the Colonization of Texas, 1825-1834," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 31 (1928): 299-301, for a list of Mexicans like Juan Antonio Padilla and José María Royuela who held empresario contracts jointly with American immigrants.

institution of slavery in Texas and its expansion westward. The cooperation of Mexican elites was essential, but it is important to note that they could not compete with the capital of United States financiers who held greater interest in the regional development of Texas over national economic growth.[37]

Anglo-American immigrants who called themselves Texians fought for and won independence in 1836.[38] Under the leadership of Sam Houston, the Texians took Mexican President Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna captive and he signed the Treaty of Velasco recognizing Texas independence. The Mexican government did not recognize this treaty because Santa Anna signed under duress with greater concern for his own life, rather than for the good of the nation of Mexico. In 1845, the United States annexed Texas but the southwestern border of the state remained in dispute. From the United States perspective, the Rio Grande River served as the southern border of Texas, but Mexico saw the Nueces River as the southern border. In 1846, military troops sent by President James K. Polk invaded Mexico south of the Nueces River in this disputed territory. The Mexican American war, as it is called in the United States, ended in 1848 with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. This treaty established the U.S. Mexico border at the Rio Grande River and extended it from the headwaters of the Gila River to the Colorado River.[39] Mexico lost half of its territory at the end of this war, including New Mexico, Arizona, California, Nevada, and Utah.

This history demonstrates both the regularity of movement in the Mexico-United States borderlands for nearly two hundred years, and the extent of United States involvement in Mexican affairs from very early on. Because of this history, a familiarity

[37] Weber, *The Mexican Frontier*, 176-178.
[38] Some Tejanos supported independence including Juan N. Seguin and Manuel Flores.
[39] Weber, *The Mexican Frontier*, 274.

existed and still does between the two nations. For the United States this meant Mexicans were considered “safe” migrants and for the Mexicans it translated into comfortably migrating to the known territory of the southwest.[40]

Mexico’s loss of territory to the United States, ending with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, outlines the development of more strictly defined geopolitical boundaries between the two nations, making migration a more complicated issue. Although in the latter half of the nineteenth century, people still moved with relative ease across the border, it also marked a period of increasing restrictions on immigration in the United States. At the same time that it was tightening up its borders, the United States increased its influence in other nations. In Mexico, this period saw growing economic partnerships between Mexican liberals and American financiers.

There were those within the U.S. government and business community who wanted to continue expansion and obtain more territory from Mexico. However, others like William S. Rosecrans, Edward Lee Plumb, and former President Ulysses S. Grant, suggested that the United States could have all the economic advantages of controlling Mexico without the political headaches of annexing the territory. This idea formed the

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[40] Mexicans considered safe because Americans believed they understood the culture and psyche of Mexicans, and because they believed the proximity of Mexico to the United States meant Mexicans could and would easily return to their homeland once their labor was no longer needed. See Gilbert G. González, *Culture of Empire: American Writers, Mexico, and Mexican Immigrants, 1880-1930* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004). González notes a number of American travelers wrote about Mexico with titles such as *Mexico and Her People of To-Day* (1907) by Nevin O. Winter; *In Indian Mexico: A Narrative of Travel and Labor* (1908) by Frederick Starr; *Mexico To-Day: Social, Political, and Religious Conditions* (1913) and *Mexico Past and Present* (1928) by George B. Winton; *Trading with Mexico* (1921), *The Mexican Mind: A Study of National Psychology* (1922), and *The People of Mexico: Who They are and How they Live* (1922) by Wallace Thompson. Collectively, these writers informed Americans both of the feebleness of Mexicans who were easily led and the necessity to continue economic expansion in Mexico.

basis of the U.S. economic imperialist effort first applied to Mexico then repeated in other foreign territories where the United States held economic interests.[41]

During the period between 1848 and 1900, Mexican border towns were losing out financially to cities north of the border because the United States did not charge taxes for the internal movement of goods and had lower import duties. The result being goods were much cheaper on the northern side of the border. This led to the smuggling of goods into Mexico, and also served as an incentive for migration to the United States because of the possibility of better wages and cheaper goods. In Taumaulipas, the governor Ramón Guerra declared a *zona libre* in 1858, which permitted the importation of duty free goods within a twelve-and-a-half-mile radius of the boundary. Guerra justified this as a need to curtail the migration of people to the U.S.[42]

According to Juan Mora-Torres, Mexican migration in the second half of the nineteenth century did not serve as an "escape valve" to relieve an excess labor population.[43] He argued that a significant need for labor existed in northern Mexico with the American driven industries of mining, commercial agriculture and ranching, and railroads. Despite the availability of work, Mexican laborers too frequently found themselves in conditions of servitude and peonism. The attraction to better pay in the United States outweighed any desire to stay close to home, leading to a two-step process of migration.[44] First, internal migration occurred as a result of Mexican laborers moving from hacendados to more attractive centers in the north. The agriculture, railroad, and

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[41] John Mason Hart, *Empire and Revolution: The Americans in Mexico Since the Civil War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).
[42]Juan Mora-Torres, "'Los de casa se van, los de fuera no vienen': the first Mexican immigrants, 1848-1900," *Beyond la Frontera: the history of Mexico-U.S. migration*, ed. Mark Overmyer-Velázquez (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 9.
[43] Ibid, 10.
[44] Lawrence Cardoso, *Mexican Emigration to the United States,* 30. Cardoso also noted that hacienda owners along the border complained about migrations northward.

mining industries in Mexico's northern states paid relatively well because they had to compete with U.S. recruitment of labor. A second stage of migration occurred as workers found employment in the same jobs within the United States and for better pay.

United States railroad investment and expansion in Mexico cannot be underestimated for its role in leading to increased Mexican migration. Under the presidency of Porfirio Diaz, railroad concession to Americans increased dramatically, giving Americans a greater economic and physical foothold in Mexico.[45] Migration occurred first because of the labor needed to build the railroads both in Mexico and north of the border. The railroads permitted more advanced American mining to infiltrate Mexico, resulting in the displacement of Mexican miners unable to compete. Finally, the railroads facilitated the transport of people from within Mexico to the United States, making the logistics of migration easier than it had ever been.[46]

American financed railroads in Mexico connected important centers of mining to U.S. border towns in the north to facilitate the extraction of raw materials, and eventually the ease of Mexican migration. The first railroad concession given in 1877 under the Porfirian presidency went to the Mexican Central Railway Company, Ltd. from Massachusetts. Financiers of this endeavor included George Abbott and Thomas

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[45] See Hart, *Empire and Revolution.* He details how the United States financially supported the rise of Diaz over President Lerdo who refused to give American railroad concessions. Also See Gilbert G. González, "Mexican Labor Migration, 1876-1924," in *Beyond la Frontera: the History of Mexico-U.S. Migration,* ed. Mark Overmyer-Velázquez (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011). He writes that between 1909 and the late 1920s Mexicans replaced Greek, Italian, Japanese, and Korean workers on the Southwest's six main railroads, 41. For a detailed history of railroad development at the turn of the century see John Coatsworth, *Growth Against Development: The Economic Impact of Railroads in Porfirian Mexico,* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1981).

[46] See González and Fernández, "Empire and Origins," in which they found that from 1880-1910, four processes were at work: building of Mexico's railroads by U.S. companies, the investment of U.S. capital in mining and smelting, the effects of the previous modernization projects on Mexico's agriculture, and the displacement of peasant population as a consequence of foreign-inspired modernization. They claim that foreign monopolistic interests – not the *científicos* – were the principal architects of the modernization policies implemented by the administrations of Porfirio Díaz, 31.

Jefferson Coolidge of Old Colony Trust.[47] The line of Mexican Central connected Tampico on the Gulf Coast to the interior of Mexico and up to El Paso, Texas. Competing investors James Sullivan and William Jackson Palmer also received a concession to build the Mexican National Railway which runs from Chilpancingo, south of Mexico City up to the border towns of Texas from Laredo to Brownsville. A final example of these early concessions went to Caesar Cousins for his Interoceanic line to run from Veracruz to the Pacific Coast, but construction never went further west than Mexico City and Puebla where it easily connected with other railways to export goods to the north.[48]

Interests in Mexico's mineral resources of silver, copper, and gold led to the domination of Mexican mining by corporations from the United States. Examples of American investment in mining include that of Alexander Roby Shepherd who served as governor of Washington D.C. for a brief period ending in 1874. Shortly after leaving office, Shepherd began moves that would lead to the development of the Batopilas Mining Company in 1887. Setting the standard for how American investment in mining worked in Mexico, Shepherd used financing from New York investors, introduced the latest innovations in technology, and employed American engineers and supervisors to oversee Mexican laborers in the Batopilas silver mines of the Sierra Madre.[49] The Guggenheim family was heavily invested in mines, railroads, and smelters throughout Mexico, most recognizably under the name ASARCO.[50] The Guggenheim's were not

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[47] Hart, *Empire,* 77.
[48] Hart, *Empire,* 108-109; Coatsworth, *Growth Against Development*, 30. In footnote 37 Coatsworth sites the two competing groups of American entrepreneurs.
[49] Hart, *Empire,* 132-133. For a detailed history of these mines see John Mason Hart, *The Silver of the Sierra Madre: John Robinson, Boss Shepherd, and the People of the Canyons,* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2008).
[50] Hart, *Empire,* 139.

the only American businessmen with diversified investments that permitted monopolization of the extraction, processing, and transportation of resources. Charles Stillman committed financing to Mexican railroads while becoming heavily involved in the Candelaria silver mines of Durango. Additionally, in 1906, Stillman, along with William Rockefeller, and Henry Rogers headed the Amalgamated Copper Company which took over the Cananea mines in Sonora.[51]

American businessmen acquired large amounts of Mexican land through railroad concessions, but also invested in agriculture and ranching. Commercial ventures that required large tracts of land included sugar and henequen plantations, sawmills, and cattle ranches.[52] The northern, border states became ideal locations for some of the largest American landholdings. Henry Muller, a naturalized American citizen originally from Germany, held over one million acres in Chihuahua. In addition, Muller acquired numerous properties in northern Mexico to sell to other Americans.[53] Other investors included James Ben Ali Haggin, Lloyd Tevis, and George Hearst who acquired land to expand their ranching interests from Texas into Mexico. William Randolph Hearst, the son of George bought over one million acres in Chihuahua as well.[54] Edwin Marshall purchased over two million acres in Chihuahua, but also had landed interests in Sinaloa, along the western coast. South of Arizona in Sonora, Simeon Tucker owned over four

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[51] Hart, *Empire,* 77. For a list of U.S. multinational corporations in control of Mexican mining see also Thomas F. O'Brien, *The Revolutionary Mission: American Enterprise in Latin America, 1900-1945*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 254. O'Brien notes that a handful of American mining companies controlled two-thirds of all investment in Mexican mines and smelters by the outbreak of revolution.
[52] Hart, *Empire,*167.
[53] Ibid., 173.
[54] Ibid., 179-180.

million acres. Finally, Edgar T. Welles and J.P. Morgan, along with others forming the International Company of Mexico, purchased eighteen million acres in Baja California.[55]

Peasant unrest erupted in the Mexican countryside in the years leading up to the 1910 revolution due to foreign appropriation of land for agricultural and railroad investments.[56] In the nineteenth century, rural Mexico underwent a modernization from the *ejido* system to more profitable haciendas involved in commercial farming.[57] The result of growing haciendas led to the displacement of small farmers, and the weakening of social and economic ties to rural communities as people moved into wage labor. Hired by hacendados under oppressive conditions, rural inhabitants saw their standard of living worsen. Peasants fell into a system of debt peonage (*peonismo*), working to pay an initial loan that many would never pay off. The debt then passed on to the next generation, making *peonismo* inheritable. This is precisely the type of oppressive labor that people sought to escape when migrating north of the border, even if they once again performed agricultural labor.

According to Alejandro Portes, migration did not spontaneously sprout from economic hardship. He argued that it is too simplistic to solely examine economic conditions in determining causes of migration, but scholars must also look at social causation. Portes identified a pattern in which people exposed to Americanization

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[55] See appendices 1 & 2 in Hart, *Empire*¸ for a partial listing of American landholdings and ownership in Mexico.
[56] According to Mora-Torres, "Los de casa se van," one of the things that made Mexico advantageous for foreign investment is that labor was paid in silver while exported goods were paid in gold. This meant that labor was very cheap while the goods being produced by that labor were making a lot of money.
[57] Douglas Massey, "Economic Development and International Migration in Comparative Perspective," in *Determinants of Emigration from Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean,* ed. Sergio Diaz-Briquets and Sydney Weintraub (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991), 33. Massey found that the first waves of migration from Mexico began as a result of enclosure of communal land, capitalization of agriculture, and market creation, and began shortly after the turn of the century.

through U.S. political intervention were more likely to migrate.[58] In Mexico there is a long history of this type of political and economic intervention, as detailed above. Mexican peasants, therefore, became familiarized with American corporate work culture in railroads, commercial agriculture, and industrialization.[59] The experience with the American system of labor eased the decision to migrate, knowing one had the skills and wherewithal to survive working in the United States.

From the mid-1800s to the outbreak of revolution economic and social factors contributed to the migration flow north from Mexico. American investment in cooperation with Mexican elites shifted the economic landscape to one of industrialization and commercialization of agriculture, supported by wage labor. The poor working conditions that characterized wage labor in Mexico, along with the disassociation from community, and social conditions of familiarity with the territory and work culture of the United States were the social circumstances which contributed to migration.

1910 Revolution to 1929

In 1910, revolution erupted in Mexico as Indians and the peasantry rose up to demand economic reforms, achieve freedom through effective village government, and defend the sovereignty of the nation through the overthrow of Porfirio Díaz. Essentially ruling as a dictator from his first year in office in 1876, Diaz opened the nation to foreign

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[58] Alejandro Portes, "Unauthorized Immigration and Immigration Reform: Present Trends and Prospects," in *Determinants of Emigration from Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean,* ed. Sergio Diaz-Briquets and Sydney Weintraub (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991), 77.
[59] See O'Brien, *The Revolutionary Mission,* for his analysis of American corporate culture which he defines as a distinct combination of material accomplishments, blending of new values like individualism and old values like hard work.

investment and ownership of natural resources, which led to unrest in various sectors of society. Mexican elites joined the revolutionary effort for many of the same reasons as the peasantry, but also saw an opportunity to gain political power in Diaz's absence. Factions began to form among the revolutionary leadership and their followers, initiating nearly two decades of political instability.

In addition to economic causation, the political instability in Mexico contributed to migration to the United States from 1910 to 1929. Cities in Texas with a historical ethnic Mexican population, like San Antonio, and new locals of settlement, like Houston saw an increase in their population of Mexican migrants. Although the hard numbers increased during this time period, the rate of increase did not change significantly from the previous decade.

Census records show a rate of increase of slightly more than double from 103,393 Mexican migrants in 1900 to 221, 915 migrants in 1910. The population of Mexicans doubled once again in the following decade to 486,418 Mexican migrants in 1920. One study of the 1920 census statistics stated that the "immigrant invasion" was no more serious than it had been two or three generations prior, and posed no greater threat to American institutions.[60]

In the aftermath of the Mexican revolution, the nation experienced a period of continued unrest known as the Cristero Revolt from 1926 to 1929, with a second wave from 1932-1936. The revolt erupted in response to the repression of the Catholic Church

[60] U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Immigrants and Their Children, 1920: A study based on census statistics relative to the foreign born and the native white of foreign or mixed parentage,* Census Monographs VII, (Washington: D.C.: United States Government printing Office Washington, 1927): 10 and 78, archive.org/details/immigrantstheirc07carprich (accessed November 30, 2012).

by the government of Plutarco Elías Calles.[61] The Church interpreted articles 3, 5, 24, 27 and 130 of the 1917 Mexican Constitution as anticlerical in nature because they placed the government in control of social functions such as public education and healthcare. In June of 1926, President Calles enforced restrictions placed on the Catholic Church, specifically those outlined in Article 130, which limited the powers of the clergy from owning property, speaking out on political issues, and placed churches under the supervision of the government in matters of worship and leadership. In response, the Church suspended worship by August, and lay citizens took up arms against the government. Although the regional expanse and participation in the fighting was limited, the violence, political instability, and oppression of the Cristiada, as the uprising came to be known, provided further cause for migration to the United States.

During the Cristiada, from 1926 to 1929, the majority of fighting took place in North Central and Western Mexico. The Cristeros were agrarian and manual laborers, small farmers, rancheros, and some indigenous communities, not middle class or elites who feared agrarian reform.[62] They faced resistance from the federal army and from agraristas armed by the Mexican government. Over the course of the conflict tens of thousands of Mexicans fought against each other. In 1929, alone there were approximately 50,000 Cristeros, and throughout the rebellion 25,000 agraristas served

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[61] According to Jean A. Meyer, *The Cristero Rebellion: The Mexican People Between Church and State, 1926-1929* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), the problems boiling beneath the surface of the Cristiada are related to global capitalism which Mexico was trying to become a part of in the aftermath of the revolution. The government of Mexico was deeply invested in a modernization of the state.
[62] Ibid., 87.

permanently as auxiliary troops in the federal army.[63] Those who found themselves targets of violence from both sides sought refuge in the cities or in the United States.[64]

Although the instability of the revolution and the Cristiada lead to migration, calls for low-wage labor in the Southwestern United States also prompted movement during this time period.[65] In 1917, the United States introduced a literacy act to slow immigration, but with pressure from the railroads the government suspended the policy for Mexican migrants.[66] With the U.S. entrance into World War I, and migration of African Americans from the south to industrial centers in the northern part of the country, there was a need for cheap labor in agriculture as well. Considered docile and naturally suited to agriculture, Mexicans were preferred by growers over poor whites.[67] Additionally, growers knew they could underpay or withhold pay, and intimidate Mexican laborers without much legal recourse because as non-citizens Mexican laborers rarely approached authorities.

Employers considered Mexican workers "birds of passage," migrants who stayed in the United States temporarily, only to fulfill labor needs. The proximity of Mexico to the United States helped facilitate this belief. The categorization as "birds of passage," allowed employers to justify migrant labor, arguing the population would never become a burden to American society because they were unlikely to settle. As a result of the belief

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[63] Ibid., 85 and 106.
[64] Christopher Boyer, *Becoming Campesinos: Politics, Identity, and Agrarian Struggle in Postrevolutionary Michoacán, 1920-1935* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 179.
[65] See Emilio Zamora, "Labor Formation, Community, and Politics: the Mexican Working Class in Texas 1900-1945," in *Border Crossings: Mexican and Mexican-American Workers* ed. John Mason Hart (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1998), 139-162.
[66] Gilbert G. Gonzalez, "Mexican Labor Migration, 1876-1924," in *Beyond la Frontera: The History of Mexico-U.S. Migration* ed. Mark Overmyer-Velázquez (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 39.
[67] Michael Snodgrass, "The Bracero Program, 1942-1964," in *Beyond la Frontera,* ed. Mark Overmyer-Velázquez, 82. Snodgrass argues that because growers preferred Mexican labor they created an artificial argument that agricultural labor was work white Americans would not do.

that Mexicans were unable to assimilate, it remained important for employers to maintaining the public message of Mexican laborers as temporary. Despite this notion there is evidence that some employers, such as railroad corporations sought to hire men with families because that signaled permanency of settlement and provided stability for companies.[68] The actions of private industry demonstrated their willingness to manipulate public perception and place political pressure on government in any effort to produce and improve profits.[69]

The United States once again introduced restrictions on migration in 1924 with the Johnson-Reed Act which created the quota system and launched the border patrol, marking the beginnings of a militarized southern border. The quota system was based on national origin, which established limits on admissible migrants based on country of origin. With the introduction of this immigration restriction came the categorization of "illegality" as a status attached to migrants whose presence in the United States was a legal impossibility but a social reality.[70] Interpreted as a restrictionist policy based on race, the 1924 act gave preference to migrants from countries that "preserve the ideal of American homogeneity."[71] However, American employers still needed a source of cheap labor, and at their insistence the 1924 quotas did not apply to migrants from any territory

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[68] Gonzalez, 'Mexican Labor Migration," 41-44, See also Jorge Durand and Patricia Arias, *La experiencia migrante: Iconografía de la migración México-Estados Unidos* (Mexico: Altexto, 2000), 69.

[69] Cardoso, *Mexican Emigration to the United States,* notes that providing assistance and other encouragements for Mexican laborers to establish stable settlement in the United States were championed by the religious and by capitalists, but criticized by unions and U.S. workers.

[70] Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 4.

[71] U.S. Department of State, Office of the Historian, "The Immigration Act of 1924 (Johnson-Reed Act)," http://history.state.gov/milestones/1921-1936/ImmigrationAct. The primary nations that fell under the quota system were those Eastern European countries with whom the U.S. fought during World War I.

in the western hemisphere, including Mexicans. Still, Mexican migration dropped significantly in these years through administrative means.[72]

Depression

In 1929 the U.S. Supreme Court upheld a decree declaring that individuals who commuted between Mexico and the United States for employment purposes were legal migrants. However, with the start of global depression in the same year, there also began efforts to repatriate Mexican migrants. The underlying truth of repatriation efforts is that the Mexican presence in the United States is tolerated and maybe even desired, as long as it serves the economic needs of the country. However, this same population is then blamed, targeted, and rejected when the country falls into economic crisis, as was the case during the Depression.[73] As several scholars have noted, hostile actions towards Mexican migrants are often projected on all ethnic Mexicans, regardless of citizenship, resulting in a legacy of discrimination that continues to inform Mexican cultural identity in the United States.[74]

State agencies initiated repatriation efforts with federal support, as well as cooperation of the Mexican government. Both Mexican and American governments agreed to the language of repatriation rather than deportation because it sounded less negative. Local government officials introduced plans to encourage "voluntary" deportation, but carried out coercion and scare tactics that informed Mexican laborers

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[72] Mark Reisler, "Always the Laborer, Never the Citizen: Anglo Perceptions of the Mexican Immigrant during the 1920s," *Between Two Worlds: Mexican Immigrants in the United States* ed. David G. Gutiérrez (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1996) , 23.
[73] In the United States, migrants of various nationalities have traditionally been targeted for taking American jobs during periods of national economic hardship. During the Great Depression, Mexicans were blamed for unemployment and for taking resources, like charitable contributions, from others.
[74] See George Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American*, and Ngai, *Impossible Subjects.*

they were unwelcome in this environment of high unemployment.[75] Most who voluntarily departed believed they would face forcible removal if they did not cooperate. U.S. based committees and organizations raised money for returning migrants to use for travel and provisions. Although the official program targeted illegal migrants, particularly criminals, of no specific ethnic background, statistics show that Mexicans were overwhelmingly deported more than any other migrant population.[76]

While the Americans had their methods of encouraging repatriation, the Mexican government also persuaded Mexican citizens with the promise of land in colonies set aside specifically for repatriates, but these programs never fully materialized.[77] From the Mexican perspective, large-scale migration remained an embarrassment and aiding repatriations was a "humanitarian act of true nationalism".[78] Various sectors of Mexican society worked together to ease the repatriation efforts, including waving taxes for a larger value of imports so people could return with their material possessions, providing transportation to the interior at no cost to repatriates, and devising programs that would make the best use of the labor skills of returning migrants.

Returning migrants found themselves unwanted on both sides of the border, with the realization that non-migrant Mexicans perceived them as traitors to their country, Americanized, and an economic burden. Many repatriates who used transportation provided by the government were first transported to border towns where many decided

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[75] Abraham Hoffman, *Unwanted Mexican Americans During the Great Depression: Repatriation Pressures, 1929-1939* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1974).
[76] See Hoffman, *Unwanted Mexican Americans,* 101-105; Camille Guerin-Gonzales, *Mexican Workers and American Dreams: Immigration, Repatriation, and California Farm Labor, 1900-1939* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1994).
[77] Some colonies were established at Pinotepa in Oaxaca, El Coloso in Guerrero, and La Esperanza in Tamaulipas. See Francisco E. Balderrama and Raymond Rodríguez, *Decade of Betrayal: Mexican Repatriation in the 1930s,* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006), 185.
[78] Fernando Saúl Alanís Enciso, "The Repatriation of Mexicans from the United States and Mexican nationalism, 1929-1940," in *Beyond la Frontera,* ed. Mark Overmyer-Velázquez, 52.

to stay, before going to the interior or attempting to return to the United States. Mexicans already living in the region resented this increase in population at the border which placed a burden on local governments and economies. Due to their dress and language, returning migrants became distinguishable from non-migrants, leading to criticism that they were more American than Mexican. Some repatriates reported that their American born children had difficulty adjusting to Mexican life and customs, indicating the introduction of new ideas and practices with the movement of people back and forth across the border.[79] Estimates range around 500,000 Mexicans returned to Mexico during the Depression, and the experiences of this first large wave of transnational migrants demonstrated the beginnings of a complicated culture and identity that would develop around Mexican migration to the United States.

Despite the negative tensions surrounding Mexican migrant labor in the United States, evidence suggests that during the Depression, officials on both sides of the border initiated efforts to establish a contract labor system.[80] Mexican government officials in the late 1920s and early 30s concluded Mexican migration served as a "safety valve" for Mexico because movement continued regardless of their efforts to curb migration in the 1920s.[81] There is no evidence linking the intentionality of using migration as a means of easing political and economic unrest in Mexico, and in many sectors of society rebellions continued but none as widespread as the revolution. In 1929, at the tail end of the Cristero Rebellion, Mexican officials introduced the idea of a worker program to the United States, but a formal agreement did not materialize at the time. During the

[79] Hoffman, *Unwanted Mexican Americans,* 148-150.
[80] Cardoso, *Mexican Emigration,* 117.
[81] Manuel García y Grego, "The Importation of Mexican Contract Laborers to the United States, 1942-1964," in *Between Two Worlds,* ed. David G. Gutiérrez, 46.

Depression, migration dropped because of repatriations, lack of jobs in the United States, and because American private enterprise was not focused on investments in Mexico, laborers in Mexico were not being displaced.[82] While American workers and labor unions applauded the decline, commercial agriculture and industry wanted to continue migrations. By the late 1930s, southwestern growers in the United States lobbied congressmen for a contract labor program.[83]

Contract Labor Agreements, 1942-1964

With the entry of the United States into World War II, there was a great need for labor. This labor came from a variety of sources and included women, African Americans, and Mexican migrant labor contracted through the Bracero Program. An agreement between the United States and Mexican governments, the Bracero Program allowed for the recruitment of laborers south of the border and contracted them to work with participating corporations in the United States. From 1942 to 1964, approximately 4.6 million labor contracts were signed, making this the largest foreign labor source in the United States.[84]

The United States entered World War II in 1942, and government officials sold the Bracero Program to the Mexican people as a patriotic duty in solidarity with the

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[82] Hart, *Empire and Origins,* 10.
[83] Snodgrass, "The Bracero Program," 82.
[84] http://braceroarchive.org/about, December 26, 2012. For a complete history of the Bracero Program see Ernesto Galarza, *Merchants of Labor: The Mexican Bracero Story* (Charlotte: McNally and Loftin, 1964); Richard B. Craig, *The Bracero Program: Interest Groups and Foreign Policy* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1971); Henry P. Anderson, *The Bracero Program in California* (New York: Arno Press, 1976); Peter N. Kirstein, *Anglo over Braceros: A History of the Mexican Worker in the United States from Roosevelt to Nixon* (San Francisco: R & E Associates, 1977); Juan Ramón García, *Operation Wetback: The Mass Deportation of Mexican Undocumented Workers in 1954* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1980); Kitty Calavita, *Inside the State: The Bracero Program, Immigration, and the I.N.S.* (New York: Routledge, 1992); and Deborah Cohen, *Braceros: Migrant Citizens and Transnational Subjects in the Postwar United States and Mexico* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011).

Allies. During the war, fewer contracts were awarded than at any other time of the program, indicating that the true value lay in providing a steady stream of comparatively cheap labor and not necessarily in filling a labor shortage. In fact, the program awarded seventy-two percent of bracero contracts between 1955 and 1964.[85]

Both large scale agriculturalists and the Mexican government held interests in sustaining the Bracero Program for as long as possible. In 1943, Public Law 45 formalized the program with details of the contract, including the provision that the United States government would be responsible for ensuring follow through. Set to expire in 1946, the program became extended through 1947, after growers lobbied the American government. Large growers argued the advantages of having a ready pool of workers available to perform the seasonal work involved in farming rather than going out to find domestic workers as the need arose.[86] While the Bracero Program functioned as an executive order since its introduction, it became Public Law 78 in 1951, under pressure from the Mexican government, and existed as such until 1964, when all contracts ceased. As a public law, the program adopted a formal process for contracting labor, an important protection for workers that the Mexican government wanted to ensure, especially because of increasing enticements to import workers without documents.

An increase in undocumented migration emerged as one of the unintended consequences of the Bracero Program, which in the long run benefitted American

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[85] Manuel García y Griego, "The Importation of Mexican Contract Laborers," 49.
[86] Ernesto Galarza, *Merchants of Labor: The Mexican Bracero Story* (Santa Barbara, CA: McNally and Lofti, 164), 48.

employers and smugglers.[87] Large growers recruited outside the confines of the program because they wanted to be able to offer wages lower than those established by the bracero agreement. In addition, farmers living in restricted territories without access to bracero labor sought alternative means of acquiring workers from Mexico. In an effort to protect their citizens, the Mexican government established a base pay for braceros and restricted workers from being hired into territories known for their mistreatment of Mexicans. Included among the early restricted territories was Texas, a major agricultural hub and traditional region for Mexican labor, so growers subverted the legal system and hired workers without formal contracts.[88] Public Law 78 not only established a formal process for contracting Mexican labor, but it also "dried out" or legalized many Mexicans who entered the country without papers by allowing them to stay in the U.S. to work with a contract.

With the Bracero Program, American employers institutionalized a system of exploiting Mexican labor that continues to this day. Ernesto Galarza wrote in *Merchants of Labor,* his study on the Bracero Program in California, that large agricultural farmers pressured the American government to establish, administer, and renew the policies that permitted Mexican migrant labor. In addition, agriculturalists manipulated the established policies to ensure the labor supply, decrease wages, and generally create conditions that were to the benefit of the farm owners.[89] Critics of the Bracero Program referred to it alternately as "a form of imported colonialism," and as a legalized form of

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[87] See Julian Samora, *Los Mojados: The Wetback Story* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1971) for a detailed analysis of the process and consequences of undocumented migration.
[88] Garcia y Grego, "Mexican Contract Laborers, 1942-1964," 52-53.
[89] Ernesto Galarza, *Merchants of Labor: The Mexican Bracero Story: An account of the managed migration of Mexican farm workers in California, 1942-1964.* (Santa Barbara:McNally and Lofti, 1964).

slavery.[90] These perspectives reflected the opinions of many within Mexico who held a negative view of the program. While critics vilified the United States because of the mistreatment and injustices committed by Americans, they also showed frustration over the failures of the Mexican government. As Snodgrass expressed, “Here was the Mexican government, after all, recruiting poor young country boys to go work for gringo farmers on lands that were once Mexican.”[91]

Then, as now, opinions in Mexico surrounding migration varied. While some denounced the Bracero Program for its exploitation of workers, the Mexican state continued to support the program, and braceros both with and without documents continued to migrate. News of mistreatment by American employers and discrimination from the American public circulated in newspapers, corridos, and the stories of returning migrants, yet those who migrated overlooked negative reports with an eye towards opportunity and adventure in the United States.

From the perspective of the U.S. government, in addition to providing a cheap source of labor, the Bracero Program served as a tool to promote positive relations within Mexico. Migrants often returned to their communities of origin with favorable views of the United States, even when braceros had negative experiences. Not wanting to worry family with tales of mistreatment, or portray one’s time laboring in the United States as unproductive, returning braceros shared stories of personal success and material gain.

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[90] Ngai, *Impossible Subjects,* 13; Snodgrass, “The Bracero Program,” 80; Gilbert G. González, *Guest Workers or Colonized Labor? Mexican Labor Migration to the United States,* (New York: Paradigm, 2005).
[91] Snodgrass, “The Bracero Program,” 80.

Within the context of the Cold War these positive accounts served to extol the virtues of democracy and capitalism in Mexico.[92]

Positive reports from returning migrants facilitated the recruitment of men as undocumented labor. Migrants often accepted the work because of the potential for economic advancement available in the United States, and because of the difficulty in acquiring a bracero contract. Bureaucratic red tape held up the process for many aspiring braceros. Daniel Galvan, a returning bracero aspirant in 1958, waited two weeks at the recruitment center in Empalme, Sonoroa, losing hope that he would acquire another contract. He explained his experience, "I met some men from the state of Yucatán. And with them was a man whom they called, *el licenciado*, who represented all the people from Yucatán applying for bracero contracts. And I spoke to him and he told me, 'Give me $200 Mexican pesos and I will help you.' Alright, I gave him $200 pesos and waited about fifteen more days. And I got the contract, and crossed over again."[93] Galvan's experience showed that some perspective braceros paid extra money to cut through the paperwork, while others without access to those resources accepted work outside the program altogether.

Many of the contemporary problems surrounding Mexican migration and labor have historical antecedents in the manipulations of American agriculturalists during the Bracero Program. Because commercial ranchers and farmers wanted cheap labor they bypassed bracero contracts when they were excluded from the program (as in the case of Texas), the bureaucracy of the program proved inconvenient, or employers simply wanted to underpay their workers. Hiring migrant labor outside the Bracero Program

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[92] Ibid, 94.
[93] Daniel Galvan interview with Juan Galvan, October 21, 2004, UH-Oral History of Houston, Houston History Project, Special Collections, University of Houston.

stimulated the process of undocumented migration, reduced wages to a level in which they became uncompetitive in a domestic labor market, and created a labor industry characterized as work that Americans will not do. Under the circumstances created by large scale American farmers, agricultural labor carried a social stigma that offended the sensibilities of American workers. In conjunction with meager wages, the hiring of a predominantly migrant population to do farming succeeded in reinforcing the belief that agricultural labor existed below the dignity of American workers.

While the Bracero Program served as a method of controlling migrant labor in an attempt to ease American public concerns about a growing foreign Mexican presence, the reality that undocumented migration increased during the era of Bracero contracts led to demands for a government response.[94] Requests to curb undocumented migration came both from within the United States and from the Mexican government.[95] The Mexican government faced internal pressures from landholders who complained about the flight of labor to the United States. In addition, government officials argued undocumented migration threatened the Bracero Program whose provisions had been carefully negotiated in an effort to protect Mexican workers north of the border. The American response came in the form of the U.S. Border Patrol which originated systematic deportations of undocumented Mexican migrants beginning in 1943 and culminated with Operation Wetback in 1954.[96]

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[94] See Juan Ramon Garcia, *Operation Wetback*, for an outline of the argument that the Bracero program was introduced to quell public concerns about Mexican migrant labor in the United States.
[95] Garcia y Grego, "The Importation of Mexican Contract Laborers," 56 and Kelly Lytle Hernández, "The Crimes and Consequences of Illegal Immigration: A Cross-Border Examination of Operation Wetback, 1943-1954," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 37 (2006): 427.
[96] For an outline of the argument that the government participated in a decade-long build up of deportations prior to Operation Wetback see Lytle Hernández, "The Crimes and Consequences of Illegal Immigration," 422-444.

Table 1.1: U.S. Border Patrol Apprehensions 1943-1955

Year	**Number of Deportations & Apprehensions**
1943	11,775
1944	39,449
1945	
1946	80,760
1947	
1948	116,320
	214,543
	217,505
1949	296,337
1950	579,105
1951	501,713*
1953	*827,440**
1954	1,089,583*
1955	254,096*

Source: Deportations for the years 1943-1950 according to United States Department of Justice, *Annual Report of the Immigration and Naturalization Service for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1950,* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1950).*Apprehensions according to Kelly Lytle Hernández, "The Crimes and Consequences of Illegal Immigration: A Cross-Border Examination of Operation Wetback, 1943-1954," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 37 (Winter, 2006): 429-443.

Concern grew about a perceived invasion of Mexican foreign nationals due to public reports of the increasing number of deportations. The public did not understand that in part the reason for increased apprehensions simply rested in the fact that it became a priority, and that reports included repeat apprehensions of the same person. Early recommendations proposed legislation that penalized employers for hiring laborers without proper work authorization. The district director of the Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) branch in San Antonio submitted: "The chief problem in

this district is still the wetback….About the only additional legislation that would appear to be of any help would be to make it an offense to employ any alien unlawfully in the country."[97] This proposal faced backlash from those who argued the difficulty involved in proving employers knowingly hired undocumented workers.

In 1951, President Truman appointed a president's commission on migratory labor to study the conditions of migrant workers. Members of the committee included academics, policy officials, and one community liaison: Maurice T. Van Hecke was a law professor, Noble Clark served in the United Nations as deputy director general for food and agriculture, William M. Leiserson held a PhD in economics and often mediated labor disputes, Robert E. Lucey was the archbishop of San Antonio who was familiar with the Mexican American population in the U.S. and efforts to organize labor, Peter H. Odegard who received a doctorate in political science, and Varden Fuller whose PhD in agricultural economics led to work on various issues of farm labor in the public and private sector.[98] Recommendations proposed by the commission included an end to the legalization of undocumented migrants already living in the United States because this "drying out" only led to the regularization of movement and not the end to undocumented migration. The report also suggested a number of provisions that would improve the lives of migrant workers such as a minimum wage for all farm labor, expansion of social security to cover migrants, better enforcement of child labor laws, and improved educational opportunities funded by the government if necessary.[99] Publication of the

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[97] U.S. Department of Justice, *Annual Report of the Immigration and Naturalization Service for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1950* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1950): 2-3.
[98] Robert S. Robinson, "Taking the Fair Deal to the Fields: Truman's Commission on Migratory Labor, Public Law 78, and the Bracero Program, 1950-1952," *Agricultural History Society* 84 (2010), 384-385.
[99] U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Standards, *The Recommendations of the President's Commission on Migratory Labor* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1952).

commission's report and recommendations came out in April 1952, and most of the recommendation went ignored. However, as suggested, the government created a federal committee on migratory farm labor which existed into the John F. Kennedy administration. Greater immigration law enforcement became the other recommendation adhered to, shifting the core of the government's response to police action targeted at migrant workers.

The INS used the agitation over the increase of a foreign Mexican presence to enhance their funding and manpower by presenting itself as the first line of defense against an invading foreign presence.[100] With the U.S. Border Patrol at the helm, the INS introduced Operation Wetback in 1954 as a military strategy that deported Mexicans with the use of apprehensions or encouraged "voluntarily" deportation through propaganda, and scare tactics.[101] Money budgeted to the agency increased by an additional $3 million in1954, one month after the start of Operation Wetback.[102] The success of the deportation and apprehension program was exaggerated both in terms of the reported number of deportations and in its long term consequences.[103] Reports of over 1 million apprehensions in fiscal year 1954 hid the impossibility of such success because the program was introduced on June 17, 1954 and the fiscal year ended on June 30th of the same month.

As indicated in table 1.1, the U.S. Border Patrol had been ramping up apprehensions and deportations for a decade prior to Operation Wetback. By every

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[100] Both the President's Commission on Migratory Labor and an INS official referred to Mexican migration as an "invasion." *Commission on Migratory Labor*, 6. See also García y Grego, 55.
[101] Juan Ramon Garcia, *Operation Wetback*.
[102] García y Griego, "The Importation of Mexican Contract Laborers," 58.
[103] See Garcia y Griego, "The Importation of Mexican Contract Laborers," 59; Lytle Hernández, "The Crimes and Consequences of Illegal Immigration," ; García, *Operation Wetback.*

indication a growth in the policing of migrants in the border region went hand in hand with the Bracero program. For example, the increased militarization of the border through the erection of fencing began in 1945 with INS sending 4500 lineal feet of chain link fence (10ft in height) to Calexico California.[104] The majority of apprehensions and deportations touted as the success of Operation Wetback actually occurred prior to the introduction of the program. Still, the significance of the effort lay in the propaganda surrounding its success, and leading to a secure future for both the INS and U.S. Border Patrol.

The Mexican government lost much of its leverage in negotiating contract labor agreements with the United States following World War II, and as a result of Operation Wetback. Because the U.S. no longer sought wartime support from its neighboring country to the south, the need to appease Mexico with favorable concessions ceased to exist. With the highly publicized success of Operation Wetback, large scale growers came under pressure to support deportations and replace undocumented laborers with bracero contract labor. Growers wanted undocumented labor in the first place to keep costs low; therefore, in an effort to get employers to buy into the Bracero Program, the program itself became less stringent.[105] After Operation Wetback, abuses of the Bracero Program continued and undocumented migration eventually resumed.

In 1955, Commissioner Joseph Swing of the INS touted the success of Operation Wetback writing, "The so-called 'wetback' problem no longer exists…. The border has

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[104] Lytle Hernández, "The Crimes and Consequences of Illegal Migration," 438. Lytle Hernández provides evidence that the INS had no intention of fencing the whole border but simply wanted to make it more difficult. She cited a memo from one official who wrote that the fence would "compel persons seeking to enter the United States illegally to attempt to go around the ends of the fence."

[105] García y Griego, "The Importation of Mexican Contract Laborers," 59.

been secured."[106] Bracero contracts continued until 1964, when under pressure from a coalition of U.S. labor unions, the church, and Mexican Americans, the decision to end the bracero program passed by a very narrow margin.[107] The decision to end the Bracero Program was a unilateral decision without any input from Mexico. Although the sanctioned contract labor program ended, the practice of undocumented labor was already solidly in place, and by 1967 apprehensions of undocumented migrants once again rose over 100,000 and a decade later in 1977 that number approached 1 million.[108]

From Mexican Miracle to the 1982 Crisis

The Bracero Program operated during a period in Mexico known as the "Mexican miracle," characterized by economic growth rooted in U.S. foreign investment and a population boom due to advancements in healthcare. With the argument that economic necessity serves as the primary cause of Mexican migration to the United States, then in theory during periods of prosperity migration would drop. The opposite occurred when Mexico experienced its economic miracle, with these years marking a period of unprecedented growth in transnational migration. Two possible rationales for this theoretical anomaly include the fact that people migrate for reasons other than economic necessity, or the "Mexican miracle" did not reach the masses. Both of these explanations hold some truth, but the latter more accurately explains the willingness of Mexican workers to serve either as contracted braceros or the unenviable alternative as undocumented labor. One crisis came with the growth in population as a result of

[106] Ibid, 59, quoted within text.
[107] Snodgrass, "The Bracero Program," 102.
[108] David G. Gutiérrez, "*Sin Fronteras?:* Chicanos, Mexican Americans, and the Emergence of the Contemporary Mexican Immigration Debate, 1968-1978," in *Between Two Worlds: Mexican Immigrants in the United States,* ed. David G. Gutíerrez (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1996), 180.

improved healthcare, resulting in the inability of revolutionary programs to meet the needs of the growing citizenship.[109] Rather than create sustainable and equitable economic growth, foreign investment in Mexico led to the displacement from traditional ways of life and ultimately high unemployment.

U.S. foreign investment reignited following World War II, both in agriculture and then by the 1960s in industry as well. The modernizing agricultural methods introduced as Mexico's so-called "Green Revolution" (1940-1980) contributed to a growth in migration because it led to the displacement of subsistence farmers who found that new techniques overtaxed the land and water resources and who could not compete with commercial agriculture. Eventually small farmers no longer produced the staple crops families survived on, leading to the importation of agricultural goods and the need for wage labor to purchase necessities.

The term, Green Revolution describes the program to modernize and improve Mexican agricultural practices and production. It developed between the Mexican government and the United States through the Rockefeller foundation which initiated, financed, and supervised the project.[110] The Mexican state ended up funding "modern" practices such as providing chemical fertilizer and chemical pesticides, irrigation systems, hybrid seeds, and mechanization. At first glance the project seemed a success with Mexico quadrupling agricultural output from 1940 to 1965.[111] Farm machinery eased and increased production, massive government investment in creating an irrigation system expanded land usage, the research and development of hybrid seeds along with

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[109] See Paul R. Ehrlich, *The Population Bomb* (New York : Ballantine Books, 1971), in which he discusses the inability of developing nations to feed their growing populations.
[110] David Sonnenfeld, "Mexico's 'Green Revolution,' 1940-1980: Towards an Environmental History," *Environmental History Review*, 16 (1992), 32.
[111] Ibid, 28.

chemicals were used to grow new crop strains faster, larger, and prevent insect infestation. Beneath the surface of this success were a series of negative economic, environmental and social consequences, each providing the impetus for migration.

In 1934, the Mexican government organized a public finance and development institution called Nacional Financiera, which invested in irrigation projects within Mexico. Principal funding for the institution came from foreign investment in the form of lines of credit from commercial banks such as Bank of America and Chase Manhattan, the U.S. Export-Import Bank, and eventually the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (the World Bank) as well as the Inter-American Development Bank.[112] The United States held large and sometimes sole interest in each of these lending institutions, which translated into a heavy influence in the decision making of Nacional Financiera.

During the Green Revolution, Nacional Financiera's irrigation program included the building of dams, irrigation works, roads, electrical power generating facilities, storage facilities, and railroads, much of it in the north. With many of these projects located in northern states, growth in agricultural production could easily supply the United States, but these investments privileged private commercial agriculture to the detriment of *ejiditarios.* As irrigation projects opened up large landholdings for commercial agriculture, local communities experienced a depletion of their water supply. The reduced water supply in conjunction with the government's decision to terminate the agrarian reform program, led to the displacement of people who used centuries old traditional and sustainable agricultural techniques. As the Green Revolution displaced *ejiditarios* from their lands in the south, the commercialization of agriculture led to a

[112] González and Fernández, "Empire and the Origins," 46.

need for labor in the north. The collision of these dual processes resulted in northward migration and eventual migration to the U.S. Other consequences of expanded irrigation included long-term environmental and public health dangers, such as contamination of water supply due to improper drainage.[113]

In addition to irrigation, the combined usage of hybrid seeds, chemical fertilizers, and pesticides undermined traditional and sustainable farming methods and led to the displacement of *ejiditarios*. Labs in the United States and Mexico developed these science based agricultural methods as improvements in farming, but they primarily benefitted commercial agriculture. Prior to the Green Revolution, *ejiditarios* maintained their crops through rain fed watering or utilizing natural irrigation methods. They also had fewer problems with insects. Pesticides became a necessity after the introduction of hybrid crops and chemical fertilizers.[114] One reason for this shift is because of repeat planting of the same crop as farmers attempted to meet marketplace demands for certain foods. Traditional methods of preventing insects and disease promote crop rotation or companion planting two crops that mutually help to ward off devastating biological threats, but these practices conflicted with the modernization of the Green Revolution. Another reason pesticides became a necessity is because hybrid seeds developed in a laboratory had a higher susceptibility to disease and insects, than those originally used in the region.[115] With these changes in agriculture, farmers became increasingly dependent on modern systems introduced by the Green Revolution, and the costs to sustain modern planting proved too high for many *ejiditarios*.

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[113] Sonnenfield, "Mexico's 'Green Revolution,'" 39.
[114] Erin G. Graham, "Bordering Chaos: Mothers, Daughters, and Neoliberalism" (PhD diss., University of Houston, 2010), 76.
[115] Over time hybrid seeds are developed to possess properties that are resistant to disease and insects.

Beyond the modernization of Mexican agriculture, the Green Revolution also impacted the economy, driving down prices. The denial of price supports further contributed to the dislocation of small farmers. As a result of Mexico's partnership with the United States in the Green Revolution, American corporations invested in Mexican agriculture through the production and sale of machinery, fertilizer, seeds, and pesticides, and through the merchandising of agricultural goods.[116] Transnational corporations encouraged both small and commercial farmers to use the "modern" goods and supplies, leading to a dependence on company seeds and methods. The dependence on industry-promoted goods meant that corporations could dictate what is produced and how it is produced. As commercial agriculture became more profitable, subsistence farmers made attempts at competing with marketplace demand. In an attempt to meet demand for luxury fruits and vegetables, such as strawberries and asparagus, subsistence farmers neglected the needs of producing basic foodstuffs for their families. As a result, it became necessary for Mexico to import basic food grains like corn and beans.[117]

If irrigation and overworking the land had not displaced *ejiditarios*, the final push came from the inability to compete with the prices for commercial agriculture and trade advantages that favored those with a higher yield. In response to their inability to profit or subsist from the land, *ejiditarios* migrated. Some worked as laborers for commercial farmers, others moved to urban areas to find work, and many migrated to the United States to contribute to the household. Beyond internal and external migration, the

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[116] Ibid, 46. Companies involved in Mexico's agriculture included Anderson Clayton, John Deere, International Harvester, Celanese, Monsanto, Dupont, American Cyanamid, Corn Products, United Fruit, and Ralston Purina.

[117] See Sonnenfield, "Mexico's 'Green Revolution'," for an analysis of how Mexico experienced a decade of sluggish growth in agricultural productivity, rapid population growth, and was importing basic food grains, 28.

devastating consequences of the Green Revolution extended to former *ejidos,* land left fallow in Mexico with families depending on remittances rather than working unprofitable land to survive. By the end of the 1970s, the failures of the "Green Revolution" began to show, but not before Mexico became the model for introducing "modern" agricultural programs throughout the developing world, instituting a "sustaining agricultural imperialism."[118]

American financiers replicated their agricultural investments with industrial development for export, which made the country dependent on the global market.[119] In addition, because laborers in both agriculture and industry were paid less than a living wage they did not provide a sustainable consumer base within Mexico. Without a strong internal market when demand for Mexican exports dropped in the 1980s, the country experienced economic decline. Leading up to the 1982 crisis, Mexico had already experienced a decade of slow growth in agricultural productivity, rapid increase in population, and the importation of basic food stuffs.

The state attempted to stimulate the internal economic market through the implementation of Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI), a modernizing policy adopted throughout Latin America. ISI aids the growth of industrialization within the nation through government investment and protectionist trade policies.[120] Investments included price supports on agriculture and subsidized loans to industries, while trade

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[118] Graham, "Bordering Chaos," 78.
[119] Saskia Sassen, "U.S. Immigration Policy toward Mexico in a Global Economy," in *Between Two Worlds: Mexican Immigrants in the United States* ed. David G. Gutiérrez (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1996) 213-227. Sassen argues that the common factor in countries that send migrants to the U.S. is the presence of a specific type of foreign investment in development for export.
[120] Dolores Acevedo & Thomas J. Espenshade, "Implications of the North American Free Trade Agreement for Mexican Migration into the United States," in *Between Two Worlds,* ed. David G. Gutiérrez, 231. According to the authors, countries with high out migration turn to ISI as the preferred industrialization strategy.

policies included high import tariffs as well as non-tariff barriers like quotas placed on imports, import licensing, and overvalued exchange rates to reduce the costs of critical goods needed in the development of industry. U.S.-Mexico political and economic relations undermined the ISI protectionist policies as industrial foreign investment increased in the latter half of the 1960s.[121] Problems arose because many Mexican corporations had not become competitive in the international market and therefore could not expand. With limited domestic markets, the initial employment opportunities brought by protected industries began to falter.

While American agriculture maintained a secure source of labor coming from Mexico, American industry also began to look south of the border for cheap labor. To this end, Mexican President Gustavo Diaz Ordaz developed the Border Industrialization Program (BIP) in conjunction with American manufacturers in 1965. The root of this program lay in the large numbers of unemployed Mexicans amassing in border cities due to repatriation or awaiting the opportunity to migrate north. In 1961, the Mexican government began efforts to buildup the infrastructure and economy of the border with the Programa Nacíonal Fronterizo (PRONAF – National Border Program). PRONAF employed Mexicans living in the north to pave roads, build factories, beautify city sections along the border, and build industrial parks that included electricity, water, and branch lines of railroad trucks for transport to and from the main line[122] As part of PRONAF, Arthur D. Little, one of the oldest management consulting firms in the world, accepted a contract to study industrial development along the border, and suggested

[121] Graham, "Bordering Chaos," 54.
[122] Anna-Stina Ericson, "An Analysis of Mexico's Border Industrialization Program," *Monthly Labor Review* 93 (1970), 33.

removal of the obstacles to the rapid growth of industrial enterprises.[123] By 1965 the recommendations were implemented in the BIP, characterized the development of *maquilas* or factories along the border.

It is no coincidence that the introduction of the BIP came shortly after the demise of the Bracero Program. Proponents of the build-up of *maquilas* argued that it would help curb migration because the factories would employ men who previously sought labor in the United States. However, under the BIP, corporations oversaw the feminization of labor, that is the hiring of a primarily female labor force, leading to a growth in the available workforce and accompanied by a drop in wages due to oversupply of labor.[124] For men these conditions contributed to high unemployment and often the decision to migrate north of the border. Women working in the *maquilas* experienced a familiarity with U.S. labor culture, and just as with Mexican men generations before, higher wages for the same labor in the U.S. offered these women the next step in potential upward mobility.

As a result of the BIP, foreign industrial development expanded rapidly in Mexico, setting the stage for large-scale migrations. By May 1970, approximately 160 new *maquilas* emerged in Mexico, employing over 17,000 workers.[125] Initially production in the *maquilas* was limited to exports so as not to compete with the nation's ISI efforts. However, as early as 1972, changes in legislation permitted access to the domestic market, and allowed for the location of *maquilas* anywhere in the country.[126]

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[123] Arthur D. Little, Inc., *Survey of the Institutional and Financial Requirements of Medium and Small Industry in Mexico* (March 1963), 33.
[124] The idea of the "feminization of labor" is introduced by Sassen, "U.S. Immigration Policy," 220.
[125] Ericson, "An Analysis of Mexico's Border Industrialization Program," 33.
[126] Joshua A. Cohen, "The Rise of the Maquiladoras," *Business Mexico* 4 (1994), 52. The original BIP agreement limited *maquila* development to within 20 km of the border.

Further deteriorations of the internal market occurred in response to the debt crisis of 1982 when Mexico's state-run industries underwent privatization, and Mexico made agreements to significantly reduce their protective barriers.[127] Miguel de la Madrid attempted to stabilize the economy with the Programa Inmediato de Reordenacion Económica (PIRE - Immediate Economic Reorganization Program), which opened up the economy to foreign investment and reduced public spending. Established with the help of a loan from the International Monetary Fund, the PIRE cut spending with the elimination of subsidies for transportation and food.[128]

The consequences of growing foreign investment in Mexico are evident from the growth of the *maquila* industry. Over the decade of the 1980s, the number of factories grew from 539 to 1,834, along with a growth in employment from 113,897 people to 441,126.[129] The economic conditions contributing to a growing migrant labor force must be understood within the context of a globalized economy. Low wages in Mexico along with continued high unemployment rates were consequences of foreign investment and failed protectionism, and served as economic factors contributing to the growth in undocumented migrant labor.

1986 IRCA to NAFTA

In response to the high levels of undocumented migration, Congress with House Judiciary Committee Chair Peter Rodino (D-NJ) at the helm, drafted legislation to curb undocumented migration and deal with the unauthorized population already living in the United States. Prior to this, the most significant U.S. immigration reform had been the

[127] Graham, *Bordering Chaos,* 56.
[128] Ibid, 58.
[129] Cohen, "The Rise of the Maquiladoras," 52.

Hart-Cellar Act of 1965, which adjusted the national origins quota system to give preference to family reunification and those with skilled labor. With an emphasis placed on permitting migration for family members of citizens or U.S. residents, increasing numbers of women migrated to the United States to join their male relatives serving as America's labor. Attempts to pass immigration legislation faltered throughout the 1970s, including a reform package introduced by President Jimmy Carter in 1977. The Carter plan adopted much of the proposed legislation introduced by Rodino and Congress, such as sanctions for employers who hired unauthorized workers, increased appropriations to the INS for greater policing of the border, and legalization for undocumented migrants already residing in the U.S.[130]

Despite the failure to pass immigration reform, support for provisions persisted and under President Ronal Reagan, an immigration compromise was once again introduced in 1982. After failing a couple of rounds of legislation, the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) passed in 1986 with three key provisions that paralleled those proposed by Carter: stronger border enforcement, penalties for employers who knowingly hired unauthorized migrant labor, and limited amnesty for undocumented migrants able to prove continuous residence in the U.S. since January 1, 1982. In addition, the 1986 IRCA authorized a guest worker program for agriculture, funding to individual states for the processing of detained migrants, and the creation of what became E-Verify to confirm authorized status of migrants.

The 1986 IRCA intended to address the problem of undocumented migration, but this movement of Mexican labor continued. One of the failures of the reform policy lay

[130] Gutierrez, "Sin Fronteras?" 196-197. Gutierrez found that Mexican Americans protested much of the Carter plan because it looked almost like the Rodino proposal.

in the inability of Congress to address broader global capitalist forces, many of which originate in the U.S. Any policy that focuses solely on migrant status and border patrol will likely fail because it ignores the fact that as countries become more economically and politically integrated, the more likely large-scale migration between nations will occur.[131] It should therefore come as no surprise that migration increased after the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

The policies leading to the NAFTA agreement had been evolving for years with a gradual shift to division of labor at a global scale. Although Congress did not pass international economic reforms, they did authorize the creation of the Commission for the Study of International and Cooperative Economic Development (CSIMCED) as part of the 1986 reform. The CSIMCED suggested increased trade between the United States and Mexico, acknowledging this would initially lead to the destruction of peasant social systems and increased migration, but arguing it would reduce migration in the long run.[132] This suggestion became NAFTA, signed in 1992 and enforced in 1994 under the U.S. presidency of Bill Clinton and the Mexican presidency of Ernesto Zedillo. Late nineteenth century U.S. investments in Mexico's railroad development, agricultural production, ranching, and mining demonstrate early interests in Mexican raw materials and labor. American funding of the Green Revolution and BIP serve as further evidence of the joint need for Mexico to provide cheap labor and exports to the United States. The policies of economic neoliberalism culminated with NAFTA under the guise of free

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[131] Sassen, "U.S. Immigration Policy," 216; Douglas Massey, "Economic Development and International Migration in Comparative Perspective," in *Determinants of Immigration from Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean*, ed. Sergio Díaz-Briquets and Sydney Weintraub (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), 4.
[132] Acevedo & Esphenshade, "Implications," 232-233.

trade, that is to say market relations unhindered by the state. However, in its provisions, NAFTA ignored the political policies leading to the internationalization of labor.

As previously outlined, protectionist policies began to deteriorate with the BIP in 1965, and the economic crisis of 1982. Still, NAFTA introduced greater allowance for American investment within Mexico because it protected against nationalizations and eliminated restrictions. Through NAFTA, Mexico also agreed to the privatization of lands, a reversal of hard fought reforms of the 1910 Revolution. These policies combined to force further dislocation of peasants, massive migration to the north and to the United States, and destruction of what remained of domestic Mexican agriculture.[133] Under NAFTA, Mexico agreed to gradually phase out subsidies to corn producers, while the U.S. continued to financially support agriculture, which resulted in American produced corn and beans replacing Mexican grown products, ironic for a nation that had been growing these staples since before contact.

Almost a year to the date of the enforcement of NAFTA, the Mexican economy collapsed and an agreement was made with the United States to stabilize the economy. Under the direction of U.S. banks, Mexico carried out several austerity measures and privatization plans. Ultimately the consequences of NAFTA proved devastating for the working and indigenous people of Mexico as it allowed for U.S. access to cheap labor while undermining Mexican owned industrial and agricultural production. By mid-1995, in the aftermath of the negotiations to stabilize the economy, a reported 11 million people declared unemployment. Many of these unemployed moved to urban areas primarily in the north in search for work, and found it in the lowest paying of jobs. During the first three months of 1995, approximately 250 companies opened up *maquilas* on the border,

[133] Gonzalez and Fernandez, "Empire and Origins," 54.

taking advantage of the devaluation of the Mexican peso.[134] With high levels of unemployment in the country, these factories offered low wage jobs, more frequently to women than men, without the ability to unionize, which lead to a lower standard of living.[135]

Culture of Migration

Apart from economic and political factors contributing to Mexico-U.S. migration, there also exists cultural reasoning as migration becomes a process independent of the conditions that originally caused it. Regularization of movement and desires for upward mobility contribute to a culture of migration that influences the decision to move even when there is no economic necessity, political instability, or state-sanctioned partnerships of migration. In arguing that a culture of migration exists, this does not discount the broader structures discussed throughout this chapter. Cultural influences may contribute to an individual decision to migrate, but individuals remain subject to global capitalist forces and government policies regulating movement. Analysis of the development of a culture of migration remains relevant beyond its causative effects in the decision to migrate, but also in the role it plays in understanding evolving notions of community and identity.

The establishment of transnational migrant networks contributes to the regularization of movement. Although not the first to establish migrant networks, Mexicans often developed a direct flow from a specific pueblo to one distinct city within the United States. This circuit began with a handful of migrants from one region or

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[134] Ibid, 53.
[135] Martha Chew Sánchez refers to this as the "feminization of poverty" in *Corridos in Migrant Memory* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006).

pueblo finding work and establishing themselves in an American town, making it easier for successive migrants from the pueblo of origin to find work and housing if they too moved to the same city. Evidence of early transnational migrant networks can be found in the development of *sociedades mutualistas* established in the U.S. which carried the names of home towns. While the creation of migrant networks did not guide the decision to migrate, a sense of familiarity created by the connection made the decision easier to make in favor of migration.

A history of migration also established the regularization of movement between Mexico and the U.S. Over years of integrated economic systems and state-sanctioned migration, an accumulation of international infrastructure developed which standardized the transnational movement of people, capital, information, and goods.[136] The cumulative history of migration made the process familiar for both migrants and the receiving communities, so that even in the absence of a migrant network, individuals had the knowledge of and accessibility to movement.[137]

With the regularization of movement, migration developed into a rite of passage, particularly for men.[138] For some, migration to the United States for labor purposes became simply what young men do, and the accepted path to provide for one's family. Under these circumstances the decision becomes about when to migrate, not whether one will migrate. What this implies is that a culture of migration effects the community at large by playing on the conscience of those who anticipate and prepare for a future

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[136] Massey, "Economic Development and International Migration," 26.

[137] For the assertion that the forces shaping transnational migrant networks are also beginning to affect people in both the U.S. and Mexico, see Roger Rouse, "Mexican Migration and the Social Space of Postmodernism," 259.

[138] See Deborah Boem, "'Now I am a Man and a Woman!' Gendered Moves and Migrations in a Transnational Mexican Community," *Latin American Perspectives* 35 (2008), 16-30; where she outlines this process as a gendered migration.

laboring in the U.S. It also brings into question the social standing of those who reject migration as a rite of passage.

In addition to the regularization of movement, desires for upward mobility also help to fuel a culture of migration. While improving one's social status implies economic causation, it differs from economic necessity in that the decision to migrate is not about mere survival but to fulfill hopes for a better life. Remittances in Mexico contribute to material improvements sought by migrants, but also serve as a rationale for continued migration. A culture of migration developed in some communities in part because of the dependence on remittances and desire to sustain a way of life to which people became accustomed. Additionally, income redistribution as a result of remittances created stratification differences between migrant and non-migrant households. The resulting effect of emerging class disparity was that neighboring households were more likely to begin the process of migration.[139] Even when the original economic conditions contributing to migration cease to exist, people will continue to migrate in an effort to achieve economic mobility or to maintain their family.

In her introduction, Camille Guerin-Gonzales claims that the language of the American dream shaped expectations of Mexican immigrants.[140] The American Dream promised economic opportunity and security, basic rights of individual citizens, and guaranteed the freedom to reach one's unique human potential. In general Mexican migrants interpreted this freedom to mean achieving economic and social upward

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[139] The theory is that if a household is poor they are less likely to migrate if neighboring households are comparatively poor, but when neighboring households have increased income due to migrant remittances then it increases migration for everyone. See Sergio Díaz Briquets and Sydney Weintraub, eds. *Determinants of Emigration from Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), 31; and Jeffrey Cohen , *The Culture of Migration in Southern Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004).
[140] Camille Guerin-Gonzales, *Mexican Workers and American Dreams*.

mobility, creating savings, opening a business, going to school, and aiding family and community. Over time the American Dream comes to equal material gain through consumption. As a result, beyond fulfilling basic economic needs of a household, migration becomes a means to satisfying new consumption aspirations in an effort to have the best of both worlds and recreate the American Dream in Mexico.[141]

Desires to improve one's station in life or at least provide for a better future for the next generation are common sentiments across many societies in this globalized world. Remittances and pursuit of a better life served as both cause and effect in the migration process. A culture of migration developed such that people worked in the U.S. to attain upward mobility beyond the original economic need. However, American notions of success were introduced and reinforced generation after generation in Mexico as migrants developed transnational connections, and ideas spread through U.S. corporations, advertising and entertainment. Because global economic circumstance developed an increasing number of low-wage, temporary, and part-time jobs in Mexico, laborers found an absence of competitive wages to sustain hopes for upward mobility and respond to these failures of the state and private enterprise with migration.

The argument that people migrate due to increasing population, a stagnant economy, and high unemployment does not fully encapsulate the circumstance in Mexico because it pretends that the nation exists in isolation of the global capitalist economy and ignores the role of centuries old U.S. economic and political influence. Both internal and external economic, political, and cultural factors combine to influence the rise of Mexico-

[141] See Alejandro Portes, "Unauthorized Immigration and Immigration Reform: Present Trends and Prospects," in *Determinants of Emigration,* ed. Sergio Díaz-Briquets and Sydney Weintraub, 86. Portes qualifies this argument by explaining that migration is only one solution to solve the problems of consumption and providing financially for the household.

U.S. migration. These factors include: foreign investment, revolution in Mexico, the internationalization of labor as a result of government negotiated contracts, varying versions of both restrictive and welcoming U.S. immigration policy, and the regularization of movement across the border. At various points in the past two hundred years, these intertwining issues have combined to lead to the displacement of ordinary working people throughout Mexico.

Chapter Two - *Lo mexicano*: Writings on Mexican Nationalism

Studies of identity examine two dominant theories, both of which recognize identity as a socially constructed category. The first argues that identity does not change but remains static, and the oppositional position theorizes identity as fluid, changing with new experiences and other conceptions of self.[142] This chapter will examine Mexican nationalism as a particular kind of identity that not only changes over time and under different circumstances, but at no time means the same thing to all people. The understanding of what it means to be Mexican can differ according to race, gender, class, age, sexuality, religion, or migrant status, because all of these identities interact within each individual. Still, nationalism is not so fluid that it carries no meaning at all. An examination of the writings and cultural representations of Mexican nationalism provides a history of identity construction and change that will serve as the basis for understanding the role migration plays in Mexican national thought.

Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the origin and Spread of Nationalism*, provides a historical context and framework for discussing various arguments and approaches concerning the development of nationalism. He argued that nationalism emerged as the world experienced both a decline of religious communities and the fall of the dynastic realm as a means of maintaining social order. The significance of the decline of these cultural systems is that in their absence there remained a need for meaning and order, particularly with the organization of land.

Under dynastic rule there was little question concerning land ownership or responsibility for cultivation because the crown dictated those terms. As challenges to

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[142] See the writings of Stuart Hall, "Gramsci's relevance for the study of race and ethnicity," in *Journal of Communication Inquiry* (1986), 10:2, 5-27. Hall provides a theoretical understanding of the fluidity of identity and its interactions with other conceptions of "self".

the dynastic order emerged there was less certainty of who held responsibility for and maintained control of land. Anderson suggested that given these circumstances, both an opportunity and a need for other types of social systems emerged that would bring order to society. The result being, an "imagined" community of nation, linked to specified territories and giving rise to the creation of the nation state for the practical purpose of administering land.

Anderson's idea of nation is rooted in territoriality, and others such as E.J. Hobsbawm and Immanuel Wallerstein similarly trace the history of nations to the creation of states defined by bordered lands.[143] However, nationalism is the development of an emotional connection to a shared history that begins with place but not limited by borders. Wallerstein understands identity as a moral, political and contemporary phenomenon whose purpose is to make claims from the past against the manipulable process of the present.[144] While Anderson defines nation as an imagined political community, he asserts that the collective identity called nationalism is culturally created and develops meaning beyond the purposes of order.[145] Likewise, Hobsbawm believes nations are essentially constructed from above, but they need to be analyzed from below to understand what is in the minds of ordinary citizens and supporters of nationalism.

In the post-Revolutionary period, the Mexican government crafted a nationalist ideology in an effort to establish unity and pride. The role of government becomes significant in outlining the official nationalism promoted by the nation state which they

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[143] E.J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, myth, reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Immanuel Wallerstein, "The Construction of Peoplehood: Racism, Nationalism, Ethnicity," in Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein, *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities* (London and New York: Routledge, Chapman & Hall, 1991).
[144] Wallerstein, "The Construction of Peoplehood," 78.
[145] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 6.

integrated into government programs, cultural celebrations, and the media, including through representations of migration. Alvaro Obregón, a military leader and farmer who gained some prosperity during the Díaz regime was elected to the presidency in 1920, and oversaw the promotion of nationalism through state run projects. In addition to implementing popular reforms of the 1917 Constitution, Obregón established the *Secretaría de Educación Pública* (SEP) run by José Vasconcelos. Through the SEP, Vasconcelos promoted an official Mexican nationalism in education, literature, and the arts. Despite the role of government in defining Mexican nationalism, it could not control how the public would receive these ideas or interpret them, nor could it control external influences on what it means to be Mexican.[146] Inevitably, the development of Mexican nationalism became a relationship between the state and society.[147]

Characteristics of post-Revolutionary nationalism as defined by the Mexican state were varied and sometimes contradictory.[148] They included anti-foreign sentiment often expressed specifically as anti-Americanism, patriarchal order to society both within the home and in terms of the relationship of the state to the people, conflating racial and class ideals by holding up indigenous and working people as the true Mexicans, and continuation of the modernization project initiated by the Díaz regime. Mexican

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[146] Vaughan and Lewis, ed. *The Eagle and the Virgin*, 2. In the introduction, Vaughan and Lewis propose that other factors contributing to the nation building process in Mexico include the private sector, market development, processes of secularization, and transnationalism. In his work *Yankee Don't go Home!,* Julio Moreno provides an excellent example of some of these processes at play, documenting the establishment of the U.S. based private corporation, Sears, in Mexico City in the aftermath of the Revolution. This transnational, private sector business used marketing tactics that synchretized U.S. consumerism with Mexican nationalism.

[147] See Homi K. Bhabha, "DissemiNation: Time, Narrative and the Margins of the Modern Nation," in *Nation and Narration* ed. Homi K. Bhabha (New York: Routledge, 1990), 300. Bhabha says construction of nation negotiated through relationship between the government imposed narrative and those performed by its citizens.

[148] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 5. Anderson argues that there is no ideology behind nationalism, claiming scholars struggle with the paradox between political power of nationalisms and their "philosophical poverty".

nationalism became an important focus of study for intellectuals like Manuel Gamio, José Vasconcelos, Samuel Ramos, and Octavio Paz in the Revolutionary period and aftermath.[149] This preoccupation along with the appearance of nationalist themes as the subject of various art and cultural productions indicate the prevalence of nationalist thought in the Mexican consciousness.

Indigenismo, Mestizaje, and Anti-Americanism

Expressions of pride in the *indigenismo* of the Mexican nation grew exponentially during the Revolution, whereas the era of Porfirismo characterized the indigenous as backward. With the social unrest of the revolution stemming from the peasantry and Indian pueblos, political and intellectual leaders demonstrated their support by emphasizing indigenous contributions over negative stereotypes though there was no concise agreement on the value of indigenous culture.[150] In 1916, anthropologist Manuel Gamio underlined the *indigenismo* of Mexican nationalism in his book *Forjando patria:pro-nacionalismo.* In this work, Gamio wrote about the multiple nationalities or *patrias* that existed in Mexico due to race, language, or geography, and discussed ways in which Mexico might develop a unified national identity.[151] One of Gamio's major

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[149] Lomnitz-Adler, *Exits from the Labyrinth*, 1. Lomnitz-Adler argues that issues of national culture have emerged during crucial moments in Mexican history: independence, following the Mexican-American War, under the Porfirio Diaz regime, and in the aftermath of the Mexican Revolution. He also labels the 1930s-1950s as the "golden age" of Mexican national culture studies.

[150] Though attitudes about the indigenous and the peasantry were changing during the Revolution, there existed a divide between the beliefs of political and intellectual leaders like Manuel Gamio and leaders of the peasant rebellion, Francisco Villa and Emiliano Zapata. Gamio criticized Zapatismo as a form of banditry hiding behind the face of revolution and taking advantage of misguided Indians to push the agenda of the former regime. He viewed one faction of Zapatistas as legitimate, those indigenous of Morelos who became integrated into the European population though not necessarily culturally assimilated. This aspect of Zapatismo Gamio labels Indianism.

[151] Manuel Gamio, *Forjando Patria: Pro-nacionalismo,* trans.Fernando Armstrong-Fumero (Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 2010), 25-29. From Gamio's perspective, in the early twentieth century there existed small patrias and local nationalisms.

assertions was that the indigenous comprised a majority of the population in Mexico whether as isolated communities or in the racial mixture of the people, and that indigenousness was vital to the national consciousness.[152] Gamio recognized the value in indigenous language and culture and promoted the hybridization of Mexican society in order to forge a unified nationalism.

As a prominent intellectual who throughout his career held many political and academic positions in Mexico, Gamio's views were significant. In the same year *Forjando Patria* was published, Gamio became the Director of the *Escuela Internacional de Arqueología y Etnografía Americana* and the following year was appointed the head of the newly formed *Departamento de Antropología*, a government agency under the presidency of Venustiano Carranza.[153] He became very influential in the field of anthropology both for his methods of doing fieldwork and for his focus on the material culture of Mexico's indigenous communities. The focus on *indigenismo* helped shape how intellectuals would construct a Mexican identity directly linked to the pre-Hispanic history of the nation. Through his political appointments, Gamio forged a connection between anthropology and the revolutionary state.

Like many intellectuals of the time, Gamio lived in the United States for a period of time. In 1909, he became a student of Franz Boas in the department of anthropology at Columbia University where he received his masters and later his doctorate. He returned to Mexico shortly after the start of the revolution. In 1926, Gamio's political

[152] Gamio, *Forjando Patria,* 158. Rick A. López, "The Noche Mexicana and the Exhibition of Popular Arts: Two Ways of Exalting Indianess," in *The Eagle and the Virgin,* eds. Vaughan and Lewis, 36.
[153] Other positions held by Gamio include Inspector General de Monumentos Arqueológicos de la Secretaría de Educación Pública, General Director of Población Rural y Colonización, Chief of the Departamento Demográfico of the Secretaria de Gobernación, and the Director of the Instituto Indigenista Interamericano.

position became compromised and he returned to the U.S. in exile. He wrote about Mexican nationalism from the perspective of someone who spent some time in the United States and in *Forjando patria* made comparisons between the two nations. In the 1930s Gamio went on to write two of the earliest English language studies on Mexican migration to the United States.[154] Within the context of migration, *indigenismo* becomes not simply about the pre-Colombian roots of the nation, but defining oneself in opposition to American. If not in his personal experiences within the U.S., Gamio most certainly witnessed

Intellectual and political leader, José Vasconcelos wrote *La Raza Cósmica* in 1925, which argued that the true Mexican is *mestizo*, defined by Vasconcelos as a mixture of all the races of the world.[155] He held the utopian belief that the *mestizo* would grow to embody the best traits of each race, reaching a superior level of spirituality, peace, and culture. With this understanding, his view of *la raza cósmica* was that it was both a process and the future of the nation. In lifting up the *mestizo* as the ideal, Vasconcelos challenged beliefs that promoted the eradication of indigenous peoples, but he also held conflicting ideas about race. Rather than placing equal value on the contributions of each race, Vasconcelos believed some were superior to others. Perhaps because the racial mixture in Mexico was irreversible, Vasconcelos like others praised *mestizaje* as a positive but had more difficulty finding value in the substance of being indigenous. In *La Raza Cósmica,* Vasconcelos expressed the preferability that the

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[154] Manuel Gamio, *Mexican Immigration to the United States* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1930) and *The Mexican Immigrant, His Life Story* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1931).
[155] José Vasconcelos, *La Raza Cósmica/The Cosmic Race: a Bilingual Edition,* trans. Didier T. Jaén (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997).

Spanish absorb the indigenous, effectively shedding indigenous languages and religion in favor of Spanish and Catholicism.

The state promoted Mexican nationalism through cultural entities in which they had some influence or control. Because of his ability to direct policy, Vasconcelos' beliefs as expressed in his writings held particular significance. Established in 1921, the SEP under the leadership of Vasconcelos introduced literacy campaigns and educational missions to rural areas of Mexico in an effort to incorporate and modernize those sectors of society seen as marginalized. He established libraries, carried out the first census of indigenous regions and languages, and subsidized the muralist movement. The educational content of these campaigns promoted a Revolutionary, nationalist vision of Mexican history and identity.[156]

Vasconcelos recruited muralists Diego Rivera, David Alfaro Siqueiros, and José Clemente Orozco to create public works of art, the first of which was commissioned in 1922 for the walls of the Escuela Nacional Preparatoria.[157] These government funded efforts became the visual representation of Mexican nationalism and the official history of the nation. Despite his interest in *mestizaje*, Vasconcelos criticized indigenous art as not being true art because it had not been fostered and taught in the western or Greek classical tradition.[158] Rather than utilize Indian art and artists to demonstrate the nation's *mestizaje*, the indigenous and labor imagery of Mexican nationalism emerged in the formally trained muralists' art.

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[156] Laura Isabel Serna, "We're going Yankee": American movies, Mexican nationalism , transnational cinema, 1917-1935 (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2006), 78.

[157] Desmond Rochfort, "The Sickle, the Serpent, and the Soil: History, Revolution, Nationhood, and Modernity in the Murals of Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco, and David Alfaro Siqueiros," in *The Eagle and the Virgin,* ed. Vaughan and Lewis, 44.

[158] López, "The Noche Mexicana," 30.

Like Gamio, Vasoncelos lived in the United States at various points in his life. As a child at the end of the nineteenth century, he lived with his family in Piedras Negras, Coahuila, and later across the border in Eagle Pass, Texas where he attended school.[159] This experience of living in the borderlands revealed the discrimination against ethnic Mexicans whether they were born in the United States or not. A couple of times during the Revolution, Vasconcelos was forced to flee Mexico for the United States because of conflict with the governments in power, first siding with Francisco Madero against the Diaz regime, and later threatened by the Huerta government, then finally exiled again by the Venustiano Carranza government. After his failed run for the Mexican presidency in 1929, Vasconcelos spoke out against American imperialism.[160] Once again, the significance of this perspective lay in Vasconcelos' influence as an intellectual and cultural figure, contributing to the anti-American sentiment within Mexico in his later writings.

Mexican nationalist identity defined by *indigenismo* was not an inevitability, but promoted by intellectual and political nationalists. Evidence of this lay in the centennial celebrations of Mexican independence, planned by cosmopolitan Mexicans who placed *indigenismo* at the center of post revolutionary identity. The centennial celebrations at Chapultepec Park showcased modern innovations such as paved roads and electricity alongside "folkloric *mexicanidad*". Dubbed the "Noche Mexicano," the September evening in 1921 featured Indian artisanry, regional dress and dance, and common foods such as tamales.[161]

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[159] Nicandro F. Juárez, "José Vasconcelos and La Raza Cósmica," Aztlan vol.3 no. 1, 54-56.
[160] http://www.lib.utexas.edu/taro/utlac/00061/lac-00061.html, accessed February 15, 2013.
[161] Rick A. López, "The Noche Mexicana and the Exhibition of Popular Arts: Two Ways of Exalting Indianness," in *The Eagle and the Virgin: Nation and Cultural Revolution in Mexico, 1920-1940.* (Durham

The Exhibition of Popular Arts in 1921, also formed part of the centennial celebrations. Differing from the perspective of Vasconcelos, the exhibition allowed for the artistic legitimacy of indigenous arts and crafts in its display to a mainstream Mexican public. Artist, Jorge Enciso worked to put this exhibition together, placing regional indigenous crafts on display in a museum and situating the objects within a recreation of their original context. While placing Indian art in a museum implies only western accepted cultural spaces provide legitimacy, the effort demonstrated to Mexican viewers that this art represented the "real" Mexico and deserved proper appreciation.[162]

With the instability of the Cristero Rebellion and presidential succession, from 1925 to 1934, the government played a smaller role in supporting Mexican nationalism through popular culture. Lázaro Cárdenas reinstituted government promotion of Mexican culture and identity throughout his presidency from 1934 to 1940. Although the SEP established a film fund in the 1920s, Cárdenas helped solidify and ushered in an era of state financing of the Mexican film industry. Examples of Cárdenas' intervention include the government's purchase of wardrobe and props for the film *¡Vámonos con Pancho Villa!* and saving from bankruptcy *Cinematográfica Latino Americana, S.A.* (CLASA), the very studio that produced the film.[163] On an institutional level, the administration established the *Financiadora de Películas* which provided loans to

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and London: Duke University Press, 2006), 23-30. López notes that Adolfo Best Maugard, who organized the Noche Mexicana, received a lot of criticism from people who though the presentation was low class. He defended the celebration as presenting the way in which Mexican Indian fold art could be adopted and refined to create a distinct Mexican cultural aesthetic.

[162] Ibid, 31-34.

[163] Sergio de la Mora, "Virile Nationalism: Cinema, the State, and the formation of a National Consciousness in Mexico, 1950-1994" (PhD diss, University of California Santa Cruz, 1999), 33-34.

produce films and build studios. One final state measure included a protectionist tax exemption for domestic film production.[164]

.An argument could be made that the motivation of the Cardenas regime was financial rather than for the promotion of popular nationalism, however, Cardenas' many cultural interventions suggest a genuine nationalist agenda. [165] Regardless of the reasoning, these state-supported efforts resulted in the creation of films that reflected the nationalist narrative of the state. Several revolutionary era films and those made during the Cardenas regime mirrored the growing indegenismo of Mexican nationalism. Film scholar, Joanne Hershfield found that revolutionary era films such as *Tepeyec* (1917), *Cuauhtémoc* (1918), and *De raza azteca* (Of the Aztecs, 1922) highlighted histories of the pre-Columbian era and portrayed the conditions of Indian life in a positive manner.

A shift occurred in indigenous themed movies with the filming of *¡Que Viva Mexico!* in the early 1930s, made by Russian director Sergei Eisenstein and funded by American Upton Sinclair. Recognizing the vigor with which Mexicans embraced their *mestizaje*, Eisenstein told a story romanticizing the character of the Indian, but also outlined the discrimination and hardship of indigenous laborers. Films made during the Cardenas regime which demonstrated *indigenismo* included *Redes* (Nets, 1934), *Janitzo* (1935), *El Indio* (The Indian, 1938), *La india bonita* (The Pretty Indian Girl, 1938), and *La noche de los Mayas* (The Night of the Mayas, 1939).[166] The government's support of these films, along with renewed interest in muralist projects under Cardenas demonstrates the role of the state in promoting *mestizaje*. Likewise, the state supported production of

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[164] Joanne Hershfield, "Screening the Nation," in *The Eagle and the Virgin,* ed. Vaughan and Lewis, 264. Sergio de la Mora, "Virile Nationalism", 41.
[165] De la Mora outlines this debate among Mexican film scholars, 35.
[166] Hershfield,"Screening the Nation," 266-268.

films which highlighted the experience of Mexican migration, and in doing so placed equal emphasis on the *indigenismo* of its citizenry living in the United States, often concluding that only hardship awaits the Mexican "other" in his life north of the border.

Racial identity expressed through the language of *mestizaje*, acknowledged an indigenous past while linking Mexicans to European modernity. Elites conflated the diversity of Mexico's indigenous population into a generic Indian identity due to ignorance of or apathy towards specific indigenous pasts. The umbrella term *mestizo* served a purpose beyond unifying the post revolutionary nation. *Mestizaje* rooted people to place, it laid claim to the land of Mexico for the Mexican people who by nature of their biological past were of the earth beneath them. As such, the *mestizo*, and by extension, the Mexican as indigenous implies rejection of the foreigner who has no claim to Mexico. Mary Kay Vaughan and Stephen E. Lewis argue that Mexican liberals privileged the Aztecs over other indigenous because of their resistance to foreign invasion.[167] Andres Molina Enriquez expressed this sentiment when he wrote, "Over time, the anvil of Indian blood will always prevail over the hammer of Spanish blood."[168] What this suggests is the language of *mestizaje* and *indigenismo* in the context of *mexicanidad* necessarily implies anti-foreign.

Mexico's history of occupation and conquest lends itself to the rejection of foreigners. John Mason Hart contributed to this discussion with *Empire and Revolution,* a history that is as much rooted in North American relations with Latin America as it is in Mexican nationalism.[169] He argued that the Mexican Revolution first began as a call for participatory government and agrarian reform but became a cultural, political, and

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[167] Vaughan and Lewis, *The Eagle and the Virgin*, 5.
[168] Cited Lomnitz-Adler, *Exits from the Labyrinth*, 2.
[169] Hart, *Empire and Revolution*.

economic rejection of North America.[170] In Mexico, North American financiers had control of banking, railroads, technology, mining, and land at the turn of the century. It is not surprising this caused resentment towards North America, particularly among the peasant classes having to cope with the loss of land as well as the transition from agricultural to industrial labor. It is under these conditions that Hart documents opposition to North Americans as the rallying point behind which Mexicans united.

In his study of Mexico's modern visual culture, John Mraz observed anti-foreign and specifically anti-American sentiment reflected in the pictures of Mexican photographers during the revolution and into the 1940s. Mraz studied the photographic images taken by Ponciano Flores Pérez and Eduardo Melhado. Pérez in particular used his photography to express opposition to the war on civilians, but also in opposition to the invasion of Veracruz by the United States. He took pictures of street fighting sometimes as they occurred and sometimes staged to demonstrate American atrocities committed against Mexicans. Mraz argued that the staged or un-staged circumstances of the images did not matter in understanding Flores Pérez's opposition to United States imperialism.[171] As a photojournalist whose work appeared in newspapers or for sale as postcards, Perez's perspective could be easily accessed, coloring public sentiments towards Mexico's northern neighbor.[172]

An overall anti-foreign outlook characterized revolutionary Mexican nationalism. Diego Rivera's mural "History of Mexico" provides an example of this. Located on the walls of the National Palace, where political figures and the public have access to its

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[170] Ibid, 271.
[171] Mraz, *Looking for Mexico*, 70-72
[172] See John Mraz, *Photographing the Mexican Revolution: Commitment, Testimonies, Icons* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2012), 162. According to Mraz, there was a great deal of filtration between photojournalism and postcards.

images on a daily basis, the main corridor of the mural was painted off and on between 1929 and 1935. In this mural Rivera presents a dichotomy of good versus evil with the implication that the good forces in Mexico's history have defended the nation from the evil forces of external invasion, oppression, or exploitation.[173] The indigenous and peasant are heroes in this imagery, forming the backbone of Mexican society and culture.

Revolutionary governance restored national sovereignty over natural resources, property, and the process of representation, meaning the exclusion of foreigners in occupation, ownership, and politics.[174] Provisions throughout the 1917 Constitution restricted foreigners in Mexico. Article 8 gave only citizens the right to petition the government on political matters while article 9 hampered the right to assemble. Limitations on freedom of movement were subjected to immigration laws with article 11 which also controlled movement of undesirable aliens resident in the country. The first section of article 27 limited the right to property to Mexican citizens and corporations, with exceptions for foreigners who considered themselves nationals in regards to the property. Article 32 privileged Mexican born citizens for employment and restricted several positions in the military to the native born. Finally, article 33 prohibited foreigners from participating in domestic policy and allowed deportation of immigrants without trial.

Further anti-foreign policies emerged in the post-revolutionary immigration laws of Mexico. As Mae M. Ngai argued, immigration policies provide a lens into how a nation sees itself and how it understands its relation to the rest of the world.[175] In 1930,

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[173] Vaughan and Lewis, *The Eagle and the Virgin,* 51.
[174] Pablo Yankelevich, "Mexico for the Mexicans: Immigration, National Sovereignty and the Promotion of *Mestizaje*," *The Americas,* 68 (2012): 415.
[175] Ngai, *Impossible Subjects,* 9.

the Mexican immigration law of 1926 was replaced by one which allowed for admission into the country evaluated on the basis of defense of *mestizaje*.[176] It is evident from government policy that anti-foreign sentiment existed as a remnant of the revolution and the *indigenismo* of Mexican nationalism supported that position. This anti-American sentiment emerged within the popular culture of migration as well, through the denunciation of migrant mistreatment and rejection of U.S.-Mexican hybrid cultural construction.

El Pelado, el Charro, y la China Poblana

In the midst of nationalist government efforts at creating a unified state, Mexican intellectuals continued to theorize what it meant to be Mexican. As previously indicated, *indigenismo* signaled the racial identity of *Mexicanidad*, and the anti-foreign attitudes that come with defining oneself as Indian in opposition to a non-Indian "other". In keeping with the revolutionary spirit, *indigenismo* also pointed to the proletarian and peasant classes of Mexico. In his study on Mexican identity and perceptions of the United States, Stephen D. Morris explains that the state defined the Mexican culturally as a moral *mestizo* and socially as a worker or peasant.[177] The characterization of *lo mexicano* as of the lower social class takes on many forms in the literature of nationalism and in cultural representations of *mexicanidad*.

Sociologist, Paul Gilroy wrote in his study of the relationships between race, class, and nation, "the concept of class cannot be entirely banished from inquiries into

[176] Yankelevich, "Mexico for the Mexicans," 426.
[177] Stephen D. Morris, *Gringolandia: Mexican Identity and Perceptions of the United States* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005), 20.

racial politics."[178] Gilroy's theory about the interweaving connections between race and class took shape in Mexico through the way *mestizaje* and the working class conflated into parallel and overlapping imagery coming out of the revolution. Nicandro F. Juarez outlined the fusing of racial and class identity when he wrote, "The need to glorify the *mestizo* stemmed in part from the cultural and racial inferiority complex which plagued and which is still prevalent in Latin America."[179]

The inferiority referenced by Juarez came from Samuel Ramos' 1934 book *El perfil del hombre y la cultura en México* (Profile of Man and Culture in Mexico). Born in Zitácuaro, Michoacoan to a father who worked as a doctor, Ramos became a distinguished professor of social philosophy and aesthetic theory. He believed in scientific order, and utilizing this idea to craft a theory of the Mexican Character.[180] The overarching argument of the book is that Mexicans undervalue themselves, which Ramos called an inferiority complex. One of the interesting aspects of this work is that Ramos historicizes this inferiority, drawing roots to the conquest and colonization, but says inferiority does not begin until after independence because that is when Mexico is forced to figure out who it is.[181]

According to Ramos, the character that best embodied the Mexican inferiority complex is the *pelado.* He argued that the *pelado* displays a confident public personality but his real and private personality is that of an introvert. Key characteristics of the *pelado,* according to Ramos are that he is economically and intellectually inferior, he is

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[178] Paul Gilroy, '*There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack'* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987 & 1991), 17. See also Balibar and Wallerstein, *Race, Nation, Class.*
[179] Juárez, "Jose Vasconcelos and La Raza Cósmica", 51-82
[180] T.B. Irving, preface to *Profile of Man and Culture in Mexico,* by Samuel Ramos , trans. Peter G. Earle, 4th printing (Austin: Texas Pan-American Series, 1969).
[181] Ramos, *Profile of Man and Culture in Mexico*, 56.

hot tempered in order to disguise his insecurities, and he associates manliness with virility.[182] Despite Ramos' warning against the *pelado* becoming a symbol of Mexican nationalism, that is exactly what happened in the form of one of Mexico's (and to some extent Mexican Americans') most beloved characters, Cantinflas, whose *pelado* became popularized in the 1940s and 50s.[183]

Although Ramos argued that Mexicans of all social classes exhibit the characteristics of the *pelado*, in the character of Cantinflas the *pelado* and the proletarian become synonymous. Ramos wrote "Nothing Mexican is immune to this [Indian] influence, because the indigenous mass is like a dense atmosphere that envelops everything in the nation."[184] The Indian influence emerges in the *pelado* represented by Cantinflas in which both racial and social inferiority combine.[185] Played by actor Mario Moreno, Cantinflas exhibited many of the characteristics of the *pelado* detailed by Ramos. However, he distinguished himself from that stereotype in many ways, the most important of which is his outwitting of those in power. Perpetual underdog, Cantinflas represented the common man and his winning against the elites at their own game shifted the power paradigm for Mexican popular audiences who saw themselves in a character that proved to be more than an inferior rogue.[186] Representations of migrant characters in film similarly embody the working class experience and *indigenismo* of the *pelado*.

[182] Ramos, *Profile of Man and Culture in Mexico,* 58-61.
[183] See Jeffrey Pilcher, *Cantinflas and the Chaos of Modern Modernity* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resource, 2001) for a detailed analysis of Cantinflas within the context of Mexican history.
[184] Ramos, *Profile of Man and Culture in Mexico,* 64.
[185] John Mraz wrote in *Looking for Mexico,* "Cantinflas (Mario Moreno) created the *peladito*, and embodiment of *mestizaje*, the Spanish-Indian racial mixture that is the Mexican genotype and the cornerstone of the revolution's nationalist cultural project." 121.
[186] There are exceptions to Cantinflas' underdog status on film, which can be seen in his later work. These include: *Si yo fuera diputado* (1951), *Padrecito* (1964), and *Su excelencia* (1966).

While numerous intellectuals and cultural theorists decry the stereotype portrayed by Cantinflas, he remains ever popular among the Mexican people, prompting one cultural observer to express, "It is no exaggeration to say that Cantinflas is today the only citizen – other than the president – in whom is realized the unity of all Mexicans."[187] Roger Bartra argued that the commercialization of the *pelado* in the character of Cantinflas removed all meaning and subversiveness from what the *pelado* once represented.[188] As a proletarian, the *pelado* was among the social classes who rose up against the Mexican government to force a revolution. Through the popularization of Cantinflas, the *pelado* simply becomes a jokester and a farce. While the Mexican masses cheer each time Cantinflas wins out over the elites, Bartra argued that in real life the proletarian had become complacent under the control of popular culture. One could argue migration is anything but complacent. While it is true migration does not engage the populace in revolutionary upheaval, it demonstrates the agency of working people to not idly accept their circumstance. Additionally, large scale migration does force a government response.

Other ideations of the *mestizo* and proletarian ideal of revolutionary nationalism appeared with the imagery of the charro and the china poblana. The charro, like the American cowboy, worked on a ranch, and represented the epitome of manliness. His dress consisted of embroidered pants, cowboy boots, and a large sombrero. The china poblana represented the typical campesina or peasant. She wore a white blouse

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[187] Antonio Rodríguez, quoted in John Mraz, *Looking for Mexico,* 121.
[188] Roger Bartra, *The Cage of Melancholy: Identity and the Metamorphosis in the Mexican Character* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992), Batra provides extensive analysis of the pelado in the second half of this work. See also Carlos Monsiváis, *Mexican Postcards,* trans. John Kraniauskas (New York, London: Verso, 1997), who argues that the *pelado* becomes the diminutive *peladito,* a nonthreatening and inoffensive rogue, 98-99.

embroidered with colorful flowers, a full, ankle length skirt that contains the colors of the Mexican flag, a rebozo (shawl), and her hair braided. Both figures were working class *mestizos* representing the intersection of race, class, and gender in Mexican nationalism.

In the aftermath of the revolution, a trend in Mexican photography replaced elites as subjects in favor of ordinary people.[189] Photographers approached capturing the "ordinary" people of Mexico in one of two ways, through nostalgia and through gritty realism. German photographer, Hugo Brehme, represented the nostalgic approach of replacing men in suits and women in Victorian dress with figures set in a romantic landscape and wearing regional dress. Brehme's images became for outsiders the archetype of the typical Mexican man in the campesino or charro and woman in the china poblana.[190] His images sold as postcards and photography books in the 1920s, portraying to the world and exotic Mexico devoid of controversy, which worked for his collaborations with the government in promoting Mexican tourism.

The photography of American, Tina Modotti represented the second form of imagery which rejected the picturesque and placed people in urban life complete with the contradictions of modernity. Rather than photographing idyllic landscapes and romanticized versions of campesinos, she highlighted class disparities, the difficulties of labor, and contrasted technology with poverty.[191] Both Modotti and Brehme called into question the elitism and modernity of the Porfiriato by placing ordinary people at the forefront. The charro and china poblana imagery fit within the government narrative of

[189] Mraz, *Looking for Mexico,* 59.
[190] See Beezley, *Mexican National Identity,* 12. Beezley says that the charro costume came from the Jarochos, especially the Veracruz region's cowboys who were Afro-Mexican.
[191] Mraz, L*ooking for Mexico,* 81-83.

revolutionary nationalism, while Modotti's photography questioned the success of the revolution.

Like others, Ramos critiqued the exotic romanticism that passed for *mexicanidad* of picturesque mountain landscapes, along with the charro and the china poblana.[192] He found that during the revolution Mexicans became more accepting of their distinct traits as a nation and less dependent on or preoccupied with foreign influences, but the exoticism of *lo mexicano* isolated the country from history. Rejecting everything foreign, about Mexico ignored the reality of the nation's past. Ramos cautioned against the extreme of ignoring all things European in favor of a distinct Mexican culture. Rather, he suggested looking toward Europe in the development of Mexican culture.[193]

Published in 1950, Octavio Paz's classic, *The Labyrinth of Solitude* examined the isolation of Mexican national culture. He argued that the natural human existence was one of solitude, and in that solitude people experienced self-discovery.[194] Paz did not focus on the racial identity of *mexicanidad*, but on the Mexican psyche. In the Mexican manifestation of this existence of solitude, Paz argued that Mexicans closed themselves off from the world. He described Mexicans as a people who wear masks, never revealing their true selves to others, but in doing so become disconnected from their own self-awareness, thus falling into greater solitude. Paz called for Mexican self-discovery, as essential to escaping the labyrinth and developing social agency. As Claudio Lomnitz-Adler phrased it, he asked for Mexicans to "name the process in which they are

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[192] Ramos, *Profile of Man and Culture in Mexico,* 102-103; José Clemente Orozco similarly lamented, "We are the first ones responsible for having permitted the creation and strengthening of the idea that the ridulous 'charro' and the insipid 'china poblana' represent so-called 'Mexicanism'," cited in Bartra, *The Cage of Melancholy,* 94; Modotti called this imagery "trash", cited in Mraz, *Looking for Mexico,* 82.
[193] Ramos, *Profile of Man and Culture in Mexico,* 102 & 108.
[194] Octovio Paz, *The Labyrinth of Solitude, the other Mexico, and other Essays,* (New York: Grove Press, 1985), 9. First published in Spanish in 1950. Paz writes, "Self-discovery is above all the realization that we are alone."

involved," because naming it gives voice to the nation and offers the language with which to express common feelings, thus emerging from isolation.[195]

Born in Mexico City in 1914, to a middle class family, Paz had access to an education and began writing at an early age. Like other intellectuals, Paz held positions of influence within the Mexican government. He lived in France and India to fulfill diplomatic appointments, but in 1968, resigned from his post in opposition to the government's violent suppression of student protests at Tlatelolco. *The Labyrinth of Solitude* remains one of the most influential and debated works on Mexican culture. Although Paz did not identify Mexican nationalism himself, he believed the roots of identity could be found in the history of the nation.

Octavio Paz lived for short stints in Spain, the United States, France, and India, all experiences that informed his writing. For example, while living in the United States in 1943, the Los Angeles zoot suit riots occurred. These were riots between white servicemen and Mexican American youth known for wearing zoot suits.[196] While living in France, Paz wrote *The Labyrinth of Solitude* upon reflecting on his experience in the United States. It is clear that his observations of Mexican Americans informed Paz's ideas about the Mexican national character. He implied that Mexican nationals were indistinguishable from their pachuco relatives living in the United States.[197] In other words, like Vasconcelos, Paz found that Mexican and Mexican American were one in the same in the minds of Americans.

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[195] Lomnitz-Adler, *Exits from the Labyrinth*, 253.
[196] See Luis Alvarez, *The Power of the Zoot: Youth Culture and Resistance During World War II* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008) for a detailed analysis of the riots. Some zoot suiters involved in the confrontation were Filipino and African American.
[197] John Kaiser Ortiz, "Octavio Paz and the Universal Problem of Mexican Solitude," *APA Newsletters, Newsletter on Hiispanic/Latino issues in Philosophy* 11 (2012): 1-4. http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.apaonline.org/resource/collection/60044C96-F3E0-4049-BC5A-271C673FA1E5/v11n2_Hispanic.pdf

The *mestizo* embodies both harmony and conflict in Mexican nationalist rhetoric. As a *mestizo* nation, Mexico is at once a mixture of indigenous and European races, and contains the core socio-political contradiction associated with each race as traditional and modern. The oppositional ideas of traditional and modern carry with them economic connotations with the former implying communal and economic parity and the latter code for capitalism. Lomnitz-Adler argued that if you look at the Mexican government in the latter half of the 1900s, it has so abandoned the political and economic ideals of the revolution that it can no longer legitimately claim to be revolutionary.[198] His claim alludes to a government no longer supporting a protectionist economy but having shifted towards an open economy characterized by free trade. This of course has a profound impact on the growth of Mexico-U.S. transnational migration.

With his book, *Yankee Don't Go Home!,* Julio Moreno studied a microcosm of how Mexico's economic shift began taking place in the post- revolutionary years by embracing the romanticism of *indigenismo* while pushing modernity in the form of capitalist consumption. He argued that each presidency following the revolution up to 1950 concerned itself with the promotion of industrial capitalism believing it offered the best path towards achieving the goals of the revolution.

According to Moreno, Mexican nationalism is rooted in a middle ground of opposing Mexican and American culture and ideals, accepting those American ideals that promote upward mobility and a rejection of ideals that ring of imperialist superiority. This middle ground combined the modern and traditional, the urban and rural, exclusionary classical liberalism and revolutionary radicalism, nationalist pride and

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[198] Lomnitz-Adler, *Exits from the Labrinth,* 10.

foreign investment.[199] He found that American corporations achieved financial success in Mexico by aligning themselves with the revolutionary nationalism of the country. Syncretism of the seemingly contradictory American business culture and traditional Mexican values, contributed to the development of Mexican nationalism in the post-revolutionary period. The syncretization of cultures took place through advertising, indicating that the message was once again sent via cultural processes.

American advertising in Mexico had two goals, to promote consumerism and to create a favorable image of America and the "American way of life". Following the Mexican Revolution, Americans wanted to curb anti-U.S. sentiment in Mexico. The interest in wanting to improve relations with Mexico stemmed from the United States desire to invest but also to prevent other countries from doing so. Moreno argued that by aligning their values, beliefs, and practices with those of Mexicans, Americans tried to create a positive image of themselves. This was accomplished by utilizing nationalist and revolutionary rhetoric to sell American goods which translated into a pro-American message.[200] Through the continuing Bracero Program, U.S. interests similarly promoted Mexican migration as a way of developing positive affiliations with the U.S., an important effort to foster alliances during WWII, and in the aftermath to combat communism. Traditionally associated with anti-Americanism, the revolution was sold as

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[199] Moreno, *Yankee Don't Go Home!,* 7.
[200] Ibid., Moreno provides extensive evidence that these were the goals of American businessmen. The most compelling of which is Rockefeller's work as chairman of the International Development Advisory Board. In this position he conducted studies to determine how best to create a culturally specific and favorable image of the U.S.

a symbol of American capitalism and commercial growth. In this manner, American advertisements blurred the lines between American ideals and Mexican values.[201]

Beginning in 1940, American backed industrial capitalism in conjunction with investment from Mexican elites, produced a strong Mexican state, able to promote its version of nationalism. Though Mexicans were not overthrowing the capitalist system, they did force American corporations to work within the political and cultural balance that characterized Mexico during the 1940s.[202] Mexican elites and intellectuals contributed to the imagery of Mexican nationalism that confronted Americans in this period. Intellectuals not only promoted the modernity of the nation, but they presented the *mestizo* as the "true" symbol of Mexico.[203] For their part, Mexican workers re-appropriated nationalist and revolutionary rhetoric to demand Americans fulfill the obligations promised to Mexicans through advertising. American corporations defined the revolution as a heroic struggle for justice within the nation's capitalist development, so Mexicans made them defend that justice.

Although Moreno defined nationalism as a syncretism of Mexican and American values, opportunities to reject imperialist attitudes and actions were always celebrated. The nationalization of oil resources during World War II became the ultimate symbol of patriotism. The development of Mexican identity came in the power of Mexicans to accept American values they found beneficial, such as upward mobility, and reject those

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[201] Not only did advertising use revolutionary rhetoric but began to use religious rhetoric and images as well. Moreno in *Yankee Don't Go Home!* provides the example of Sears' efforts to create a religious association at its opening day ceremonies.
[202] See James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985) for further discussion on subaltern agency.
[203] In *Yankee Don't Go Home!,* Moreno cites the work of Molina Enríquez, *Los grandes problemas nacionales,* and José Vasconcelos, *Cosmic Race.* Taken together the message of Enríquez and Vasconcelos is that the *mestizo* embodies the Spanish and Indigenous experience of the people only in so far as the Indians were willing to adapt to modernity; 129-130.

that threatened their cultural value system. For example, Mexicans initially rejected American individualism in favor of community.[204] The promises of industrial capitalism bringing about the social justice of the revolution never materialized, and Mexican workers found themselves unable to participate in the modernity being promoted as part of the new nationalist system. For individuals, migration becomes a way to remedy these inequalities.

Guillermo Bonfíl Batalla published his anthropological work, *México Profundo* in 1987, in which he returned to post revolutionary ideas about nationalism based on racial ideology and challenging the rise of modernity. He argued the existence of two distinct and social extremes in Mexico, the "real" or "deep" Mexico of Mesoamerica in contrast to the "imaginary" westernized and urban Mexico. Bonfil Batalla believed that a synthesis of indigenous and Spanish cultures never materialized because they opposed each other. The westernized culture of Spain, Europe, and later the United States embraced modernization characterized by development and capitalism, while the Mesoamerican culture represented an obstacle to modernization. Rather than a synchretic culture emerging after contact, Bonfil Batalla argued that hegemonic and westernized civilizations have absorbed indigenous culture since colonization.

The analysis presented in *México Profundo* rings true when examining the writings of early twentieth century intellectuals like Vasconcelos who praised the racial mixing of *mestizaje* but not the cultural continuity of *indigenismo*. Moreno's study outlined the same phenomenon of nostalgically embracing *mestizo* imagery while promoting industrial capitalism. In order to improve the future of Mexico, Bonfil Batalla

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[204] See O'Brien, *Revolutionary Mission*, who argues that most culture in Latin America opposed individualism, but this did not last long. In *Empire and Revolution,* Hart observed a new individualism that polarized Mexican society at the end of the twentieth century.

argued that the nation build on the cultural strengths of "México profundo". These strengths include placing value on self-sufficiency and benevolence towards nature rather than exploitation of nature for the purposes of commodification. According to Bonfil Batalla, the majority of Mexico's population comprised "México profundo," and held these values. He counted self-identified Indian communities, rural *mestizo*s who no longer identify as Indian, and the urban poor as part of México profundo. From Bonfil Batalla's perspective, "imaginary" Mexico exists, but lacks legitimacy because it denies the lived cultural reality of the majority of Mexicans.

Dividing Mexico into the "real" and "imaginary" inaccurately characterized the Mexico that exists in the modern era. There is truth in Bonfil Batalla's description of Mexico's racial composition and analysis of exploitation experienced as a result of modernization by the majority of Mexicans (Mexico profundo). However, his emphasis on the nation as it should be ignores that Mexico is in fact a modern nation state, regardless of its failure to provide equal access to modernity. As Lomnitz-Adler explained, both the "real" and "imaginary" Mexicos are linked to the truth and both are products of the collective imagination.[205] Still, various representations of migration in the popular culture adhere to this "real" and "imaginary" dichotomy where the "real" is characterized as rural and traditional; and the "imaginary" is all things American.

The examples of Gamio, Vasconcelos, and Paz, demonstrate that at times the Mexican government looks to its intellectual and literary figures to fill cultural or diplomatic posts. Examining who receives appointments and the positions these men fill, reveals the ideology behind the government's nationalist narrative. Bonfil Batalla held several significant cultural posts, indicating the desire of the government to continue to

[205] Lomnitz-Adler, *Exits from the Labyrinth,* 248.

promote *indigenismo* as alive and well in Mexico. Appointed director of the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (INAH), Bonfil Batalla went on to found the Museo Nacional de Culturas Populares, and at his death he was the coordinator of Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes (CONACULTA). With his imprint in each of these official state institutions, charged with preserving and presenting the national heritage of Mexico, Bonfil Batalla's conception of *mexicanidad,* remains relevant.

Roger Bartra's *La jaula de la melancolía* (The Cage of Melancholy) came out the same year as *Mexico Profundo.* In contrast to Bonfil Batalla's work, Bartra viewed the defining of Mexican nationalism in terms of *mestizaje* as an act of nostalgia, the recreation of a national myth. This idea is presented in the metaphor of the axolotl, an amphibian native to Mexico that never evolves into its full form of the salamander. Instead, axolotl becomes its own species, perpetually stuck in a state of metamorphosis. Mexicans, like the axolotl, find themselves perpetually stuck in an ideological and cultural cycle of self-discovery. Bartra criticized studies on *mexicanidad* because they are a manifestation of the very phenomenon they are studying.[206]

According to Bartra, *mestizaje* was a creation of the Mexican state and those who supported this narrative through writings or popular representations fed into the myth, to the detriment of the Mexican people. He argued that a nationalist identity rooted in *indigenismo* and the proletarian allows the government to retain stability under the guise of social cohesion while true political democracy falls by the wayside.[207] Promoting a romanticized imagery of the peasantry while pursuing a contradictory modernization in the form of capitalism, the government excluded the majority of the population from the

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[206] Bartra, *The Cage of Melancholy*, 1. Bartra believed that through their writing, intellectuals created the idea of *mexicanidad*, creating this cyclic process of revisiting the very thing they invented.
[207] Ibid., 3.

true nationalist project. From Bartra's perspective, a universal Mexican nationalism did not exist, but acknowledged the power behind the idea and argued for the need to understand how it became part of the cultural and social structure of Mexico. To this end he examined the stereotypes of the Mexican character, which in some ways paralleled the approach of Paz, but with the contradictory goal of proving the commonalities false. Other Mexican intellectuals after Bartra begin to acknowledge nuances of identity rather than committing to a racial or class ideology of nationalism. Bartra's approach extends to the popular culture of migration as well, as more contemporary artists abandon the nationalist rhetoric and criticize policies of both the U.S. and Mexico for the injustices migrants face.

Carlos Fuentes' perspective on Mexican nationalism can be found both in his fiction and social commentary. His first novel, *Where the Air is Clear,* was published in 1958, and he continued to write until his death in 2012. He held an anti-foreign perspective on Mexican nationalism in the sense that he believed the nation needed to function on its own, exclusive of external intervention. Fuentes wrote, "We must, therefore, recognize nationalism as a dynamic factor, essential for the solution of internal problems, which should remain free of outside meddling."[208] While he recognized the indigenous past of Mexico, Fuentes did not succumb to universals in his analysis of Mexican nationalism, instead arguing that the cultural consciousness of Mexico is multiracial and multicultural. Complications of *mexicanidad* exist throughout Fuentes' book *The Crystal Frontier,* about the Mexico-U.S. borderlands with migration as a central theme. Through his characters, Fuentes expressed a developing construction of transnational identity rooted in nation but also deterritorialized at the borderlands.

[208] Carlos Fuentes, "Doing It Our Way," *New Statesman and Society* 3 (1990): 17.

Fuentes did not use his storytelling, or his political and cultural commentary to create a legitimating narrative in support of a national identity.[209] What he did express was the need to voice the repression of the dispossessed, the underprivileged, and the unrepresented.[210] Carlos Fuentes was the son of a Mexican diplomat who was born in Panama and grew up throughout the Americas, including a six year stint in Washington D.C. from 1934-1940. During this time Mexico nationalized oil holdings and by Fuentes' account he experienced a personal backlash of not being permitted to visit his friends in their homes as a result. He lived in Mexico for the first time as a teenager, where he attended school, and as an adult resided at various points in Mexico, the United States, England, and France. Perhaps because of his worldly perspective, Fuentes often wrote about a broader Latin American identity in his social commentary while his fiction remained rooted in Mexican identity. In his essay "How I started to write," Fuentes reminded readers, "remember, I had learned to imagine Mexico before I ever knew Mexico," which allowed for a creative representation of nationionalism. While, Fuentes' novels reintroduce traditional characteristics like *indigenismo*, machismo, and modernity, his literature also freely explores the potentialities of the Mexican consciousness.

Patriarchy and Gender

The concept of patriarchy as a characteristic of *lo mexicano* existed prior to the revolution. Both the caudillos of the nineteenth century and Porfirio Diaz presented themselves as father figures for the nation, while fathers served as the head of household

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[209] Pauline Warren, "Carlos Fuentes: Imagining the Other: Violence, Sounds, and Silences" (PhD diss,, University of Houston, 2005), 41.
[210] Carlos Fuentes, "Central and Eccentric Writing," in *Lives on the Line: the Testimony of Contemporary Latin American Authors* ed. Doris Meyer (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 10.

in the traditional family structure. In the post-revolutionary period, the government once again positioned itself as a paternalistic figure in a way that became institutionalized through the monopoly of the Partido Revolucionario Internacional (PRI). Octavio Paz wrote about the government as father, asserting, "Behind the respect for Señor Presidente there is the traditional image of the Father… in the center of the family: the father. The father figure is two-pronged, the duality of patriarch and macho. The patriarch protects, is good, powerful, wise. The macho is the terrible man, the chingón, the father who has left, who has abandoned a wife and children. The image of Mexican authority is inspired by these two extremes: Señor Presidente and caudillo."[211] Paz's quote could easily apply to Mexican migrant males who view opportunities for labor in the U.S. as a means to fulfilling their fatherly duties as provider, but whether intentional or not, upon leaving Mexico they become the macho who abandons the family.

In the introduction to his study of Mexican youth counterculture, Eric Zolov outlines a paternalistic relationship between the Mexican government and society, a relationship which parallels the middle-class family. Conceptualizing the "revolutionary family," as a framework to understand Mexican governance and social relations in the post-revolutionary period, Zolov argued that a patriarchal system developed in response to the need to create unity. In a practical sense, with the reform policies of the revolution, the government adopted the role of caring for the people as a father cares for his children. Zolov historicized the idea of the revolutionary family to the presidency of Plutarco Elias Calles in 1929. Calles established the Partido Nacional Revolucionario, precursor to the dominant PRI, which drew its legitimacy by association as the party of the revolution. Wanting to avoid the pitfalls of both the decentralized caudillo system of the nineteenth

[211] Paz, *The Labyrinth of Solitude,* 336.

century and the overly centralized dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz, the PRI created a centralized authority with the perception of democratic political participation.[212]

Zolov found that in order to establish unity, the post-revolutionary regime had to rewrite the historical memory of the revolutionary experience as one of unified opposition to the Diaz regime and to imperialism.[213] To accomplish this consolidated view of the revolution, the government oversaw the writing of textbooks, creation of murals, monuments, and celebrations that elevated both rebels and the post revolutionary political establishment, as heroes. The photography of the period reinforces this imagery as well. Seen as the photographer of the revolution, Victor Cassasola's *Albúm histórico gráfico* was filled with images of the "great men" of the revolution.[214]

With the PRI serving as the official ruling party of the nation, it became the metaphorical stable family unit with the president serving as the authoritative father figure. Zolov argued that this reinforced traditional middle class families with "the father stern in his benevolence, mother saintly in her maternity, and children loyal in their obedience."[215] Mexican popular culture is full of male imagery that represents various aspects of the Mexican national character. The female representation of indigenismo is the India who must be tamed, the female equivalent of the charro is the china poblana, and the counterpoint to the patriarch is the long suffering woman. Each of these images reinforced the paternalistic structure of society and understanding of what it meant to be Mexican.

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[212] Zolov, *Refried Elvis,* 2.
[213] Ibid., *Refried Elvis,* 3-4. See also Mraz, *Looking for Mexico,* for his analysis of how photography was used to co-opt difference among the revolutionaries into the same "Family" "in service to the national conglomeration that legitimizes the PRI dictatorship as the revolution's sole heir," 92.
[214] Mraz, *Looking for Mexico,* 73.
[215] Zolov, *Refried Elvis,* 5.

In his chapter titled "Mexico 1890-1976: High Contrast, Still Life," Carlos Monsiváis presented a top-down analysis, highlighting the ideas of machismo and paternalism as characteristics of Mexican nationalism and the state. In other words, like Zolov, he found that the government grew more autonomous as it claimed to pursue policies for the care and protection of the masses. The government's paternalism had a depoliticizing effect in that people bought into the nationalist project of the state, allowing the regime to rule in peace because challenges to that authority would be deemed unpatriotic. However, according to Monsiváis, this relationship ended in the 1950s as people no longer tried to meet the elusive standards of Mexican nationalism and all that remained were local traditions that later get absorbed into national identity.[216]

Born and educated in Mexico City, Monsiváis emerged as a cultural critic in the 1960s, and along with Fuentes and Elena Poniatowska remained until his death one of the most respected writers for his insight on Mexican culture and identity. With the book *Mexican Postcards*, Monsiváis consolidated his thoughts on the characteristics of Mexican nationalism. While he wrote about *indigenismo* and the proletariat, Monsiváis expands his analysis to include other characteristics of *mexicanidad* like machismo, paternalism, modernity, Catholicism, spirituality and mysticism, transnationalsim, and millenarianism. Consistent with Bartra's perspective of culture, Monsiváis analyzed how political and economic elites organized society, using nationalism to serve their needs

[216] Monsiváis, *Mexican Postcards,* 20. See also Zolov, *Refried Elvis,* who argues that by the late 1950s, revolutionary nationalism was being questioned not only by the peasantry but by younger generations of the middle-class, 8.

Conclusion

In his book, *Exits from the Labyrinth,* Claudio Lomnitz-Adler made the argument that all studies of Mexican nationalism are problematic because with the exception of Bartra, they do not question the existence of Mexican national culture to begin with. Still, he found Bartra's analysis flawed because even if nationalism was a mythical creation of intellectuals, it is already ingrained in the social and political system of the nation. Lomnitz-Adler concluded that we cannot abandon all forms of nationalism because national identity plays a role in a global society, but argued that we have to look at regional identity and place within the context of nation.

Lomnitz-Adler found that in the 1970s and 80s, intellectuals wrote about Mexican cultural nationalism as diverse yet all the more Mexican for its diversity.[217] He argued that these ideas fit into the agenda of the Mexican nation state which desired new and diverse images of nationality, but also continued to present the *mestizo* as the image of national pluralism. In contrast, he believed there was no homogenous national culture but a nationalist ideology in which the local operates, which is to say there exists an imagining of nation within which communities create their own sense of identity. Because Lomnitz-Adler recognized the traditional associations of revolutionary nationalism persisted, he seemed to suggest a return to *patria chica* within the context of the official nationalist narrative to understand the fundamental beginnings.

The revolutionary nationalism that developed in the 1920s and 30s loomed large in the conceptions of Mexican identity throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. In an effort to establish unity, the government pieced together a patriarchal nationalism that was at once anti-American in its mestizaje and embracing of the United States in its modernity.

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[217] Lomnitz-Adler, *Exits from the Labyrinth,* 11.

How would conceptions of self change as Mexico became a nation of migration to the United States? With migrants conceiving of a deteritorialized identity, an identity of *lo mexicano* outside of Mexico, how is identity re-imagined and re-introduced?

Chapter Three - Mexico for the Mexicans: Anti-Americanism and Mexico's Case against Migration

Mexico's popular culture of migration reflected a nationalist sentiment consistent with the intellectual and political discussions of Mexican nationalism coming out of the revolution. Understanding the embodiment of the revolution to be wrapped up in the idea of "Mexico for the Mexicans," post-revolutionary national identity was rooted in resistance to foreigners.[218] This chapter interrogates the topic of migration as portrayed in Mexican literature, film and music, demonstrating a nationalism defined in opposition to a foreign "other" and in this case specifically in opposition to the United States. Through examples of migrant ill-treatment in the United States by employers and social prejudice in daily interactions, Mexican identity was underscored and reinforced. Migrants identified more closely with nation due to being discriminated against and excluded from the mainstream. They in turn romanticized home in the face of their negative experience in the United States. Although Mexico lacked the same economic opportunity available in the north, migrants longed for a time and place when one felt dignity and joy in life, even if this memory of Mexico did not match their lived reality. In addition to the messages of migrant mistreatment and the romanticizing of Mexico, Mexican popular culture reinforced nationalism by criticizing hybrid cultural practices adopted by migrants living in the United States as inferior to the perceived purity of Mexican culture. The examples found in this chapter bolster the Mexican national narrative, but people do not always respond as expected and therefore continue to migrate despite nationalist rhetoric imploring people to stay.

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[218] The anti-Porfirian newspaper, *El Hijo de Ahuizote,* carried the subtitle "Mexico for the Mexicans."

While the popular culture of migration reflected nationalism of the post revolutionary period, the act of migration contradicted the goals of the revolution. Freedom from foreign influence and social justice were at the heart of revolutionary upheaval in Mexico, yet the very population that should have been most served by revolutionary reforms were the same source feeding migration to the United States in search of better economic opportunity. The corrido "Consejos a los norteños," (Advice to Northerners) documented these circumstances. The "here" that the narrator references is Mexico and these stanzas indicate disillusion with the Mexican elite for not fulfilling the promises of the revolution.

Porque los ricos de aquí no mueven ningún quehacer, con el reparto de tierras me los pusieron a leer.	Because the rich here Don't stimulate the economy With the new land distribution They've been put to reading
La cosa está del demonio, ya no hay ni revolución, nomás lo que está aumentando son ladrones de a montón	Things are like hell here The Revolution is over The only thing increasing here Are loads of thieves.

Because of Mexico's dire conditions, the narrator goes on to advise people to migrate to the United States. The very next stanza states,

Amigos, vamos al Norte; no lo estén tanto pensando, si no hay dinero pa'l tren nos iremos caminando.	Friends, let's go up north Don't waste time thinking about it If there's no money for train fare We will travel on foot. [219]

Despite a nod to reasons why people migrate in "Consejos a los norteños," the majority of the twenty-seven stanza corrido goes back and forth acknowledging the mistreatment of Mexicans in the United States but tolerating it because one's material life and economic opportunity are greater in the United States. This was a common

[219] "Consejos a los norteños," in Herrera-Sobek, *Northward Bound*, 71.

perspective of the popular culture which presented migrants either as victims or traitors to the nation. The corrido "Defensa de los norteños," (Defense of the Emigrants) makes an attempt to justify the lack of patriotism attributed to migrants.

Mucha gente así lo ha dicho: dizque no somos patriotas porque les vamos a server a los infame patotas.	Many people have said That we are not patriotic Because we go to serve The accursed big-footed ones.
Pero que se abran trabajos y que paguen buen dinero, y no queda un Mexicano que se vaya al extranjero.	But let them give us jobs And pay us decent wages; Then not one Mexican Will go to foreign lands.[220]

Popular culture of the post revolutionary period rarely acknowledged problems in Mexico. Rooted in nationalism, the overarching purpose was to deter migration with the message to both would-be and existing migrants that perceived benefits of life in the United States did not outweigh the inhospitableness.

Ill Treatment of Mexican Migrants

The mistreatment of Mexican migrants is a dominant theme throughout the popular culture of migration. United States employers are one source of abuse in these portrayals with migrants being depicted as overworked and underpaid in physically demanding jobs, verbally assaulted, living in poor conditions, and physically threatened. Equally culpable in these songs, movies, and literature, is American society at large which creates an environment of isolation and exclusion based on the discrimination of Mexican migrants. A dichotomy of good versus evil emerges from these stories with Mexican migrants portrayed as victims and the people of the United States as villains, resulting in a firmer identification with being Mexican.

[220] "Defensa de los nortenos," in Herrera-Sobek, *Northward Bound*, 81-82.

From 1922 to 2000, more than one hundred Mexican films with a Mexican emigrant theme were made, indicating the importance migration plays in the national consciousness.[221] The earliest of these productions was the silent feature *El hombre sin patria* (The Man Without a Country), released in 1922. In this film, a young, wealthy man by the name of Rodolfo is kicked out of his home in Mexico and decides to migrate to the United States. He initially lives a comfortable life until the money he brought from Mexico runs dry, forcing Rodolfo to find a job. Living as a Mexican laborer the main character suffers racial discrimination and oppressive working conditions. At the end of the plot, Rodolfo is like the prodigal son who returns to Mexico and to his family.

This film sets the pattern for the cultural production of Mexican migration in the post-Revolutionary period in which the only way to reconcile the wrong of having migrated is to return permanently to Mexico. The title reveals that very early on in Mexico-United States transnational labor history, Mexican migrants harbored a feeling that they did not belong here or there, a sentiment reflected by Mexican Americans as well. Additionally, conditions of the Mexican laborer in the United States, whether undocumented or not, permeate the popular culture of migration. In *El hombre sin patria,* Rodolfo does not experience the exclusion that makes him acutely aware of his Mexicanness until he is forced to work. Given that the dominant reason cited for migration to the United States is economic opportunity, it makes sense that labor forms the central point of reference in the popular culture of migration.

[221] David Maciel, *El bandolero el pocho y la raza: imágines cinematográficas del chicano* (México, D.F.: CONACULTA Sigle Veintiuno Editores, 2000), 94.

Hundreds of Mexican songs are written about the migrant experience, enough to warrant several studies.[222] With the popularity and ease of dissemination of music through radio and oral tradition of músicos, the experiences of migrants were widely spread along with the nationalist slant underlining these songs. Between 1920-1950, the government promoted nationalism over radio airwaves both with state run station XFX and through programming regulations for commercial stations.[223] Radio XFX, a station run by the SEP broadcast educational and cultural programming.[224]

The Mexican government introduced its first radio law in 1926, called the Law of Electrical Communications (LCE). In line with the nationalist sentiment of the post-Revolutionary period, this law restricted ownership of radio stations to Mexican citizens, and prohibited negative content against the established government, or content that could threaten public safety. In 1931 and 1932, the government also introduced revisions to the Law of General means of Communication (LVGC) which required broadcasters to carry government messages without charge, prohibited stations that broadcast within Mexico from being located outside of the country and established Spanish as the only acceptable broadcast language in "defense of the national culture."[225] The Cárdenas administration introduced the Radio Law of 1936 in which commercial radio stations were obligated to broadcast 25 percent *música típica,* and increased the required amount of government

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[222] De la Garza, *Ni aquí ni allá*; Maria Herrera-Sobek, *Northward Bound*; Teresa McKenna, *Migrant Song: Politics, and Process in Contemporary Chicano Literature* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997); Cathy Ragland, *Música norteña*; Martha I. Chew Sánchez, *Corridos in Migrant Memory*.
[223] Joy Elizabeth Hayes, "National Imagining on the Air: Radio in Mexico, 1920-1950," in *The Eagle and the Virgin,* ed. Vaughan and Lewis. According to Hayes, the audience for radio increased from 1926 with an estimated 25,000 radio sets in operation to 450,000 receivers by the late 1930s. The number of radio stations also increased over the decade of the 1930s from 70 in the middle of the decade to 120 stations by the end of the decade.
[224] Ibid, 243; See also Ivonne Grethel Chávez Ortiz, "La radio como experencia cultural: un panorama de la radiofusión en el ámbito internacional y los inicios de la radio educative en el period nacionalists en México 1924-1936," *Signos Historicos* 28 (2012): 114-148.
[225] Hayes, "National Imagining on the Air," 247.

programming.[226] These early efforts of the government ensured the dissemination of popular Mexican music and the messages contained within these songs.

Included among the various genres under the umbrella of *música típica,* were regional productions found primarily along the Mexico-U.S. border and included corridos, norteñas, and conjunto. The corrido "Versos de los betabeleros," (Verses of the Beet-Field Workers) recounts the 1923 recruitment of Mexican migrants living in Texas to work the beet fields in Michigan. The beginning of the corrido explains that workers were led to believe they would be well provided for and want for nothing if they left Texas for Michigan, but the reality explained in the corrido is they were met with abuse.

Porque no nos han cumplido Lo que fueron a contar. Aquí vienen y les cuentan Que se vayan para allá	Because they haven't done for us What they said they would. Here they come and they tell you That you ought to go up there.
Porque allá les tienen todo Que no van a batallar, Pero son puras mentiras Los que vienen y les dicen.	Because over there you will have everything Without having to fight for it. But these are nothing but lies, From those who come and say those things.[227]

"Versos de los betabeleros," is rooted in historical fact. As Juan García documented in his book *Mexicans in the Midwest, 1900-1932,* Mexican migration to the region began as early as 1914 with the outbreak of World War I. The railroad and sugar beet industries recruited Mexican laborers out of traditional regions of settlement, like Texas.[228] The corrido demonstrates that even when Mexican labor was in high demand, Mexican migrants received abuse, rather than praise for the labor they provided.

[226] Ibid, 247.
[227] "Versos de los betabeleros," Herrera-Sobek, *Northward Bound*, 92.
[228] Juan R. García, *Mexicans in the Midwest, 1900-1932* (Tucson:University of Arizona Press, 1996), 5.

Mexican journalist and self-proclaimed working-class immigrant, Daniel Venegas, issued his warning against migration in his work *Las aventuras de don Chipote o cuando los pericos mamen,* originally published in 1928. In this story, Don Chipote de Jesús María Domínguez migrates to the United States as a laborer without legal papers, the consequences of which include that he has no other choice but to work menial jobs, he is more vulnerable to mistreatment by his employers because he has no legal recourse to complain or fight back, and he is in constant fear of being deported which underlines every other aspect of life. The looming threat of deportation becomes reality for Don Chipote at the end of the novel.

The story is significant in outlining the undocumented experience because in the American mind, Mexicans become the "iconic illegal aliens"[229]. Don Chipote migrated in 1924, the same year the United States government created the border patrol and enacted the national origins quota system was enacted. The quota system did not apply to Mexico because American agriculturalist needed the labor and lobbied to exclude them.[230] Early in the 1920s Mexicans could relatively freely migrate into the United States, but evidence indicates that economic crisis early in the decade led to the repatriation of 150,000 migrants between 1921 and 1924[231]. At the time that Venegas wrote the story of Don Chipote, the border patrol was beginning to transform from an entity that controlled migration to one whose agenda became about restricting excess Mexican labor. Kelly Lytle Hernández explains in her book *Migra!,* how policing of the border became racialized and regionalized, focused on those who looked Mexican and

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[229] Kelly Lytle Hernández, *Migra!*, 2.
[230] Balderrama and Rodríguez, *Decade of Betrayal*, 21. Balderrama & Rodriguez show that again in 1928, the United States Congress considered applying immigration quotas to Mexico, but growers and ranchers objected.
[231] Yankelevich, "Mexico for the Mexicans," 422.

along the southern border. She outlined the history of the border patrol that initially hired poor whites as agents who were personally invested in restricting labor migration as competition for jobs. In Texas the border patrol also drew from former Texas Rangers who brought preconceived negative perceptions of Mexicans. In this manner, illegal comes to equal Mexican, a status that in the American mind gets attributed to all ethnic Mexicans.[232]

As a migrant, Venegas had first-hand knowledge of the process of migration and his narrative reflects the realities for labor migrants in the 1920s. He wrote, "The majority of Mexican migrants come to the United States only to leave all their physical energy, to be mistreated by foreman and humiliated by the citizens of the country."[233] Venegas' perspective as expressed both in his novel about Don Chipote and in his satirical weekly newspaper published in Los Angeles, *El Malcriado,* used the dialect of workers living in the United States at the time. That Venegas spoke to the migrant experience is evident in the success of *El Malcriado,* and the vaudeville plays he wrote and performed for working-class Mexican audiences.[234]

Working-class Mexicans similarly characterized their nationalism through expressions of anti-American sentiment. In 1927, after twenty-five years of living in the United States, Carlos Ibáñez, a native of San Francisco, Zacatecas, claimed, "I would rather cut my throat before changing my Mexican nationality. I prefer to lose with

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[232] With *Impossible Subjects* Ngai explained the concept of "alien citizens," American born minorities who are viewed as illegal because of appearance.
[233] Alberto Ledesma, "Undocumented Crossings: Narratives of Mexican Immigration to the United States," in *Culture Across Borders,* Maciel and Herrera-Sobek eds., 69. Ledesma writes that Nick Kanellos brought the stories about Don Chipote back to life. Venegas first published them as a serialized narrative in the immigrant newspaper, *El Heraldo de Mexico,* and titled the series "Las aventuras de don Chipote o cuando los pericos mamen," (The Adventures of Don Chipote or When Parakeets May Suckle Their Young). Kanellos described Venegas' work the first Chicano novel.
[234] Nicolás Kanellos, *Handbook of Hispanic Cultures in the United States* (Houston: Arte Público Press, 1993-1994), 246.

Mexico than to win with the United States."[235] In fact, Ibáñez, like many other migrants hoped to return to Mexico. Despite his pronouncement that he would rather lose with Mexico, Ibáñez ironically claimed, "I am only waiting until conditions get better, until there is absolute peace before I go back". Although a contradiction exists between Ibáñez' nationalist rhetoric and his reasons for not returning to Mexico, the fact is, his own nationalist identity was anti-American in attitude. Similarly, Wenceslao Orozco, a migrant from Durango refused to change his citizenship even though it might help him get into a carpenter's union, saying he would rather "have his two eyes taken out." When Orozco learned that his children were American citizens by birth he got sick with anger and took them to the Mexican consulate.[236]

The border itself contributes to identity formation of people living on both sides. As a social and cultural space, the act of crossing the border means movement between a place of belonging to one of exclusion. Mexican intellectual, Octavio Paz expressed this attitude in his famous work on Mexican Identity, *The Labyrinth of Solitude,* based on reflections that came to him in a two year period when he was living in the United States. Paz believed, crossing the border made one aware that he is Mexican.[237] As a member of the Mexican elite, Paz crossed the border without difficulty. Undocumented migrants understood the significance of the border more acutely because for the entirety of their presence in the United States they lived in fear of being discovered and deported. Living in this manner makes undocumented migrants distinctly aware that they are Mexican. The act of migration across the border plays a role in defining popular nationalism in Mexico because of the illegality associated with it.

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[235] Interview with Carlos Ibáñez in Manuel Gamio, *The Mexican Immigrant*, 45-46.
[236] Interview with Wenceslao Orozco in Gamio, *The Mexican Immigrant,* 53.
[237] Octavio Paz, *The Labyrinth of Solitude.* 12.

At times the dangers and mistreatment were more grave than deportation or abuse. The corrido Ramón Delgado talks about mistreatment of Mexican migrants that goes so far as to result in the death of a Mexican. The corrido of Ramón Delgado recounts actual events and begins with the year and location of the incident. S.P. Childress, the man who killed Ramón Delgado, claimed that he shot Delgado in self defense after a dispute between their sons over property in which he warned the elder Delgado not to approach the Childress house.[238] The corrido indicates that Mexicans did not believe the American account of events with the line, "they kill Mexicans just because they feel like it." This is just an indication of the injustices and mistreatment that Mexicans experienced in Texas.

Año de mil novecientos veintitrés qu se contó en ese pueblo del Hondo Ramón Delgado murió.	The year nineteen hundred and twenty-three that just past, in the town of Hondo, Ramón Delgado was killed.
Y ese pueblo del Hondo está corriendo mala fama, que matan al mexicano nomás porque les da gana	That town of Hondo is getting a bad reputation; there they kill Mexicans just because they feel like it.[239]

In the 1923 song "Vida, proceso, y muerte de Aurelio Pompa," (Life, Trial, and Death of Aurelio Pompa), the tale of Pompa as recounted in the corrido after several attempts to evade an American's abuse, he killed the man in self defense. As a result Aurelio is arrested, convicted, and sentenced to death. At the end of the song Aurelio advises:

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[238] La Prensa, Saturday, April 21, 1923, accessed September 14, 2013 http://www.laits.utexas.edu/jaime/jnicolopulos/cwp3/icg/images/news_delgado2.jpg; The Hondo Anvil – Herald, April 19, 1923, accessed September 14, 2013 http://www.laits.utexas.edu/jaime/jnicolopulos/cwp3/icg/images/news_delgado3.jpg; San Antonio Express, Saturday, April 21, 1923, accessed September 14, 2013 http://www.laits.utexas.edu/jaime/jnicolopulos/cwp3/icg/images/news_delgado4.jpg

[239] "Ramón Delgado," in Herrera-Sobek, *Northward Bound*, 103.

"…dile a mi raza que ya no venga que aquí se sufre que no hay piedad" pity	"…Tell my race not to come here, For here they will suffer; there is no here."[240]

The years 1929 through 1939, mark a period of global depression and decline in Mexican migration to the United States. In fact, the United States and Mexican governments joined in a concerted effort to repatriate Mexicans during this time period.[241] While the Mexican state could not improve economic conditions to prevent migration, they also did not like Mexicans migrating, so through consulates and other agreements you see them getting involved. Advice given in the song "Despedida de Karnes City Texas," (Farewell from Karnes City, Texas) includes, "*procuren el consulado,/que es el arma de la raza"* (Seek out the Mexican consulate/For that is the weapon of our race.) Targets of repatriation during the depression encompassed all ethnic Mexicans, including legal migrants, Mexican Americans, and undocumented migrants as expressed in the "Corrido de la triste situación," (Corrido of the Sad Situation)

Los llevan a Emigración, los sentencian a la Corte, los que van de contraband aunque lleven pasaporte.	They take them to the immigration office They sentence them in the courts, Those that are here illegally And even those with passports.[242]

Due to the tense climate of competition for jobs and the United States effort to deport Mexicans, it is no surprise that these corridos reflect a mistreatment of Mexican migrants. The following in an excerpt from the corrido "Deportados," (Deported).

Los güeros son muy maloras, los gringos son muy maloras,	The blonds are very unkind; The gringos are very unkind.

[240] "Vida, proceso, y muerte de Aurelio Pompa," in Herrera-Sobek, *Northward Bound*, 102.
[241] Balderrama and Rodríguez, *Decade of Betrayal;* Guerin-Gonzales, *Mexican Workers and American Dream*; Abraham Hoffman, *Unwanted Mexican Americans in the Great Depression.*
[242] "Corrido de la triste situación," in Herrera-Sobek, *Northward Bound*, 142.

se valen de la occasion,
y a todos los mexicanos,
y a todos los mexicanos,
nos tartan sin compassion.

They take advantage of the chance
To treat all the Mexicans,
To treat all the Mexicans
Without compassion.

Hoy traen la gran polvadera
ho traen la gran polvadera
y sin consideración,
mujeres niños y ancianos
los llevan a la frontera
los echan de esa nación.

Today they are rounding them up,
Today they are rounding them up;
And without consideration
Women, children, and old folks
Are taken to the border
And expelled from that country.[243]

The corrido "La Crisis Actual," (The Present Crisis) similarly references Mexican workers who are used for their labor only to be thrown out of the United States during economic downturn.

Después de ser explotados
en estas tierras del Norte
ahora son arrojados
Por no tener pasaporte

After being exploited
In these lands of the north
Now they are being thrown out
For not having a passport[244]

The cultural production of this period reflected the economic hardships migrants faced during the depression. For example, "Efectos de la crisis," (Effects of the Crisis) told of circumstances in which the people had no food, bill collectors persisted, and divorces increased. The narrator of "Los repatriados," (The Repatriated Ones) explains why he is being repatriated, saying, "*Maldita sea la finanza…Cálmate dolor de panza.*" (Damn those finances…Be quiet now, stomachaches).

Many of the depression era corridos are instructional. For example, "La emigración," (Emigration) is full of suggestions on how to lawfully deal with immigration agents, advises migrants to have paperwork in hand demonstrating their legal entry into the United States, and implores migrants to return to Mexico, particularly those without documents.

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[243] "Deportados," in Herrera-Sobek, *Northward Bound*, 128.
[244] "La crisis actual," in Balderrama and Rodríguez, *Decade of Betrayal*, 63.

prepara los papelitos, con ellos hay que probar que cumplimos al pasar con todos los requisites, y si no con todo y pitos… possessions…	Get the records ready That will help prove That we fulfilled the requirements When we crossed over, Otherwise, with all of our
Vamos a México, etc.	Let’s go back to mexico, etc.
Sirvase tener cuidado con quien le va interrogar; con atención hay que hablar y todo bien explicado, quien le pregunta es empleado, sin dudas de inmigración, pide justificación, cuándo y por dónde ha pasado over, si no está legalizado…	Just be careful With whoever questions you, Be attentive when speaking, Explaining everything in detail, The employee who asks you I surely from immigration And will request proof Of when and where you crossed But if you are not lawfully here…
Vamos a México, etc.	Let’s go back to Mexico, etc. [245]

“Corrido de la emigración,” (Corrido of the Immigration Officers) recounts circumstances in which people have been rounded up and imprisoned, advises migrants to take extra precautions against unlawful behavior, and ends with deportation.

Yo voy a dar un consejo a todo joven soltero,	I am going to give advice To every young bachelor…
Que arregle su pasaporte, no viva amancebado porque va a dar a la corte siendo al final deportado	Have your passport in order, Do not live with a mistress, Because you’ll end up in court And at last you’ll be deported…
Si tú quieres ser feliz, Cuando el Bravo hayas pasado muestrale a este país que sus leyes no has violado.	If you want to be happy When you have crossed the Bravo, Show this country clearly That you have not broken its laws…
Ya con ésta me despido, raza de mi estimación; sin poder dar al ovlido, que me echo la Emigración.	And so I take my leave, My esteemed people, Without being able to forget That the INS deported me.[246]

[245] “La emigración,” in Herrera-Sobek, *Northward Bound*, 132-133.

These instructional corridos demonstrate the significance of this form of cultural production that served not only to relate news from one community to the next, but offering real life methods of coping and survival.

In another song titled "Los deportados" (The Deportees), Mexican migrants are criticized for continuing to migrate to the United States when they are treated so poorly. The majority of this corrido chastised migrants for having gone to the United States in the first place, proposing that the mistreatment experienced in the north was punishment for having given up so easily on Mexico by migrating north.

Los corren los maltratan	They're insulted, mistreated,
los gringos desgraciados,	By those gringo wretches;
no tienen vergüenza	They have no shame,
siempre allá están pegados.	They keep going there.[247]

Many of the corridos imply that the only solution to the migrants' circumstances is to return to Mexico. "Deportados," states *"ya no hay más revolució*n;*/vámonos cuates queridos/seremos bien recibidos/en nuestra bella nación."* (Now that there is no revolution;/Let us go , brothers dear,/We will be well received/In our own beautiful land..) The corrido "La emigración," repeats, between each stanza, the phrase, "*Vamos a México,"* (Let's go back to Mexico). "Los repatriados," states "*Ya me vo pa'l terrenazo,/ya aquí no puedo vivir,"* (I am going to my land/I can live here no more). In two separate stanzas, the "Corrido de la emigración," declares "*Así, paisanos, queridos,/ en México los espero…adiós, México de afuera,/ya me voy para el de adentro."* (Thus, dear countrymen,/ I await you in Mexico…Good-bye, Mexicans in exile, Home to Old Mexico I go). Again in "Corrido de Inmigración," (The Immigration Corrido) the line,

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[246] "Corrido de la emigración," in Herrera-Sobek, *Northward Bound*, 137.
[247] "Los deportados," in Herrera-Sobek, *Northward Bound*, 138.

"*ha que volver a la patria/donde están nuestros hermanos."* (We must return to our homeland/Where our brothers reside.) advised migrants to return to Mexico.

This perspective was consistent with the repatriation efforts of both Mexican and United States governments. State and federal agencies worked to get Mexican migrants to voluntarily repatriate to Mexico while the Mexican government aided by providing transportation, consulate support, and promises of land as incentives for repatriation.[248] Fernando Saúl Alanís Enciso argues that the depression era repatriations were one factor contributing to the consolidation of nationalism and to the construction of the post-revolutionary Mexican state.[249]

With greater tension and policing of the Mexico-U.S. border during the depression it became more difficult to cross north, resulting in people taking greater risks to migrate. One of the earliest songs to reflect the environmental dangers of finding alternate routes to cross the border without documents was the song "Arizona"

Arizona desierto de lago	Arizona, desert lake
testígo obligado	forced witness
de tanta traición	of so many treacheries
Cuantas vidas	how many lives
en tí se han quedado	have been left here
que se han speculator	have been buried here
debajo del sol.	underneath the sun. [250]

World War II broke out in 1939, and that marked the end of global depression. With the United States entrance into the war at the end of 1941, the country once again

[248] Abraham Hoffman, *Unwanted Mexican Americans*.
[249] Alanís Enciso, "The Repatriation of Mexicans," 53.
[250] "Arizona," Manuel Jimenez, Peer International Corporation, 1929.

welcomed Mexican migrants north of the border. Labor was so important that the two governments worked to formalize the exchange with the 1942 Bracero program.[251]

From the Mexican perspective, all laborers regardless of legal status were considered braceros and, as demonstrated below, references to undocumented migrants as braceros are prevalent in the popular culture. Although Mexicans understood the difficulties and dangers of illegality, this perspective indicates that a laborer is a laborer, doing the work of Americans. In contrast, the definition of bracero in the United States was restricted to contract laborers from 1942-1964.

In the 1947 movie, *Pito Pérez se va de bracero*, after falling into legal trouble in Mexico for insulting a policeman, the main protagonist joins others in deciding to go to the United States. The film follows Pito Pérez in a series of misadventures, first working as a field hand then later on in the railroads and finally as a dishwasher in a dance hall after he finds the other labor overly exhausting, dangerous, and with little pay. The owner of the dancehall along with and American female co-worker were involved in illegal transport of Mexican workers to the United States and are discovered by the authorities. Pito Pérez is arrested in a sting to bring down the smugglers, then released after the woman from the dancehall pays his bail. He returns to Mexico vowing never to return again to the United States.

Pito Pérez was a character familiar to Mexican audiences. José Rubén Romero introduced the character in his 1938 novel "La vida inútil de Pito Pérez," about a *pícaro* (rogue) whose interactions with people throughout Mexico offered satire and social commentary on the problems of society and government ills during the post-

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[251] Evidence suggests that on a limited level and through efforts of local run governments as opposed to the federal government, repatriations of some Mexicans continued until 1944.

Revolutionary period. A film based on the novel was made in 1944 with Manuel Medel starring as Pito Pérez alongside Mario Moreno, better known as Cantinflas. This production helped to launch the character of Pito Pérez as a cultural icon within Mexico and with the popularity of the character, filmmakers believed they would find success by placing the character in the context of a bracero during a period of national interest in increasing migration to the United States. [252]

The popularity of the character Pito Pérez is important because of the audience reach of the film *Pito Pérez se va de bracero.* Though the film was not as well made as other Pito Pérez stories, it represented the feeling that migrating to the United States was not worth it. Mexican audiences widely received this message from the stream of cultural productions on migration that came to the same conclusion. Still, Mexican migration increased during the period of the bracero program individuals were not swayed by stories of mistreatment. While the popular culture could not persuade a halt to migration, it was successful in promoting Mexican nationalist sentiment both within Mexico and in the diaspora living in the United States.

According to literary critic, Alberto Ledesma, "Mexican bracero narratives have been so prolific that one may argue that they constitute an independent genre."[253] Bracero narratives of this time period include Luis Spota's *Murieron a mitad del río* (1948), Jesús Topete's *Aventuras de un bracero* (1948), Héctor Raúl Almanza's *Huelga blanca* (1950), José de Jesús Becerra González's *El dólar viene del norte* (1954), and Magdalena Mondragón's *Tenemos sed* (1956).

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[252] David R. Maciel and María Rosa García-Acevedo, "The Celluloid Immigrant: The Narrative Films of Mexican Immigration," in *Culture across Border*.
[253] Ledesma, "Undocumented Crossings," 74.

The title of Luis Spota's 1948 novel, *Murieron a mitad del río,* alone serves as a warning against migration. In search for better opportunity, the main character, José Paván and three friends attempt to cross into the United States without documents. While they are crossing the river into Texas they attempt to hide from the border patrol which is policing the river when one of the friends ends up getting left behind. While in the United States, Paván and his friends realize that they will have to live a life of constantly looking over their shoulders for fear of being caught and deported. They experience mistreatment from their employer and the worst of it comes from a Mexican American. This Mexican American decides to call immigration on Paván who is eventually forced back to Mexico.

Inter-ethnic conflict between Mexican migrants and Mexican Americans is another dominant theme in cultural representations of migration. During the post revolutionary period, this conflict primarily plays out in language. The popular culture of migration portrays Mexican Americans who either refuse to or are incapable of speaking Spanish. In these cultural productions speaking Spanish becomes a litmus test for the level at which someone has rejected their Mexicanness. The reality of inter-ethnic Mexican relations were quite complicated and characterized by varying levels of acceptance and rejection of one another.[254] Adopting too many American traits becomes a warning of what one does not want to become.

Adios mi chaparrita, released in 1939, features a Mexican character that lives in the United States permanently and he treats Mexican agricultural laborers the worst. Rather than staying in Mexico to rebuild the revolutionary nation this person is seen as a traitor who turns his back on other Mexicans and Mexico.

[254] See Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors,* for a history of this relationship.

During the years of contracted labor, Mexican migration to the United States was seen as mutually beneficial for both governments, and for Mexican laborers as equally as American employers. Despite the positivity surrounding the bracero program, popular culture portrayed those who migrated as victims, uprooted from their homes to serve a nation that was unappreciative of their labor as indicated by how poorly they were treated. The Mexican government may have advertised the bracero program as a positive, but the cultural production demonstrates that in Mexico, popular attitudes towards migration remained negative. There continued to be an anti-American sentiment in accounts of Mexican mistreatment. Written in 1942, at the start of the Bracero program, the "Corrido de los desarraigados," (The Corrido of the Uprooted Ones) outlines the exploitation of Mexican workers very early in the history of legally contracted labor.

Nos trabajan como esclavos y nos tartan como perros. No más falta que no monten y que nos pongan el freno.	They work us like slaves And treat us like dogs. All we need is for them to ride us And to put the bridle on us.[255]

The corrido "Canto del bracero," (The Bracero's Song) appeared in the 1950s and reflects the lack of dignity and respect experienced by undocumented Mexican migrants living and working in the United States. In this song the migrant identifies this mistreatment as discrimination.

…siempre sentí la falta de estimación quesque dicen que es discriminación discrimination.	I always felt a lack of respect Which they say is called
Ay qué triste es la vida qué triste vida la del bracero ay cuánta decepción, cuánta desolación	Oh how sad is life How sad the life of a bracero. Oh how much deception, how much desolation.

[255] "Corrido de los desarraigados," in Herrera-Sobek, *Northward Bound*, 165.

The corrido does not identify whether the discrimination was based on race, class, nationality, illegality, or any other factors. However, the bracero makes it clear that the treatment of Mexican migrants pushes them into a wretched feeling of isolation. This was true for those who worked in Mexico's foreign owned mining camps, factories, or railroads south of the border, as well as for those who worked in the United States, and evidence indicates that those who suffered discrimination linked their offended dignity to their Mexicaness.[256] In other words, the experience of discrimination pushed workers into more closely identifying with nation.

"Canto del bracero," (The Bracero's Song) offers yet further advice that people not migrate, encouraging would be migrants to stay in Mexico where their loved ones are. This is a theme

Si tú piensas ir détente,	If you are thinking of going, stop.
o si estás allá regresa	Or if you are there, return
donde está to cariño y está tu gente your	To where your beloved resides and people too
y el rinconcito aquel que te vio nacer	And that small corner of the world where you were born
donde está el amor que pueden perder	Where there is a loved one you might lose.[257]

"Espaldas Mojadas" is a 1953 classic Mexican migration film that portrays all the negative experiences that can occur to Mexicans migrating to the United States. In an effort to escape trouble with a wealthy landowner, Rafael decides to move to the border town of Cuidad Juárez from San Luis Potosí with the hopes of eventually migrating to the United States in search of better opportunity. Rafael's troubles begin from the moment he attempts to acquire a bracero contract in his trade as a tractor driver but is told the only

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[256]Michael Snodgrass, "'We Are Alll Mexicans Here': Workers, Patriotism, and Union Struggles in Monterrey," in *The Eagle and the Virgin,* 315.
[257] "Canto del bracero," in Herrera-Sobek, *Northward Bound*, 166.

work available to Mexicans is in agricultural labor. This marks the first instance of discrimination and ill-treatment of would be Mexican migrants. Rafael ends up crossing without documents with the help of coyotes but the crossing is marked by tragedy with people dying or injured along the way. Upon arriving in the United States, he finds only exploitation and discrimination, along with the constant threat of deportation. Rafael works on the railroads and is witness to unethical treatment of workers, deciding eventually to leave. He befriends a Mexican American woman in a café from where he is almost deported but is protected by her instead. Rafael ends up begging to return to Mexico.[258]

Like Pito Pérez, Rafael gets into legal trouble before making the decision to migrate. This premise sends the message to Mexican audiences that desperation and feeling that one has no other options are the only justifiable reasons for migration. Both movies end in the dominant manner of so many popular cultural representations of migration, with the migrants returning to Mexico, and the lesson that migration to the United States is not worth it.

"El bracero del ano" is a 1963 comedy starring Eulalio González known as Píporro. Píporro crossed into the United States without papers in search of the American dream. In a sense he achieves the dream when he wins an award for the "Bracero of the Year" for his work in the harvest. Some critics questioned the value in treating a serious and timely topic in comedy form. However Píporro represents the quintessential *pelado* character of Mexican popular culture. Mexican intellectual, Samuel Ramos identified the pelado as the character that best embodies the Mexican inferiority complex which he

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[258] Maciel and García-Acevedo, "The Celluloid Immigrant," 159-162.

argued forms the basis of Mexican identity.[259] In defiance of Ramos' definition, Mexican society through its popular culture takes the inferiority of the pelado and turns it on its head. Píporro is one of these characters that achieves some level of success despite his supposed economic and intellectual inferiority. Through this character, the pelado is reclaimed as a symbol of Mexican nationalism, and redefined as someone who always comes out on top. True to the standard of the popular culture of migration, at the end of the movie, Píporro returns to Mexico.

Píporro's character in the film is Natalio Reyes Colas, which is also the title of a corrido written by Píporro and ridicules assimilation in this spoken excerpt from the song.

Nomás cruzó la linea divisor por el otro Lado y se encontró con Mabel, Mabel Ortiz, una pochita que hasta el nombre le Cambió, en vez de Natalio, le puso Nat, En vez de Reyes, King, y Cole por Colás. Ahora es Nat King Cole Martínez de la Garza.	As soon as he crossed the line he found another girl, Mabel, Mabel Ortiz a Chicana, who even changed his name. Instead of Natalio, she named him Nat, And instead of Reyes, King, and for Colás, Cole. Now he is Nat King Cole Martínez de la Garza.

Just as in the movie, Natalio leaves behind his girlfriend in Mexico and meets a Chicana in the United States who gives him a humorous name of famous American singer, Nat King Cole, yet maintains his Spanish surname, Martínez de la Garza, in Mexican tradition. The song continues:

Bracero, bracero ya no quiere polka	Bracero, bracero, he does not like polkas
con el acordeón, ahora se desdobla	With the accordions, now he goes wild
al compass del rock and roll.	With the rhythm of rock and roll.
Olvidó a Petrita, quiere a la pochita	He forgot Petrita, he likes the little Chicana
y hasta le canta como Nat King Cole	And he even sings to her like Nat King Cole.[260]

[259] Samuel Ramos, *Profile of Man and Culture in Mexico,* 56.
[260] "Natalio Reyes Colás," in Herrera-Sobek, *Northward Bound*, 171.

Romanticizing of Mexico

Mexico is romanticized throughout the popular culture of migration. Each of the previously documented examples in this chapter reveal idyllic notions about Mexico. With every vilification of the United States, every documented instance of migrant mistreatment, and every story of migrants returning home, the implication is that no matter what the United States has to offer, Mexico is better. Some cultural productions are more explicit in their expressions of nostalgia and longing for Mexico.

The migrant in the song "Despedida de un norteño," (An Emigrant's Farewell), bids farewell to Mexico, naming all the towns through which he passes. This was a popular way for a corridista to gain the interest of people from different towns because of their connection to place in the song. In expressing nostalgia for a variety of place in Mexico, the song indicates that beauty can be found in every corner of the country. Throughout this corrido, the narrator references Mexico as beloved.

¡Adiós mi madre querida,	Good-bye, my beloved mother
la Virgen Gudalupana,	The Virgin of Guadalupe;
¡adios mi patria amorosa,	Good-bye, my beloved land,
República Mexicana!	My Mexican Republic![261]

Bidding farewell to "mi madre querida" and to the Virgin of Guadalupe are both variations of saying good bye to Mexico. Mexico is the motherland, hence reference to the nation as mother, and the Virgin of Guadalupe serves as a symbol of the Mexican nation.

Pedro Nazas, a migrant from Zapotlan, Jalisco and living in Los Angeles in 1927, had a very positive experience of migration and settlement. He had only good things to say about the United States, including praises for the material advantages the country

[261] "Despedida de un norteño," in Herrera-Sobek, *Northward Bound*, 68.

offered as a reward for hard work. Still, Nazas explained that he would never change his citizenship because that "would be to deny the mother who has brought one into the world." He continued, "That is the way one's country is. We were born there and it is for us to love her always."[262] Nazas had no intention of permanently returning to Mexico, and he did not express any anti-American beliefs, but his Mexican nationalism was tied to a romanticizing of Mexico.

The "Corrido del Inmigrante," (Ballad of the Immigrant) reflects existence and identity for migrants, like Nazas, whose lives were in the United States but whose hearts were with Mexico.

Voy a los Estados Unidos	I'm going to the United States
para ganar la vida	To earn a living
Adiós, mi tierra querida	Good-bye my beloved country
Te llevo en mi corazón	I carry you in my heart.[263]

Jesús Topete's autobiographical work, *Aventuras de un bracero* is a cultural production of the bracero program era which romanticizes Mexico. In the words of the book's editor, it is a story which helps the reader love Mexico even more.[264] Topete wrote about his own experience as a legally contracted bracero, beginning with the excitement of leaving Mexico on this new adventure and concluding with the joys of his return. The time in between, Topete spent working strenuous hours, experienced abuse by employers, and described nostalgia for home. Important to this account is the camaraderie he felt towards other braceros. This relationship stands in stark contrast to Topete's contempt for Mexican Americans. Coming from a nationalist perspective he criticizes Mexican Americans for being sons and daughters of Mexicans but speaking

[262] Interview with Pedro Nazas in Gamio, *The Mexican Immigrant,* 48.
[263] Balderrama and Rodríguez, *Decade of Betrayal*, 7.
[264] Jesús Topete, *Aventuras de un bracero,* 2nd ed. (México: Editora Gráfica Moderna, 1961 reprint of 1948 ed.), 6. as summarized in Ledesma, "Undocumented Crossings".

badly about Mexico. He says of them "ni son una cosa ni son otra," (they are neither one nor the other)[265]

Criticism of Hybrid Cultural Practices

The popular culture of migration also conveys nationalism through lamentations over the loss of tradition and culture that comes with living in the United States, particularly the loss of language. Culture clashes are expressed between Mexicans who did not migrate and those who did, Mexican migrants and white Americans, Mexican migrants and Mexican Americans, and first generation and second generation Mexican migrants. The labels pocho and Chicano are used to describe Americanized Mexicans. Pocho carries an acerbic tinge, used to describe one who is not quite Mexican, not quite American, excluded from both and therefore lesser than. Chicano is used more matter of fact to describe an Americanized ethnic Mexican. Rather than defining through exclusion, the term Chicano describes someone who is a mixture of both. Mexicans use Chicano in reference only to those born in the United States to Mexican parents, whereas pocho is also used to refer to Mexican born migrants who adopted American cultural traits. Mexican American adaptation in the United States cannot be adequately described by the polarized concepts of either acculturation or cultural continuity.[266] Mexican American and Mexican migrant cultural identity in the United States exists along a spectrum of amalgamated American and Mexican cultural values and traditions.

Mentioned previously in this chapter, the character Don Chipote in Venegas' story finds that he is looked down upon by "his own people," due in large part to

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[265] Ledesma, "Undocumented Crossings," 78-79.
[266] George J. Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American,* 13.

language as he encounters Mexican Americas who view Spanish as a sign of inferiority in the United States.[267] Another author that expresses this sentiment is J. Humberto Robles, whose 1962 play *Los desarraigados* (The Uprooted), received praise by Mexican critics because "it bravely confronted the pocho 'problem,' and in so doing upheld the true spirit of *mexicanidad* (Mexicanness)."[268] In the midst of confronting the life problems of his Americanized children, the father in this story expresses loneliness and nostalgia for home. Having difficulty adjusting to American culture, the children rebel in a variety of ways. One son turns to alcoholism, another deals drugs in an attempt to achieve economic success, and the daughter chases her American dream in the form of a white American boyfriend.

The first generation born to Mexican migrants in the United States fuels ideas about Mexican nationalism because this generation is more likely to adopt English and other aspects of American culture. Juan Ruiz, a migrant from Uruapan, Michoacan, and father of teenage children who listened to American jazz, proudly claimed that he does not use "pochismos". He disliked the fact that his children only listened to jazz and pledged to acquire Mexican pieces to play in the house.[269]

Within popular culture, the Mexican comedian, Germán Valdés played the character Tin Tan, widely recognized as a pachuco. The word pachuco typically describes Mexican American youth who dressed in zoot suits and were recognized for their gestures and speech. Paz wrote, "the *pachuco* is a sinister clown whose purpose is to cause terror instead of laughter…he knows that it is dangerous to stand out and that his behavior irritates society, but nevertheless he seeks and attracts persecution and

[267] Ledesma, "Undocumented Crossings," 70.
[268] Ibid., 79.
[269] Interview with Juan Ruiz in Gamio, *The Mexican Immigrant,* 110.

scandal."[270] Tin Tan's use of pachuco slang (a form of spanglish that intermixes words from both English and Spanish) is perhaps his greatest crime against Mexican culture. It prompted Mexican journalist Salvador Novo to pen the article, "The Purity of Language," in the 1930s, because there were those within Mexico who accused Tin Tan of corrupting the language "with pocho speech that kids repeated." Upon later reflection on this article, Novo theorized that Tin Tan bothers Mexican sensibilities because "he incarnates the guilty conscience of our own voluntary or passive loss of caste."[271]

The corrido "Los norteños," (The Northerners) is very critical of the behavior of migrants who return to Mexico. The following stanzas denounce anglicized Spanish words, ridiculing the use of the word "tiquete" instead of "boleto" when purchasing a train ticket.

Si van a los estaciones dicen al despachador para probar que saben mucho; déme un "típuete," señor.	They go to the railroad stations And ask the clerk To prove how learned they are, Give me a "ticket," Mister.
Aquí pídame boleto, que no está en el extranjero, aquí se habla el castellano no me venga hablando en perro.	Ask me for a "boleto" here You are not in a foreign country We speak Spanish here Don't speak to me in dog language.[272]

Nicolás Kanellos wrote about Mexican crónistas living in the United States, saying it was their job to promote Mexican nationalism. They did this by mocking those who spoke Spanglish. This kind of intimidation and conformity of culture exists in corridos as well, as exemplified in "Los mexicanos que hablan inglés," (Mexicans Who Speak English).

En Tejas es terrible	In Texas it is terrible

[270] Paz, *The Labyrinth of Solitude,* 16.
[271] Monsiváis, 70.
[272] "Los norteños," in Herrera-Sobek, *Northward Bound*, 75.

por la revoltura que hay, no hay quién diga "hasta mañana," nomás puro good-bye.	How things are all mixed up; No one says "hasta mañana," It's nothing but "good-bye."
Ya jau-didi-dú mai fren en ayl sí yu tumora, para decir "diez reales" dicen dola yene cuora.	And "howdy-dee-do my friend, And I'll see you tomorrow," When they want to say "diez reales" They say "dollar and a quarter."…
Todos queremos hablar la lengua Americana, sin poder comprender la nuestra castellana.	All of us want to speak the American language, Without understanding Our own Spanish tongue.[273]

In the corrido "La Pochita," (The Pochita), the narrator marries a Mexican American girl and laments that she does not speak Spanish

Me dijo que no hablaba el español y yo le dije que no hablaba ingles y a todo lo que ella me decía le contestaba con Oh Laidi, Laidi yes	She told me she did not speak Spanish And I told her I did not speak English And everything she told me I answered her: "Oh Lady, Lady yes."[274]

At the end of the corrido we find out that la Pochita was not in fact American, but a native of Jalisco who ends up getting deported. She had become so acculturated as to pretend to be American and in doing so rejected the Spanish language, a symbol of rejecting her nationalism. Her deportation was getting what she deserves. Her deportation sends the message that there is no use in denying who you are.

The term *renegado* came into usage to describe Mexican migrants who had returned to Mexico during the depression era repatriation program, but who wanted to return to the United States as soon as possible. These people were viewed as unpatriotic and naïve for wanting to return to a country that did not want them. Common criticism of these returning migrants is that they are no better than those who never left Mexico just because they have material goods, different style of dress, or speak English. In fact, in

[273] "Los mexicanos que hablan inglés," in Herrera-Sobek, *Northward Bound*, 110.
[274] "La pochita," in Herrera-Sobek, *Northward Bound*, 112.

these corridos, the migrants is often reminded of where s/he came from as demonstrated in the corrido "El renegado," (The Renegade).

Así pasa a muchos que aquí conozco	This happens to many That I know here
Cuando aprenden un poco de Americano y se visten catrines y van al baile Y el que niega su raza ni madre tiene,	When they learn a little American And dress up like dandies. And go to the dance. But he who denies his race Is the most miserable creature.
pues no hay nada en el mundo tan asqueroso como la ruin figura del renegado.	There is nothing in the world so vile as he The mean figure of the renegade.[275]

A series of Mexican films typified this genre, stereotyping the cultural consequences of life in the United States. *Primero soy mexicano* (1950) (First I am a Mexican) is about a Mexican landowner who sends his son Rafael to the United States for medical school. Upon returning, Rafael speaks and acts in all the negative ways that Mexicans view Americans. His language is pocho, he forgets Mexican traditions, displays immoral American behavior by seducing his dad's goddaughter Lupe, just for fun. In the end he redeems himself by deciding to stay in his pueblo to practice medicine and marry Lupe.[276] As mentioned earlier in this chapter, a common nationalist message was that in order to right the wrong of migrating to the United States, one must return to Mexico permanently. A secondary narrative that appears throughout the popular culture of migrations is that returning migrants learn their lesson of trying to chase American men and women, in the end always settle down with a Mexican.

[275] "El renegade," in Herrera-Sobek, *Northward Bound,* 119-120.
[276] Maciel, *El bandolero,* 103.

Soy mexicano de acá de este lado, (I am a Mexican from This Side of the Border) was filmed in 1951, and the plot set in Mexico. Through the characters of Freddie, a Chicano from Texas, and Jorge, a former bracero, differences between ethnic Mexicans born in the United States and those born in Mexico are played out. The message of the film is that Mexicans from south of the border are culturally authentic while those from the north are nothing but pochos. Freddie reaffirms this sentiment for Mexican audiences when he discusses loss of identity and culture among Chicanos.[277] The title is a phrase that demonstrates the need for people to show their authenticity by showing they are from "este lado," the Mexican side.

Aca las tortas (This Is the Place for Mexican Sandwiches), released in 1951, is a story about two Mexican children, Lupe and Ricardo, sent to the United States for their education who return to Mexico. Upon returning they are viewed as pochos, Americanized in their speech, culture, and even in their appetite. Their parents own the best tortería in town, making Lupe and Ricardo's aversion to Mexican food particularly traitorous. Their father, Don is very patriotic. At the beginning of the movie he questions the Mexicanness of another restaurant owner who sells hamburgers and hot dogs, countering, "my tortas are so Mexican they even carry the Mexican flag: red tomato, white onion, and green avocado." Upon their return, Lupe and Ricardo show embarrassment of their parents' occupation and home, yet in an effort to put on airs of their American living, the children regularly take money from their parents. In the end, the children see they err of their ways and return to the Mexican way of doing things. This is symbolized in the act of them settling in Mexico, helping their parents with the

[277] Maciel and García-Acevedo, "The Celluloid Immigrant," 158.

torta business, and leaving their Americanized significant others in favor of "true" Mexicans who never migrated.[278]

Release in 1964, *El Pocho* is another film starring Píporro who plays José Guadalupe García, given the name Joe Garsha in the United States. José grows up in El Paso after his parents drowned trying to cross the Rio Grande into the United States. He tries to fit into American society and is rejected then decides to go to Juárez but is also rejected by Mexican society. At the end, García jumps into the Rio Grande because he doesn't fit either here or there, but only in the middle.

Conclusion

Although these cultural productions present realities of migrant life, they do not portray the totality of that experience. Few of these cultural productions detail the causes of migration or highlight positive stories of migration. In the rare instance that the popular cultural reflects migrant success, the story still details American mistreatment of Mexican migrants and more often than not the migrant returns to Mexico. Both the producers and audiences of the popular culture described in this chapter were either Mexican migrants or Mexicans living in Mexico. There is an overarching nationalism rooted in anti-Americanism that emerges from these portrayals regardless of their origin and reception. In the end the overwhelming messages of American mistreatment, romanticizing of Mexico, and criticism of hybrid cultural practices do not succeed in deterring Mexican migration to the United States. Instead, the lasting significance of the popular culture which depicts the migrant experience is that in reinforces Mexican

[278] Maciel, *El bandolero,* 104.

national identity both within Mexico and within the migrant community of the United States.

Chapter Four- Escape Valve: Modernity, Consumption, and the Role of Remittances in Stabilizing Mexican Households

Developed from the idea that without the opportunity for migration, Mexican workers and peasants might rise up against the government, this chapter argues that migrant remittances to Mexico are essential to the Mexican economy and post-revolutionary agenda of modernization. Migrant wages are used to purchase basic household necessities in Mexico like food, medicine, and shelter; material comforts like the latest fashion; invested in local infrastructure, festivals, and vernacular architecture. On a national level the economy benefits as remittances contribute to the overall gross domestic product, while local communities experience modernization but can become dependent. Unintended consequences of migrant dollars include the development of class differences between migrant and non-migrant households, which are evident in material objects of consumption. Pressures to keep up with the upward mobility of others contribute to migration as a rite of passage from generation to generation and at times from one household to another. Migration both supports and undermines the modernization promoted by the Mexican state. With remittance dollars, Mexicans are able to purchase goods and experience some upward mobility, but in many ways the modernization that they are purchasing is out of place in Mexico.

Survival and the American Dream

Once a goal of the Porfiriato, the revolutionary government also pursued a project of modernization but with a more inclusive program. The post-war approach differed from the Porfirian in that it sought to democratize access to the economic system through land reform and protectionist policies. Modernity became part of the government's

official language of nationalism, alongside a contradictory dedication to indigenismo. As previously outlined, the revolutionary government legitimized itself through the language of mestizaje while equating the goals of the revolution with those of industrial capitalism.[279]

Gradually during the post-revolutionary period, Mexico experienced the reintroduction of American corporations and goods. President Calles developed a corporatist government which solidified under the Cardenas regime. While nationalist sectors of society rejected the foreign presence, the government held off unrest by satisfying certain popular demands such as the nationalization of oil, protecting small business, and protecting consumers.[280] Cardenas, therefore, aligned his government with revolutionary ideals when he nationalized oil in 1938, but simultaneously pursued policies favorable to industrial capitalism to the detriment of the working class. With industrialization, Mexican workers continued getting funneled into wage labor or farming under a hacendado, neither of which provided a path to the modernity promised by the revolutionary government.

For the ordinary citizen in Mexico, modernity translated into the acquisition of material goods. In his book *The Revolutionary Mission,* Thomas O'Brien argues that the intervention of American businessmen introduced a culture to Latin America that at its heart promoted values seen as distinctly American such as consumerism, individualism, and material gain. Even if not explicitly stated, these corporations introduced a set of practices and beliefs wrapped into the ideology of the American Dream. Emily S. Rosenberg wrote in *Spreading the American Dream* about desires to promote America's

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[279] O'Brien, *Revolutionary Mission,* explains that from the 1920s and 30s, came the idea that Mexican nationalism equaled the patriotic project of Mexican development.
[280] Ibid, 311.

exceptionalist development in other parts of the world. For nation states this meant private enterprise, free trade, and free flow of ideas and culture.[281] In order for this developmentalism to succeed, the citizenry had to become consumers, constantly striving for economic betterment.

While the 1910 revolution promoted nationalism and rejected what was seen as imperialist attitudes of foreign investors, Mexicans accepted elements of a consumer culture that were in sync with the revolutionary ideals. In this vein, post-revolutionary Mexico sought to reconstruct a country of modernity and national progress.[282] These ideas got integrated with the consumer culture of the United States, meaning the purchase of products was equated with modernity and progress. American products especially exemplified ideas of modernity. Along with equating consumption and modernity, nationalist ideas promoted the belief in continuously reinventing that which is new.

Acceptance of a consumer culture meant that Mexicans were buying into a version of the American dream that with enough money they could purchase progress and more specifically individual upward mobility.[283] However, it became clear that the American dream was unattainable in Mexico. Under these circumstances it is possible that the search for access to the American dream influenced decisions to migrate.

With economic causation being the primary reason Mexicans give for migration to the United States, two variants of financial need emerged. The first claims that money from migration is needed for basic human survival, such as providing food and shelter for

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[281] Emily S. Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream: American Economic and Cultural Expansion, 1890-1945* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982). Rosenberg called this "liberal developmentalism" with the idea that the United States had experienced this process in a unique way from other nations and that it could be repeated elsewhere.
[282] Julio Moreno, *Yankee Don't go Home!,* Introduction.
[283] Guerin-Gonzales argues that one's identity influences the belief that one has access to the American dream. She recounts a history in which Mexican workers in California fight agricultural bosses for access to the American dream and carry notions of what that means throughout their life in the United States.

the family. The second economic motivator lies in broader desires that parallel the American Dream with migrants wanting to improve their own life or the lives of their family. In this second scenario, money from migration is intended for the future purchase of land, for home construction, education of family members, or a life in the United States. In the absence of a true path into the Mexican middle class, migration offered a real option toward upward mobility. The great irony of migration as a path to modernity is that in pursuit of this unattainable nationalist promise, millions of Mexicans leave the very nation they call home.

Consistent in the history of Mexican migration to the United States is criticism from primarily middle class Mexicans that those who migrate betray nation by abandoning Mexico and laboring to make the United States rich. The basic response to this perception lies in the fact that migrants do not consider patriotism in decisions to migrate, but base their action on more pressing concerns such as survival. Migrants view their labor in the United States as a means to gain personal wealth, not as a boon to the American economy. This is not to say that migrants are naïve about the role they play in the capitalist system. They understand that corporations need cheap labor to be able to sell affordable products at a price that consumers are willing to pay, and ultimately gain large profits. As a result, migrants know they are often exploited to achieve wealth for American corporations, but none of this plays into their decision making. The only thing that matters is whether they will make enough money to provide for their families.

Migrant themes in the cultural production of Mexico reflect the basic pursuit of money for survival. The corrido "Gana el güero y el pollero," (The Blond Man and the Smuggler Profit) acknowledged the fact that others profit at the expense of migrants, with

lines such as "Gana el güero y el pollero/ y a mí me queda nada," (The blond man and the smuggler profit/ and I am left without a thing). Presumably the güero in this song is an American looking for laborers. The song continues, "Pero yo sigo cruzando/ porque allá tengo trabajo… Voy y vengo, vengo voy/ buscando pan pa' mis hijos," (But I keep on crossing over/ because my work is over there… I come and go, I go and come/ in search of bread for my children).[284] The migrant in this song lives a transnational existences going back and forth across the Mexico-U.S. border in order to feed his children.

In a 1987 La Prensa article, the author reported on the dangers of crossing the Rio Grande and the desert, but concluded that the need to eat and work was too great.[285] During an interview conducted in the late-1980s, an undocumented migrant by the name of Leonardo who each year returned to Mexico to visit his family expressed the same sentiment saying, "None of us are terrorists, we don't have time to be terrorists. All we are interested in is feeding our families… Look, if there were work in Mexico we wouldn't be here. We have to go where there's work."[286] In the political cartoon by "El Fisgón," a migrant stands on the Mexican side of a militarized border with the United States, complete with barbed wire, cement wall, and an armed police force. With the American flag in sight, waving on the other side, the migrant states, "I still have more fear of hunger." (see figure 1)

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[284] "Gana el güero y el pollero," in Herrera-Sobek, *Northward Bound,* 205.
[285] Francisco Osaba, "Alarma en la frontera por la llegada de los ilegales," *La Prensa,* March 10, 1987.
[286] Interview with Leonardo in Marilyn P. Davis, *Mexican Voices/American Dreams: An Oral History of Mexican Immigration to the United States* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1990), 35-36. Osaba responded to comments made by Harold Ezell, former western regional commissioner, U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service.

Figure 1. "Permiso para matar" by El Fisgón in *La Jornada*, May 19, 2006

One of the leading newspaper cartoonist in Mexico, Rafael Barajas publishes his political cartoons under the moniker "El Fisgón". Political cartoons have a long and important history in Mexico, beginning with José Guadalupe Posada, famous for his calaveras, and his *caricaturas* that helped to inform the populace during the revolution. "El Fisgón" whose name means both curious in a mischievous way and mocking or teasing, demonstrates his interest in understanding political issues and presenting them to the public though humor and irony. He is critical of the Mexican government and of the United States when he senses hypocrisy between its policies and actions. As a cartoonist for popular national newspapers in Mexico, "El Fisgón," has a significant audience. In the above cartoon, from the migrant's perspective there is no amount of securing the

border that will prevent his crossing because he is motivated by primal needs. Drawn and published in the context of American politicians arguing for the building of a wall along the border and private citizens creating a militia known as the minutemen on the U.S. side to monitor migration, this cartoon signals the belief that these efforts are a waste of resources[287]

"De paisano a paisano," (From countryman to countryman) by Los Tigres del Norte, expressed the belief that barriers would not prevent migration.

De paisano a paisano	From countryman to countryman
del hermano al hermano,	From brother to brother,
por querer trabajar	Because of our desire to work
no han hecho la Guerra,	They have waged war on us,
patrullando fronteras,	By patrolling the borders,
no nos pueden domar.	But they cannot break us.[288]

Los Tigres del Norte emerged in the late 1960s, and won recognition with their first hit in 1974, "Contrabando y Traicion." The group remains a popular norteña band recognized for reflecting the experiences of marginalized groups, among them migrants. Former undocumented migrants themselves, Los Tigres derive their popularity from their authenticity and ability to speak for the common man. As founder Jorge Hernández explained, "I believe we are establishing a very direct communication with them, because we are telling their lives in our corridos. We are singing their life experiences. In so many ways, we are singing what migrants want to say aloud."[289] The popularity and

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[287] The minutemen organization began in 2005.
[288] Ragland, *Música Norteña, 182.*
[289] Jorge Hernández quoted in Chew Sánchez, *Corridos in Migrant Memory*, 81.

audience reception of Los Tigres is a reflection of both the quality of their entertainment and the relatability to the group and their songs.[290]

For those who view migration as a way to provide basic living for their family, going to the United States without documentation is an act of desperation, when there are no other visible options. In his book *Weapons of the Weak,* James C. Scott presented the belief that people can withstand a great deal of oppression with everyday acts of resistance, but open rebellion is often a sign of desperation.[291] For this reason many view Mexican migration to the United States as an "escape valve," a slow release of Mexico's peasantry and working class who in dire circumstances turn to migration rather than rebellion. In this context, migration itself can be viewed as an act of resistance against poverty and oppression created by the industrial capitalist system which the governments of both Mexico and the United States helped construct. It is impossible to speculate whether or not revolution would happen in the absence of migration, but certainly having it as a last option is better than no option at all.

In her book *Música Norteña,* Cathy Ragland recounted a May 2005 broadcast of the television show, *Don Francisco Presenta,* which included an interview with news anchor Jorge Ramos. In discussing his book about a group of undocumented migrants who died in 2003, Ramos stated, "Our immigrants are not terrorists… They cross illegally because they have no other choice. They should not have to die this way."[292] Not until the 1970s does Mexican migration get presented as a last resort, a choice made

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[290] See Chew Sánchez, *Corridos in Migrant Memory,* for evidence of the popularity of Los Tigres del Norte. She notes that Los Tigres del Norte, Inc., makes about $150 million each year, and play about 200 performances annually, 173-74.
[291] James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak*.
[292] Cathy Ragland, *Música Norteña,* 181.

in the absence of choices, and this representation became more dominant after the 1982 financial crisis in Mexico.

The shift in the cultural production of migration came as a result of challenges to the government. Both Monsiváis and Zolov argue that by the 1950s, a unified Mexican nationalism began to dissipate. More specifically, the revolutionary nationalism that touted mestizaje and modernity, and presented the government as protector and provider, were all being questioned. After the government's violent suppression of the student revolts of 1968, any remaining pretense of government as protector disappeared. The students protested injustices and inequalities as the government dedicated itself to investing millions in preparation to host the Mexico City Olympics while it suppressed a democratization of education.

In the wake of what became known as the Tlatelolco Massacre, there was limited but significant public criticism of the government's actions. Octavio Paz resigned his diplomatic post in India as a form of protest, and in reporting on this action Monsiváis published a photo of Paz with the caption, "Paz: la conciencia nacional" (Paz: the national conscience).[293] The caption signaled Monsiváis' feelings and presumed public outrage at the government's actions, even if many did not know how to respond to such violence. Elena Poniatowska interviewed students present at the protest and wrote several articles from their perspective, culminating in her 1971 publication of *La Noche de Tlatelolco*.[294] This type of reporting both reflected and influenced public sentiment, and is significant because although these were intellectuals voicing criticisms, they were responding to rumblings already emerging from the people as they had from the students.

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[293] Claire Brewster, *Responding to Crisis in Contemporary Mexico: The Political Writings of Paz, Fuentes, Monsiváis, and Poniatowska* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2005), 44.
[294] Elena Poniatowska, *La noche de Tlatelolco: testimonio de historia oral* (Mexico: Era, 1971).

These events mark a break from the nationalist narrative, reflected in various aspects of society, including the popular culture of migration that voiced criticisms of the government in presenting migration as the only option for survival.

Beyond survival, millions of Mexicans migrate in search of a better life, whether in Mexico or the United States. Opportunity, rather than desperation, was a long accepted purpose for going to "the other side." The popular culture of migration both reflected and promoted the consumption associated with modernity, reiterating the idea that migration offered the means of attaining the American dream. In this post revolutionary song, "Consejos a los norteños," (Advice to northerners), clothes symbolize the success of migration. New styles and material signify the modern as opposed to the white cotton shirt and pants, and straw hat of the campesinos.

Vamos a portar chaqueta, la que nunca hemos usado, camisas de pura seda como también buen calzado	Let's go wear jackets Which we've never worn before Pure silk shirts And good quality shoes…
No pierdo las esperanzas cuando venga de regreso vendré de todo bombín y con el cuello muy tieso.	I don't lose hope That when I return I'll be dressed in a bowler hat And with a stiff collar…
Qué dicen, gorras de maiz no quieren usar tejano, los convido a trabajar con el Gringo Americano.	What do you say, straw hats? Don't you want to wear a Texan hat? I invite you to work For the American gringo…
Adiós muchachas hermosas, adios todos mis amigos, regresaré de Fifí portando muy buen abrigo.	Good-bye, beautiful girls, Good-bye to all my friends. I shall return a dandy Wearing a fine coat.[295]

Advertising promoted the idea that opportunity and the American dream could be gained through hard work. Mexicans in the 1920s and 30s valued ideas of modernity and

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[295] "Consejos a los norteños," in Herrera-Sobek, *Northward Bound*, 72-73.

progress often associated with the United States.[296] Economic growth, material well-being, and upward mobility were all evidence of individual and national progress in Mexico. Being Mexican became both about having a desire for upward mobility and maintaining pride in the social program of the revolution. Mexican nationalism evolved into an identity of what Moreno called the cultural middle ground.[297] This translated into an acceptance of American ways, but also implied strength in maintaining cultural artifacts of great relevance like mestizaje, and remaining humble about your origins.

In a review of advertisements in *La Prensa*, one of Mexico City's longest running newspapers, the 1920s and 30s are filled with ads for schools, event announcements, products to address various ailments, and a couple of stores. In the 1940s, advertisements begin to draw people into stores with the enticement of specific clothing items, like men's suits, fedoras (like that worn by Tin Tan), shoes, jeans, and children's clothes. Significantly more ads emerge in the 1950s. For the first time in this paper, there is heavy advertisement for toys as gifts from *Los Reyes,* indicating an increased commercialization of the holiday, parallel to that of Christmas in the United States. Clothing ads continued to increase over the decades.

Modern fashion served as a simple yet significant way to participate in the consumer culture in a way that outwardly displayed success. Movies were another means by which people were told that life in the United States offered the finer things. In the movie *Aca las tortas* (This is the Place for Mexican Sandwiches) the children returning from studying in the United States visibly dress different from others in their neighborhood. Wearing the latest fashion, Lupe and Ricardo stand out, except when they

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[296] See Moreno, *Yankee Don't Go Home!,* who claims North America seen as progressive, modern, and civilized because they began to surpass Europe in science and technology.
[297] Moreno, *Yankee Don't Go Home!.*

socialize with Mexicans of the upper class, a social level which they try to break into through marriage.

The most recognizable cultural image of imported modern fashion from the United States was the *pachuco,* Tin Tan. Born in Mexico City, the actor Germán Valdés, who played Tin Tan moved with his family when still a child to Cuidad Juarez, a town bordering El Paso, Texas. In Juarez, Valdés broke into entertainment while working at local radio station XEJ, where his imitation of the popular Mexican composer and singer Agustin Lara gained him recognition.[298] The owner of XEJ, Pedro Meneses, bought Valdés a zoot suit when in 1938 he created the character of "Topillo Tapas" for Valdés to portray who like Tin Tan spoke *pocho*.[299]

Shortly thereafter, Valdés joined the entertainment company of Paco Miller and traveled throughout Mexico and the southern United States. Another of Mexico's favorite comedians, Cantinflas, also traveled with Paco Miller at this time. From the success of Cantinflas, Valdés learned the art of using confusing language as a comedic tool. At the same time, his experiences while traveling in the United States contributed to Valdés knowledge of the *pachuco,* and ability to create the character of Tin Tan.

Although the image of the *pachuco* and zoot style are linked, Valdés' boss who first bought him the suit recognized it as a fashion worn by black youth in Chicago. The 1930s African American jazz singer and orchestra director, Cab Calloway, influenced the popularity of the zoot style in urban areas throughout North America. While the zoot suit existed as a North American creation, Mexican and Mexican American youth developed the *pachuco* with his own twist on the zoot style, language, music, and overall culture. In

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[298] XEJ later became a TV station in Juarez.
[299] Jose Alberto Ortega, "El Pachuco Tin Tan: La Incomoda Conciencia," *La piztola* Junio 1998.

this manner the *pachuco* emerged as a cultural production of migration. The extravagance of this image represented a rejection of the economic constraints of the World War II era, and a rebellion against the folk culture of migrant, Mexican parents. Additionally, the zoot suit was an expression of dignity, of working-class and marginalized youth wanting to look nice in public.[300]

Just as Valdés' experiences living along the border exposed him to the *pachuco* style that flowed from El Paso to the barrios of Cuidad Juarez, the same was true for countless other youth living in northern Mexican cities along the border. Their adoption of this style facilitated its spread to urban areas in central Mexico. Through his fashion, Tin Tan promoted consumption modernity, material prosperity, and upward mobility, ideas that emerged in the post revolutionary nationalist rhetoric. The nationalism of the post-revolutionary period became synonymous with modernity through upward mobility, material prosperity, and consumption. While the zoot suit did not appeal to the fashion senses of all Mexicans, it represented material wealth desired by many within Mexico. Mexicans got ideas about fashion and other consumer goods through movies, but the country's long history of trade with the United States also introduced a number of products. In 1945, the year that Tin Tan had his first staring role in a movie, 85.1% of Mexico's exports went to the United States and 82.4% of its imports came from the United States.[301] In order to maintain this level of profitable trade, there had to be a demand for the goods imported from the United States and an ability to purchase these products. Mexican migrants contributed both to the desire for material products and a means by which to attain them.

[300] See Luis Alvarez, *The Power of the Zoot.*
[301] Banco de Mexico. *Informe Anual*. México D.F., 1946, 11.

Tin Tan demonstrated the economic and cultural significance of Mexican migrants in both Mexico and the United States in the mid-twentieth century. The labor economy of the United States depended upon migrants who also promoted consumption as a symbol of modernity within the Mexican economy. Finally, the character of Tin Tan best reflected the ability of migrants to contribute to the culture and identity of Mexico by adopting the North American zoot style, transforming it into a distinctly migrant production, and celebrating it as part of Mexican popular culture.

While the evidence suggested migration offered upward mobility and material gain, many depictions in the popular culture questioned the myth versus reality of the migrant experience. The following two excerpts from corridos boast of nice things acquired by migrants. The first corrido is an argument between two ranchers, one who has migrated and one who has not, and the second is from the perspective of a man whose friend migrated. "Plática entre dos rancheros," (Conversation between Two Ranchers) ends with the man who migrated acquiescing and apologizing to the other rancher after having insulted him with exaggerated tales of his experiences in the north, and a twenty-four stanza long story of how great the United States was in comparison to the rancho.

No te imaginas lo que es vivir como un licenciado buena camisa, buen traje, buen abrigo y buen calzado	You can't imagine how it is To live like a lawyer. With good shirt, good suit, Good overcoat and shoes.
Tu reloj con su leontina, y tu fistol de corbata, los bolsillos siempre van bien retacados de plata.	Your watch on its chain And your scarf-pin in your tie And your pockets always filled With plenty of silver.[302]

Similarly, "Radios y chicanos," (Radios and Chicanos) tells the story of a migrant from the perspective of someone who did not migrate. While the material gain of the

[302] "Plática entre dos rancheros," in Herrera-Sobek, *Northward Bound,* 83.

migrant is acknowledged, the narrator concludes that migration is not so great because in the United States people are treated as nothing more than consumers.

Y al sentirse con tostones	When he gets a little money
se va hacienda de confianza,	He gains confidence
y al comprar trajes rabones	And buying tight-fitting suits
se siente casi Carranza.	He almost feels like Carranza.[303]

The narrator goes on to humorously recount how the migrant is bombarded with advertisements for seemingly useless items such as a discount to the dead when they buy a good coffin.

Individuals who returned to Mexico, whether permanently or for visits, brought with them stories of the wealth available in the United States and carried material goods as evidence of that potential. Indeed, Isidro Osorio decided to leave for the United States in 1921 because of stories that he heard from neighbors and friends who returned to Mexico. He revealed, "they all talked and talked about this thing and that. That was why I came [to the United States], so that they couldn't tell me stories, and so that I could convince myself with my own eyes of what they were saying."[304] Wenceslao Orozco moved to the United States from Durango because a neighbor's son who returned "with good clothes and spending a lot," told others that the pay for carpentry work in the United States was very good.[305] Unfortunately for Orozco, he never earned the dollar amount he was told this line of work paid. His experience demonstrated that the stories told were not always accurate, and often romanticized the migrant experience.

Osorio and Orozco recounted their experience in the late 1920s, but the story remained the same in the latter half of the 1980s when Augustin Pérez was interviewed.

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303 "Radios y chicanos," in Herrera-Sobek, *Northward Bound,* 113.
304 Interview with Isidro Osorio in Gamio, *The Life Story of the Mexican Immigrant*, 42.
305 Interview with Wenceslao Orozco in Gamio, *The Life Story of the Mexican Immigrant,* 49.

Pérez, an auto parts shop worker living in Los Angeles said, "The campesinos in our country…talk with someone who has returned from the United States. They talk about the money, the life, and the custom, and of course one will mostly talk about the good, but never do they tell them of the battle and the difficulty of crossing the border…When I return I am going to tell them the truth."[306]

Corrido after corrido criticized the materialism associate with the United States, either declaring it false, or concluding the effort was not worth it. In this manner many of the corridos mirror those with an anti-American theme, ultimately sending a message against migration. The song "Desde Morelia," (From Morelia) told of a man who like others wanted to earn money, but after migrating realized that in the United States he was nothing more than a work animal, exploited for hard labor.

Desde Moerelia vine enganchado, Ganar los dólares fue mi illusion; Compré zapatos, compré sombrero Y hasta me puse pantaloon.	From Morelia I came as a bracero, To earn dollars was my illusion. I bought shoes, I bought a sombrero, And even put on new pants.
Y ahora me encuentro Ya sin reuello, Soy zapatero de profesión Pero aquí dicen que soy camello Y a puro palo y a puro azadón	And now I find myself Breathless, I'm a shoemaker by profession But here they say I'm a camel And I work just with a shovel and a hoe.[307]

"Los norteños," (The Northerners) is a song centered around the theme of false material gain. Even when acknowledging that some migrants do return with money, the narrator criticized their behavior. Popular culture that is critical of behavior is a way of informing people how they should act, because the audience does not want to be like the subject who is presented in a negative light. By negatively portraying the wealthy

[306] Interview with Augustin Peréz in Davis, *Mexican Voices/American Dreams,* 40.
[307] "Desde Morelia," in Davis, *Mexican Voices/American Dreams,* 169-170.

migrant who looks down on campesinos and forgets where he came from, the public is told that if they decide to migrate and return with money, they should be humble rather than boastful.

Pues mucho de los que vienen
como bien lo dijo Trejo,
"No traen ni un peso en la bolsa
nada más el aparejo."

Many who have returned
As Mr. Trejo well put it,
"They don't have a cent in their pockets
Only the harness."

Que las ropas y el abrigo,
la corbata y el calzado,
no crean que los compran nuevos,
son gallos que les han dado.

The clothes and the coat
The tie and their shoes
Don't believe they bought them new
They are hand-me-downs someone gave them.

Unos sí vienen gastando
porque llegan como hidalgos
pero aquellos fanfarrones
que ahora tartan de hacer menos
a los que portan calzones.

Some do come back spending
They arrive here like squires.
But there are those braggarts
Who try to put down
Those who wear Indian trousers.

Sin saber que los ingrates
que agora la dan de pomade,
si se quitan los zapatos
les ves la pata rajada.

Without realizing that those ingrates
Who put on airs,
If they take off their shoes
You can see their cracked feet.[308]

Another song by Piporro, "Juan Mojado," (John Wetback) took a humorous albeit critical look at an Americanized migrant who rejected all things Mexican in favor of American fashion and music. Because the subject of this song is ridiculed, finding himself running from INS, barefoot, with nothing to show for his efforts, the audience is once again told not to migrate.

Ya no canta más corridos
pa' las güeras rock en rol
pantaloon de abajo ancho
plataforma y gran tacón
chus de onda
nice zapatos

He doesn't sing corridos anymore
For the blondies, rock and roll,
Bell-bottom pants,
Platform shoes, stacked heels,
Stylish shoes,
Nice shoes,

[308] "Los norteños," in Herrera-Sobek, *Northward Bound,* 77.

no huaraches anymore	No sandals anymore,
anymore.	anymore.[309]

The myth of riches easily found in the United States is the basis of this excerpt from the song "Yo soy Mexicano señores," (Gentelmen, I Am a Mexican). It reflects the account of many migrants who claim they decided to migrate based on the stories told by others.

Por ahí cantaba la gente que en el Norte	People sang of how in the North
el dinero se barria con la escoba.	Money could be swept off the
streets.	
Y nosotros creyéndonos el cuento	And believing this fairy tale
decidimos venirnos para acá.	We decided to come to this land[310]

From this excerpt of "La jaula de oro," (The Golden Cage), the narrator laments that while he has money in the United States it is not worth anything because as an undocumented migrant he fears being caught and deported.

De que me sirve el dinero	What good is money to me
si estoy como prisionero	If I am like a prisoner
dentro de esta gran nación.	Inside this great nation.
Cuando me acuerdo hasta llora	When I remember this I weep
que aunque la jaula sea de oro	For even though the cage is golden
no déjà de ser prisión	It is still a prison.[311]

Each of these representations criticized the culture of consumption and the pursuit of wealth in the United States, and each is from different time periods from the 1920s to the 1980s, indicating the prevalence of these beliefs.

With stories from the popular culture debunking the myths told by returning migrants, why did people continue to migrate? Why did returning migrants continue to perpetuate the myth? Despite the pitfalls of buying into the stories told by returning migrants, people of the pueblos could not ignore the material evidence of their success.

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[309] "Juan Mojado," (Eulalio González) in Herrera-Sobek, *Northward Bound,* 291.
[310] "Yo soy Mexicano señores," (Juan Manuel Valdovinos) in Herrera-Sobek, *Northward Bound,* 203.
[311] "La jaula de oro," in Herrera-Sobek, *Northward Bound,* 292.

Additionally, migrants perpetuate the myth for a variety of detailed personal reasons, but at the basis is a desire to show outward success in part to elevate one's status in the eyes of others and one's own sense of self.[312] In the 1930s, repatriates arrived in Mexico with major items like sewing machines, phonographs, and trucks.[313] In addition to these big ticket items, people frequently returned with everyday conveniences. Isidro Osorio planned to return to his wife and kids in Mexico with quilts, clothes, and shoes for them.[314] In the 1980s people returned with televisions, VCRs, and microwaves. These experiences demonstrate that migration served as a means of attaining the material wealth associated with modernity.

Some migrants planned to return to Mexico with the buying power they earned in the United States to establish themselves within the Mexican economy. Others sent money to their families in Mexico, boosting their ability to participate in the consumer culture, even if at the margins. Still others, like Pablo Mares went back to Mexico but decided to return to the United States because in his words, "the work is very scarce [in Mexico], the wages are too low. One can hardly earn enough to eat. It is true that here [in the United States] it is almost the same, but there are more comforts of life here. One can buy many things cheaper and in payments."[315]

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[312] See Natalia Milanesio, *Workers go Shopping in Argentina: The Rise of Popular Consumer Culture* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2013, 5. Milanesio describes the role consumption plays beyond acquiring stuff. For other discussions of material products as a means of attaining social standing, see also Sarah Lynn Lopez, "The Remittance House: Architecture of Migration in Rural Mexico," in *Buildings and Landscapes* 17, no. 2, Fall 2010, 39; Aída Castilleja, "El Espacio domestico en pueblos Purépecha como product histórico y cultural," in *La Vivienda Purépecha: historia, habitabilidad, tecnología y confort de la vivienda purépecha,* ed. Eugenia María Azevedo Salomao (Morelia, Michoacan: Universidad Michoacana de San Nicolás de Hidalgo, 2008), 86.

[313] Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores de México

[314] Interview with Isidro Osorio in Gamio, *The Life Story of the Mexican Immigrant,* 45.

[315] Interview with Pablo Mares in Gamio, *The Life Story of the Mexican Immigrant,* 2.

Mares' statement indicated that for some Mexicans, the decision to migrate to the United States translated into a choice between struggling for mere survival and working hard for the opportunity at having a better life. In other words, options existed in Mexico for laborers, but none that allowed access to upward mobility or the comforts of modernity. Simply existing for the sake of survival amounted to a very poor life for those whose dreams were tied to migration.

Many cultural representations express the search for a better life as the reason for migrating. One example is the corrido "El ilegal," (The Illegal One).

Yo soy uno de los ilegales,	I am one of the illegals
de esos que andan brincando el alambre	One of those jumping the fence
cruzando canals para progresar.	Crossing canals to move ahead.
Yo conozco muy bien la pobreza,	I know poverty very well,
no ambiciono poder ni riqueza,	I don't aspire to be powerful or rich
tan solo yo quiero mi vida cambiar.	I just want my life to change.[316]

While Augustin Peréz acknowledged the myths of returning migrants, he said of his salary, "It's not much, but I live better here than in my own country. At least there is enough for me to buy clothes, more food-probably double the food- and I have time for diversions…There's time to rest here. You can have your beer and diversions and you still have enough to save or help your family."

Daniel Galvan, whose life as a transnational migrant began under the bracero program in the 1950s said, "I thought that in the United States we can live better than we would in Mexico. Taking into consideration that in Mexico we could make a decent living, somewhat comfortable, because one can also support oneself in Mexico. But it is very rare for someone to be able to stay at home with the family and be okay, without

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[316] De la Garza, *Ni de aquí ni de allá,* 47.

lacking anything."[317] According to Galvan, making a living in Mexico still required migration to Mexican urban centers and little time with one's family. Despite the years he spent separated from his family with short visits in between stretches of working in the United States, Galvan saw an end to the separation in contrast to what he believed a future in Mexico held. He rationalized, "My hope was that one day we could all be together…If we can all be here [in Houston] together, then it is better this way."[318]

Figure 2. "Aclaración a la Presidencia" by El Fisgón in *La Jornada* January 11-17, 2006

[317] Daniel Galvan, interview.
[318] Ibid.

The feelings expressed by Galvan and Mares were represented in a political cartoon by “El Fisgón” in January 2006. The image showed three Mexican construction workers building a skyscraper in the United States. One says, “Yeah, we have jobs in Mexico…” while another who is eating his lunch adds, “What we don’t have are wages.” (see figure 2) Titled, “Aclaración a la Presidencia” (Clarification for the presidency), the message is clear that while workers know of labor in Mexico, they reject the mistreatment by employers, poor working conditions, and meager salaries. Very simply, the wages in the United States were preferable to those in Mexico, even though, as Mares expressed, working conditions were not any better.

Remittances

Migration undermines the modernity associated with Mexican nationalism in multiple ways, first because leaving Mexico for a better life or better opportunities in the United States necessarily implies a failure of the revolutionary state to bring about equal access to the modernist project as promised. However, intentionally or not, with the sending of remittances to family in Mexico, migrants help to boost the national economy, giving some stability to the state. In the corrido “El otro México,” (The Other Mexico) the narrator defends the decision to migrate, claiming it was a necessity, and while he lives in the United States he maintains his national identity and culture. He goes on to criticize the wealthy of Mexico for hiding their money in offshore accounts while migrant workers provide money to the nation.

Los campesions que venimos de mojados casi todos se lo enviamos	We peasants who come as wetback we send almost all our money

a los que quedan allá   to those who remain back there[319]

Working to provide money for family back in Mexico has been a standard part of migration from the beginning. In the latter half of the 1920s, Western Union reported an increasing presence in Mexico, taking over cables and facilities of the Mexican Telegraph Company. The first report standardizing money transfer to Mexico through Western Union was published in 1926, indicating regularity of the process.[320] With the bracero program there was an increase in money transfer as a mostly male population labored in the United States and their families remained in Mexico. Over the years the annual amount of remittances ebbed and flowed with the rate of migration to the United States. On an individual level, the pattern of remittances inversely correlated with the length of time a migrant lived in the United States. Although each case differs, it is still typical to see the amount of remittances drop the longer a family member remains north of the border.[321]

In recent years, remittance dollars increased rapidly and have become so important that they stand second only to oil in sources of income to the state. According to a September 1985 report by *Uno Más Uno,* undocumented migrants sent 3 billion dollars from the United States to Mexico per year.[322] A 1999 article in the magazine *Epoca* reported the remittance amount to be near 6 billion dollars.[323] Mexico saw a

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[319] "El otro México," (Enrique Franco 1998) in Chew Sánchez, *Corridos*, 206.
[320] Western Union Telegraph Company Records, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution.
[321] See Leigh Binford, "Migrant Remittances and (Under)Development in Mexico," *Critique of Anthropology*, 23 (2003), 324-325; Fernando Lozano Ascencio, "Remesas: ¿fuente inagotable de divisas?" *Ciudades* 35 (1997), 12-18; Douglas S. Massey, et. al., *Return to Aztlan: The social Process of International Migration from Western Mexico* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).
[322] Alberto Carbot, "Doce millones de indocumentados envían a México 3 mil millones de dólares al año: John Gavin, Estado Unidos necesita tener bajo control a sus fronteras, señalo el embajador," *Uno Más Uno*, September 12, 1985.
[323] Elida Martínez Solano, "Envíos de dinero, rasurados," *Epoca*, August 2, 1999.

steady increase of remittance dollars after the turn of the millennium until the recession hit and migration declined, but in the past couple of years returns are inching up once again to more than triple what they were at the end of the century.[324] As of September 2013, the total amount of remittances for the year were over 16 billion, and are projected to hit at least 21 billion if the rate of money transfer remains the same.[325]

The majority of remittances are quickly spent on consumables such as food, clothing, and housing construction or improvements, and are rarely invested for personal capital gain or local development. A secondary use of migrant dollars is for community festivals as well as individual celebrations for important milestones like a baptism or wedding. The final major personal expense that is paid for in migrant dollars is the education of a child or sibling. Remittances used for these types of expenses indicate a boost for the household economy and social status, but the question remains whether it does anything to aid the local and national economy.

Jeffrey H. Cohen argued in his book *The Culture of Migration in Southern Mexico,* that remittances benefited the national economy but led to income inequality between migrant households and non-migrant households, as well as dependency on maintaining a system of migration that will continue to provide remittances in order to maintain a certain standard of living.[326] This is a conclusion reached by several anthropologists and sociologists who Leigh Binford refered to as structuralists.[327] While

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[324] Richard Fausset, "Remittances to Mexico fell 20% in September compared with last year," *Los Angeles Times*, November 1, 2012.
[325] http://www.banxico.org.mx/SieInternet/consultarDirectorioInternetAction.do?accion=consultarSeries
[326] Jeffrey H. Cohen, *The Culture of Migration in Southern Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004).
[327] Binford, "Migrant Remittances and (Under)Development in Mexico," 305. Binford categorizes the following studies as structuralist: Luin Goldring, "Development and Migration: A Comparative Analysis of Two Mexican Migration Circuits," *Report of the Commission for the Study of International Migration and Cooperative Economic Development* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1990); Richard

he agreed with the structuralist conclusion at the local level, Binford argued, in contrast to Cohen, that remittances did not improve the nation's economy either. Placing the economic impact of remittances within the context of globalization. Binford proposed that the income gap between Mexico and the United States actually widened because American corporations gained or saved a great deal of capital from cheap migrant labor and migrant dollars spent in the U.S. This point is valid, much as economic causation behind migration needs analysis within the context of globalization, so do the economic consequences.

In contrast to the structuralist argument, Binford found that a functionalist argument began to emerge in the 1990s, led by such prominent scholars of Mexican migration as Douglas Massey and Jorge Durand.[328] The functionalist position stated that remittances actually led to development at the local and national level. Exceptions exist in which remittances are used for long-term investment rather than immediate consumption. The magazine *Epoca* reported on twenty communities that used remittances to finance local projects such as infrastructure development or social programs for the community. One example existed in Guanajuato where four

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Mines, *Developing a Community Tradition of Migration to the United States: A Field Study in Rural Zacatecas, Mexico, and California Settlement Areas* (La Jolla: Program in U.S.-Mexican Studies, University of California, San Diego, 1981); Joshua Reichert, "The Migration Syndrome: Seasonal US Wage Labor and Rural Development in Central Mexico," *Human Organization* 40 (1981), 56-66; Joshua Reichert, "A Town Divided: Economic Stratification and Social Relations in a Mexican Migrant Community," *Social Problems* 29 (1982), 411-423; James Stuart and Michael Kearney, *Causes and Effects of Agricultural Labor Migration from the Mixteca of Oaxaca to California* (La Jolla: Program in U.S.-Mexican Studies, University of California, San Diego, 1981); and Raymond E. Wiest, "External Dependency and the Perpetuation of Temporary Migration to the united States," in *Patterns of undocumented Migration: Mexico and the United States* ed. R.C. Jones (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1984), 110-35.

[328] See Jorge Durand, et. al. "Migradollars and Development: A Reconsideration of the Mexican Case," *International Migration Review* 30 (1996), 423-444; Richard C. Jones, "U.S. Migration: An Alternative Economic Mobility Ladder for Rural Central Mexico," *Social Science Quarterly* 73 (1992), 496-510; Richard C. Jones, *Ambivalent Journey: US Migration and Economic Mobility in North-Central Mexico* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1995); Douglas S. Massey and Emilio A. Parrado, "International Migration and Business Formation in Mexico," *Social Science Quarterly* 79 (1998), 1-20.

municipalities joined together to form an organization to help migrants. Also, in Tepatitlán, Jalisco an organization used remittances to offer scholarships to students, and as an additional project used the money to form a cooperative for growing chickens.[329] The family that Rubén Martinez followed for his book, *Crossing Over*, used some of their remittance dollars to open a small convenience store in the front of their home.[330] Binford also noted studies in which remittances were used in the development of industrial manufacturing and agriculture.[331] The problem with some of this investment, especially when it comes to small businesses, is at times the local economy cannot support the industry. Additionally, it is apparent that this type of investment in development is not successful enough to curb migration.[332]

Investments in businesses represent attempts for migrants or their families to achieve their own version of the American dream of self-reliance and economic success, but placed in Mexico. Migrant dollars used for social programs and infrastructure development are attempts to improve the long-term conditions of a particular pueblo, but often these investments primarily benefit migrant households. For example, developments of an electrical grid or plumbing lines only benefit those households that are equipped to handle such technology. While these investments may prove beneficial, in the immediate sense there is often a disconnect between modern technology and the realities of Mexicans. Lastly, remittances spent on material goods represent a different

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[329] Elida Martínez Solano, "Envíos de dinero, rasurados," *Epoca*, August 2, 1999.
[330] Rubén Martinez, *Crossing Over: A Mexican Family on the Migrant Trail* (New York: Picador USA, 2002).
[331] Jorge Durand and Douglas Massey, *Más Allá de la línea.* (Mexico: Fondo para la Cultura y la Artes, 1994); and Jones, *Ambivalent Journey.*
[332] Martinez, *Crossing Over,* and Binford, "Migrant Remittances".

path towards achieving the American dream through consumption as evidence of individual success.

Estimates of the percentage of earnings that workers send to the United States range from 10% in 1999 to nearly 30% in 2008.[333] This rate differs vastly depending on estimated length of stay, and type of labor. With the majority of that money spent on consumable products, it is important to consider the economic and social impact of this type of material gain. As previously demonstrated, modern clothing was one of the early visible signifiers of improved social status as a result of migrant dollars. A larger indicator of individual success that emerged in the 1930s and continues today is the purchase of an American pick-up truck. Beginning in the 1950s Ford and Chevy trucks occupied advertisement space in Mexico City's *La Prensa.* Typically, modern products and conveniences first become available in urban centers like Mexico City. It therefore serves as a major status symbol and evidence of modernity when people repatriated during the depression return to their pueblos with American made trucks.

The modern symbolism of the truck emerges in the popular culture of migration, reinforcing ideas that migration provides economic success. In his work *Diario de un Guerilla,* Ramón Tianguis Pérez wrote about symbols of being American (and by extension modern) included owning a truck and dressing like a *pachuco*.[334] Martinez also noted the sense of pride male family members had in returning with their trucks, following each other in a caravan down the streets of their village.[335] However, true to the pattern of migration themes in Mexican popular culture, the imagery of success does

[333] In 1999, Solano, "Envíos de dinero, rasurados," estimated the rate between 8-10%; in 2008 Binford, "Migrant Remittances," estimated 28.3 cents for every dollar.
[334] Sisk, *Mexico, Nation in Transit*, 126.
[335] Martinez, *Crossing Over.*

not always demonstrate reality. Released in 2000, *De ida y vuelta*, portrayed a character named Filberto who returned to his hometown in Mexico with a truck which to him served as an outward symbol of having achieved the American dream.[336] By the end of the movie the audience and Filberto's brother become aware that the truck belonged to someone else. This film has a complicated view of migration, but like many earlier portrayals, it sends a message about false material gain.

The difference between Pérez and Martinez's accounts from that of the film *De ida y vuelta,* is the first two are non-fictional. While there is truth in the false material gain of many migrants, the many forms of popular culture that represent this existence persist with the nationalist narrative that migration is not worth the effort. These cultural productions ignore the reality that millions of Mexicans see no other options and see just enough upward mobility in the experience of others to believe that migration is worth the effort.

The epitome of the American dream achieved in Mexico is home construction, which involves major participation in the consumer culture. Given that houses built by migrant dollars are much more elaborate than others in a pueblo, there is not real market in which to value the house. Therefore, money put into additions or new constructions are not investments, but a demonstration of improved social status.[337]   In her oral history collection of Mexican migrants, Marilyn P. Davis wrote of her 1985 visit to the village of San Juan in western Mexico, "Virtually all improvements in the village were made with money earned in the United States: new construction, restoration of the four-hundred year-old church, new businesses, and purchases of land, animals, televisions, and

[336] Sisk, *Mexico, Nation in Transit*, 42-45.
[337] Lopez, "The Remittance House," 39.

refrigerators."[338] Interviewed by Davis, Peréz who criticized exaggerated tales of success had his own dreams for returning to Mexico saying, "I have a lot of motivation… because I would like to buy a house or some land and return to get married."[339]

In the preface of her study of norteño music, Cathy Ragland gave an account of a visit to Santa Inés, Puebla, the hometown of migrant musicians that she interviewed in New York. The father of these musicians pointed out neighboring houses of family members living in New York, along with the construction of a house being built by his son Santiago. Santiago's modern construction sat juxtaposed to the father's house which did not have the modern conveniences of electricity.[340]

People use remittances to build their own house "for when they return to their pueblo," or for family, most frequently the parents of children who migrated. Aída Castilleja argues that such construction sends the message of one's success as a result of migration, but in the case of migrants constructing their own homes, the house often go uninhabitated or are lived in only for part of the year.[341]

Castilleja recounts an observation she made when visiting a pueblo called Uricho in Michoacan. On the outskirts of Uricho, migrant remittances were being used to construct a house under the supervision of family members while the owner of the house remained working in the United States. The owner provided the designs for the two-story home which included separate spaces for the bathroom, bedrooms, kitchen, dining room, living room, and TV room. The family overseeing construction refused to stay in the home because the design was too unfamiliar. Evidence of the detachment between this

[338] Davis, *Mexican Voices/American Dreams,* ix.
[339] Intervew with Augustin Peréz in Davis, *Mexican Voices/American Dreams,* 39.
[340] Ragland, *Música Norteña*, xi.
[341] Aída Castilleja, "El espacio doméstico en pueblos Purépecha," 85.

new construction and the realities of life in Uricho, is seen in the usage of the empty fountain adorning the front yard, which family members used to store their harvest.[342]

New styles and materials used in home construction are also changing the landscape and material culture of several villages. Styles, both exterior facades and interior floor plans are being imported from United States Consequences of these "remittance houses" are that they mark a shift from communal to more individualistic living and pressure for others to update their home. In this environment traditional becomes equated to backward

The actions of the state in both political and economic matters involving migrants, further demonstrated the importance of migration on Mexican national identity. The government has a history of intervening on behalf of migrants living in the United States in criminal cases that appeared prejudicial, and in workers' attempts to acquire better pay and improved working conditions. Additionally, the Mexican government's cooperation with the United States during the repatriations of the great depression is well documented. Throughout the latter half of the twentieth century, the Mexican consulate presence in the United States increased because trade relations between the two countries increased, but also to better serve the Mexican migrant population living in the United States. In 1989, the government of Mexico formalized their efforts at aiding migrants with the Paisano program

Originating out of pressure from Mexican and Mexican American community organizations that champion migrant causes, the goals of the Paisano program are to protect the rights of migrants returning to Mexico and curb the corruption on both sides of the border which results in the theft of migrant wages. Initially the program

[342] Ibid, 85.

functioned only during high vacation travel seasons, like Christmas when many migrants return home. In 1995, a *Plan Nacional de Desarrollo* put the Paisano program in charge of an initiative called "*Nacion Mexicana,*" which sought to dignify the work of Mexicans working outside of the country. Additional directives included ensuring that migrant co-nationals received respect and just treatment upon returning to Mexico; that their rights were protected; and that the program recognize the importance of securing cultural links, and social and economic connections with Mexican communities and ethnic Mexicans in the United States and Canada.[343] The Paisano program now resides under the umbrella of the *Instituto Nacional de Migración* (INM), which is a government entity established in 1993.

Under the INM, three other programs emerged to address the needs of the people. First established in Tijuana in 1990, *Grupo Beta* works to protect the physical welfare and human rights of migrants. The program now has twenty-one groups in nine states along the northern and southern borders.[344] In 2007, programs for *Repatriación* and *Oficiales de Protección a la Infancia* (OPIS) were created. Their purposes are respectively to aid migrants deported or repatriated back to Mexico and to protect the rights of migrant children, particularly those traveling alone.

The Paisano program places government as mediator between migrants, Mexican financial institutions, and communities of origin. Although the program provides useful information and advice concerning the logistics and bureaucracy of returning to Mexico either permanently or for a visit, the primary function relates to facilitating the transfer of goods and money into Mexico. The Paisano program helps to ease migrants visiting their

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[343] http://www.paisano.gob.mx/index.php/programa-paisano/antecedentes

[344] These states include Baja California, Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Tamaulipas, Veracruz, Tobasco, Chiapas, and Oaxaca.

families during the Christmas holidays by placing hundreds of agents in key points of entry to help them navigate any red tape. During this time of year, the government increases the amount of allowable imports without taxation from 75 dollars to 300 dollars by Mexican nationals traveling by land. The Paisano guide includes detailed information on importing various goods into Mexico, including the process and taxes need to temporarily or permanently import a car, and what to do about importing house furnishings.

In response to the quickly increasing rate of remittances to Mexico, the Paisano program standardized the process by which migrants can help finance projects in their home communities, through the Programa 3 x 1, all of which is explained in the Paisano guide. The 3 x 1 program matches monies sent by officially sanctioned organizations of migrants with funding from municipal, state, and federal entities. The types of projects awarded funding include infrastructure, equipment, and service projects that serve the community. Examples listed within the guide include projects that provide drinking water, indoor plumbing, and electricity; funding for education, scholarships, or school recreation; communication, street, and highway development; urban improvement; protection of the environment and natural resources; and culture and recreation. Additionally the government offers a matching 1 x 1 funding program for communities or individuals who want to develop capitalist projects.[345] With these efforts, the government has attempted to instituionalize the economic behavior of migrants that has been in place

[345] http://www.paisano.gob.mx/index.php/programa-paisano/124-guia-paisano

for decades in places like Zacatecas and Guerrero, which served as models for this program as a result of their investment efforts in the 1980s.[346]

Conclusion

Carlos Fuentes' novel *The Crystal Frontier* provides an opportunity to evaluate multiple, overlapping, and conflicting ideas about identity and culture and how these themes interact with the Mexican migrant experience.[347] The novel illuminates a broad array of perspectives on migration and the Mexicans' own sense of culture and identity. Published twice in Spanish, first in 1995, then in 2007, and in English in 1995, this novel had significant reach on both sides of the border. Already a well known author, after his death in 2012 was the biggest selling author in Mexico

The story titled "Spoils," has particular relevance for its analysis of consumption. Dionisio had a great love for his country and its culture and despised the cultural imperialism of the United States. In contrast to the rich Mexican culture he celebrated through cooking, Dionisio continuously criticized American culture for its abundance, stupidity, and hurried pace.[348] As demonstrated throughout this chapter, Dionisio's attitude reflected that of many Mexicans, but like others he still participated in the consumer culture. He was the one character in the novel most critical of American culture, who claiming he was a "passive victim," got caught up in avalanche of products. Dionisio then decided to abandon his passive role and began buying everything, indicating that even the most reluctant of consumers is subject to the desire for *things*.[349]

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[346] The website for the 3x1 program in Zacatecas traces the roots of the program to the 1940s, but was formalized by state and federal authorities in 1992, and became a national program in 2002.

[347] Carlos Fuentes, *The Crystal Frontier: A Novel in Nine Stories,* trans. Alfred Mac Adam (New York: Farrar, Traus and Giroux, 1997).

[348] Ibid, 59-61.

[349] Ibid., 61-62.

Fuentes revealed that the real motivation behind this purchasing was to receive acceptance from American society. Dionisio believed if he accepted what the United States was offering, perhaps they would accept what he was offering in terms of Mexican cuisine.

In the course of this story Dionisio happened upon a Mexican peon "lost" in a shopping center for ten years who did not want to return to Mexico because he did not want to leave the consumerism and abundance. The peon begs Dionisio not to return him to Guerrero saying, "It's that I like all this, the shopping center where I live, the television, the abundance, the tall buildings…" With this story Fuentes acknowledges the desire for goods and individual prosperity, but he does not permit his characters to relent. Dionisio succeeded in removing the peon from the mall and raced across the desert, discarding all his American objects including those that were symbolic of the progress and modernity of the United States. Dionisio acknowledged that in Mexican hands the southwest "would be a big desert, from California to Texas," but he prefered the barren land over the abundance and advancements of the United States. He and the peon approach the border naked, choosing to return to Mexico without any American influences.[350]

Dionisio's story represents the oppositional images bombarding Mexican cultural identity. In many ways this is another anti-migration, Mexican nationalist narrative because Fuentes rejected the necessity to buy into the American dream as the migrant characters, both middle and working-class return empty handed to Mexico. Published in the wake of NAFTA, the entire novel spoke to the inequalities and injustices people experienced as a result of the agreement. While "Spoils" did not represent the reality of

[350] Ibid., 86-88.

migrants, most of whom do return in consumer products to Mexico, it did outline the Mexican people's contradictory experience of mondernity.

Migration as a means of attaining modernity supports Mexican nationalism as both indigenous and modern. However, the process of migration undermines other aspects of nationalist identity because the means of attaining the wealth to participate in consumption are necessarily outside of the nation. Consequences of material objects that portray status is that it creates desire among others to pursue the same social status. Other undermined aspects of nationality include, the introduction of goods and products that do not fit the Mexican way of life.

Chapter Five - *¿Quién manda?* Migration and its Impact on the Patriarchal Order

The final chapter discusses the impact of migration on the patriarchal ideals of Mexican nationalism reflected both in the lives of women who migrate and those who stay behind. As a result of Mexico-U.S. migration, increasing numbers of women become the heads of household, working in family fields or migrating to border towns for labor in the maquiladoras. Other women took the step of migrating to the United States with husbands or to support families. In both cases women challenge traditional roles, often to the bemoaning of the men in their lives who complain these women are too independent or in the case of migrant women, too Americanized. Migration, however, does not completely undermine patriarchy as it allows men to continue playing the role of provider, women who stay behind often continue to consult migrant husbands in decision making, and women who migrate with husbands find themselves fulfilling traditional household roles in the United States. The popular culture reflects women's experiences and complicates conceptions of the patriarchy of *lo mexicano*, as transnationalism becomes the norm in both the lived reality and representations of migration.

Much of the cultural production of migration which depicts women's experiences comes from a male gaze and reinforces the patriarchy of Mexican nationalism. When the popular culture does reflect experiences that challenge the patriarchal order, it takes on a disapproving tone that both criticizes women who deviate from gender norms and derides the transnational migration which undermines the Mexican family. The realities of women's lives often diverge from the cultural representations, indicating they do not simply accept cultural messages at face value, but challenge and maneuver within those ideas as circumstances necessitate.

Gender plays a crucial role in who migrates, when, how, and why, making it an important factor in causation.[351] U.S. government restrictions and reforms result in the creation of gendered migrations at different points in history. The Bracero Program, for example, recruited male labor, routinizing the process of Mexican labor migration led by men well into the twenty-first century. The regularity of movement contributed to a culture of migration in many communities, giving people a sense of transnationalism even if they have never migrated. In these circumstances, imaginings of a transnational future occur for both young boys and young girls. Maricela, a woman from a rural community called El Refugio in the state of Guanajuato said of her husband and others like him, "I think they only migrate because of their ambition, because they believe if they migrate their money is going to pay more. Because I know that he started migrating since he was very young."[352] Another resident of El Refugio, Maria, expresses the female imagining of transnationalism, noting that she always expected to have the life of a migrant's wife because her mom and sisters live in the same way, while her father, male siblings, and male in-laws have all migrated.[353] The culture of migration that develops in towns like El Refugio are reflected both in the young men who dream of migrating to make a better life and women who expect to marry a migrant.

In one sense migration supports the traditional patriarchy of Mexican nationalism as men leave to fulfill their role as providers by earning a living in the United States while women stay behind. In explaining why this is the pattern of migration for people

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[351] Pierette Hondagneu-Sotelo, *Gendered Transitions: Mexican Experiences of Migration* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); Deborah Boem, "Now I am a Man and a Woman!": Gendered Moves and Migrations in a Transnational Mexican Community," *Latin American Perspectives* 35 (2008): 17.
[352] Interview with Maricela in Lucia Galvan, "Restructuring the Household: Male Migration to the United States and Evolving Female Gender Roles in Rural Mexico" (MA thesis, University of Houston, 2013), 61.
[353] Interview with Maria in Galvan, "Restructuring the Household," 39.

from her rural town, Jessica, a resident of El Refugio reasoned, "Because the male is the one who brings the livelihood to the house. It is the traditional way how it is done here in Mexico….Women have to take care of the children. They [men] are not going to stay with the children, while we leave [to the US]." Paola, another resident of El Refugio made similar assertions concluding, "Because that is normally the way it is done. They go out to work and we stay home."[354]

Going beyond explaining that these gender norms are simply the way things are done, Maricela takes her observations a step further, reasoning that women are too vulnerable and lack the intelligence to migrate. She stated, "It is because it is easier for men and because they are who carry the obligation of bringing home what is necessary. We as women are in more danger; we do not even know where to go."[355] Though her perspective might portray women as incapable, Maricela's rationale holds a great deal of truth. Without the long history of migration that men experienced, women do not have the established connections or familiarity of the logistics for migrating undocumented to the U.S. Migrant women do as men and become dependent on coyotes and polleros to provide passage, but in addition to facing the regular dangers of capture or death, women also face sexualized violence as the border.

One narrative of the cultural production of migration romanticizes Mexico through women's bodies. The idealization of Mexico in the popular culture and media of migration is a common theme, often with an emphasis on the beauty of or nostalgia for place. The representations concerning women express nostalgia for the traditional *mexicana*, appreciation for the household duties women in Mexico perform, and criticism

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[354] Interview with Paola in Galvan, "Restructuring the Household," 39.
[355] Interview with Maricela in Galvan, "Restructuring the Household," 41.

of modern dress associated with the overall Americanization of migrant women. These cultural productions conclude that the women who remain in Mexico while husbands or fiancés migrate are better than women encountered in the United States. Sometimes the migrant men discover this lesson along with the audience but the consumers of the cultural production serve as the targets of the message. Women in these accounts function as symbols for Mexico, reinforcing an anti-American sentiment implying the futility of migration while sending the message that Mexico is superior. In making this argument, traditional gender roles are reinforced, effectively asserting the patriarchy of Mexican nationalism.

The film *La China Hilaria* (1939) falls into this category of romanticizing Mexico through the image of the ideal woman. Hilaria is a woman whose fiancé, Isidro migrates to the United States, and while living as a migrant loses his way, forgets about his betrothed in Mexico, and marries another woman. Meanwhile, without other options, Hilaria becomes a singer at fairs and cockfights where two men vie for her affections, but remaining true to Isidro she refuses their advances. Migration serves only as a device to explain Hilaria's circumstances and gain sympathy for the film's main female character. If audiences did not already have a familiarity with the story of a woman abandoned by migration, then they become acquainted with the experience through the film. With his wife from the U.S., Isidro returns to Mexico where the community views him in a negative light for breaking his promise to Hilaria. Free of her obligation to Isidro, Hilaria ends up happy with the handsome character played by Pedro Armendaríz. Though her circumstances at the beginning of the film seemed dire, Hilaria proves to be too good for Isidro, and her honesty and faithfulness are rewarded.

Release of *La China Hilaria* occurred the same year World War II broke out, but before the signing of the Bracero Program. Within this context, potential migrants faced unfavorable conditions for migration to the United States. A decades-long history of migrant movement between the United States and Mexico already existed, one that included aggressive deportation of Mexican migrants during the Great Depression. With this history of transnational migration between Mexico and the U.S. in the two decades prior to World War II, some of the experiences that characterize Mexican migration for all its existence begin to develop, including that of women and families who remain in Mexico as the male head of household migrates for labor purposes. Nationalist values of race and class intersect with the message of patriarchy in *La China Hilaria,* because Hilaria is an indigenous looking proletarian modeled after la China Poblana. Rather than marry the wealthy gentleman trying to court her, who proves to be corrupt, Hilaria ends up with a working class man in Armendaríz. For a movie created during Mexico's golden age of cinema it accurately reflected the government's approved definition of Mexican nationalism.

In the film, *Aca las tortas* (1951)*,* Maria represented the woman left behind, while Ricardo and his sister traveled to the United States for an education. Maria had a son by Ricardo, but nobody except the grandmother seemed aware of who the boy's father was. As noted in chapter three, after Ricardo returned to Mexico, he attempted to improve his station in life by marrying a wealthy Mexican girl who also received an education in the U.S. When he saw Maria, he refused to acknowledge her or his son. By the end of the film, Ricardo realized how wrong he was to reject the dark-haired, working-class Maria along with his laboring parents who run a restaurant selling *tortas*. The closing scene of

the film showed that Ricardo found happiness where he always belonged, with those who represent the "real" Mexico, Maria and their son, and working in his family's restaurant.

Regret for not appreciating the woman waiting in Mexico was expressed in the song "Natalio Reyes Colás" (Nat King Cole) by Piporro, who was discussed in chapter three. The story begins with an account of Natalio, a native of Tamaulipas who crossed the Rio Bravo without looking back and leaving his fiancé whom he planned to marry. It continues:

No era flaca, era gordita,	She wasn't skinny, she was chubby,
Petra Garza Benavides	Petra Garza Benavides.
llorando dijo a Natalio	Crying, she told Natalio:
Reyes Colás no me olvides,	Reyes Colás, do not forget me.
soy má bien feya (fea) que Hermosa	I am on the ugly side, I know,
pero no te hallas otra	But this I can tell you,
que seya (sea) más hacendosa.	You will not find a better housekeeper.

The narrator described Petra, the woman being left behind in Mexico as unattractive, and therefore not the type of woman capable of persuading her significant other not to migrate. The one appeal that Petra made to Natalio, was her superiority in being able to perform domestic duties. After going to the United States and having a failed affair with a Chicana, Natalio returned to the Mexican border and lamented,

Natalio Reyes Colás	Natalio Reyes Colás
se regresó a la frontera	Returned to the Mexican border.
se vino a pata y en "ride"	He walked and asked for a ride
diciendo yo no he de hallar	Saying I shall never find
otra prieta que me quiera	A dark-skinned girl who loves me
como Petrita, aunque feyita (feita)	Like little Petra; even though she's ugly
si sabe amar.	She knows how to love.[356]

Once again, the usage of negative physical attributes explain why Petra might prove unappealing. As a metaphor for Mexico, Petra symbolized everything that Mexico

[356] "Natalio Reyes Colas," (Eulalio González) in Herrera-Sobek, *Northward Bound,* 171.

lacked. However, abandoned by his Chicana and the United States, Natalio concluded she was not well suited to him because she only knew how to sing and dance and have a good time, but did not know how to cook anything except ham and eggs, waffles, and hamburgers with ketchup. In the song, Natalio returned to Petra because of her ability to love, but placed in contrast to the failures of the Chicana, the tale implied Petra's appeal lay in her knowing how to cook Mexican food and serve as a good housekeeper.

Traditional domesticity of women for example, in their ability to use the *metate*, is highly valued in various cultural representations, but this romanticizing of hard labor expressed a longing for the past and a longing for home. In the absence of men, women allowed for a relaxation of household labor. Women found when their husbands' returned, household responsibilities increased, even if only nominally. While some women from El Refugio claimed their husbands helped with children's homework, and sweeping, they also acknowledge that the workload seemed less burdensome when the men were away. Paola explains, "Well, it decreases in the aspect that when he is absent I have less housework to do here at home. I mean, for example, if children want something to eat, I give them something simple. And when he is home I have to prepare the food on time, I mean, formal food. For them, for the children, we give them simple dishes. But it is also loaded because I have full responsibility for our children."[357]

Fashion and the contested space of Mexican women's bodies

A whole series of songs romanticize Mexico through criticism of women who are too Americanized, falling into the same theme of anti-Americanism that emerged in other cultural representations of migration in the post-revolutionary period. Women's bodies

[357] Interview with Paola in Galvan, "Restructuring the Household," 66.

become points of contention in these songs as their physical appearance and fashion choices serve as symbols of their Americanization and modernity. Likewise, women's appearance serves as indication of their inability to perform domestic duties, their interest in having a good time, and their belief that they are boss. Lamenting the freedoms of women in the United States in comparison to women in Mexico is a long held theme in the popular culture of migration. As early as the 1890s, corridos begin to express criticism of women who think they are boss, as depicted in "Desde México he venido" (From Mexico I have come).

Desde México he venido nomás por venir a ver esa ley Americana que aquí manda la mujer.	From Mexico I have come Just to come and see, This American law That says the woman is boss.
En México no se ha visto, ni en la frontera del Norte que intimiden a los hombres llevándolos a la corte.	This is never seen in Mexico Nor on the northern border, That men should be intimidated By taking them to court.[358]

The narrator criticizes the permissiveness of American husbands and in another stanza refers to Mexican men who allow the same type of behavior as *patos* or cuckolds.[359] From the Mexican male perspective white American women act like they are boss, but the critique is also frequently thrown at Mexican American women, and migrant Mexican women.

The corrido "Las pollas de California" (The Chicks from California) similarly decries the fact that north of the border women are boss. As evidence, the narrator explains that women demand and expect material goods both for fashion purposes and domestic life.

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[358] "Desde México he venido," in Herrera-Sobek, *Northward Bound,* 281.
[359] Américo Paredes, *A Texas-Mexican Cancionero: Folksongs of the Lower Border* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995), 154-155.

Bonito California, donde gocé de placers, lo que no me gusto a mí que allí mandan las mujeres.	California is beautiful, I had a great time there; The thing I did not like, Women are boss there
Las pollas de California gastadoras de diner, para salirse a pasear piden guantes y sombrero.	The chicks from California Like to spend money; When they want to go out, They ask for gloves and a hat.
A la primer carta que hice a una novia a quien pedí, dijo que quería Buena estufa y buena cama de dormer.	The first (love) letter I sent To a girlfriend I wanted to marry; She said she wanted a good stove And a good bed to sleep on.
Cuando la saqué a pasear en un carrito, que me va diciendo la indinia, quiero un vestido bonito.	When I took her for a ride In a car, She insolently tells me That she wanted a pretty dress.

The song continues with its criticism of Californian women because they do not have the skills and characteristics of Mexican women. For example, they do not eat traditional food, and they like to drink beer.

Las pollas de California no saben comer tortilla, lo que les gusta en la mesa es el pan con mantequilla.	The chicks from California Do not know how to eat tortillas; What they like on the table Is bread and butter.
Y a la hora de la comida, si les falta la cerveza, luego luego van diciendo que les duele la cabeza.	And at lunch time, If they don't have any beer, Immediately they say That their head aches. [360]

Throughout the course of "Las pollas de California," women's fashion, materialism, modernity, and masculine behaviors all become conflated into the conception of Americanized women as boss.

Carlos Ibañez, a native of San Francisco Zacatecas noted, "I haven't wanted to get married because the truth is I don't like the system of the women here. They are very

[360] "Las Pollas de California," 1924, in Herrera-Sobek, *Northward Bound,* 106-108.

unrestrained. They are the ones who control their husbands and I nor any other Mexican won't stand for that." Implied in this observation is a de-masculinity of American men, not like Mexican man who would not allow that behavior. Ibañez continued, "Now the Mexican women who come here also take advantage of the laws and want to be like the American women."[361]

In 1924, when "Las pollas de California" was written, several other songs emerged connecting women's fashion to perceived lack of decency and loss of tradition. This was at the height of flapper fashion and Mexican women adopted the look from European and Hollywood films.[362] Early in the 1920s primarily middle and upper class Mexican women had access to the flapper style and it seemed appropriate that they would adopt the modern trend. However, in the media and in popular culture people expressed a great deal of dissent, in particular to the bobbed haircuts of the flappers. In Mexico, flappers were called *las pelonas,* a nod to women's shortened hair being the most dramatic cultural shift. In the summer of 1924 Mexico City newspapers published commentary critical of flappers, and the objection to the look turned violent as men fought with each other and attacked women dressed in flapper attire. The critique of *las pelonas* extended beyond Mexico City to Mexicans living north of the border. In the song "Los paños colorados" (Red Bandannas) women's bodies become contested space where their fashion equates to laziness in domestic chores and their incessant anticipation of going out on the town.

Los paños colorados	Red bandannas
Los tengo aborrecidos	I detest

[361] Carlos Ibañez quoted in Gamio, *The Life Story of the Mexican Immigrant*.
[362] See Anne Rubenstein, "The War on 'Las Pelonas': Modern Women and Their Enemies, Mexico City, 1924," in *Sex in Revolution: Gender, Politics, and Power in Modern Mexico,* eds. Jocelyn Olcott, Mary K. Vaughan, and Gabriela Cano (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 57-80.

y ahora las pelonas los usan de vestidos.	And now the flappers Use them for their dress
Las muchachas de San Antonio son flojas pa'l metate quieren andar pelonas con sombreros de petate.	The girls of San Antonio Are lazy at the metate; They want to go bobbed, With straw hats on.
Se acabaron las pizcas, se acabó el algodón Ya andan las pelonas de puro vacilón.	The harvesting is finished, So is the cotton. The flappers stroll out now For a good time.[363]

Women on both sides of the border, regardless of migration status received criticism for liking to go out. In the context of migration, this became yet another example of how life in the U.S. sullied the traditional *mexicana,* and arguments over going out became about women's proper place in society being within the home rather than on the street. The house and the street served as symbols for the private versus public sphere and patriarchal order dictated women should remain in the private sphere where men can guard and protect them. Meanwhile, the streets existed as the public arena of men, and the space where a woman's virtue came into question because outside the home protection is uncertain. Migration changed control of the private and public arenas for Mexican men and women because in the United States Mexican men did not "own" the streets.[364] In the U.S., there is a lack of community to keep a watchful eye on women, but men are also subordinate to the power structure in the U.S., especially if undocumented. Undocumented migrant men found themselves performing as women do

[363] "Los paños colorados," in Herrera-Sobek, *Northward Bound,* 280.
[364] Jennifer S. Hirsch, "'En el norte la mujer manda': Gender, Generation, and Geography in a Mexican Transnational Community," in *Women and Migration in The U.S.-Mexico Borderlands,* eds. Denise A. Segura and Patricia Zavella (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 447. See also Rouse, "Mexican Migration and the Social Space of Postmodernism," 8-23.

in public when they do not want to draw sexualized attention, men attempted to make themselves invisible for fear of being caught by authorities.

Also composed in 1924, “Las muchachas que hay en la actualidad” (Modern-Day Girls) does not mention *las pelonas* by name, but its reference to shortened dresses in the context of the 1920s is clearly about the loose fitting and raised hem of the flapper. Because this fashion came from outside of Mexico, rejection of the dress was akin to defending national pride and the traditional.[365] The song decries Americanized women who do not behave in the way Mexican women are supposed to behave because they lack skill in domestic labor and are only interested in having fun. The presumption in all these songs is that the fun and “good time” that Americanized women want to have is immoral, implying sexual availability given their dress. This is especially evident in this corrido which blames women for the wrath of God.

Qué capaz que a las muchachas les preocupe hacer el quehacer, andando ellas bien polveadas aunque no hagan de comer.	Today’s young women Do not think about housework; They are all well-powdered Even though they don’t cook.
Quién se acuerda del metate, de lavar o de planchar; eso sería un disparate, se trata hoy de vacilar.	Who remembers the metate, Washing dishes or ironing; That would be unthinkable, All they want is to have fun.
Por eso Nuestro Señor tal vez nos manda el castigo por causa de las mujeres que se han subido el vestido	That is why Our Lord Has seen fit to punish us; It’s all the women’s fault, Because they’ve shortened their dresses.[366]

Whether supportive or dissenting of the *pelona* dress, popular consensus rejected the ability of ugly, indigenous, and poor women to wear the flapper style, making criticism of *las pelonas* an issue of race and class in addition to an expression of

[365] Rubenstein, “The War on ‘Las Pelonas’”, 58.
[366] “Las muchachas que hay en la actualidad,” 1924, in Herrera-Sobek, *Northward Bound,* 283.

nationalism.[367] Soledad Sandoval, a native of Parral, Chihuahua said she didn't like the flapper style unlike "many girls of the middle and poor classes of Mexico who no sooner get here [U.S.] then they immediately turn flappers."[368] Working class Mexican women found that in the U.S., they had access to modernity because of improved economic standing and greater independence from the controlling and watchful eye of the patriarchal traditions of Mexico.[369] This should not suggest that a patriarchal structure did not exist in the United States. In fact, Mexican migrant women found themselves in a transnational space "between the dominant national and cultural systems of both the United States and Mexico."[370] The song "Contribución a las pelonas" (Tax on Bobbed Women) tells of a reported levy placed on flappers in Chicago. Whether reality or rumor, the conception of a tax reflected the fact that in many communities throughout the United States, flappers were similarly viewed as morally suspect or at the very least blurred the lines of acceptable femininity.

Atención pongan, señores,
de lo que la prensa ha hablado
en motive de un decreto
que en Chicago se ha implantado.

Attention, gentlemen,
The press is full of news
Because of a law decreed
In the city of Chicago.

La mujer que esté pelona
pagará contribución
Mexicana o extranjera
sin ninguna distinction

All women with bobbed hair
Will pay a tax,
Mexican or foreigner
Without distinction.[371]

[367] Rubenstein, "The War on 'Las Pelonas'", 64.
[368] Soledad Sandoval as quoted in Gamio, *The Life Story,* 62.
[369] See Hirsch, "En el norte la mujer manda," 447. Hirsch finds that one of the factors contributing to differences between sending and receiving communities is privacy and the ability of migrant women in the United States to maneuver around in public spaces with relative anonymity, whereas in Mexico everyone in the community would be aware of one's actions in the public arena.
[370] Segura and Zavella eds., *Women and Migration,* 3.
[371] "Contribución a las pelonas," 1924, in Herrera-Sobek, *Northward Bound,* 284.

That this news gets reported in Mexico in the form of the corrido demonstrates an effort to control women's dress on both sides of the border. The song serves as a warning, and rationalization for another reason why women should not adopt this style of dress.

Mexican migrant women in the U.S. continuously used fashion as a form of resistance within the patriarchal order, and still do. Throughout the decades the popular culture also continues to reflect the changing fashions of women who have become too Americanized in the eyes of adherents to "traditional" *mexicanidad*. Modern fashion becomes a target in "Al cruzar la frontera," (Upon Crossing the Border), another cultural representation which equated physical appearance with decency and morality. The song recounts the betrayal of a migrant woman because in the U.S. she became boss, liked to have a good time (defined here as chewing gum and going out drinking), she adopted modernized fashion both in her dress and make-up, and she found a new boyfriend.

Cuando pasamos unidos la frontera
a la fortuna nos fuimos a buscar,
ella era Buena, mas como era ranchera
yo no pensaba que así me iba a pagar.

Mascaba chicle y se iba de parranda
y ya le olía la boca a puro ron,
mas como dicen que allá las viejas mandan
al poco tiempo por otro me cambío.
Al poco tiempo las uñas se pintaba,
a la rodilla la falda se subió,
a cada rato la boca se pintaba
y hasta un abrigo de chivo se compró.

When we crossed the border together
We went seeking our fortunes
She was good and being a country girl
I never thought she would betray me.

She would chew gum and go out drinking
And her mouth smelled of pure rum
And as they say, there the women are boss,
In a short time she traded me for another.
Soon she was painting her fingernails
And her skirt climbed up to her knees
And she was constantly painting her mouth
And she even bought herself a leather coat.[372]

In 1950, a female duo called Río Bravo recorded "Al cruzar la frontera" by CBS records. Dueto Río Bravo represented a trend in regional music in which women performed songs written from the male perspective both in their subject matter but also in their narration.

[372] "Al cruzar la frontera," (Eladio J. Velarde) in Herrera-Sobek, *Northward Bound,* 285-286.

In her study of gender in ranchera music, Olga Nájera-Ramírez wrote "by virtue of singing in their 'female' voice, women recontextualize a text, even when they do not change a single word."[373] As women singing the lyrics of "Al cruzar la frontera," dueto Río Bravo expressed the betrayal that many women feel when their boyfriends and husbands migrate to the U.S. In a reinterpretation of the female voice's criticism of "*ella,*" Americanized migrant women receive the blame for the wandering of men, implying that the women who represent the "real" Mexico, those women who stay behind also disdain the modern woman of migration.

The association of modern fashion with loss of tradition is evident in the song "El Rancho" (The Ranch) which makes comparisons between American and Mexican women, criticizing the beauty regimens of women in the U.S., and implying their artificiality. Throughout the comparison, the narrator romanticizes Mexico through women's bodies.

Por aquí todas con crema y colores	Around here the women use creams and paints
se ponen bellas como un maniquí!	To make themselves pretty as mannequins,
¡cuánto más valiera muy bien bañaditas	It'd be much better to see them fresh from the bath,
como en el rancho donde yo nací!	Just like on the ranch where I was born.
Por aquí todas con blusas de seda	Around here the women wear silk blouses
van escotadas hasta por aquí	That are low cut all the way down to here,
¡cuánto más valiera ordeñando vacas	It'd be much better to see them milking cows,
como en el rancho donde yo nací!	Just like on the ranch where I was born.
Por aquí todas usan el sombrero	Around here the women wear hats.
que se sanfurran hasta por aquí,	Pulled all the way down to here,
¡cuánto más valiera rebozo terciado	It'd be much better to see them wrapped in a shawl,
como en el rancho donde yo nací!	Just like on the ranch where I was born.

[373] Olga Nájera-Ramírez, "Unruly Passions: Politics, Performance, and Gender in the Ranchera Song," in *Women and Migration* eds. Segura and Zavella, 466.

Por aquí todas al estilo mula	Around here the women look like mules
andan tusadas hasta por aquí	With their hair chopped up to here,
¡cuánto más valiera con chica trenzota	It'd be much better to see them with a long braid,
como en el rancho donde yo nací!	Just like on the ranch where I was born.
Por aquí todas pestañas con rimel	Around here the women wear eye makeup,
cejas pintadas pasan por allí	With painted eyebrows they pass by,
¡cuánto más valiera ojo sin retoque	It'd be much better to see eyes without makeup
como en el rancho donde yo nací!	Just like on the ranch where I was born.
Por aquí todas falda muy rabonas	Around here the women wear short skirts
van enseñando hasta por aquí,	Showing all the way up to here,
¡cuánto más valiera para no ver cosas	It'd be better off not seeing such things
volvererme al rancho donde yo nací!	By returning to the ranch where I was born.[374]

In each scenario presented by the narrator, he derided the clothing, makeup and overall appearance of women, favoring instead the return to traditional ways. In one stanza, a return to the traditional means performing domestic labor. The narrator longs for the women in the U.S. to look and act like the women on the *rancho,* and in expressing this desire he romanticizes Mexico through women's bodies. Such expressions reflect patriarchal nationalist attitudes by implying that Mexico is better because women maintain their modesty, propriety, and know how to work hard. Reference to the *rancho* in contrast to "here" [the U.S.] indicated a rejection of all that is American, urban and modern, and simultaneously established these words as interchangeable.

Though there is no known date of "El rancho," it was included in a collection put together by Guillermo Hernández in 1978, and in one stanza, reference to *pantalón campana* or bell-bottom pants, indicates a late 1960s/early 1970s composition. The idealized "traditional" m*exicana* of these songs did not necessarily exist as a reality in

[374] "El Rancho," in Herrera-Sobek, *Northward Bound,* 115-117.

Mexico, but represented the type of patriarchal order of nationalism that migrants longed for. In these examples of cultural production the women are modern while the men are not. The implication being that migration does not change men because they do not forget their tradition and what it means to be Mexican, but it does change women if they are not careful.

Each cultural representation that denounced the Americanization of migrant women, communicated that modernity for women was not a good thing. However, as discussed in the previous chapter, modernity also existed as part of the nationalist narrative, and access to modernity in the form of consumption became one of the motivations for migration. Consumption became a part of female modernity as well through their fashion, but socializing in public and demonstrating autonomy as "boss" in private also symbolized modernity. Migrant women demonstrated adaptability when they embraced the modern and with cultural representations that argue men honor tradition, the presumptive conclusion was that men were being left behind. Such interpretations reflected a reality for many migrant families.

Migration to the U.S. increased for Mexican women after 1965, with the introduction of the Hart-Cellar act which shifted immigration policy based on national origins to one based on skills and family ties. As Mexican women migrated to the U.S. to join their husbands, they too joined the labor force frequently as maids and nannies. In these positions women integrated into American society more readily than men because their jobs forced the speaking of English. Ability to speak English gave women access to the public arena that men might not acquire. The English language and wage earnings provided women with a level of independence and autonomy within the home. Despite

the knowledge and capabilities of women, it would be an overstatement to argue that migration brought total liberation because in many ways women continued to fulfill traditional gender roles while living in the U.S.

Whereas migration to the United States for women is often portrayed as an improvement in life circumstances due to greater economic and social independence, the reality is more complex. Women who move as part of a family unit often find themselves continuing to perform the labor of the home by cooking and caring for the family, even if they also work.[375] Some women also find themselves caring for other relatives or unaccompanied men from their rancho. With the additional domestic responsibilities they are not provided with help in the household, and find themselves working a double shift of wage-laborer and housewife for several people.

Rosa (from El Refugio) asserts that women are capable of migrating but acknowledges that their primary obligation is in the home explaining, "Well, because as head of household, he has to go to work to seek support for the family, and we, we can also migrate, but we must take care of the household."[376] What Rosa might be referring to is the fact that in the United States she would most likely become a wage laborer but still take on the full responsibility of cooking, cleaning, laundry, and caring for children.

As a result of low wages, mistreatment by employers and by mainstream American society, male migrants may feel a sense of having their masculinity stripped in the public arena.[377] Reasserting masculinity within the home becomes one response to these public humiliations. For men who traditionally had control of their own labor while

[375] Boem, "Now I am a Man and a Woman!", 16. Here Boem argues that males enforced patriarchal power as they find new ways to express masculinity.
[376] Interview with Rosa in Galvan, "Restructuring the Household," 41.
[377] Boem, "Now I am a Man and a Woman!", 20.

working in the ranchos, the transition to wage-labor equates to further loss of power and autonomy.

Legality awards an individual freedom, security, and status. For men this translates into an affirmation of their masculinity. The woman portrayed in "La emigrada" (The Migrant Woman) becomes the target of criticism for her legal status. Written from the male perspective legality equates to Americanization and in this case thinking too highly of oneself.

Ahora que estás emigrada	Now that you've migrated
te crees muy Americana	You think you're all American
a nadie quieres halarle	You want to talk to no one
te sientes muy elevada	You feel you're superior
te crees porque trais papeles	You're uppity 'cause you've got documents
pero no sirven pa' nada	But they're good for nothing.[378]

A song called, "La nueva Zenaida," summed up the complexity of desires and fears of Mexican men. Based on an old song called "La Zenaida" by Los Alegres de Terán, "La nueva Zenaida," is a tale about a man who leaves his wife in Mexico to marry Zenaida who lives in San Antonio. Upon arriving in San Antonio, the man learns that Zenaida is on her honeymoon. Heartbroken and angry, the man returns to his pueblo to beg for his wife's forgiveness only to find that she has run off with his friend. The song ends with the man lamenting, "*me quedé sin Zenaida del alma/y mi vieja me dejó colgando."* (I've lost my beloved Zenaida/And my old lady left me hanging). "La nueva Zenaida," is a long running corrido recorded by various artists with popularity on both sides of the border, including Flaco Jimenez, Ramon Ayala, and Eddie Gonzalez. In an updated version, Zenaida left to her own devices in the U.S. begins wearing miniskirts, and this leads to her betrayal.

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[378] "La emigrada," (Francisco Hernández) in Herrera-Sobek, *Northward Bound,* 287.

Hace tiempo que pasó la historia	This story took place some time ago
De la ingrata y coqueta Zenaida	When the ingrate and coquettish Zenaida
por un rato que se quedó sola	In just the short time she was alone
ya le dio por usar minifalda.	Decided to wear miniskirts.[379]

Zenaida draws the ire of the narrator in this updated composition, but his vitriol could just as easily self directed. The migrant male neither appreciated what he had at home in Mexico nor could he provide for the desires of Zenaida living in the U.S. In the end the migrant is left neither here nor there.

Contrary to the messages of popular culture that decry the modernization of women in their fashion and behavior in the U.S., it is clear from the continuation of these activities that women are ignoring the reassertion of nationalism through patriarchy. In her study of Mexican women living within the transnational communities of San Ignacio and Detroit, Luz Gordillo found that migrant women who return to Mexico for a visit use fashion to challenge notions of appropriate female behavior.[380] By wearing embellished dresses or shorts, these women also demonstrate their modernity and material gain that comes with life in the U.S. Though these women do not overthrow traditional norms, their visits to San Ignacio during the patriarchal festival introduce slight changes in culture that become integrated into the lives of women even if they never experience migration. Despite the portrayals within the popular culture, it is too simplistic to assume that men do not also evolve with migration. Gordillo found generational differences that younger men accept if not embrace modernity for women by helping with household labor and embracing marriage partners whom they view as equals.

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[379] "La nueva Zenaida," in Herrera-Sobek, *Northward Bound,* 284. The original version of "La nueva Zenaida" was written by Salomé Gutiérrez.

[380] Luz María Gordillo, *Mexican Women and the Other Side of Immigration Engendering Transnational Ties* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010), 57.

Las abandonadas/The abandoned

Many women who remained in Mexico experienced abandonment for years at a time after a significant other migrated, and some never saw their husbands or fiancés again. Stories of women abandoned by migration abound in the popular culture, as in the following song, "Adiós, México querido" (Good-by, My Beloved Mexico)

Te dejo también mis hijos, mi mujer y hasta mi hogar: adios, México querido, quizá pueda regresar.	I also leave you my children, My wife and even my home. Good-bye, my beloved Mexico, Perhaps I shall return.
Adiós México querido, ya vendré por mi familia, si la migra no os ve, habrá pan todos los días	Good-bye, my beloved Mexico. I shall come back for my family. If the border patrol doesn't see us There will be bread everyday.[381]

The narrator of the song expresses sorrow for having left his family and the audience experiences the longing of the migrant but nothing is said of the family who gains little comfort from the fact that their loved one cannot guarantee his return.

Written in 1989, the song "El bracero" (The Bracero) talks not only of a family abandoned but one's land and home are all left wanting for the migrant who left northward.

A los estados del suelo Americano dejando su labor sin cultivar el grano.	To the States To American soil Leaving their farmland Without planting seed.
Tristes se quedan las casitas desoladas los hijos, la mujer las madres ovlidadas.	Sad do they leave Their desolate houses Their children and their wives Their mothers quite forgotten.
La madre espera con el rostro marchitado los hijos, la mujer	Their mother waits With her aging face Their children and their wives

[381] "Adiós México querido," (Juan José Molina) in Herrera-Sobek, *Northward Bound,* 257.

mil penas han pasado	A thousand pains have suffered
siempre lo esperan	Always waiting
devisiando pa'l camino	Looking up the road
y salen a encontrar	And going out to meet
a todo el peregrine.	All traveling people.
Pero el bracero	But the bracero
perdido en la distancia	Lost in the distance
fue de los muchos	Was one of the many
que nunca más vovieron;	Who never returned;
tal vez algunos	It may be that some
olvidaron sus familias,	Forgot their families,
otros muy tristes	Others becoming very sad
de pena se murieron.	From deep grief died.[382]

Rafael Buendia wrote "El Bracero", after having spent the 1970s building a career in composing music and producing films. He grew up in Zacatecas on a small *municipio* called Rancho Nuevo de Morelos, to a family of *campesinos* where he was one of eleven children. As a songwriter, Buendia sold himself as "El Compositor de los Pobres" (the composer of the poor), and his wealth grew out of a commercialization of stories of the subaltern peoples such as migrants, the poor, and narcotraficantes. However, to this day Buendia remains respected as someone who tells the stories of the people.

Promising marriage upon returning from the United States represents one way in which women in Mexico become obligated to a man that might never return. One common theme that persists over several decades in the popular culture is that of migrating for the purpose of making enough money in order to marry. As indicated, the premise of the film *La China Hilaria* concerns a migrant male leaving behind his fiancé. The thought process of migrating to save for marriage is the same type of goal oriented migration that exists when people want to save enough money to move back to Mexico and open a business, build a house, or purchase land. The underlying hope is that of

[382] "El bracero," (Rafael Buendía) in Herrera-Sobek, *Northward Bound*, 199-200.

temporary migration with the belief and expectation that a homecoming is around the corner.

In the song "Me voy para el Norte" (I Am Going Up North), the narrator not only promises to return after having earned enough money to get married, but he promises to buy a beautiful dress for his bride.

Adios chaparrita	Good-bye, little one,
me voy para el Norte	I am going up north
voy en busca de fortuna,	I am going in search of fortune
tan pronto regrese	As soon as I return
luego nos casamos	We'll get married
porque como tú ninguna.	Because there's no other like you…
En esa famosa	In that famous
frontera del Norte	Land of the North
voy a ganar mucha plata,	I am going to earn lots of money
compro tu vestido	I'll buy your dress
bordado de azares	Embroidered with orange blossoms
y nos casamos mi chata.	And we will marry, my pugnose dear.[383]

Los Gavilanes del Norte recorded "Me voy para el Norte," in 1974, under SONOMEX, a recording and sound company out of Mexico City founded by Julio Macías in 1968. SONOMEX would later focus its business on dubbings and various other Spanish language recordings for television and film. Los Gavilanes del Norte became one of the most popular norteño groups in Mexico throughout the 1970s and 80s. Although there had been some American presence in the Mexican music industry in the early 1900s with such companies as CBS, beginning in the 1980s, U.S. based recording companies become more prominent in the regional music industry. This is significant because it raises the question of a growing U.S. influence in Mexican popular culture. The songs about

[383] Me voy para el Norte, (Miguel Ángel Razo), Los Gavilanes del Norte, Discos SONOMEX, LPSM-590, México 1794, in López Castro, *El Río Bravo es charco*, 146-147.

migration to fulfill a marriage promise portray the U.S. as the answer for economic hardship, but such a narrative existed prior to American corporate influence.

De California te escribo (From California I'll Write You) was first recorded by Carlos y José under the Fonovisa label in 1994.

Estoy viendo tus ojitos	I am looking at your eyes
que de agua se están llenando.	That are welling up with tears.
Mañana mismo	Tomorrow without a doubt
me voy pa' California	I am going to California,
de allá te escribo	From there I'll write to you;
cuando ya esté trabajando	When I am working there
mucho dinero tender	A lot of money I will have
porque voy a estar ahorrando	Because I shall be saving (it)
pa' cumplirle a mi Chatita	So that I can fulfill my promise
pa' cumplirle a mi Chatita	So that I can fulfill my promise
que me ha de estar aguardando.	To my girl who'll be waiting for me….
El dejarte tan solita	Leaving you all alone
volver contigo mi amor	To return back to your love,
Ojalá Dios lo permita.	I hope God wills it
Pa' estrecharte entre mis brazos.	So I can hold you in my arms.
Pa' estrecharte entre mis brazos	So I can hold you in my arms
y besarte tu boquita.	And kiss your lips.[384]

Founded in 1986, Fonovisa Records dominated the regional Mexican market in the United States out of its headquarters in Los Angeles. With its establishment, Fonovisa filled a niche in the music industry that many other American record labels ignored under the assumption that it would not prove lucrative. Fonovisa founder, Guillermo Santiso, courted and fostered regional Mexican acts from both sides of the border including those that play such genres as corridos, banda, norteña, and ranchera. Los Tigres del Norte are counted among the most popular and bankable artists signed by Fonovisa.

From their location in Los Angeles, Fonovisa marketed to an American based audience which included a growing population of Mexican migrants. Catering to this

[384] "De California te escribo," (José Luz Alanís Cantú) in Herrera-Sobek, *Northward Bound,* 256.

audience, musicians develop a growing number of songs that reflect the migrant experience. Of course the subject of migration is not the only type of popular culture that migrants are interested in and not the only theme performed by these artists. As Martha Chew Sanchez notes, regional music is primarily about dancing and entertainment, and while the migrant themes of the songs relate a feeling of nostalgia for those living in the United States, regional music itself reconnects migrants to home.[385] Furthermore, while Fonovisa helped to break open the U.S. market, many of the regional artists hailed from Mexico and heavy distribution took place south of the border as well. This fact is significant to note to demonstrate that it has significance within Mexico/Mexican nationalism.

In the same vein "Me voy a California" (I am Going to California) justifies leaving a girlfriend behind with the expectation that the male migrant will return, the two will marry, and he even entertains the possibility of taking his future wife to the United States

Ya me voy a California	I am going to California
voy a cosechar dinero.	I am going to reap lots of money
Aunque dejo aquí a mi novia	Even though I leave my girl here
la prenda que tanto quiero.	The treasure I love the most…
Cuando ya pase algún tiempo	After a short time
y si la suerte es muy buena	And if luck is good to me
que regrese yo a mi pueblo	I shall return to my hometown
a cumplirle a mi morena	To keep my promise to my brunette
entonces nos casaremos	Then we shall marry
ay que vida tan Hermosa	Oh what a beautiful life
Si te llevo a California	If I take you to California
pasaremos por Reynosa.	We shall pass by Reynosa.[386]

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[385] Chew Sánchez, *Corridos in Migrant Memory*.
[386] "Me voy a California," (A. Villagómez) in Herrera-Sobek, *Northward Bound,* 257.

Suggsetions of traveling to the U.S. with a spouse become a greater likelihood in the wake of NATA. The earliest apparent recording of the song in 1994 was also performed by Carlos y José under the Capitol/EMI Latin label. Carlos y José was a famous norteña musical duo that began performing in 1968 out of Camargo, Tamaulipas. The two founding members first met five years earlier in their native, Nuevo Leon. Carlos Tierranegra Salazar was from an *ejido* called El Encandenado and José Heriberto Rodríguez Garza hailed from the *rancho* Los Ramones, where both worked the land until they decided to try their luck in music. They recorded their first record in Mc Allen, TX in 1970 and for nearly forty years enjoyed fame and popularity on both sides of the border. While never working as migrant labor in the U.S., Carlos and José had the upbringing and experience of agricultural work and spoke to the experience of other working class Mexicans. It was through their professional life as musicians that transnationalism became a part of their existence, and they spoke to the experience of migrant laborers as well.[387]

Songs which present migration as a means of fulfilling the promise of marriage come from a male perspective and as such present the act of migration as dutiful act of love. The reality for both the men that migrate and the women left behind is not quite as romantic. "Carrera contra la muerte" (Race against death) depicts a woman and family left behind while the father migrated to labor in the U.S. in order to provide a proper wedding for his love. However, after three years without contact, the woman dies of a broken heart.

Quiso ganarle a la muerte	He wanted to beat death
quiso ganar la carrera	He wanted to beat the race

[387] http://www.kebuena.com.mx/musica/artistas/carlos-y-jose/20050804/artista/191956.aspx, accessed August 22, 2014.

tres años sin verla	Three years without seeing her
y no la alcanzó	And he could not arrive on time to see her again[388]

Responses of women abandoned by migration vary from loyalty and faithfulness to moving on with life and other relationships. Despite all indications against return, such as lack of remittances or communication, some women chose to believe their significant other would arrive back on the *rancho* some day. If married, the decision to remain faithful may not be out of choice, so much as religious obligation. In the Catholic faith divorce is sinful, so many women never consider it. Engaged women if not released from their obligation consider their promise sacred, while others fear the social stigma of walking away from an engagement.

Migrant men living in the U.S. at times attempted to maintain transnational control through relatives or other males, phone calls, threats of abandonment or withholding remittances.[389] Some women found themselves living under the watchful eye of in-laws indefinitely while husbands or fiancés were away. Another way of controlling women's behavior was by asking other friends in the village to report on the woman's activities, effectively preventing the potential for other romances to develop. With contemporary technology making communication by phone easier and cheaper, families can maintain transnational relations even if separated for years at a time. However, phone calls can also serve as a reminder to women of appropriate behavior as well as notification that they are monitored by friends in the community. Even though many women essentially live without a husband, the threat of abandonment serves as a method of control due to the associated social stigma. Finally, the issue that most

[388] "Carrera contra la muerte," (Enrique Valencia) in Chew Sánchez, *Corridos in Migrant Memory,* 206.
[389] Boehm, "Now I am a Man and a Woman!", 25.

concerns women is the loss of financial support and for those who receive remittances, the threat of withholding money served as another form of control. Though many women stay behind, in a variety of ways their independence and autonomy may not be as great as once imagined.

Women who remained in Mexico found that husbands remained involved transnationally in big financial and familial decisions such as the selling of real estate or approval of a child's marriage. Maria (from El Refugio) explained, "I can make some decisions alone. When there are other problems to resolve here in the family, I need his authorization, I mean, I have to ask for him for permission."[390] The return of men often caused a disruption to the lives of women who in the absence of husbands lived a somewhat independent existence in which they made decisions concerning daily affairs, though still consulted husbands on big issues. With the return of men, women accepted male authority once again.

Conceptions of masculinity changed with the regularization of male labor migration to the United States because it became the accepted and sometimes expected method of fulfilling one's duties as provider. Therefore, men who did not migrate had their masculinity called into question.[391] In this manner a culture of migration developed that presented departure as the dutiful and nationalist position as Mexican patriarch. This concept is inherently contradictory, calling into question whether fulfilling a nationalist agenda through a transnational existence is patriotic or disloyal. For those living the experience of migration there is no contradiction, and they exist as evidence that one can be simultaneously Mexican and transnational.

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[390] Maria interview with Galvan in "Restructuring the Household," 73.
[391] Boehm, "Now I am a Man and a Woman!", 20.

Deborah Boehm found that some men who choose not to migrate express their masculinity in other ways like drinking, domestic violence, joking about controlling women, and violent confrontations with other men.[392] One interpretation of this behavior points to the *machismo* of Mexican culture that has nothing to do with migration. However, Boehm indicated a situation in which men who stay behind find it difficult to fulfill their role as provider due to the lack of economic opportunity in the region. Without the ability to control the situation and not being able to figure out a situation in which you can both be there for your family and provide for them financially, sense of being a man is lost. These men internalize the message that migration presents the possibility to provide for their families in a way that not migrating appears to be a choice to not fulfill one's responsibilities. What this behavior indicates is migration impacted culture and identity even for those who do not migrate.

An issue discussed in recent years with more frequency is a relocation of the family abandonment narrative to tell the story of transnational migrant families living in the U.S. who experience the deportation of loved ones. The following two songs also highlight the theme of women and families "left behind", but this time within the United States due to the deportation of the migrant male. An early recording expressing this theme is *Deje mi amor allá en el Norte* (I Left My Love in the North), recorded in 1978.

Dejé mi amor al otro lado
No tengo yo mi pasaporte
Y es que mi fui así de mojado.
La quiero yo y ella me quiere
con amor deseperado;
quisiera ser, ser como el ave
para volar siempre a su lado.
Pero ya pronto si Dios quiere
amorcito consentido

I left my love on the other side
I do not have my passport
For I went there as a wetback.
I love her and she loves me
With a desperate love
I wish I were, were like a bird
So I could always fly by her side.
But very soon if God wills it,
My dearest beloved,

[392] Ibid., 21.

arreglaré bien mis papeles	I shall get my papers in order
para estar siempre contigo	So that I may always be with you
y así los dos juntitos	And together the two of us
embriagarnos de cariño	We'll be dizzy with our love.[393]

In the era of NAFTA, "El deportado" (The Deported One) tells the story of a man who was deported, leaving his family in the U.S. While the opening of the border allowed for greater movement of goods, it did not provide for increased migration of labor. In fact the contrary occurred after NAFTA with a greater militarization of the border and an increase in deportations.

Yo también soy deportado	I am also a deported one
aunque ya estaba casado	Even though I was married
no me quisieron dejar.	They did not want to let me stay.
Dejé mi esposa y mis hijos	I left my wife and my children
quisiera volver con ellos	I want to return to them
pero no puedo cruzar.	But I cannot cross (the border).[394]

The narrator goes on question how many children have been abandoned like his and laments that his children don't speak any English so he was barely able to tell him that he couldn't return because he wasn't being allowed to cross the border.

Throughout the history of Mexican migration, the expectation of women who remain in Mexico while their significant other migrates is that they will remain faithful and chaste. Despite evidence that many women abandoned by migration remain alone out of a sense of loyalty or obligation, the popular culture reflects stories of women who walk away from relationships in favor of another. This theme may be a metaphor for women taking on the role of men. Sexual freedom and infidelity are perceived as the acts of men, and now women are doing what men do in all realms (in sexuality, in the household, in decision making, in labor, in migration, etc.) Much like other corridos,

[393] "Deje mi amor allá en el norte," (Isidro Coronel, 1978) in Herrera-Sobek, *Northward Bound,* 264. Performed by Felipe Arriaga by CBS in Mexico.
[394] "El deportado" (Aciano Acuña, 1992). Performed by Los Terribles del Norte.

these narratives likely grew out of lived experiences, but they also reflect the guilt and imagined fears of men living in the United States. Scholars found that frequency of migrant communication and visits home decline along with remittances, indicating emotional and financial abandonment go hand in hand. Does one become emotionally detached and stop sending money? Or is it the other way around? Each familial situation is different, however, the culture emanating both from the state and from the people dictates men and women fulfill their respective obligations as provider and faithful companion regardless of emotion. Under these social expectations, the guilt of not sending remittances is much greater than any guilt over male infidelity or emotional detachment. Therefore, the imagined betrayal of women who remain in Mexico becomes intensified with the failure of men to fulfill their financial obligations, and this idea flows throughout the popular culture of migration.

The corrido *Los norteños* (The Northerners) served as a warning to both men and women. The warning to women stated that male migrants will spend all the family money to pay for migration, leaving the family with nothing but hope of remittances to follow; and to men that in their absence women are capable of infidelity.

Cuando se van para el Norte le dicen a su mujer; para ajustar el trasporte la casa voy a vender	When they go up north They tell their wives: “In order to have enough money for my transportation I am going to sell the house.”
Al fin que primero Dios desde allá te he de mandar muchos puños de dinero para que puedas gastar.	“Believe me, God will provide. From the U.S. I will send you Many a handful of money So that you can spend it here.”
Si su mujer es legal sufre y tiene que aguantar, pero si es de pocas pulgas	If their wife is faithful She suffers and waits, But if she has few scruples

los tiene que coronar — She cuckolds him.[395]

The corrido continues with an account of how the migrant sold everything the family owned to migrate but in the end returns flat broke. Written in the aftermath of the revolution, this corrido fit into the national narrative of the time that warned against migration to the United States. The end of the corrido solidifies the message leaving the family torn apart, the wife having had an affair, and no financial gain to show for their efforts.

Antoher song that narrates the tale of an abandoned woman who married another is "La boda fatal" (The Fatal Wedding). The premise for leaving to the United States recounted in this corrido resonates in many tales, which is that of a man leaving to earn enough money in order to get married. Sometimes the migrant male forgets about his betrothed, as in the film *La China Hilaria*, and at other times as in "La boda fatal," the woman moves on. In either case, the popular culture concludes that leaving your love in preparation for marriage equates to a fool's errand.

Una tarde nublada de marzo	On a cloudy March afternoon
para el Norte me fui de bracero,	I left to go north as a bracero.
a mi novia dejé y perdida,	My fiancé I left behind
porque me iba a casar en enero	I was to marry her in January
y pore eso me fui de mi tierra	And that is why I left my homeland
a buscar el famoso dinero.	In search of the almighty dollar…

After living and working in the United States for eight months, always with his fiancé in mind, the migrant in the narrative returned to his pueblo recounting,

Al llegar a mi pueblo querido	Upon arriving in my dear town,
las campanas oí repicando	I heard the church bells ringing
y la gente pasaba de prisa,	And people passed by hurriedly,
pregunté lo que estaba pasando,	I asked what was going on,
me dijeron con mucha malicia:	And they answered with great malice:
"Es tu novia que se está casando."	"It's your girlfriend who is getting married."

[395] "Los norteños," in Herrera-Sobek, *Northward Bound,* 76.

The corrido ends with the migrant going to jail after killing his girlfriend and the groom, a warning to both women awaiting a migrant laborer and their would be suitors. Like so many things surrounding migration there are contradictory imagery and messages expressed in the popular culture While "La boda fatal," reflects true feelings and fears of migrant men, the lived reality for many is that they continue to migrate.

"El bracero fracasado" (The Bracero who Failed) was performed by Las Jilguerillas in the 1980s.

Una mañana de mi casita yo me alejé Dejé a mis padres dejé a mis hijos, también mi esposa, todo dejé.	One morning My little house I left. I left my parents, I left my children, And also my wife. I left everything.
Me fui pa'l Norte con la esperanza de hacer fortuna luego volver.	I went up north With the hope To make a fortune And then return.
Pero mis planes, todos fallaron; pues me agarraron los de la ley.	But my plans All failed Because the law Caught me.
Cuando volví mi jacalito solo encontré mis viejecitos habían muerto y con otro hombre hallé a mi mujer.	When I returned My little hut Was all alone, My poor parents Had died, And with another man I found my wife.[396]

Las Jilguerillas were born in Michoacán where they helped their dad on the rancho. At a young age they moved to Mexico City where they met their idols, Duetó América and it

[396] "El bracero fracasado," (Salomón Valenzuela Torres) in Herrera-Sobek, *Northward Bound,* 270.

was their idols that gave them the name Jilguerillas (goldfinch).[397] The group is comprised of two sisters, Imelda and Amparo Higuera, Imelda has already passed. From the feminine voice, the lyrics of "El bracero fracasado," become recast as a reflection of the increasing number of women migrating to work along the northern border in the maquilas and to the United States.

Mentioned earlier in the chapter, Rafael Buendia's corridos cover a variety of different themes, but migration has remained a constant in both his composition and filmmaking. With the corrido "Solitas y Abandonadas" (Women Alone and Abandoned), Buendia returned to the topic of women who remain in Mexico while men migrate. Such women fell subject to rumors, especially in rural areas where everyone knew each other. The rumors typically developed out of some variation of migrant men having affairs or starting a new family with a woman in the U.S. "Solitas y Abandonadas" reflects this reality, but also contains a warning to men not to forget about their financial obligations. Buendia's wife, Maria Elena Jasso, also known as "La Fronteriza" recorded the song, perhaps reflecting an attempt to give the woman's perspective of migration.

Voy a cantar un corrido
sin distinguir sociedades,
de las mujeres casadas
que quedan en sus hogares
cuando se aleja el marido
por ahí para otras ciudades.

I am going to sing a ballad
without class distinctions
about married women
that stay in their homes
when their husbands leave
to other cities.

Los que se van para el norte
contratados de braceros
dejan mujeres y hijos
viviendo de pordioseros
y ellos allá con las gueras

Those that migrate to the north
contracted as braceros
leave their wives and children
begging for a living
and the men are over there with American women

[397] http://www.ranchito1340.com/jilguerillas.html, accessed April 11, 2014.

diciendo que son solteros.

claiming they are single.

Solitas y abandonadas
suspiran por el marido
y a veces con la de malas
no falta un acomedido
y echa a volar la paloma
para adueñarse del nido.

Women alone and abandoned
anxiously longing for their husbands
and sometimes because of bad luck
there is an obliging neighbor
who rekindles the dove's desire for flight
and takes control of the nest.

A los esposos ausentes
va mi consejo sincero,
si no regresan a casa,
siquiera manden dinero
porque con hambre las pollas
se brincan el gallinero.

To the absentee husbands
I am sending sincere advice
If you do not return to your homes
at least send money
because when the chicks are hungry
the roosters will take advantage.

Solitas y abandonadas
quedan llorando en las villas,
en esperar al marido
se pasan noches y días
y a veces cuando ellos vuelven
hayan sus casas vacías.

Women alone and abandoned
crying throughout their town
awaiting for their husbands
they spend their days and nights
and sometimes when the men return
they find empty homes.[398]

Written by a man, but meant to be sung by "La Fronteriza," this song is one of advice being meted out to migrants, and as "La Fronteriza," she knows what she's talking about.

Another tale of love loss presented a particularly traitorous act because it involved the betrayal of one brother against another. "Pedro y Pablo" told the story of one brother, Pedro migrating to the U.S. in order to support the education of the other after the death of their parents.

Pedro habló con entereza
"tienes que seguir la escuela
tienes muy buena cabeza
yo me voy aunque nos duela
yo trabajo y tu estudias
al cabo que el tiemp vuela"

Pedro talked with strength of mind
"You have to keep studying
You are intelligent
I will leave although it will hurt us
I will work and you will study
since time flies, our separation will be short"

The corrido presented the idea that remittances might go towards educating family members in Mexico rather than towards consumption of material products. Sacrificing

[398] "Solitas y abandonadas," (Rafael Buendia) in López Castro, *El Río Bravo es charco,* 505-506.

himself for his brother, Pedro migrated to the north, leaving his girlfriend Leticia behind, and asking her to keep an eye on Pablo. Upon returning to Mexico, Pedro found that his brother had become a lawyer and married Leticia. The song concluded, "*mejor ni hablo/ella si se portó mal*," (I better not talk about her/she was the one who behaved badly).[399] Coming from the male perspective this story places blame on the woman for betrayal, and reinforces the message that a woman's role is to remain ever faithful and waiting.

Enrique Franco wrote the corrido "Pedro y Pablo" in 1998, for Los Tigres del Norte. Franco began performing and writing at the age of fifteen while living in the border town of Tijuana where his family moved to follow work. Himself a migrant who experienced many of the negative conditions of other Mexicans in the United States, Franco wrote relatable songs that appealed to the people. Various artists have performed Franco's songs but some of his greatest successes came as collaborations with Los Tigres del Norte, a testimony to his ability to speak to the people's truths.[400]

Las que van al otro lado

The 1965 immigration legislation created a different process of gendered migration which included larger numbers of women migrating to join relatives under family reunification provisions. "Me voy para el Norte" (I Am going Up North) speaks to the woman migrant's experience.

¿Qué dices mi vida,	What do you say, my love,
nos vamos al Norte?	Shall we go up north?
ya tengo todo arreglado	I have everything all fixed up
para que pasemos	For us to cross over…

[399] "Pedro y Pablo," (Enrique Franco, 1998) in Herrera-Sobek, *Northward Bound,* 210-211.
[400] Ramiro Burr, "Still Roaring After 30 Years," *Billboard,* November 11, 2000.

Tú bien saves, mi bien	You know well, my love,
que no te puedo olvidar,	That I cannot forget you,
chatita de mis amores.	My beloved little one.
Los dos no iremos en el pasajero	We shall both take a passenger train
con destino a la Fronter.	Toward the border.
Irás en mis brazos, dueña de mi vida,	I'll hold you in my arms, my love,
aunque tu mama no quera.	Even if your mother objects.[401]

Many woman were able to migrate only with the help of a male relative or lover as in the song "Dos pasajes" (Two Tickets).

Dos pasajes/Two Tickets

Qué dices, prieta querida,	What do you say, my dark love?
vámonos para otras tierras,	Let us go to another land,
aquí traigo dos pasajes,	I have two tickets for us,
o me segues o te quedas.	Will you follow me or stay?

The song "Concha la mojada" (Concha the Illegal Alien) was written by Ernesto Pesqueda and performed by Las Jilguerillas in 1981. The song tells the story of a man enamored by a woman and the majority of the song is about his wanting to get her to notice him. She has a boyfriend who is a drunk and the narrator has nothing to offer her in terms of financial stability, he has no money, no car, no radio, but decides he wants to woo her with a guitar that he borrowed. The song ends with this final stanza.

Si me voy pa'l otro lado	If I go to the other side
me la llevo de bracera	I will take her as a bracera
hay la paso de mojada	I will take her as a wetback
nos pasamos por el Bravo	We will cross the Rio Bravo
a la Unión Americana	To the United States
y derecho hasta Chicago	And straight to Chicago
nos iremos de volada.	We will go real fast.[402]

[401] "Me voy para el norte," in Herrera-Sobek, *Northward Bound,* 167.
[402] "Concha la mojada," (Ernesto Pesqueda) in Herrera-Sobek, *Northward Bound,* 260.

The song presents the U.S. as the solution to problems, but represents a shift in that the man does not leave behind his woman in order to fulfill his promise. Rather he imagines a future in which they will work together to fulfill the dream. Guardillo says women begin to demand to be included in migration.

"Voy a cruzar la frontera" (I am Going to Cross the Border) tells the story of a woman who was taken to the U.S. by her family. In 1979 the song was performed by Los Ermetaños by CBS Mexico.

Voy a cruzar la frontera, voy a buscar a Dolores,	I am going to cross the border I am going to look for Dolores…
hace tres días que se fue sus padres se la llevaron, a mí tristeza me dio cuando llegaba al Río Bravo; hace tres días que se fue sus padres se la llevaron.	It's been three days since she left, Her parents took her away; I became very sad When she was nearing the Rio Bravo; It's been three days since she left Her parents took her away.[403]

Few corridos examine women's labor migration, like "La carita tapada" (Covered Face) which characterizes women as dutiful, happy, and hard working, in contrast to the early twentieth century criticisms of migrant women as boss.

De Tejas a Califoria por las fronteras del Norte existen ciertas mujeres que cuentan con pasaporte	From Texas to California On the northern borderlands Live certain women Who have passports.
Con sus caritas tapadas y sus mochilas de "lonche" se pasan de madrugada a sus labors del Norte.	With their little faces coered And their lunch sacks, They cross at daybreak To their jobs in the North.
Gastan bien estas mujeres y también alegres son, en sus casas son pilares pues también traen pantalón.	They spend well, these women, And they are cheerful, too. In their homes they are pillars For they wear the pants, too.[404]

[403] "Voy a cruzar la frontera," (J. Maldonado and J. Villa) in Herrera-Sobek, *Northward Bound,* 267.

“Las pobres ilegales” (Poor Illegal Immigrant Women) was performed in a 1980 recording by Yolanda del Río in 1980, in which she speaks directly to migrant women letting them know this is dedicated to them.

Las pobres ilegales que Cruzan la frontera solteras o casadas mujeres de mi tierra	Those poor illegal immigrant women Who cross the border Single women or married ones Are all my countrywomen
Se van ilusionadas dejando sus cariños buscando sus maridos llorando por sus niños	They leave their land with dreams Leaving their loved ones behind In search of their husbands Crying for their children.[405]

The song goes on to talk about the mistreatment and exploitation of these women in their labor, fears they face in being undocumented. She notes that some have luck while other die. Some fear getting caught by INS other fear if they reject bosses’ sexual advances then they might get paid less. She uses the language of “paisanos.” This is also the title of a movie starring Yolanda del Río and produced by Producciones Jean and Producciones del Rey in 1982.

Increasingly, more cultural productions are beginning to portray a more complicated and real experience of migration for women. The film , *Under the Same Moon*, depicts a mother named Rosario who performs domestic labor in the U.S. as an undocumented migrant. She works to provide an education for her son Carlitos who lives with family in Mexico. After years of separation, and the death of the boy’s primary caregiver, Carlitos migrates without documents to the U.S. in search of his mother. Still,

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[404] “La carita tapada,” (Oscar Curiel Aladaiz) in Herrera-Sobek, *Northward Bound,* 277-278.
[405] “Las pobres ilegales,” (José Martínez Loza) in Herrera-Sobek, *Northward Bound,* 286.

very few representations speak to the separation of women from their children, the sexualization of labor, or atrocities of rape along the border.[406]

Migration affects the patriarchal definition of nationalism in two ways, first by supporting patriarchy in the long suffering woman who remains in Mexico while men migrate, and by undermining it in the woman who becomes boss whether by choice or by default. As Pierette Hondagneu-Sotelo found, Mexican women do not challenge patriarchy out of feminist ideology; rather they do so out of necessity.[407] Althouth the official post-revolutionary nationalism of Mexico is characterized by patriarchy, migration challenges the notion both for those women left behind and for those who migrate. A sense of transnationalism develops for Mexican communities touched by migration on both sides of the border regardless of individual experience of migration.

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[406] Sylvanna M. Falcón, "Rape as a Weapon of War: Militarized Rape at the U.S.-Mexico Border," in *Women and Migration* eds. Segura and Zavella, 206. Falcón found systematized rape developing along the border to the extent that potential female migrants acquired oral contraceptives prior to migrating and many women saw rape as one of the many prices you have to pay for passage to the United States.
[407] Hondagneu-Sotelo, *Gendered Transitions.*

Conclusion

The relevance of this dissertation is in offering a cultural analysis of Mexico-U.S. migration which places it within the context of the Mexican nation-state. I have demonstrated through this study that the popular culture and media of migration both reflect migrant experiences and contribute to the development of a transnational identity which challenges the official narrative of Mexican nationalism. While many cultural representations of migration support the racial, class, and gendered characteristics of *mexicanidad*, they also contribute to a normalizing of migration and familiarity with the ills and gains of the experience. Combined with the lived reality of Mexican migrants and the communities they leave behind, the media and cultural production of migration create a sense of transnational identity for communities touched by migration on both sides of the border, even when one has never experienced the process of migration. This cultural approach adds to the growing literature on the impact of migration within Mexico by putting forth a set of ideas through which people become politically and socially engaged in the creation of change.

I created a framework from which the discussion of transnationalism could take place by arguing that the post-revolutionary state-sponsored nationalism was rooted in the racial identity of mestizaje, faith in the social class of working people while promoting modernity as a nationalist objective, and a gendered organization of society based in patriarchy. Mexican nationalism is a much studied topic within Mexico, and examining the role of migration in defining identity complicates the official narrative to reveal that communities touched by migration develop a sense of rootedness in Mexico while simultaneously imagining a transnational existence. While the experience of

migration and its representation through cultural production are not the only factors in creating a sense of transnationalism within Mexico, it is the most intimate of factors.

Transnational migration is a decision made by individuals in response to structural political and economic circumstances. It is important to understand the causation behind Mexico-U.S. migration because the act of migration itself deterritorializes identity. The economic causation can be traced to Mexico's relationship of colonialism with the United States characterized by overwhelming U.S. investment in Mexico and ownership of resources. The history of U.S. economic domination begins with acquisition of land, followed by investments in railroads and mining, then agriculture with the "Green Revolution", industry and transnational labor through the Border Industrialization Project, and finally NAFTA. Each of these efforts leads to the displacement of artisans, farmers, and ordinary working people. Through migration, individuals resist these economic constraints and reject political policies which regulate cross-border movement, effectively subverting the nation state. The lived reality of migrants and their communities on either side of the border exists beyond the confines of nation and the culture reflects this condition.

Through the reading of popular culture and media as text, I make an argument for the use of film, literature and music as evidence that the cultural consequences of migration both supports the post-revolutionary narrative of Mexican nationalism and undermines the state's definition of what it means to be Mexican. The media and cultural production of migration are often produced and disseminated by those in power at the level of state and private corporations. However, people do not always act in expected ways in their consumption of culture. Through the undermining of the official nationalist

narrative a space is created for conceptualizing an identity rooted in transnationalism. Both in its support and rejection of official nationalism, the cultural production of migration contributes to an imagining of a transnational existence through the normalizing of migration.

I discovered that generally speaking, the media and cultural production of migration from 1920 to 1968 supports the Mexican nationalist narrative. Cultural representations of Mexican migration express nostalgia for home, criticism of life in the U.S., and support of the patriarchal order. One could extrapolate a critique of Mexico in the cultural representations which present migration to the U.S. as the solution to attaining upward mobility. However, even these representations express return to Mexico as an eventuality or aspiration.

Popular culture and media, following the events at Tlatelolco in 1968, continue to express love for Mexico and criticism of mistreatment within the United States but also more readily criticize the government of Mexico and are less judgmental about the patriotism of migrants. New themes have also begun to emerge in contemporary culture of production, including issues of the hypocrisy of American attitudes which simultaneously desire the free flow of drugs but reject the free flow of labor, and migrant illegality within the United States. Illegality becomes a contentious topic for Mexican migrants and Mexican Americans alike because in the U.S. illegal has come to equal Mexican or at the very least Latino. What this means is that ideas of illegality and not belonging are attributed to all ethnic Mexicans regardless of citizenship and residency status.

Maldita Vecindad y los Hijos del Quinto Patio is a Mexican rock group that formed in 1985, as part of a movement of rock artists to sing original songs that speak to their own cultural experiences as opposed to Spanish translations of popular American rock songs. Maldita Vecindad draws inspiration from style and language of Tin Tan, effectively adopting a transnational creation that they in turn disseminate to their mass of fans. Songs about migration by Maldita Vecindad as "Ojos negros" (Black Eyes) is about a migrant longing to return to Mexico and "Mojado," (Wetback) about a migrant who dies trying to cross the border. Molotov is another rock group that talks about migration with their song "Frijolero" (Beaner) about the experience of discrimination felt by ethnic Mexicans, migrants and citizens alike, living in the United States. These contemporary representations demonstrate the evolving conceptions of identity and persepective of the migrant experience.

As a cultural history of Mexico, this dissertation adds to the literature with an analysis that extends beyond 1950, and a period in Mexican history when government had a heavy hand in cultural production. Additionally, this study offers a major contribution with its discussion of popular culture coming from the borderlands of Mexico, rather than centered in Mexico City. The literature on Mexican culture traditionally focuses on Mexico City as the center of cultural production and nationalist thought. With the discussion of regional music including corridos and norteñas, this dissertation highlights thriving cultural production located in the margins where both transnational migrants and the borderlands exist.

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