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Mark Glazer

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

Michael Breem

Michael Green

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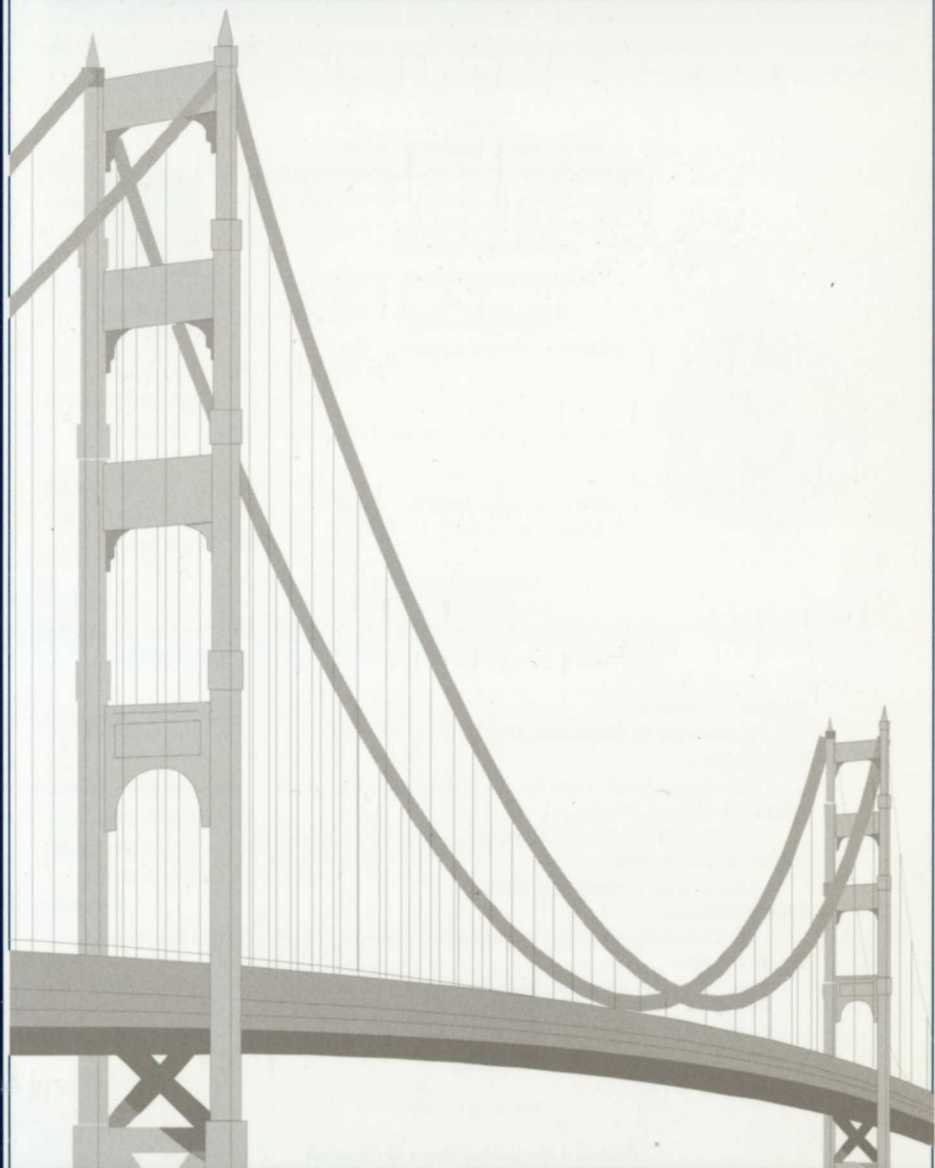
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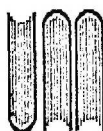
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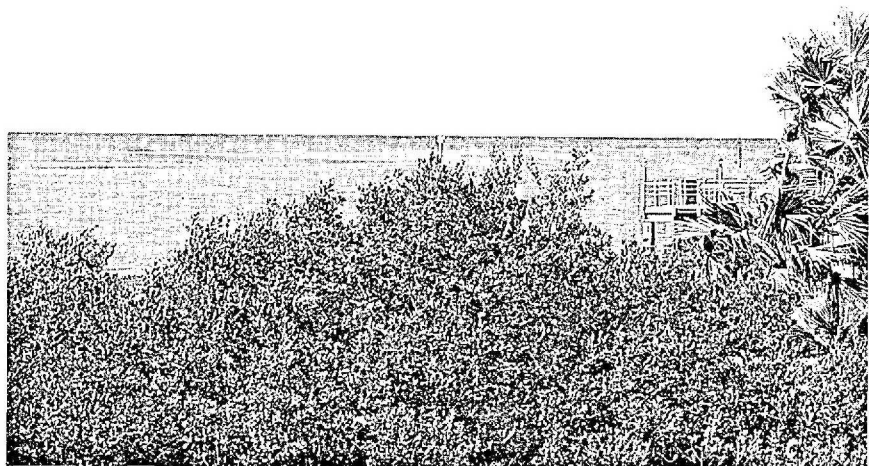
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South Pade Island

—Dr. Mark Glazer

Elderly Latino Needs Along the Texas-Mexico Border: A Demographic Challenge for the 21st Century

Cruz C. Torres
Texas A & M University

Resumen

El propósito de este artículo consiste en presentar una estimación del crecimiento fenómeno de la población anciana de origen latino que reside en la frontera. El artículo presenta datos demográficos a nivel regional donde factores demográficos y socioeconómicos son muy distintos a las estadísticas a nivel nacional y estatal.

Introduction

The Latinization of the U.S. population is well documented. Equally well established is the youthful structure of the Latino population in the U.S. However, changes in health care, along with other factors such as changes in the economic structure of the population have improved the quality of life, life chances and longevity for the Latino population. By 1990, Texas contained the fifth largest elderly population in absolute numbers in the nation (after California, New York, Florida and Pennsylvania). Furthermore, Texas had the second largest Latino elderly population in the nation (next to California). The growth of the elderly Latino population in Texas has been the most impressive and the trend promises to continue.

In spite of this dramatic increase in population, elderly Latino aging issues and health care concerns remain largely invisible in the larger health and aging

policy contexts. The relative size of the population to some extent is responsible for this neglect. First, among the aging population, Latinos constitute a relatively small proportion of the population. Second, among the Latino population the aging population also constitutes a small segment of the rapidly growing population. Thus aging Latinos are invisible to two important and growing sub-populations. Ironically it is precisely because of the size of the population, or rather the dramatic increase in size in the elderly Latino population, that the public sector's ability to meet the needs of the elderly Latino population will be compromised. It is not the proportion of the population, but the absolute size of the population that creates greater demands on service providers. Besides the increase in demands, the special interests of the medical corporate sector (Wallace and Villa, 1997) and

the youthful structure of the Latino population will be at odds with and affect the needs of the elderly Latinos. One will continue to mask significant changes in the Latino elderly population; the other will continue to ignore its needs.

Demographic characteristics and geographic distribution patterns of Latino seniors in Texas vary dramatically and further hinder appropriate needs assessment. For example, demographic characteristics along the Texas-Mexico border region are so distinct, that individuals concerned with meeting the needs of aging Latinos in Texas need data specific to the region along the Texas-Mexico border to accurately determine these needs. Only through desegregation of regional data can policy planners begin to understand how specific regional needs differ from state and national trends. This report examines (1) the demographic characteristics of elderly residents of 33 Texas-Mexico border counties through 2020, (2) economic indicators for the 33 counties, and (3) demographic distribution and characteristics of the formal health care delivery systems.

Several factors make the Texas-Mexico transnational region not only unique, but especially vulnerable in meeting the health needs of its residents, especially its Latino elderly. 1) The demographic profile of the population in these counties is significantly different from the rest of the state. 2) Most of the counties in the region (exceptions include Webb, Hidalgo, and El Paso) are rural. Most non-rural counties have only one metro area: Webb/Laredo, El Paso/El Paso. Hidalgo

County is the exception with two cities, McAllen and Edinburg, forming the metro area within its boundaries. 3) The majority of the border region counties have a federal *medically underserved* and *professional shortage* area classification. 4) The poverty rate for these counties is far above state poverty rate. 5) Finally, the vast majority of the population, especially the elderly population, is linguistically different.

Method

This report is based on data from 1) the 1990 Census, 2) population projections from the Texas State Data Center in the Department of Rural Sociology at Texas A&M University, and 3) Texas State Department of Health data on licensed health professionals and institutions.

Caution must be used interpreting the racial/ethnic census data. According to the Census Bureau, Hispanics could self-identify as any of the five available race categories (White, Black, American Indian, Eskimo, Alcut, Asian or Pacific Islander, other). Consequently, Hispanics can be of any race, with significant numbers identifying themselves as "white." The "white" category thus contains Anglos and Hispanic whites. Because of the significant number of Hispanics in the border region, this confounding of the categories can create a problem in population analyses based on race/ethnicity. Several factors minimize, but may not eliminate, the problem for this specific region and population. First, the proximity of this population to the U.S.-Mexico border; due to their cultural affinity, Texas-Mexico border

Hispanics are more likely to associate the "white" category with Anglos than with themselves. Second is the age category of the target population. Older Latinos, either because of their immigration history or personal experiences with the dominant labeling policies, are more likely to self-identify as *Mexicanos*, Mexicans or Hispanics, than "white." So while these factors reduce the risk of losing Hispanics to different categories, the caveat is nevertheless warranted.

Demographic Characteristics for Texas-Mexico Counties

The Region

For the purpose of this report, the Texas-Mexico border region encompasses a 33 county area along, but not necessarily adjacent to, the Texas-Mexico international boundary (Figure 1). The counties within the region vary dramatically in size and population density. In area the range extends from Pecos County, with an area of 4,764 square miles, as the largest county. Willacy County, with a 587 square mile area, is the smallest. If size is measured in population density, then El Paso County with a population density of 665.2 persons per square mile represents the most populated county in the region. Kennedy with 0.3 persons per square mile is the least populated county in the border region (Texas Department of Health, 1997).

Elderly Population

Two demographic trends affect the Texas population profile in general and the Texas-Mexico border in particular.

First is the "graying" of the general population. Second is the unprecedented "graying" of the Latino population. Latino elderly represent the most rapidly growing segment of the total U.S. elderly population. In the next census, of the 2,034,087 projected elderly Texans, less than 10 percent will reside in the border counties (Texas State Data Center, 1998). In contrast, 37.7 percent of the state's Latino elderly will reside in the 33 county area (Keep in mind that only 31 percent of the Texas's Latino population resides in the area.) According to demographic projections by the Texas Data Center (1998) presented in Table 1, 12.5 percent of the Texas population will be 65 years old or older by 2020. In contrast, only 8.7 percent of the total population in the border counties will be 65 years old or older. Twelve counties (36.4 percent) are expected to have less than the state's projected 12.5 percent elderly population. A more salient statistic, however, is the increase in absolute numbers of Latino elderly as illustrated in Table 1.

By 2020 only 7.5 percent of Texas' Latino population will be 65 years old or older. (See Table 2.) Still, Latino elderly will make up 22.9 percent of the Texas elderly population. In the Texas-Mexico border region, however, Latino elderly will constitute 75.8 percent of the region's elderly population.

Another useful measure of change is the percent increase in a given population. Table 3 shows the Texas elderly population is projected to increase by 210 percent. In contrast, the Texas Latino elderly population will increase by 375 percent. In the Texas-Mexico

Table 1: Texas-Mexico Border Counties Elderly Population Projections

	Elderly Population Projection*			Latino Elderly Population Projections*			Elderly Percent of Population		
	1990	2000	2020	1990	2000	2020	1990	2000	2020
Texas	1708443	2034087	3601089	228631	342206	824444	10.1	10.0	12.5
Brewster	1217	1418	1889	361	512	767	14.0	13.6	17.9
Brooks	1076	1268	1649	862	1036	1419	13.1	13.36	12.8
Cameron	27515	32825	523591	14166	19841	40589	10.6	9.4	8.8
Crocket	479	679	1128	136	237	518	11.7	14.5	16.8
Culberson	297	492	851	156	273	557	8.7	12.2	16.1
Dimmit	1209	1400	2154	874	1010	1653	11.6	11.4	13.1
Duval	1692	1955	2590	1405	1601	2143	13.1	12.6	12.6
Edwards	283	422	771	68	129	290	12.5	15.0	18.2
El Paso	48267	63989	109384	26051	38403	74595	8.2	8.8	10.7
Frio	1488	1856	3129	847	1039	1859	11.0	9.7	10.0
Hidalgo	38438	45669	86620	19902	29853	73652	10.0	8.0	6.7
Hudspeth	292	453	737	132	233	442	10.0	13.2	16.1
Jeff Davis	369	442	543	136	157	186	19.0	21.1	24.2
Jim Hogg	692	843	1151	618	747	1026	13.5	14.6	15.7
Kenedy	41	84	125	31	57	90	8.9	15.9	18.6
Kinney	682	806	795	195	290	390	21.9	24.3	21.3
LaSalle	706	844	1262	477	593	889	13.4	12.5	13.7
McMullen	122	181	254	25	50	109	14.9	20.6	26.8
Maverick	3082	4107	7067	2751	3663	6427	8.5	8.8	9.5
Medina	3832	4503	7283	1103	1396	2698	14.0	12.2	12.5
Pecos	1446	1954	2863	594	887	15108	9.9	10.5	12.7
Presidio	920	1151	1497	654	831	1141	13.9	14.8	14.3
Real	495	588	661	43	74	162	20.5	21.8	20.6
Reeves	1638	2025	2994	764	1094	2030	10.3	11.6	14.3
Starr	2858	3806	7288	2719	3611	6982	7.1	6.9	7.5
Sutton	433	644	1157	154	260	519	10.5	13.1	17.7
Terrell	200	277	424	80	133	230	14.2	18.0	23.3
Uvalde	2916	3229	4346	1054	1390	2320	12.5	11.6	11.4
Val Verde	3743	4715	7118	2271	3038	5118	9.7	10.0	10.6
Webb	10493	14244	29165	9632	13200	25302	7.9	7.0	6.5
Willacy	1976	2369	3287	1218	1623	2598	11.2	10.9	10.2
Zapata	1386	1424	1799	653	778	1416	14.9	12.2	9.4
Zavala	1300	1402	2017	1031	1091	1661	10.7	10.0	11.0
Border Co. Total	176175	202082	347589	91163	129130	263285	10.4	10.3	8.7
% of State Elderly	10.3	9.9	9.7	39.9	37.7	31.9			

*Source: Texas State Data Center, Texas A & M University

border region the increase is more moderate; the Latino elderly population will increase by 289 percent.

Further examination of Table 2 reveals that by 2000 in all but two counties, the 75 years old and older age category will be 40 percent or more of the elderly population. This is significant because a consequence of longer life expectancy for all populations, includ-

ing Latinos, is an increase in the incidence of chronic illness. Indeed, research has found an increase in age results in functional disabilities and perceived poor health (Van Nostrand, Furner, and Suzman, 1993; U.S. Senate, Special Committee on Aging, 1988). Research by Espino (1993) and Burge and Espino (1989) as well as Smith and Kingston's (1997) analysis of the

Table 2: Elderly and Latino Elderly Percentage of Population

	Totals	2000 Population*					Totals	Pct. Elderly	2020 Population*				
		Pct. Latino	Pct. Latino	Pct. 75+	Pct. Elderly	Pct. Latino			Pct. Latino	Pct. 75+	Pct. Elderly	Pct. Latino	Pct. 75+
Texas	2034087	10.0	16.8	45.6	5.7	41.1	3601089	12.5	22.9	39.4	7.5	37.5	
Brewster	1418	13.69	36.0	48.0	10.8	45.1	1889	14.9	40.6	46.5	11.5	51.1	
Brooks	1268	13.3	81.7	48.8	12.0	46.3	1649	12.8	86.1	48.9	11.7	48.0	
Cameron	32825	9.4	60.0	48.6	6.8	42.5	53591	8.8	75.7	42.2	7.7	39.4	
Crocket	697	14.5	34.0	43.3	9.3	39.7	1128	16.8	45.9	46.0	12.2	43.8	
Culberson	492	12.2	55.5	39.6	9.1	39.6	851	16.1	65.5	45.4	12.7	42.6	
Dimmit	1400	11.4	72.1	48.9	9.7	48.7	2154	13.1	76.7	43.4	11.3	43.4	
Duval	1955	12.6	81.9	50.1	11.9	51.0	2590	12.6	82.7	48.5	11.4	48.4	
Edwards	422	15.0	30.6	41.7	8.4	38.0	771	18.2	37.6	48.5	11.1	51.0	
El Paso	63989	8.8	60.0	41.9	7.2	39.7	109384	10.7	68.2	40.5	9.0	39.5	
Frio	1856	9.7	56.0	46.2	7.6	47.10	3129	10.0	59.4	43.1	7.7	42.0	
Hidalgo	45669	8.0	65.4	48.3	5.8	40.8	86620	6.7	85.0	38.7	6.0	36.7	
Hudspeth	453	13.2	51.4	40.2	9.6	36.5	737	16.1	60.0	49.4	12.2	49.8	
Jeff Davis	442	21.1	35.5	51.8	17.7	55.4	543	24.2	34.3	53.0	15.5	59.7	
Jim Hogg	843	14.6	88.6	48.5	14.1	48.3	1151	15.7	89.1	48.7	14.9	47.7	
Kenedy	84	15.9	67.9	31.0	13.5	31.6	125	18.6	72.0	54.4	15.7	54.4	
Kinney	806	24.3	36.0	51.4	15.5	46.9	795	21.3	49.0	54.3	15.3	48.2	
LaSalle	844	12.5	70.3	51.0	11.6	48.6	1262	13.7	70.4	47.2	11.8	47.5	
McMullen	181	20.6	27.6	42.0	13.1	42.0	254	26.8	42.9	58.3	21.0	55.8	
Maverick	4107	8.8	89.2	43.9	8.3	44.1	7067	9.5	90.9	41.8	9.1	41.5	
Medina	4503	12.2	31.0	47.4	8.5	45.6	7283	12.5	37.1	41.0	9.9	39.5	
Pecos	1954	10.5	45.4	40.5	8.1	39.5	2863	12.7	52.7	44.9	9.6	44.2	
Presidio	1151	14.8	72.2	47.0	12.7	46.7	1497	14.3	72.2	49.6	12.1	49.8	
Real	588	21.8	12.6	49.2	10.3	32.4	661	20.6	24.5	58.4	13.8	50.0	
Reeves	2025	11.6	54.0	43.3	8.1	40.1	2994	14.3	67.8	44.9	11.4	42.0	
Starr	3806	6.9	94.9	43.5	6.7	43.5	7288	7.5	95.8	42.4	7.3	42.1	
Sutton	644	13.1	40.4	42.1	10.7	38.9	1157	17.7	44.9	42.5	13.0	39.3	
Terrell	277	18.0	48.0	44.4	15.1	41.4	424	23.3	54.3	57.8	17.0	55.2	
Uvalde	3229	11.6	43.0	48.5	7.6	42.3	4346	11.4	53.4	45.4	8.2	43.2	
Val Verde	4715	10.0	64.4	45.3	8.7	44.8	7118	10.6	71.9	46.5	9.5	45.9	
Webb	14244	7.1	92.7	43.5	6.8	43.5	29165	6.5	93.6	39.4	6.2	39.2	
Willacy	2369	10.9	68.6	46.3	8.5	43.0	3287	10.2	79.0	46.2	8.7	43.3	
Zapata	1424	12.2	54.6	53.0	7.7	47.9	1799	9.4	78.7	45.7	7.8	41.0	
Zavala	1402	10.0	77.8	44.8	8.5	42.4	2017	11.0	82.3	36.7	9.7	34.1	

*Source: Texas State Data Center, Texas A & M University
 *Percent of elderly population that is Latino

*Percent of total elderly population that is 75 years old or older

*Percent of Latino population that is 65 years old or older

*Percent of elderly Latino population that is 75 years old or older

AHEAD data found Latino elderly to be more functionally disabled than non-Hispanic whites. Disease and disorder incidence projections through 2020 predict the greatest increase in incidence rates will be for those diseases and disorders associated with older populations, especially minority rural populations.

Decline in health is further associated with greater utilization of health care resources (Rosenwaite, 1985) and probability of entering a nursing home dramatically increases with increased age and disability (Wolinsky, Callahan,

Fitzgerald and Johnson, 1992). Census data (1990) further substantiate research findings. According to the Bureau of the Census (1990), only 1.4 percent of individuals 65-74 years old live in nursing homes. By age 85-90 the percentage has increased to 18.6 percent. Thirty-three percent of those 90-94 and 47.1 percent over 95 years old reside in nursing homes.

Economic Indicators for the Border County Region

Besides advanced age another correlate of health and health status is eco-

Table 3: Percentage Population Increase 1990-2000

<i>Population</i>	<i>Texas</i>	<i>Texas-Mexico Border Counties</i>
Total Population	170 %	234%
Latino Population	254%	266%
Elderly Population	210%	197%
Latino Elderly Population	361%	289%

conomic well-being (Gibson, 1994; House, Lepkowski, Kinney, Mero, Kessler, and Herzog, 1994; Feinstein, 1993). Historically Latinos have been more sensitive to economic and employment downturns than the general population (National Council for La Raza, 1998; Rochin, 1990). Nationally Latinos have the highest poverty rates, 26.4 percent vs. 8.6 percent for whites (National Council for La Raza, 1998). Recent economic trends have witnessed a 6.9 percent decline in Latino median income at the same time that the median income for whites has risen to \$44,756 (La Raza Council, 1998). Latinos also disproportionately participate in occupations characterized by low wages, high risk, early and inadequate retirement, and health plans. As a consequence of this work history and a lifetime of health risks and poverty, Latinos accumulate minimal or no long-term benefits at the end of their employment years.

Table 4 provides selected socioeconomic indicators that profile the state's economic well-being. The same profile is provided for each county and the border zone. Only McMullen County enjoys a median household income above the Texas median household income of \$27,016. The median

household income for the border region stands at \$16,834. As is evident from Table 4, approximately 35 percent of the region's population and almost 33 percent of the region's elderly live in poverty. Poverty levels range from an 18.1 percent low in McMullen County to a 60 percent high in Starr County. What's more, every county, except Kinney County, exceeds the state's level of elderly living below the poverty level.

Exacerbating the negative effects of low household income is household size. Over 84 percent of the region's households exceed the state's average number of persons (2.7) per household. The average number of persons per household in the border counties stands at 3.1. The obvious consequence of lower median household incomes and greater number of individuals per household is less disposable capital per person. The Texas-Mexico border area's mean per capita income is \$7,902, or 61 percent of the state's per capita income of \$12,904.

Characteristics of Formal Health Care Delivery Systems

As indicated earlier, there is substantial evidence that older Latinos with low incomes have been poor most, if

not all, of their lives. The disproportionate concentration of Latino elderly among the chronically poor and ethnically homogenous areas (Wallace, 1990) has serious implications for ameliorative health interventions. Limited access to health and long-term care services among older Latinos means that

they probably experienced greater risk of poor health and underutilization of health services throughout their lives. Moreover, a greater share of the care responsibilities falls on the shoulders of their families, who like their elders are disproportionately economically vulnerable (National Council for La Raza,

Table 4: State and Border Counties: Population's Socioeconomic Profile

County	Total Population	Percent Hispanic Population	Income		Percent Pop. Below Poverty Level	Percent Persons 65+ Below Poverty
			Median Household Income	Per Capita Income		
Texas	16,986,510	27.7	27,016	12,094	18.1	18.4
Brewster	8,681	42.7	17,586	10,730	27.6	27.4
Brooks	8,204	91.7	13,509	6,623	36.8	34.2
Cameron	260,120	83.2	17,336	7,125	39.7	26.9
Crocket	4,078	50.5	19,087	10,232	25.2	26.1
Culberson	3,407	77.0	16,559	7,632	29.8	27.9
Dimmit	10,433	85.1	12,222	5,386	48.9	44.9
Duval	12,918	86.1	13,602	7,126	39.0	39.6
Edwards	2,266	50.9	14,639	7,537	41.7	38.5
El Paso	591,610	72.1	22,644	9,150	26.8	21.3
Frio	13,472	69.4	14,059	6,629	39.1	45.9
Hidalgo	383,545	87.7	16,703	6,603	41.9	28.4
Hudspeth	2,915	67.1	15,401	7,994	38.9	33.9
Jeff Davis	1,946	59.9	18,995	9,975	19.7	22.0
Jim Hogg	5,109	91.7	14,704	6,852	35.3	36.6
Kenedy	460	75.8	16,500	9,212	21.3	22.0
Kinney	3,094	52.0	15,750	7,931	28.6	18.1
LaSalle	5,254	73.5	15,615	8,130	37.0	39.8
McMullen	817	58.9	29,205	13,485	18.1	21.3
Maverick	36,378	90.8	12,262	5,184	50.4	45.5
Medina	27,312	42.5	22,455	9,820	23.6	25.2
Pecos	14,675	56.2	21,170	9,133	29.6	33.5
Presidio	6,637	83.5	13,016	6,347	48.1	49.9
Real	2,412	25.9	17,428	8,184	30.5	29.2
Reeves	15,52	79.2	19,952	7,765	28.8	32.9
Starr	40,518	97.6	10,182	4,152	60.0	53.8
Sutton	4,135	46.1	20,933	10,926	19.0	28.5
Terrell	1410	60.7	21,213	10,146	27.4	19.3
Uvalde	23,340	63.2	18,001	8,625	31.1	22.4
Val Verde	38,721	71.8	18,042	7,902	36.4	30.7
Webb	133,239	92.9	18,074	6,771	38.2	35.1
Willacy	17,705	86.4	14,590	6,074	44.5	34.8
Zapata	9,279	83.8	14,926	6,541	41.0	27.0
Zavala	12,162	92.2	11,162	4,818	50.4	58.3

*Source: Texas State Data Center, Texas A & M University

1998).

Beyond population characteristics, numerous institutional barriers limit access to quality health care. One such institutional barrier is a serious lack of hospital and long-term care facilities in or near the community of residence (Angel and Angel, 1996). Because economics, not need, drive the corporate medical industry, the growth of the health care industry has concentrated in growing middle-class suburban areas, away from poor minority populations and/or sparsely populated areas (Wallace, 1990). As a result, many minority communities suffer from a lack of institutional services. The federal government uses two federal designations: *Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA)*² and *Medically Underserved Area/Medically Underserved Populations (MUA/MUP)*³ to identify geographic areas and populations that lack adequate institutional services. These designations often serve as proxies to a population's health status. Table 5 presents information on various aspects of service availability. It shows 60.6 and 84.9 percent of the border counties are 100 percent HPSA and MUA/MUP respectively. If we consider the counties that have parts of the area or population HPSA and MUA/MUP designated, then the number increases substantially (81.8 and 93.9 percent respectively).

Institution Availability

Using Texas Department of Health data (1996), Table 5 illustrates how availability of service in the community may be the most salient service utilization issue for residents along the Texas-Mexico border. Sixteen counties (48.5 percent)

have no acute care facilities. Of the 72,041 licensed⁴ acute care beds in Texas, only 6.4 percent (4,644) are located in the Texas-Mexico border area. Of those located in the area, 86.9 percent are found in the four metro areas (El Paso, Laredo, Edinburg-McAllen, Brownsville). A casual glance at the regional map will immediately clue the reader to the vast distances involved between these metro areas and between a metro area and its corresponding rural population.

Nursing home data provided on Table 5 reveal there are 125,631 licensed nursing home beds in Texas. Of these, only 5.5 percent are located in the region. Additionally, at least twelve counties have no local nursing home. As with hospital beds, the available licensed nursing home beds are unevenly distributed within the region. Sixty-six percent of all nursing home beds are located in metro areas. The lack of local facilities is especially egregious for Latino families for several reasons. First, nursing homes away from the community of residence is especially difficult for a population deeply steeped in familialism, especially in relation to the elderly. An already difficult decision, placing a loved one in a nursing home, is made next to impossible if the only available facility is miles away from the community of residence. Second, with few exceptions, most counties cover vast geographic distances. Nursing homes away from the community residence can mean fewer family visits, and/or culturally different staff and environment. These circumstances create undue economic and psychological hardships for both the elderly Latino and for their families.

Table 5: Health Care Delivery Systems

County	Total Population	HPSA	Med Under served Area	Health Professionals			Health Facilities			Health Facilities	
				Doctors	Nurses	Dentists	Acute Care Hosp.	Licensed Beds	Staffed Beds	Nursing Homes	Licensed Beds
Texas	16,986,510	176*	229*	26,037	96,197	7,452	460	72,401	55,226	1,158	125,632
Brewster	8,681	Parts	Total	10	34	2	1	50	37	1	59
Brooks	8,204	Parts	Total	2	13	1	-	-	-	1	98
Cameron	260,120	Parts	Parts	311	915	49	5	958	940	12	1,286
Crocket	4,078	None	None	2	14	2	1	20	20	1	46
Culberson	3,407	Total	Total	3	10	1	1	25	25	-	-
Dimmit	10,433	Total	Total	6	12	1	1	49	26	1	100
Duval	12,918	Total	Total	1	11	-	-	-	-	1	90
Edwards	2,266	None	Total	1	4	-	-	-	-	-	-
El Paso	591,610	Parts	Parts	677	2,584	148	7	1,559	1,336	11	1,321
Frio	13,472	None	Total	5	26	2	1	22	22	2	183
Hidalgo	383,545	Parts	Total	373	1,181	77	5	1,090	1,044	16	1,554
Hudspeth	2,915	Total	Total	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Jeff Davis	1,946	None	Total	1	6	1	-	-	-	-	-
Jim Hogg	5,109	None	Total	2	6	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kenedy	460	Total	Total	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kinney	3,094	Total	Total	1	5	-	-	-	-	-	-
LaSalle	5,254	Total	Total	3	10	-	-	-	-	-	-
McMullen	817	Total	Total	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Maverick	36,378	Total	Total	23	71	2	1	77	60	1	120
Medina	27,312	Total	Total	12	103	5	1	34	27	4	383
Pecos	14,675	Parts	Total	8	36	3	2	51	40	1	120
Presidio	6,637	None	None	2	9	1	-	-	-	-	-
Real	2,412	Total	Total	2	15	-	-	-	-	1	86
Reeves	15,852	Total	Total	8	22	3	1	62	46	1	90
Starr	40,518	Total	Total	10	46	3	1	44	44	1	100
Sutton	4,135	Total	Total	2	9	1	1	21	13	1	39
Terrell	1,410	Total	Total	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Uvalde	23,340	Parts	Total	19	68	5	1	62	53	2	345
Val Verde	38,721	Total	Total	22	108	7	1	93	78	3	268
Webb	133,239	Total	Parts	129	414	22	2	427	400	3	442
Willacy	17,705	Total	Total	9	24	2	-	-	-	1	120
Zapata	9,279	Total	Total	-	10	1	-	-	-	1	59
Zavala	12,162	Total	Total	4	12	-	-	-	-	-	-

*Source: Texas State Data Center, Texas A & M University

These include 113 entire counties, 22 partial county designations, 23 facilities (hospital, clinics or prisons), and 18 populations

^bTexas has 229 counties with Total Medical Underserved Area designations. These include the total population in 177 counties and 48 subcounty populations

Health Care Professionals

Most often where a health care professional chooses to practice his/her profession is determined by the availability of adequate health care facilities. The uneven geographic distribution of health care facilities becomes the first barrier to adequate access to health care. In using physician availability as a primary indicator for designating areas as medically underserved, authorities underscore the import role direct care physi-

cians play in determining if a population's health care needs are at risk. Table 5 shows at least five border counties have no resident physician and eleven have no dentist.

Direct care physician availability is primarily reflected in the physician/population ratio. The Texas direct care physician/population ratio stands at one in 719. For the border counties, the direct care physician ratio is considerably higher, one in 1,200. The availability

of general practice physicians is even more critical. The state's general practice physician/population ration is one in 3,914. The border counties' ratio far exceeds the Texas state ratio. Several counties (Cameron, El Paso, Frio, LaSalle, Maverick, Reeves, Starr and Webb) have general practice physician/population ration range that exceeds one in 4,600 but falls below one in 8,000. Maverick County holds the most notable general practice physician/population ratio, 10,893.

According to the Texas State Board of Medical Examiners (1998), there were 26,037 licensed physicians in Texas. Of these 1,648 or 6.3 percent practice medicine in the border counties. As with the other medical services, 90.5 percent (1,490) of the physicians practice medicine in the four border metropolitan areas. Travel to the city for a doctor's appointment is an added hardship to Latino elderly, especially elderly Mexican American women who are more likely than non-Latinas to rely on family for transportation (Angel, Angel, McClellan, and Markides, 1996).

Besides the real shortage of area physicians, the shortage is compounded by physician's unwillingness to participate in Medicare and Medicaid. It has already been established that because of their economic and work histories, Latino elderly have the lowest levels of either private or public health insurance of any group in the U.S. (Angel and Angel, 1996; Lacayo, 1993; U.S. General Accounting Office, 1992; Commonwealth, 1989). Even though Latinos, especially Mexican Americans, report lower levels of Social Security participation (Council of La Raza

1992), they nevertheless are disproportionately dependent on Medicare and Medicaid for health care. Paradoxically, policies and procedures within the Medicare and Medicaid programs manage to impede equitable access to adequate health care.

In an effort to reduce costs, Medicare had reduced reimbursements to hospitals and doctors. In recent years, a continued low reimbursement rate by Medicare has made Medicare patients less attractive to the health industry. Medicaid patients are to be avoided. Lacking appropriate economic incentives by Medicaid, many physicians and nursing homes actively avoid Medicaid patients (Moon and Davis, 1995). Accordingly, as shown on Table 6 only 46.8 percent of practicing physicians in the Texas-Mexico border area participate in Medicaid. Of those that are enrolled as Medicaid physicians, only 46.5 percent carry a high client level (100+), 18.4 percent have a medium level (30-99) client load and 35.1 percent report a low (0-29) client level (Texas Department of Health, 1997).

Latino Health Care Professionals

Consistently, research indicates that linguistically different Latino elders underutilize health services. Communication problems due to limited English proficiency on the part of Latino elders is one of the most serious problems stemming from the cultural distance between providers and consumers of health care. Hence, the ethnicity of health care providers often becomes a factor in the ability or willingness to utilize available health care services. According to Texas Board of Medical Ex

Table 6: Texas-Mexico Border Physician Availability & Participation

County	Physician ^a Participants	Dr./Pop Ratio	Medicaid Participants	Level of Medicaid Participation		
				Low ^b	Med. ^c	High ^d
<i>Texas</i>	<i>26037</i>	<i>719*</i>	<i>8918</i>	<i>5247</i>	<i>1684</i>	<i>1987</i>
Brewster	10	932	3	2	1	-
Brooks	2	4167	1	-	-	1
Cameron	311	966	132	42	16	74
Crocket	2	2221	2	1	-	1
Culberson	3	1124	1	-	-	1
Dimmit	6	1760	3	1	-	2
Duval	1	13654	-	-	-	-
Edwards	1	2742	1	-	-	1
El Paso	677	978	300	134	55	111
Frio	5	3117	5	1	-	4
Hidalgo	373	1277	190	46	40	104
Hudspeth	-	---	1	1	-	-
Jeff Davis	1	2105	1	-	1	-
Jim Hogg	2	2667	2	-	2	-
Kenedy	-	---	-	-	-	-
Kinney	1	3291	-	-	-	-
LaSalle	3	1939	-	-	-	-
McMullen	-	---	-	-	-	-
Maverick	23	1894	14	5	1	8
Medina	12	2666	11	9	1	1
Pecos	8	2014	6	3	2	1
Presidio	2	3646	-	-	-	-
Real	2	1315	-	-	-	-
Reeves	8	1947	5	1	1	3
Starr	10	4807	5	3	-	2
Sutton	2	2240	1	-	1	-
Terrell	-	---	-	-	-	-
Uvalde	19	1297	6	3	3	-
Val Verde	22	1953	12	4	4	4
Webb	129	1330	58	14	12	32
Willacy	9	2149	7	-	1	6
Zapata	-	---	-	-	-	-
Zavala	4	3021	3	-	1	2
Border Counties	1648	1200	770	270	142	358

*Source: Texas State Data Center, Texas A & M University
^a direct care physicians

^b physicians carrying a low Medicaid client level = 0-29 patients

^c physicians with a medium Medicaid client level = 30-99 patients

^d physicians with a high Medicaid client level = 100+ patients

aminers' most recent statistics (September 1998), 12.8 percent (3,067) of the active physicians in Texas are Latinos. Of these, 27.9 percent (855), are prac-

ticing physicians in the border counties. However, 92.1 percent are located in the four metropolitan areas on the border.

In the absence of a bilingual/bicul-

tural physician, other bilingual health professionals such as registered nurses can improve or bridge language incompatibility between physician and patient. Unfortunately, the statistics are more discouraging for Latino registered nurses. As of September 1998, only 7.9 percent of the registered nurses in Texas are Latino. Recent changes in admission policies for Texas professional schools will undoubtedly aggravate the scarcity of cultural diversity in the professions.

Conclusion

Growing old poor in medically underserved rural areas will continue to have serious implications for successful aging for elderly Latinos. Projected population increase in Latino elderly, combined with limited institutional resources, predict an at-risk Latino elderly population. Especially vulnerable are elderly Latinos residing in the impoverished communities along the

Texas-Mexico border. As we move into the twenty-first century a greater proportion of the state's Latino elderly will be 75 years old or older. Their needs will be greater and more costly at a time when the resources and the focus will continue to be on the growth and the youth of the Latino population. Additionally, universal changes in family dynamics, i.e., smaller families, marital disruption, increased outside employment for women, and increased geographical mobility will change the way Latinos view elder care. In the end, socioeconomic challenges may override cultural preferences in how the Latinos deliver or receive eldercare in the future.

To meet the needs of this growing population, we need continued research that accurately depicts the changing dynamics of Latino elderly populations, their needs, the social networks and social service systems available to meet these needs.

Endnotes

¹ In the Texas-Mexico Border region many Mexican Americans live in densely populated *colonias* that, though formally urban, the resource deficit is more in line with rural communities.

² Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) is a federal designation used to define an area with a ratio more than 3,500 people per primary care physician and no available physician within a reasonable distance in surrounding communities.

³ Medically Underserved Area/Medically Underserved Populations (MUA/MUP) is a federal designation used to identify an area or a population with an inadequate access to personal health services. Four factors are used to determine an area or a population's designation: physician access, percentage of aged population, poverty rate, and health status indicators such as infant mortality rate.

⁴ Licensed beds is not synonymous with staffed beds. Overwhelmingly hospitals and nursing homes operate below licensed capacity.

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Xala de aquí, de allá. Vinculación cultural de la migración Mexicana a Estados Unidos

Lourdes Consuelo Pacheco Ladrón de Guevara

Abstract

This article treats the specifically cultural linkages between the inhabitants of Xala, Nayarit, and those, born in Xala, who have taken up residence in the U.S. While the motive for immigration may be economic, and while U.S. employers see these migrants almost exclusively in terms of the economies they represent, the article focuses on the Xaleños as cultural beings and the manner in which they replicate their cultural heritage in their communities in the U.S.

Introducción

Xala es un municipio rural localizado a 85 kms de la ciudad de Tepic, capital del Estado Federal de Nayarit, en el occidente de México. La localidad de Xala, cabecera del municipio del mismo nombre, se localiza entre las ciudades de Ahuacatlán e Ixtlán del Río. Se conecta a la carretera federal México-Nogales a través de un entronque de 5 kilómetros.

Xala significa *lugar sobre la arena* (*xali*: arena; *tla*: lugar), porque se encuentra en un valle formado por las arenas del volcán Ceboruco cuya última erupción data de 1870. El volcán pertenece al Eje Neovolcánico Mexicano, y presenta una actividad volcánica constante con pequeñas fumarolas y escurrimientos de agua caliente.

La localidad de Xala se encuentra conurbada con la localidad de Jumulco; entre ambas tiene una población de

5,643 habitantes (INEGI, 1995). Existen diferencias culturales entre ambas localidades. Mientras la población de Xala tiene origen español, y sus habitantes son mestizos, la población que habita en Jumulco proviene de una comunidad indígena de origen tlaxcalteca, originaria del centro del país.

En 1582 se construyó el convento franciscano dedicado a la Inmaculada Concepción, cual hoy se encuentra en ruinas. La arquitectura de la localidad tiene sus orígenes en la etapa de la conquista. Del siglo XIX sobresale la Basílica, iglesia principal de la localidad dedicada a la Virgen María, y la mayor parte de las construcciones de las casas señoriales del lugar caracterizadas por gruesas paredes de adobe, techos de tejas y patio de distribución habitacional. Estas construcciones se realizaron durante el periodo del auge

de la explotación de las minas de arena. Las calles son empedradas sobre un suelo arenoso.

El municipio de Xala tiene un total de 34 localidades rurales; la población vive en localidades inferiores a 500 habitantes. En la cabecera municipal se cuenta con energía eléctrica, agua potable, drenaje y teléfono. En el resto de las localidades se carece de agua potable y drenaje. Xala se encuentra a 1060 metros sobre el nivel del mar y prevalece el clima templado.

En la cabecera municipal se tienen dos escuelas primarias y dos secundarias. Recientemente se ha iniciado una escuela preparatoria por cooperación. También se cuenta con una clínica de la Secretaría de Salud de primer nivel que atiende consulta externa, sin hospitalización.

La principal actividad de los habitantes es la agricultura de temporal y la ganadería de subsistencia. El 90% de las tierras es de propiedad ejidal y donde se cultiva principalmente maíz de temporal. Sólo el 3% es pequeña propiedad y riego. Se realizan manufacturas a base de madera y hoja de maíz. En la década de los noventa se ha impulsado la manufactura de empaque de hoja de maíz la cual se comercializa en el Distrito Federal y Guadalajara.

Metodología

Para la realización del presente documento se realizaron observaciones directas de fiestas en la localidad de Xala durante la fiesta del poblado, el 15 de agosto, y a fines del mes de diciembre, durante la Navidad. En esas fechas los migrantes de Xala radicados en los Estados Unidos, regresan a la localidad

a la celebración de las fiestas. Se realizó observación de comportamiento cotidiano.

Se realizaron entrevistas e historias de vida a personas representativas de la comunidad, a migrantes en tiempos de retorno y a familiares de los migrantes que viven en Xala.

La cultura como identidad

De acuerdo a la antropología cultural, en la determinación de la identidad sociocultural de los individuos y grupos influye el territorio de origen, la recuperación de la memoria e historia colectiva y la aceptación de la propia cultura (Roque de Barrios, 1989). A su vez, la cultura expresa las relaciones sociales, las relaciones de poder y las relaciones económicas. Ello porque toda forma cultural no existe en el vacío sino en contextos específicos que conllevan ese tipo de relaciones.

La identidad cultural sobrevive más allá de las fronteras geográficas. El término 'cultura' expresa un sistema de conocimientos y valores que mediatiza la visión del mundo y la construcción de la identidad, y está formada por símbolos de distinto tipo y nivel: étnicos, geográficos, religiosos, ocupacionales, regionales (Giménez, 1987). Los procesos de construcción de la identidad cultural son múltiples, y se pueden identificar desde la adquisición del lenguaje y formas de expresión, hasta las ceremonias y ritos expresamente establecidas para ellos reproducidas por el sistema escolar.

La existencia de distintas culturas y la confrontación con otros ha puesto de manifiesto que la identidad se afirma en confrontación con otras identidades en

un proceso contradictorio, donde la identidad cultural emerge (Bonfil, 1987). Los mexicanos en Estados Unidos, al confrontarse con culturas distintas, revaloran distintos elementos culturales de los cuales eran portadores, y se convierten en defensores de la cultura mexicana, lo cual los convierte en "los mexicanos más mexicanos".

La identidad parte de un conjunto de rasgos reproducidos colectivamente pero aceptados individualmente. Ese *capital cultural identitario* permite adaptaciones en diversos momentos a partir de la incorporación de rasgos de las nuevas culturas sin que signifique rompimiento con la cultura de origen, pero por el contrario, se renueva a partir de la incorporación de elementos que no la destruyen sino que le dan nuevo sentido.

En el caso de los migrantes mexicanos a Estados Unidos, la identidad religiosa y festiva se articula a distintos ámbitos de la vida cotidiana y da por resultado un perfil cultural determinado desde donde pueden enfrentarse a otras culturas. Otorga una manera de vivir lo mexicano.

La herencia cultural de los migrantes

Los migrantes son tales desde una situación cultural ocurrida a partir de la lógica de sus saberes prácticos, la cual se convierte en la fuente de sus certidumbres. La herencia cultural de la cual son portadores, la especificidad cultural, deriva del modo de vivir, de sus posibilidades de comunicación, su capacidad argumentativa, del ámbito de libertad en que se han socializado, de las relaciones de dominación en que viven, de la significación que realizan

del mundo. Es, a partir del arsenal de la experiencia cultural vivida como los migrantes rehacen los significados en el lugar de llegada.

Las investigaciones al respecto son escasas. Los migrantes trasladan con ellos sus relaciones sociales las cuales tienden a fortalecerse al encontrarse en situaciones extrañas, culturalmente hablando. Se afianzan los rasgos de la identidad como un mecanismo de autodefinition. El encuentro con formas de vida diferentes tiende a influir más decisivamente en las relaciones sociales en las segundas generaciones de migrantes, de ahí que el proceso de incorporación a la nueva sociedad se realice diferencialmente desde el punto de vista de la generación, la edad, el género y el ciclo de llegada.

Uno de los rasgos fundamentales de la situación cultural de los migrantes es el sentido de pertenencia a la comunidad de origen localizada en el país proveniente (Florescano, 1993). Se asiste a un reforzamiento de los lazos con la familia radicada en el país latinoamericano, el cual puede llegar a convertirse en lazos colectivizados por un grupo amplio, lo cual da origen a diversas formas de cooperación entre ambos núcleos. Las formas más usuales son los Clubes sociales, Patronatos y Fundaciones.

En diversas localidades de América Latina es posible encontrar *comunidades dentro* y *comunidades fuera*. Los habitantes se reconocen en ambas, no tanto porque físicamente puedan transitar entre ambas regiones—lo cual también es posible—sino porque encuentran referentes familiares y comunitarios muy cercanos en la otra

comunidad. Las formas más comunes de reconocimiento son el mantenimiento de la lengua, los regionalismos, la concepción del mundo, la alimentación y sobre todo, la celebración de las fiestas de la comunidad de origen.

Somos de aquí, somos de allá

Las formas de cooperación ocurren en ambas direcciones. La *comunidad de fuera*, la radicada en Estados Unidos, tiende a apoyar las actividades realizadas por la *comunidad de dentro*: otorga apoyo a ciertos gastos de infraestructura social, impulsa programas de bienestar colectivo. Pero la *comunidad de dentro* está lejos de ser un mero receptáculo de los dólares enviados por los paisanos migrantes. La comunidad se convierte en el símbolo de lo que permanece y, desde este punto de vista, provee la materia prima para la continuación de la cultura alimenticia, la artesanía y otros aspectos (Anderson, 1993). La conservación, la permanencia en el lugar físico visualizado como propio, la realización de las celebraciones tradicionales, se convierten en el principal aporte de la *comunidad de dentro*. Su valor es ser productora de bienes culturales.

De esta manera se tiende a un reforzamiento de ambas culturas. Los que salen se reconocen en el exterior como grupo, de manera comunitaria, debido a los rasgos que les otorga la cultura del lugar de origen, en tanto que los que permanecen, ayudan al fortalecimiento de esa cultura y lejos de perder a los que se van, encuentran nuevas formas de recuperarlos.

La herencia cultural tiene un

sustrato geográfico determinado en el cual se formó; sin embargo, la cultura se desprende de esa base geográfica para reproducirse en ámbitos diversos. La cultura adquiere vida propia. Es por ello que se encuentran culturas rurales latinoamericanas reproducidas en ámbitos urbanos norteamericanos, no como copia o extensión de la primera, sino como otra forma de vivir, rehacer y participar la cultura heredada.

La necesaria pluralización

Lo deseable sería que los migrantes pudieran ostentar y reproducir su cultura en el lugar de origen sin más limitaciones que las otorgadas por la propia cultura. Por el contrario, las tendencias a la homogeneización planetaria de los Estados Unidos niega la diversidad en su propio país y en los ajenos. Las medidas de homogeneización empiezan con la obligatoriedad del idioma, y con ello se inicia la trasmutación de las almas. Pensar en un idioma ajeno es expropiar los símbolos creados en el idioma materno, es expropiar la infancia. De ahí que la identidad cultural de los migr-antes requiera de fortalecimientos claros y fuertes, ya que se realiza en condiciones de subordinación, prácticamente como un mecanismo de la pervivencia.

La globalidad tiende a la homogeneización pero la base para realizarlo es la necesaria pluriculturalidad portada por los grupos sociales más allá de cualquier frontera.

Xala de todos los días

Como en una gran cantidad de localidades mexicanas, la migración de Xala a los Estados Unidos cuenta con

una *infraestructura social* a partir de las redes familiares y regionales establecidas como consecuencia de los convenios de braceros de la de los cuarenta. Inicialmente los apoyos tenían como finalidad apoyar la migración laboral cíclica ocurrida en ciertas épocas del año. Después se transformó en apoyo a la migración definitiva: formas y medios de pasar la frontera, búsqueda de lugares de llegada y obtención del primer empleo, entre los apoyos más importantes.

La vinculación entre los xaleños de ambos lados de la frontera ocurre de diversas maneras. En Xala, Nayarit, los ausentes están presentes a través de los miembros de la familia que permanecen en el pueblo, los cuales se encargan de mantener vivo el recuerdo de quienes momentáneamente no están. En el pueblo se conocen los pormenores de la vida personal ocurrida en los Estados Unidos, ya que las noticias transmitidas a través de las cartas personales pronto se convierten en conocimiento social. Existe, también, una presencia de obras ya que a través de diversas agrupaciones se realizan inversiones en obras colectivas, como ocurre con el Club Social de Xala de California.

En los Estados Unidos la comunidad de Xala es portada por los propios pobladores, los cuales convierten el lugar de origen en uno de los signos distintivos dentro del resto de la comunidad mexicana. La elaboración de comida típica de la localidad, el mantenimiento del lenguaje, el reconocimiento de los oriundos de la localidad, el apoyo mutuo en diversas circunstancias actúan como rasgos que otorgan una identidad desde la cual se produce

la asimilación a la sociedad norteamericana.

La participación de las costumbres en ambas comunidades, la comunicación estrecha entre los parientes y paisanos y la asistencia a eventos claves de la cultura produce un espacio cultural de la migración donde los migrantes se reconocen como pertenecientes. Ese espacio cultural de la migración no es exclusivo de los espacios geográficos, aunque parta de ellos, sino que es el conjunto de las relaciones sociales establecidas entre las comunidades de dentro y de fuera entre sí.

En Xala, como en otras comunidades mexicanas, a partir de la construcción del espacio cultural de la migración, se ha trascendido a espacios de participación social y política. Ello ha llevado a la formalización de las asociaciones, las cuales actúan en lugares antes reservados para el Estado y sus organizaciones. Puede ocurrir que en estas comunidades la presencia de las *comunidades de fuera* tenga una influencia en aspectos relacionados con la pluralización del voto y el apoyo a determinadas administraciones como una manera de sancionar, positiva o negativamente, la política interna.

Los habitantes de las *comunidades de fuera* proyectan una cierta imagen de éxito ante los pobladores de la *comunidades de dentro*. Puede decirse que quienes no son capaces de adaptarse a las condiciones del exterior regresan a la comunidad de origen en un lapso relativamente breve. Estos mismos pobladores valoran la actitud de quienes permanecen en el exterior ya que saben que fueron capaces de vencer las resistencias al cambio, la añoranza por

la comunidad de origen y las relaciones familiares. También fueron capaces de adaptarse a una nueva situación y sobre todo, de construir nuevas relaciones de vida y de trabajo.

Esa fortaleza la trasladan al buscar un nuevo tipo de relaciones con las autoridades mexicanas. La agrupación de migrantes les permite tener un trato diferente, tanto con autoridades civiles como religiosas en México. La migración provocó una unidad que de otra manera hubiese sido difícil conseguir, dadas las condiciones de sociabilidad de las comunidades rurales en Nayarit. Además, la migración evitó que construyeran una cultura política a partir de los esquemas de corporatización del partido hegemónico mexicano. Por ello, se convierten en gestores para la obtención de mejoras en la comunidad de origen, rompiendo con la tradicional actitud de espera atribuida a los campesinos mexicanos. Es más, en ocasiones, se convierten en factor clave para la realización de obras ya que prácticamente obligan a las autoridades locales a emprender determinados trabajos.

Madre, protege a tus hijos ausentes

La fiesta de la Virgen de la Asunción, el 15 de agosto de cada año, se convierte en una de las celebraciones nucleares del espacio cultural de los migrantes de Xala. La fiesta pertenece al calendario de fiestas católicas y tiene por objeto celebrar el arribo de la Virgen a los cielos. En la versión indígena, la fiesta es el agradecimiento a la Madre Tierra por la cosecha anual, de ahí que coincida con el surgimiento de los primeros frutos de la cosecha de cada

año. En el México mesoamericano, el fruto esencial de la tierra es el maíz, por lo que es también conocida como *La Feria del Elote*, fase correspondiente al maíz tierno.

Esta combinación entre el culto religioso católico y lo sagrado indígena vinculado a las fuerzas de la naturaleza otorga a la fiesta una de las características de arraigo entre los pobladores. Se asiste a uno de los misterios más sorprendentes como es la creación a partir de la tierra. El surgimiento del maíz es parte de lo sagrado compartido por la tierra y el agua. De ahí se entiende la profundidad con la que es asumida la fiesta, tanto en Xala como en el resto del México rural cuya sobrevivencia depende, en gran medida, de la abundancia de las lluvias.

La Virgen de la Asunción representa a la Virgen María con los brazos abiertos, y es la invocación de las lluvias. La gente del lugar dice que la distancia entre las manos de la Virgen constituye el tamaño de los elotes de Xala, ya que éstos son famosos por ser, o haber sido, los más grandes del mundo debido al suelo volcánico en que se producen. La imagen de la Virgen de la Asunción lejos de ser un concepto abstracto, se convierte en un personaje participante de la fiesta. Es transportada en hombros en diversas peregrinaciones, realiza visitas a iglesias vecinas y es ataviada con vestimentas regionales. Se le atribuyen características humanas; se le hacen peticiones de favores, los cuales, si son concedidos, son gratificados con ofrendas de flores, velas o servicios.

La Feria del Elote tiene la particularidad de que a lo largo de las calles por donde se entra al pueblo se

colocan tinas donde se cuecen elotes tiernos. Durante todos los días del festejo, una de las actividades de los visitantes es comer elotes cocidos y asados que se venden a profusión en las calles. También se ofrecen platos de la comida tradicional regional: gorditas de maíz cocidas en horno de leña, elote colado, esquite, encanelados, rosquetes, pipián, pozole y otros.

La fiesta está muy lejos de ser un acontecimiento que gira alrededor de la Iglesia Católica; por el contrario, se ha convertido en una fiesta popular con fuerte influencia regional. En su organización y desarrollo participa: la iglesia, la presidencia municipal, la casa de la cultura, las asociaciones productivas, la comunidad en su conjunto y los migrantes. Comerciantes ambulantes de diversos giros tienen *La Feria del Elote* entre las principales de la región, razón por la cual se asientan diez días antes de la celebración.

Un sábado antes del 15 de agosto se inaugura oficialmente la feria a través de un desfile *de rompimiento*. La comitiva se integra por las autoridades municipales y estatales y un representante de los migrantes. Después, sigue el desfile *de carros alegóricos* de diversas instituciones educativas, de servicios y productivas. En 1997, como todos los años, el carro perteneciente a los migrantes tenía a la embajadora de los migrantes en el centro, vestida de Virgen. El carro hacía alusión a la erupción del Volcán Ceboruco, lo cual se representaba con una ingeniosa composición de papeles de colores brotando de un volcán de papel simulando fuego.

El Volcán Ceboruco es el escenario

natural de Xala, ya que la cabecera municipal se encuentra asentada en el costado sur. Al vivir en Xala la presencia del volcán prácticamente pasa desapercibida, ya que se integra como parte de la cotidianidad; sin embargo, una vez que se está lejos de la localidad, la circunstancia de vivir en las faldas de un volcán que registra actividad volcánica, se convierte en uno de los elementos a resaltar dentro de la particularidad geográfica de origen. Este elemento, como se ha visto, es retornado por los migrantes como uno de los elementos que conforman la identidad. Son ellos quienes resaltan esa particularidad, porque la han visto desde la lejanía.

Es la lejanía la que otorga otro nivel de comprensión. Desde esa nueva óptica se valora la existencia pueblerina pasada que posiblemente nunca más regresará. Al salir se valora lo que se deja, pero si no se hubiera dejado, no se valoraría. En la nueva escala de valores, aspectos tales como la tranquilidad del pueblo, el silencio de las tres de la tarde, la manera de ser, el sabor del agua, se convierten en valores intangibles los cuales son añorados y motivo de disfrute en los tiempos del regreso.

La embajadora de los migrantes es hija de una de las familias asentadas en los Estados Unidos, en este caso, de Los Angeles, California, la cual es elegida para venir expresamente a participar en la fiesta patronal. La embajadora tiene un papel relevante, ya que representa la generación más joven de los migrantes. También asisten a la fiesta el mayor número de hijos de migrantes para dar lucimiento a la fiesta y señalar la presencia de los ausentes. De esta

manera los migrantes de las primeras generaciones aseguran que las generaciones siguientes se involucren en el mantenimiento de las tradiciones y refuercen los lazos familiares. Después del carro alegórico, los migrantes que vinieron a la fiesta portaban una manta que decía "Virgen de la Asunción, protege a tus hijos ausentes".

En la feria sobresale el *pitero*, el cual toca un instrumento prehispánico llamado *chirimía* (una pequeña corneta, acompañada de un tambor). El sonido de la *chirimía* permea las diversas actividades de la feria, desde la misa de gallo a las cinco de la mañana hasta la quema del castillo a las diez de la noche. Al terminar las procesiones, el *pitero* es recibido en diversas casas donde le regalan comida regional y agua. En obsequio, el *pitero* toca tonadas tradicionales para regocijo del vecindario de la casa que lo acogió. La conservación de la música del *pitero* influye para impedir la proliferación de la música de bandas que de otra manera ya se hubiese posesionado de la feria. Ello puede deberse a que este músico popular y fiestero sea exclusivo de la zona maicera del sur de Nayarit, vinculado con el pasado prehispánico de esa zona. Los migrantes colaboran para el pago del *pitero* y con ello contribuyen a la continuación de este tipo de música tradicional exclusiva de esta zona.

Durante los nueve días previos al día 15, la feria transcurre entre encuentros deportivos, bailes populares, comidas típicas, exposiciones artesanales, quemas de castillo y celebraciones religiosas (misas de gallo o de madrugada, peregrinaciones, primeras comuniones, rosarios, misas de tres pa-

dres). Los migrantes organizan la peregrinación del día 14, la cual se convierte en una de las más lucidas de todo el novenario. En ella, los migrantes ofrendan velas y flores a la Virgen. Además, protagonizan diversas danzas ataviados con vestidos típicos de la zona. De ahí se explica que los migrantes hagan todo lo posible por acudir a Xala en las fechas de la celebración patronal o envíen a alguno de sus hijos. En los casos en que ello no es posible debido a la situación económica o a impedimentos laborales, algún familiar de la localidad toma su lugar; los migrantes están representados real o simbólicamente.

Los que nos fuimos aquí estamos

La presencia de los migrantes introduce nuevos cambios en el escenario de Xala. Durante el desfile de *rompimiento* de la feria se identifica a los migrantes por el atuendo que portan; las mujeres jóvenes se visten con ropa de moda en los Estados Unidos, y los hombres exhiben ropa de marca. El aspecto empieza a distinguir a los migrantes por los vestidos atrevidos, la sustitución de sombreros por gorras, en general un arreglo que puede ser calificado como *agringado*.

También empieza a cambiar el uso de la lengua. Es posible encontrar combinación entre las expresiones regionales y términos en inglés. Ocasiona risa entre los lugareños sorprender a un familiar migrante que ha *olvidado* el nombre de un término en español para utilizar el equivalente en inglés.

En la arquitectura habitacional de la localidad, la migración ha dejado una

huella sobresaliente. Las casas de los migrantes observan mejoras físicas. Prácticamente, el mejoramiento habitacional del pueblo se debe al flujo de divisas enviadas por la comunidad xaleña que se encuentra más allá de la frontera. Quizá por ello existen en Xala negocios que se dedican a cambiar dólares, negocios que no podrían ser explicados fuera del contexto de la migración.

Nos vamos para pertenecer

Aunque los pobladores de Xala tuvieron que salir físicamente de la localidad para encontrar una forma de vida, generalmente, en busca de empleo, la construcción de un espacio cultural de la migración les ha permitido estar presentes en el espacio geográfico original. Propiamente dicho, porque salieron es por lo que siguen perteneciendo, la salida del pueblo les otorgó una visión de pertenencia que posiblemente antes no percibían, ya que estaban involucrados en ella. Los pobladores y su entorno eran una sola identidad sin que se pudiera realizar la diferenciación de la circunstancia desde la circunstancia misma.

Fuera de la localidad, la toma de conciencia de la pertenencia a un lugar determinado les otorga un rasgo de identidad colectiva que traspasa las fronteras políticas entre México y los Estados Unidos. Se convierte en un espacio nuevo, compartido por habitantes de ambos lados de la frontera. La característica es que se trata de un espacio construido por ellos mismos dentro de relaciones sociales que, si bien tuvieron su origen en una

localidad rural mexicana, ahora son reestructuradas en un ámbito urbano norteamericano para posteriormente influir en la comunidad rural.

Paradójicamente, los migrantes se convierten en los primeros interesados en la conservación de las tradiciones. Impulsan el mejoramiento del mundo físico al mismo tiempo que pugna por el mantenimiento y enriquecimiento de las costumbres. Son ellas las que les otorgan el sustrato cultural con el que recorren el mundo extraño y desconocido del país extranjero y se convierte en la fortaleza de sus acciones. El impacto de ello en Xala es complejo; propiamente dicho, la comunidad se encuentra entre dos fuerzas—los de dentro que desean el cambio y el progreso y los de fuera que desean conservar lo tradicional como condición de la existencia. Este aparente antagonismo se resuelve en la vida diaria de los que están aquí y los que están allá; trabajan y viven en el tiempo moderno portando las ideas pertenecientes a un tiempo pasado, del cual se apropian como símbolo, refuncionalizándolo para el presente.

Los migrantes, sobre todo de la primera generación, regresan a morir a Xala. De esta manera, el sentido de pertenencia encuentra una expresión real: volver a la tierra del origen. Con ello se cierra el círculo de la migración individual para aportar un elemento a la migración colectiva; los hijos deberán regresar a la localidad a visitar a los antepasados donde habita la memoria.

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A Study of Hispanic New Car Buyers: Revisited

Dr. Leon F. Dube and Dr. Robert J. Hoover

Resumen

Este artículo es un estudio subsecuente al artículo de 1987 entitulado "A Study of Hispanic New Car Buyers" [Un estudio sobre compradores hispanos de autos nuevos]. Once años más tarde, es estudio analiza y compara los patrones de auto nuevo de hispanos y no-hispanos en el Condado de Nueces, Texas. La encuesta consiste en las siguientes cinco categorías: 1) características de comprador, 2) razones para comprar, 3) lealtad del distribuidor, 4) confianza del comprador, y 5) tiempo utilizado en la compra. Los datos contenidos en estas categorías muestran algunas diferencias y similitudes básicas entre los dos compradores. Adicionalmente, el estudio nos ilustra en cómo difieren los hispanicos y no-hispanicos en los patrones de compra de auto en el Condado de Nueces.

Introduction

The need for analysis of the similarities and differences between Hispanic consumers and non-Hispanic consumers in the U.S. is becoming increasingly important. This significance is underscored by trends showing that the rapid growth of the Hispanic market continues. Furthermore, evidence in the literature concerning the purchasing habits of Hispanic consumers is contradictory. Hence, this study of Hispanic new car buyers is consequential to both academics and practitioners of marketing.

The purpose of this study is to provide data demonstrating the process that Hispanic consumers use in their decisions to purchase new cars. The data reveal similarities and differences between Hispanic and non-Hispanic buyers. Of additional value in this study of South Texas buyers is that the Hispanic

sample does not consist of a mixture of cultures such as Cuban, Puerto Ricans, etc., but generally describes people of the Mexican culture.

Literature Review

Numerous studies of the purchasing patterns of Hispanic consumers are found in the literature. These studies in which the consumers are variously identified as Hispanic, Latino, and Mexican-American consumers suggest that both unique as well as non-discernible patterns of purchase behavior are evident within these sub-groups. These sub-groups are often all classified as Hispanic.

Alaniz and Gilly (1986) suggest that the Hispanic consumer is price conscious, values product quality, purchases advertised brands, and exhibits

a higher degree of brand loyalty than the non-Hispanic consumer. Supporting the brand loyalty conclusion is Czepiec and Kelly (1985); Deshpande, Hoyer, and Donthu (1986); and Sherrod (1990). Contradicting these conclusions, however, are Saegert, Hoover and Hilger (1985); and Valencia and Wilkes (1986) whose studies did not find a higher degree of brand loyalty among Hispanic consumers than among non-Hispanic buyers. Deshpande suggests that the unlike conclusions concerning brand loyalty in the studies are partially explained, because Deshpande used self-identification measures, while the Saegert study utilized various other methods of identifying ethnicity.

Studies by Alaniz and Gilly (1986) and Czepiec and Kelly (1985) suggest that Hispanic consumers respond more to advertising to aid them in their purchasing than do non-Hispanic consumers. In addition the Czepiec and Kelly study and Wagner and Soberson-Ferrer (1990) imply that Hispanic consumers appear to purchase products that allow them to exhibit prestige and status.

As observed by Saegert, Hoover, and Hilger (1987), much of the analysis of Hispanic purchasing discussed in the literature focuses on the purchase of soft goods and especially deals with the purchase of food items. To enhance the analysis of Hispanic purchasing behavior Saegert, Hoover, and Hilger in their 1987 study examined purchasing patterns of new car buyers. Our current study replicates many of the hypotheses of their 1987 study.

Methodology

A telephone survey was conducted of

persons who had purchased new cars in Nueces County during a six-month period. A random sample of one-hundred Hispanic and one-hundred non-Hispanic new car buyers was selected from the Nueces County registration lists obtained from the county courthouse. Ethnicity was first identified from the surname of the buyer and then verified by the respondent's self-description.

Since the purpose of the study is to analyze the purchasing habits of Hispanic new car buyers in comparison to non-Hispanic new car buyers, the population was merely divided into Hispanic or non-Hispanic. We did not attempt to sub-classify the non-Hispanic sample further.

A bilingual interviewer was included to communicate with respondents who could not easily converse in English. The refusal rate was not excessive for either group of respondents; thus a bias caused by refusing to answer the questions does not appear in the data.

Hypotheses

A number of hypotheses were tested in this study. The hypotheses are listed with the results of testing each hypothesis discussed in the analysis section.

Hypothesis 1: Among new car buyers in south Texas, there is no significant difference in brand loyalty between Hispanics and non-Hispanics.

Hypothesis 2: Among new car buyers in South Texas, there is no significant difference in the influence of advertising between Hispanics and non-Hispanics.

Hypothesis 3: Among new car buyers in South Texas, there is no significant

difference in how a buyer chooses a salesperson between Hispanics and non-Hispanics.

Hypothesis 4: Among new car buyers in South Texas, there is no significant difference in the manufacturer's reputation influencing the buyer's choice between Hispanics and non-Hispanics.

Hypothesis 5: Among new car buyers in South Texas, there is no significant difference in the influence of financing options on the choice between Hispanics and non-Hispanics.

Hypothesis 6: Among new car buyers in South Texas, there is no significant difference between Hispanics and non-Hispanics concerning their attitude toward the deal they make.

Hypothesis 7: Among new car buyers in South Texas, there is no significant difference between Hispanics and non-Hispanics in their satisfaction with the purchase.

chase.

Hypothesis 8: Among new car buyers in South Texas, there is no significant difference between Hispanic and non-Hispanic consumers in how they shopped for new cars as measured by the number of dealers visited when shopping and the time spent gathering information.

Analysis

Hypotheses 1- Brand Loyalty

The Hispanic buyer shows a higher degree of brand loyalty than does the non-Hispanic buyer as inferred from the question of whether or not the buyer would likely make the same decision again. As shown in Exhibit 1, 84.2% of the Hispanic buyers said the likelihood of making the same decision again was extremely high or very high, while only 62.4% of the non-Hispanic respondents

EXHIBIT 1

MAKE THE SAME DECISION IN THE FUTURE

Variable	Hispanics	Non-Hispanics
Extremely High	19.8%	31.7%
Very High	64.4%	30.7%
Somewhat High	5.9%	26.7%
Somewhat Low	4.0%	2.0%
Very Low	0.0%	7.9%
Extremely Low	2.0%	0.0%
Don't Know	2.0%	1.0%
Chi Square = 41.17 D.F. = 6 p = 0.000		

gave this indication ($p=0.000$). Thus, the hypotheses of "no-difference" between Hispanics and non-Hispanics is rejected.

This conclusion is in contrast to the Saegert study which demonstrates that Hispanics had a lower likelihood of making the same decision again than the non-Hispanics. In the specific incidence of evaluating new car buyers, our study contradicts the Sager analysis.

Hypothesis 2-Influence of Advertising

The Hispanic sample responded more to advertising than did the non-Hispanic sample. Over twenty-six percent of the Hispanic sample said that advertising was the most important reason for choosing the dealer they purchased from, while less than twelve percent of the non-Hispanic sample chose advertising. The t-test shows this difference to be significant at the .10 level.

Thus the hypothesis of "no difference" of the influence of advertising is rejected. This conclusion supports the Alaniz and Czepiec studies which likewise revealed that Hispanic buyers respond more to advertising.

Hypothesis 3- Choice of Salesperson

The Valencia study suggested that Hispanic purchasers would more likely purchase from a Hispanic salesperson than from a non-Hispanic salesperson. As shown in Exhibit 2, our study revealed no significant difference in the choice of a salesperson between Hispanic and non-Hispanic new car buyers, thus contradicting the Valencia study. Therefore, the hypothesis of "no difference" because of the ethnicity of the salesperson is supported.

Hypothesis 4- Manufacturer's Reputation

Indicating the most important reason

EXHIBIT 2

ETHNICITY OF SALESPERSON

Ethnicity of Salesperson	Ethnicity of Buyer	
	Hispanic	Non-hispanic
Hispanic	45.5%	44.5%
White	45.5%	47.5%
Black	2.0%	4.0%
Other	2.0%	0.0%
Don't Know	5.0%	4.0%
Chi Square=2.83 d.f.=< p=0.587		

for choosing the dealer, over thirty-five percent of the Hispanic sample and over forty-one percent of the non-Hispanic sample, said the reputation of the manufacturer matters significantly. Using t-analysis shows this difference to be insignificant at the .05 level. Thus the hypothesis that there is no significant difference from the reputation of the manufacturer on the choice of dealers between the two samples is not disproved.

Hypothesis 5-Financing Options

Data analysis shows that 14.9% of the non-Hispanic sample and 8.9% of the Hispanic sample said that financing options was the most important reason for choosing a dealer. However, the choice of financing options in choosing a dealer is insignificant at the .05 level using t-analysis. Hence the hypothesis that there is no significant

difference between the two samples is not disproved.

Hypothesis 6-Good Deal

A higher rate of Hispanic buyers than non-Hispanic buyers indicated that they got a "good deal" on the new car they purchased. Over seventy-five percent of the Hispanic sample and approximately sixty percent of the non-Hispanic sample said they made an extremely good or very good deal. Analysis of these overall responses, as seen in Exhibit 3, demonstrates that the difference in attitude toward the deal is significant. The hypothesis that there is no significant difference in how the samples felt about the deal is rejected.

Hypothesis 7-Satisfaction With Purchase

Consistent with the previous hypothesis, Hispanic buyers were significantly more satisfied with their purchase than

EXHIBIT 3
ATTITUDE TOWARD DEAL

Attitude	Hispanic	Non-hispanic
Extremely Good	13.9%	16.8%
Very Good	61.4%	43.6%
Somewhat Good	18.8%	29.7%
Somewhat Bad	0.0%	3.0%
Very Bad	0.0%	3.0%
Extremely Bad	4.0%	0.0%
Don't Know/Refused	2.0%	4.0%
Chi Square=16.48 d.f.=6 p=0.012		

were the non-Hispanics in the sample. The results of this query are illustrated in Exhibit 4. The data indicate there is a significant difference in satisfaction with purchase within the two samples.

Hypothesis 8- Shopping Habits

The respondents in the sample were asked to identify the number of dealers they visited when shopping for their new car. As shown in Exhibit 5, 64.4% of Hispanics shopped at only one or two dealers, while 47.5% of the non-Hispanics visited three or more dealers. The difference in number of dealers visited is significant.

As a measure of shopping habits, respondents were also asked the time they spent gathering information. Exhibit 6 shows that there is a significant difference in time spent gathering information between the two samples. From the data in Exhibit 5 and Exhibit

6, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in shopping habits between the Hispanic and non-Hispanic buyer is rejected.

The results of our data are contrary to the conclusions found in the Saegert study, where no difference between the two samples was noted in dealers visited and time spent shopping. Additionally, the results from our study in testing Hypothesis 6 and Hypothesis 7 are consistent and are in contrast to the Saegert study. Our sample of Hispanic new car buyers would more likely make the same decision again and felt they had made a good decision as compared to the non-Hispanic sample.

Additional Data

In addition to the data used to test the hypotheses, the analysis revealed further information about the purchasing process. Exhibit 7 shows a list of

EXHIBIT 4
SATISFACTION WITH PURCHASE

Satisfaction Level	Hispanic	Non-Hispanic
Extremely Satisfied	32.7%	21.8%
Very Satisfied	50.5%	48.5%
Somewhat Satisfied	6.9%	25.7%
Somewhat Unsatisfied	4.0%	0.0%
Very Unsatisfied	4.0%	0.0%
Extremely Unsatisfied	0.0%	3.0%
Don't Know/Refused	2.0%	1.0%
Chi Square = 24.51 d.f. = 6 p = 0.001		

EXHIBIT 5
BUYER SHOPPING HABITS

Search Variables	Hispanics	Non-Hispanics
Visited on or two dealers	64.4%	48.6%
Visited three or more dealers	30.7%	47.5%
Don't Recall	5.0%	4.0%
Chi Square = 23.51 d.f. = 3 p = 0.000		

EXHIBIT 6
TIME SPENT GATHERING INFORMATION

Amount of Time	Hispanic	Non-Hispanic
One week or less	72.3%	91.1%
One to three weeks	14.9%	0.0%
Four or more times	6.9%	5.0%
Don't Recall	5.9%	4.0%
Chi Square = 23.5 d.f. = 3 p = 0.000		

EXHIBIT 7
MOST IMPORTANT FEATURE

Feature	Hispanic	Non-Hispanic
Price	37.6%	32.7%
Fuel Economy	5.0%	3.0%
Quality	30.7%	46.5%
Other	2.0%	1.0%
Chi Square = 5.99 d.f. = 3 p = 0.002		

the items which the respondents said were the most important features they considered when buying a new car. As noted in the exhibit, Hispanics mentioned price, fuel economy, and styling more often than did the non-Hispanics. Notably, the non-Hispanic buyer responded more to quality claims.

Respondents were also asked the make of the car that they bought. The results are shown in Exhibit 8. The data shows that there is no significant difference between the make of car purchased by the Hispanic consumer and the car bought by the non-Hispanic. This conclusion supports the Saegert study, which also found no difference in the type of car Hispanics and non-Hispanics were likely to purchase.

Sample Profile

Exhibit 9 shows the profile of the

sample. The major difference between the Hispanic sample and the non-Hispanic sample is occupation. A larger portion of the Hispanic sample is blue-collar, while more of the non-Hispanic sample is white-collar. This distinction reflects the make-up of the work force in Nueces County.

Conclusions

A number of conclusions can be drawn from our study of new car buyers. In comparison to the earlier study of new car buyers by Saegert, our study supported the findings that Hispanic buyers are more likely to respond to advertising than are non-Hispanic purchasers. Conversely, the non-Hispanic was more likely to respond to financing attractiveness.

Our study, however, found no significant difference between the two groups in shopping at dealers. Our

EXHIBIT 8 MAKE OF CAR PURCHASED

Make of Car	Hispanics	Non-Hispanics
General motors	33.7%	25.7%
Ford	19.8%	7.9%
Chrysler	8.9%	12.9%
Japanese	31.7%	45.5%
European	3.0%	6.9%
Refused	2.0%	1.0%
Chi Square = 12.38 d.f. = 6 p = 0.056		

study also found a change from the earlier study in Hispanics' purchase confidence in that Hispanics would likely make the same decision again and were satisfied with the purchase they made. In addition, more Hispanic buyers said they made a good deal than did non-Hispanic buyers.

We can also conclude that Hispanic buyers tend to be more brand loyal than do non-Hispanics. Significantly, and in contrast to the earlier study, Hispanics were not more likely to purchase from a Hispanic salesperson than were non-Hispanics.

From a marketing strategy perspective, our study suggests several approaches that could enhance pro-

motional efforts. A strong advertising campaign directed toward the Hispanic market is indicated. Furthermore, non-Hispanics visited more dealers, which suggests the importance of personal selling with this target. In addition, since Hispanic buyers tend to be brand loyal, maintaining a current listing of those consumers could aid future sales or sales to their acquaintances.

Some of the data in this study are consistent with earlier research, while other conclusions are in contrast. The data in this study also suggest that the Hispanic buyer is becoming more integrated into the mainstream culture of the U.S. and is less a unique buyer.

EXHIBIT 9 PROFILE OF THE SAMPLE

Characteristics	Hispanics	Non-hispanics
Mean Age	34.7	37.6
Mean Income	\$28,711	\$32,853
Gender: Male	76.2%	70.3%
Gender: Female	22.8%	28.7%
Marital Status: Not Marries	29.7%	28.7%
Marital Status: Married	63.3%	70.3%
Occupation: Blue Collar	64.4%	32.7%
Occupation: White Collar	29.7%	60.4%

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- Valencia, Humberto and Robert E. Wilkes. 1986. "Shopping-Related Characteristics of Mexican-American and Blacks," *Psychology and Marketing*, vol. 3, 247-259 unique sub-culture.

The Local Labor Market of Monte Alto: A Sociological Perspective

Laura L. Reagan

Resumen

Trabajando desde los modelos teóricos desarrollados por Sassen y otros, este artículo analiza el mercado de trabajo México-Americano en Monte Alto, Texas, y demuestra que, contrario al pensamiento de la economía neoclásica y del de la nueva sociología económica, los actores sociales utilizan estrategias socialmente incluidas en la busca y locación de los empleos. Se señalan la importancia de las redes familiares y la economía informal.

Introduction

This paper will apply and differentiate from Saskia Sassen's work on local labor markets and immigrant groups. Definitions of a local labor market from economic sociology will be applied to ethnographic work on the small, rural, predominantly Mexican-American community of Monte Alto, Texas, located 30 miles from the Mexican border. Exploratory qualitative case study methodology is chosen to demonstrate the contribution culture and history make to the definition of this local labor market for one extended family. A discussion of Bourdieu's structuralist constructivism reveals the importance of the case and its methodology. The Monte Alto labor market cannot be understood merely in the usual neoclassical economic terms of spatial and geographic labor markets, nor can it be fully grasped by the new economic sociological look at immigrants and their networks as typification

of the local labor market. This case demonstrates that individual social actors creatively utilize strategies from their cultural and historical context, thus participating in the construction.

The concept of labor markets first entered economic literature for methodological reasons. It was used as a geographical, statistical tool to control for external and internal variations in wages (Mayhew, 1997). The traditional neoclassical economic definition of labor market is "the aggregate demand for and the aggregate supply of labor" (Wolff, 1987). This definition focuses on the moment of exchange, that is the completion of the transaction whereby a worker is offered a job and accepts it. Sociological interest expands the definition of local labor markets to include pre- and post-exchange processes. Inherent in the original conceptualization of labor markets is a focus on geography in terms

of proximity to work. An economic sociological view of labor markets conceives of them as socially conditioned activity spaces that may assume nonterritorial forms. This definition allows for the reconstruction of gender, race, and nationality which can shape information channels in the labor market and thus shape individual lives (Sassen, 1995). This paper utilizes Saskia Sassen's (Sassen, 1995) economic sociological view of labor markets to examine job information gathering and job location for the extended family case study presented. The case also demonstrates an immigrant characteristic of socially embedded networks as it relates to job information gathering and job location.

The local labor market of Monte Alto demonstrates the contention that immigrant workers utilize social networks in order to maximize information and economic opportunity distributed unequally in space in the manner of other immigrant groups in the United States. The network may simply be two sides of the Texas-Mexican border within a twenty-five mile radius of each border, as is the case for poor migrant workers in Monte Alto. However, another use of social networks is seen among working-class or middle-class families. Their geographical labor market extends up to a thirty mile radius from their homes in a pattern similar to other labor markets in the United States. The job information gathering and job search strategies of these families often mirror those of other immigrant groups. In addition, their systematic linkage of the formal and informal sectors of the economy is similar to other immigrant groups seeking to forge a fa-

vorable position in the American economy.

Participants in the informal economy seek to alter their position in the class structure, ultimately blurring the lines that distinguish classes (Portes, Castell, Benton, 1989). Informalization occurs not only in developing countries but also in advanced nations (Castells, 1989, p. 2). Monte Alto has informal economic activity which is culturally specific and reflective of the semi-permeable nature of the border between Texas and Mexico.¹ This research suggests the view that informal economic activity is not merely a survival activity employed by desperate, marginalized people, but rather a creative process, indigenous to this rural Mexican-American community, given the macro processes impacting it (cf. Ferman, Berndt, and Selo, 1978; Henry, 1978).

An important difference between immigrant communities and this case exists, requiring a construct of culture that is more interactive and creative than a mere documentation of immigrant experience. Cultures act upon one another in the border milieu, creating and recreating the cultural borderland. Doug Foley calls this process border-crossing in his description of the Mesquaki interaction with the dominant white culture in his hometown in Iowa. Like Foley, I reject the more traditional, fixed view of culture which focuses on the loss of tradition as a negative process of cultural assimilation. Therefore, this paper focuses on the process of ethnogenesis, the dynamic process of cultural exchange, transformation, and creation that occurs in the borderland milieu (cf.

Greeley, 1974). Likewise Rio Grande Valley residents are engaged in the continual process of constructing, deconstructing, and reconstructing their own unique ethnic identities as individuals and groups. Recent literature on the formation of ethnic identity has focused largely on the processes by which ethnicity is constructed and offers illuminating insights into the malleability of ethnicity and the fluidity of group boundaries (Nagel, 1994; Roosens, 1989; Waters, 1990). An example is the prioritization of the migrant orientation around the ethnic community, whereas a "minority" orientation defines itself as it works through its own interactions, problems, and particular realities arising as a result of both structure and agency (Nagel, 1994).

"Culture is the product of human agency but at the same time any form of social interaction is embedded in it" (Archer, 1998). Whether the result of complex interaction between issues of culture and agency, as Archer argues, or Bourdieu's theory which attempts to bridge structuralism and constructivism, (Bourdieu, 1990) the theoretical placement of this research poses the question, where does the individual stand in light of the macroprocesses of society? The theory which shapes this paper lies in Bourdieu's concept of a social actor capable of "intentionless invention of regulated improvisation" (Bourdieu, 1977). Accepting the constraints of structure, it is the inventive improvisation of the family members in the case that constructs the local labor market and its integration of both formal and informal economic activities. Likewise, "the dialectic of the internal-

ization of externality and the externalization of internality" is at work in the construction of community identity, ethnicity, and the local labor market (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 72).

This work seeks to understand the dynamic nature of the local labor market—how people come to make money—by examining the historical and cultural influences on the labor market. Qualitative methodology was chosen for this research to stimulate theoretical thought and inquiry regarding two "new" or revisited areas of sociological study, economic sociology and the sociology of culture. I will examine existing theoretical application of these two areas and also probe their intersection. This case study lays the necessary grounding theory for a quantitative look at these phenomena by other researchers.

In this way case studies can serve both quantitative and qualitative research. On one hand, even a census or a national survey can be viewed as a case study within the context of time and space (Feagin, Orum, Sjoberg, 1991). However, qualitative procedures are often used in case study research, because greater holistic understanding of the richness and depth of social action can be reached (Feagin, Orum, Sjoberg, 1991). Qualitative research also encourages and facilitates, in practice, theoretical innovation and generalization (Feagin, Orum, Sjoberg, 1991). I have chosen a qualitative, ethnographic, case study methodology.

Throughout this work a commitment has been made to the insider's perspective. This is significant to the choice of methodology, the case study, and the

theoretical placement of the findings as an interactional approach (Vaughan, 1993). Many qualitative research specialists believe that micro-level qualitative methodologies are vital in revealing that "the perspectives of those who command social power and the orientations of those below, who are under control of the former, are asymmetrical (Feagin, Orum, Sjoberg, 1993)." A top-down view of Mexican-Americans often assumes uniformity, missing the gradations and perspectives that are demonstrated in this case study. It is hoped that the family member's definitions of culture, community, economic survival, and success are honored.

Three in-depth interviews with members of an extended family in Monte Alto are utilized to gain an understanding of the family's networks and labor patterns. Two other in-depth interviews of unrelated community members were utilized to substantiate the historical context shared by the family members. Because I am a resident of Monte Alto, I also have relied on my observation of labor patterns in the community over a twelve-year period. These strategies are triangulated with documentary research that provide variety of data and method to produce the understanding of the local labor market sought.

Presented first is a review of the history and culture that together weave the economic fabric of the labor market of Monte Alto. The review provides the backdrop for the detailed description of the extended family network that follows. Next the paper maps both the labor market and its networks. Although a distinction is made between formal and informal economic activities for research

purposes, the delineation between the two sectors is not made by the subjects. Their involvement in both sectors is integrated, normal activity for these residents. Finally, the paper concludes with a discussion of the theoretical implications of the family's formal and informal economic activities for the local labor market in Monte Alto.

History

Understanding the historical development of Monte Alto is vital to understanding its current economic landscape. From its inception when W.A. Harding had a vision of buying, clearing, and then selling 53,000 fertile acres of the Rio Grande delta, where "bandits" still roamed, to the "successful" empowerment zone, visited and praised last year by program founder Vice President Al Gore, Monte Alto has undergone tremendous social change in this century (Pharis, 1969). At the heart of understanding social change in Monte Alto are four focal points of community identity: the Delta Club, Rio Farms, the schools (with the Blue Devil as its mascot), and the empowerment zone. Each is an exemplar of the economic fabric of Monte Alto. "It is when a community is actually challenged that the need to promote an identity is most urgent" (Bell, 1994). No greater challenge arises for a community than sustaining economic viability. Monte Alto community life did not begin with solidarity. One must note that the Rio Grande Valley has been a segregated society. The area and its people went from being part of a sovereign nation in which the local people had full citizenship to that of a conquered area in which anglo newcomers

dominated the local people. A "paternalistic accommodation" existed between the Anglo ranch owners and Hispanic ranch hands. This arrangement was transformed with the arrival of the railroads to the area in 1904. The creation of a reliable mode of transporting agricultural products to markets resulted in a sharp increase in the value of land and led to its ultimate subdivision. The agricultural development which resulted acted as a "magnet" for the migration of Anglos from outside the Rio Grande Valley. The transformation also led to increased conflict between newly arrived Anglos and the Hispanic residents (Saenz, 1993; Montejano, 1987).

The Delta Club

The Delta Club was representative of the period in which Monte Alto was established. W.A. Harding began to borrow money as early as 1922 to begin clearing 53,000 acres of land he expected would attract people to the area. Lifelong residents of the area recount the tale that the American Life Insurance Company, which funded Harding's venture, offered a three-day, two-night excursion to entice potential anglo buyers into the area. The package included a night in Mexico, where the company would "get 'em drunk and they would buy 'it' up." The township's name was changed from Rollo (named for Mr. Harding's son) to Monte Alto. It was thought that out-of-area buyers would be drawn by the romantic allure of a Spanish name (Pharis, 1969).

Rio Farms

While Harding's dream of grand real estate development never fully ma-

terialized, it did provide the context for the development of Rio Farms. The development of Rio Farms and the growth of Monte Alto are inseparably intertwined. The American Life Insurance Company sold the land to the Farm Security Administration (FSA) (Pharis, 1969). This agency had conducted a survey of South Texas in the late 1930s which indicated need for a program to serve underprivileged farm families and individuals (Sluis, 1972).

The FSA obtained a charter from the State of Texas as a non-profit, charitable corporation in order to carry out the farm training and improvement programs for low-income farmers (Sluis, 1972). Three employees of the FSA served on the original board. Four local men were selected to complete the board of directors. The charter became effective on December 6, 1941. The FSA rejected many applications for assistance because of insufficient land and a lack of farm equipment on the part of applicants; however, the American Life's 53,000 acre tract was ideal for the plan. The plan allotted 150 acre tracts for five years of tenant farming per family. Rio Farms documents 800 original tenant farm families (Pharis, 1969). The initial development of Rio Farms took place during World War II, when there was a ready market for the food and fiber that small tract farming provided. Farming flourished during this time, as did the community.

Even though a paternalistic tendency continued to define racial interaction, the allotment of land was an opportunity for advancement. While the anglo population tended to have an advantage in capital and was disproport-

tionately represented among the elite, class more than race defined these social relationships. Access to the land was closely tied to social standing. The majority of tenant farmers were anglo; nevertheless, there was a small minority of Mexican-Americans tenant farmers. Most Mexican-Americans worked as farm laborers, either as pickers or packers. There were also first generation Mexican immigrant farm laborers.

Major changes in agriculture took place from the 1960s through the 1980s, and these changes had a tremendous impact on farming in general and on the fabric of life in Monte Alto in particular. Changes in technology and economy caused a decrease in the demand for physical labor and the need for larger tracts of land in order for farms and farmers to remain viable (Sluis, 1972). Farms had to become not only larger, but they also had to become more efficient. These changes meant significant shifts in the operation of Rio Farms. Due to the decrease in tenant farms and farmers, the corporation had to change its purpose and goals. Rio Farms personnel realized that "to train a grower on acreage which could not deliver a reasonable income would defeat the purpose of Rio Farms Inc." (Sluis, 1972). As a result, the focus of the corporation shifted from the promotion of managerial and farming skills to the development of research aimed at improving efficiency, production, and marketing (Sluis, 1972).

Rio Farms shaped the community and its identity for at least twenty-five years after its incorporation. Residents report and Rio Farms literature celebrates the fact that the water system and many of the older houses were built by Rio

Farms. Some were bought later by the occupants, and some were moved. Delta Lake (now a Hidalgo County park) was created by Rio Farms to provide irrigation water for the acreage. Rio Farms also donated land for churches and the school (Sluis, 1972).

Community life in the Rio Farms era reached its zenith in the 1950s. Monte Alto was the hub of activity for farm families. The economy supported a local theater, a drug store, a hardware store, a feed and seed store, and a cotton gin, as well as the grocery store and gas stations that are still in business today. The community also maintained a busy railroad station that connected the residents, with no other means of transportation, to family and business in other parts of the valley. The Delta Club, owned by Rio Farms, was a thriving center, providing dining, lodging, and social recreation to local elites who could afford its services.

During the period between 1965 and 1985, as agriculture changed and the focus of Rio Farms changed, there was a gradual shift in population. Anglo families moved out, while the Mexican-American population rose. While a few worked for Rio Farms and employment at the packing shed was still available for those who remained, many had to seek employment outside the community. The labor market expanded as a result.

The School

By the 1970s, the center of community life shifted from Rio Farms to the school. The school, which had always been a part of community life, took on a distinction of its own, particularly for

the younger generation. The school began as a two-room school house. Today, 450 children comprise the school district, which has a Head Start Program, an elementary school, and a junior high school. The focal point for the school's community identity is the Monte Alto Blue Devils, the local junior high ball teams.

In recent years the empowerment zone board has awarded the school with approximately \$300,000 annually for infrastructure improvements. There was talk in the community that the Blue Devils might have a new stadium as a result of this funding. As was Rio Farms, the school is heavily dependent on other exogenous funding sources, namely federal monies allotted through various government entitlement programs. The two primary entitlement programs are for bilingual education (Title VII) and for children classified as migrants (Title I). Federal funds account for nearly one million dollars of a total budget of \$3,700,000. School budget reports show that federal monies make up anywhere from 16 to 21 percent of the yearly budget for the district. Local tax revenue comprises approximately 8 to 10 percent of the budget. The 1990 census data lend an understanding of the lack of revenue available (See Appendix A).

Last year, there were two significant developments: 1) teacher layoffs and 2) the visit of Vice President Gore celebrating the success of the empowerment zone program. These events indicate yet another shift in community identity and reflect the economic reality of Monte Alto. Recent changes in immigration laws have resulted in a significant out-migration. There has been a decrease in

school attendance numbers and an increase in students withdrawing from school, either by default protocol or intended action. Some federal funds are dependent on the projected number of students attending school daily. When the school doesn't have the projected number, it is required to pay the money back to the government. In addition, since state funding is tied to the average daily attendance, the painful result was the lay-off of five teachers in the district for the school year 1996-1997. According to a school board member, there is a possibility of another lay-off. The school district is highly dependent on outside monies.

The Empowerment Zone

Federal monies have entered Monte Alto in yet another way. During his first year in office, Vice President Gore initiated a program to assist designated low-income communities with money for infrastructure, grant money for investment in small businesses, job training programs, and low-income housing. The program has three broad goals which include community self-sufficiency, individual self-efficacy, and the development of programs to prevent physical and sexual abuse of women and children (U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, 1995, Feb.).

In the summer of 1997, the vice president visited Monte Alto to conduct ground breaking ceremonies for the housing project which will be used for the small barrio or settlement referred to by local residents as "Little Mexico" (Gore, 1997). It is an area on the east side of Texas Highway 88 that regularly floods when it rains. The impoverished families occupying rundown trailers and

shanty homes in "Little Mexico" will take up residence in the new housing.

Other projects funded through the Empowerment Zone are the paving of the roads near the school and the housing projects, a job training program conducted with the school for nurse's aides, and small grants for the start-up of new businesses. Monte Alto has a rural health clinic as a result of a joint venture with Knapp Medical Center in Weslaco. The clinic is overseen by a medical doctor. Treatment is provided by physician-assistants and nurses from the hospital. Joint ventures and the surge in economic activity have helped one local businessman who reports a potential boom in his business of installing septic tanks in the newly constructed homes and buildings, should he win the bid on the project. Another proposed use of the empowerment zone money is to install street lamps throughout the community.

The Empowerment Zone is yet another focus of community identity and certainly reflects the economic realities of the Delta Lake area and the community's ability to secure outside resources to facilitate not only survival but also economic sanctuary. The community-based patterns of interactions and organization of Monte Alto are associated with its successful collective economic action and are likely enhanced by the socially embedded networks in this case.

While this paper thus far has discussed the economic landscape through the principal centers of community identity, there are other small businesses in the area. Monte Alto has two convenience stores, a laundromat, a private farm office, and a privately owned fruit and vegetable packing shed. The school,

the packing shed, and Rio Farms, in that order, employ the majority of the residents and transitional labor in Monte Alto.

At first glance Monte Alto can be seen as a periphery of a periphery, but further examination of the economic realities, as manifested in its four community identities, reveals a complex interactive field. Given the world systems macroprocesses at work in this rural periphery of the borderlands and despite their marginalization, Monte Alto residents have made use of the resources available to them creatively. Each focus of community identity or major economic institution is made possible through an exogenous funding source.

The Framework of the Formal Economy

Rural America is a milieu of rapid change in spatial, economic, and social organization (Wilkinson, 1991). Rapid economic change makes Monte Alto such an interesting micro case study in particular because of its unique historical and cultural context. The dynamic milieu of microanalysis demonstrates how macroprocesses impact individuals and families. Processes which constitute a given economic reality and labor market are dynamic also. Economic structure, local social organizations, and the actions of individuals all interact with each other to create a given economic reality. Local politics and history shape the local economy. Labor is significant throughout because of the ways that changes in production continually shape local social interactions (Tauxe, 1993). For this reason, a study of the labor of an extended family in Monte Alto is needed. An extended family with roots

linked to the unique history and culture of the area has been selected in order to observe the relevance of social networks and ties in the processes of job location, job information, and job search.

Extended Family Case Study

A traditional macroeconomic definition of a local labor market includes geographically mapped routes from home to work. This facilitates a spatial understanding of the local labor market and strengthens Sassen's view of the household-workplace nexus and the community-workplace nexus (Sassen, 1995). Nearly half of the family's employment sites are close to the family residence, which is starred in yellow. Approximately half of the family works in Monte Alto and the Edcouch-Elsa area in the formal economic sector or remains home to care for small children. The other half travels farther to work. Some travel only as far as Edinburg, which is sixteen miles away (one way) or Weslaco, which is nearly the same, fifteen miles from the family residence (also one way). Still others travel as far as McAllen which is twenty-eight miles (one way), or San Benito, which is the same distance from the family residence (one way). All travel under thirty-miles from home to work. This finding demonstrates the fact that employment opportunities are limited at home for Monte Alto residents. Unwillingness to work beyond the thirty mile radius exists, in part, due to convenience but primarily because of travel costs.

The First Generation: An Immigrant Generation?

To understand Monte Alto as a local labor market it is essential to examine its

networks for job location, job information, and job search. A diagram of this family as a network (the family tree) and the accompanying interpretation of ethnographic work suggest the existence of socially embedded networks such as Sassen (1995) has defined for immigrant populations (See Appendix B).²

Like many families in the area, this family has deep roots in Monte Alto. They have lived through the changes that define the current community. Their personal histories are interwoven with the history of the area. These ties have established the patriarch and matriarch as "pillars of the community." Their influence is seen in almost every social institution in the community. They are influential in the school, the fire station, church life, and local political involvement. They are treated with respect and familiarity in local shops and eateries. Their influence can best be seen in the community response to their fiftieth wedding anniversary. In a community of 1,500 residents, 300 celebrated the occasion. The participants cut across the social and economic strata of Monte Alto.

The patriarch reports that one set of his grandparents were Mexican nationals, but that he was born in the Delta region, in La Sara, only a few miles from Monte Alto, and as far as he knows, the other set of grandparents claimed to be Rio Grande Valley residents from Raymondville. As with many families in Monte Alto, the patriarch (A) can trace his employment to ties with Rio Farms. He has worked for the Delta Water District his entire adult life. He has climbed to a lower-level supervisory position.

The patriarch emphasizes his ethnic identity as Tejano or Mexican-Ameri-

can, based on his understanding of his heritage. He has told this writer on more than one occasion about the strong feelings he has regarding his heritage. His refusal to identify himself as purely Mexican or exclusively American is demonstrated by his love of the regional Spanish of the Rio Grande Valley. He states that he cannot understand the Spanish "from over there" (Mexico). At local restaurants, he orders the chicano plate instead of the Mexican plate. He personifies the ethnogenesis that is the very heart of the co-ethnic group, Mexican-Americans. The patriarch clearly rejects the label of immigrant group. It is of utmost importance to him to pass along his ethnic identity to his children.

The matriarch (B) raised five children, then parlayed that experience into employment and a career. She began as a child care specialist; she moved up the ladder to teacher's aide, then Head Start teacher, to her current position of Head Start Coordinator for Edcouch-Elsa. Neither finished high school before they were married, but the matriarch finished a G.E.D. before her first promotion.

The Second Generation: "Looks like we've made it!"

Of their five children, there is one college graduate, the only and eldest daughter (C). She is an elementary school teacher. She went to night school while working as a teacher's aide. She first was introduced to the profession by her mother's colleagues. Before her career in education, she worked at Haggar's on the sewing line. There she met her husband who started out at Haggar's and, through a coworker, heard about a technical position at Whata-

burger, where he is currently employed. Whataburger sent him to technical school for computer repair and provided on-the-job training necessary to repair the computerized cash registers and other machines and appliances for the company (C-1).

The second child and eldest son (D) was a mechanic for J.C. Penney for years until he decided on a career in law enforcement. He used contacts through his brother and high school to find a sponsor to pay for the police academy. The Edcouch-Elsa Police Department paid for his training. His younger brother (F), the fourth in the birth order, had also gone to the police academy through sponsorship of the local department and then later worked for it. He now works for Texas Parks & Wildlife as a warden on the Corpus Christi, Texas, beachfront. Their spouses are also employed. The spouse of the first-born son (D-1) works as a community service agent in San Benito, Texas, funded through a grant from Texas A & M. while the spouse of the park warden (F-1) works as an office receptionist in Corpus Christi. Neither of these women has any college education, but both have finished high school.

The third brother did not finish high school and works as a cattle ranch-hand in Monte Alto (E). On various occasions he has worked as a field hand for Rio Farms, often responsible for irrigation. His wife (E-1) has never worked outside the home. She has always stayed home with the children and now also stays at home with the children and now also stays at home with grandchildren. Family gossip abounds regarding this couple, in part because of their tenuous employment

status, especially compared to the other professionals in the family. The youngest son (G) is also considered a professional since he works as an office manager for Hidalgo County Community Action, located in the county seat of Edinburg. His wife (G-1) works as a case-worker with the Migrant Council in Pharr-San Juan-Alamo. Each has some college education, but they are not graduates.

It is important to note that with the exception of one job referral by a *compadre*³ for the spouse of the eldest daughter to Whataburger, every employment opportunity was found by or referred by an extended family member of this particular network. This clearly demonstrates the concept of the socially embedded network (Portes, 1995). It is also significant to note that all of the professionals are employed through some extension of the state. This is further evidence of the importance that exogenous funding sources have for this community and the creatively diverse ways that residents of Monte Alto have made use of them.

The Third Generation: The Unfolding Story

The third generation is the generation of greatest diversity. There are members still in junior high school, subsequently not counted as employed, and thirty-five-year olds with an employment history. There are currently two college graduates in education in this category (I & K) and one vocational school graduate in nursing (L). It is interesting to note that, of these,

two are women. Family funds are being spent on female higher education in traditional areas, education and nursing. Employment in education and health care follow Valley-wide trends for current employment in the formal sector. While there are stay-at-home wives and mothers with small children who may or may not have completed a high school education in this family case, this does not appear to be solely a function of labor market segmentation by gender, as Sassen has suggested. In terms of understanding the economic landscape, however, it is important to note that these young women rely on public assistance for health care and infant feeding (Medicaid and WIC).

This may be a function of family structure with the sociological reality of high school teenage pregnancies. Of the first generation's fifteen grandchildren comprising the third generation's family tree, there are six (almost one-half) who have had teenage pregnancies with various outcomes (J, I-1, M, N-1). All have continued to live at home, to care for their children solely, or to have ready assistance with child care that enables them to work outside the home or to further educational goals. Nevertheless, this case reveals women employed in fields traditionally held by women, such as teaching, nursing, and child care. This shows that these women make individual choices regarding family and employment within a larger economic reality that is gender segmented as traditionally noted.

This generation has thirteen employable members (the grandchildren and their spouses) and seven children

who are still school age and not employed. Of the thirteen employable category members, only four found their employment through extended family social ties that referred them to their jobs directly. Four others utilized networks of family and friends but went through a formal application process in which their networks were not directly beneficial to them. One spouse found his job through newspaper listing and the application process. The remaining five are women who stay at home with their children. One is currently enrolled in college part-time. The ethnographic sketch of this generation tells a slightly different story than that of the second generation. The socially embedded network remains influential but does not have the same power as it did for the second generation in terms of job information or job search.

Other interpretations are rendered upon examination of the kinds of employment found, including funding source for employment. There are at least two privately funded job sites worked by the oldest grandchild and her spouse. She is the receptionist at a local radio station, and he is a journeyman electrician for a firm in Elsa (H, H-1). Their cousin (O) is a sales clerk at Walmart, another privately-owned firm. Another category member (J-1) works as a direct care provider to adolescents with behavior problems, another privately funded program.

One can also see the influence of the state as a source of employment, because there are two grandchildren employed in the health care field at privately licensed firms like the above, but relying on Medicaid and Medicare funding. One grand-

child (L) is an L.V.N. for a home health agency in McAllen, and the other (N) is a E.M.S. technician for a Weslaco-based ambulance company which contracts for service to Edcouch-Elsa. The two college graduates (I, K) are school teachers which definitively indicates a state source. In this interpretation of findings, we see that reliance on the state is somewhat diminished compared with the second generation.

The Informal Economy

Characterizing the informal sector is the simple fact that the residents of Monte Alto, known Valleywide as the "largest colonia in the Valley" with nearly 2000 residents, have continued to find that not incorporating as a town is to everyone's advantage. From time to time there is talk in community centers regarding incorporation. However, it is generally felt that exogenous funding sources and tax breaks are greater if the town is not incorporated.

The formal sector of the Monte Alto labor market has historically relied on exogenous funding sources, and currently a significant source of this funding is the state. Given the 1990 census data, which demonstrates low incomes and the limited employment, data will not tell the entire story for this or any other extended family network in Monte Alto. As a result the informal economic sector must also be examined for a full understanding of the economic reality of this family. Pragmatically, the informal economy is defined by the receipt of cash payment or exchange of services outside the formal system and, therefore, untaxed (cf. Castells and Portes, 1989).

Examples of Monte Alto's informal

economy abound. The town has an *informal* mechanic and plumber. There are garage sales every weekend in the area. Unlicensed babysitting is commonplace. Even the school uses the unpaid labor of its students to sell candy and trinkets to fund projects outside the normal budget. As a result, it is not unusual to have informal sales people coming to one's door. If a family or a group have a project it is promoting, the volunteer fire department station gladly opens its door for the sale of barbecue plates. Seasonal items are advertised and sold from homes, such as *cascarones* (decorated Easter eggs, drained, then filled with flour or confetti). These examples are only the tip of the informal economy iceberg that provides for subsistence for some in the economic milieu of Monte Alto and supplemental income for others.

During the Rio Farm era, social class was organized around one's position in relation to agricultural production. Anglo landowners and the corporate management of Rio Farms Inc. constituted the top of the social strata. This group was somewhat removed from the social activities of the mainstream community. They used the facilities of the Delta Lake Resort. The needs of the agricultural industry attracted a large number of middle class professionals who worked in supportive roles, such as aerial applicators, middle management, school administration, and contractors. These families tended to find residence in the community. Many in this group developed an informal economic structure supported by the working class members of the community who worked as pickers and packers. In the 1970s and 1980s, these families sold Avon, Amway, and other di-

rect marketing products. They were also a regular source of yard and garage sales.

More recently the upper class is less visible. Changes in agrarian economy have resulted in the flight of the Anglo professional middle class. Most of these residents have moved. A few have retired and continue to live in Monte Alto. The landowners and corporated managers who remain live elsewhere for the most part and have little contact with Monte Alto other than their work. The social positions these former residents have left are now being filled by the newly educated or first generation professionals. Many of the picker and packer class are now teachers, nurses, police officers, and computer technicians in Monte Alto or its extended non-territorial labor market. The new immigrants of "Little Mexico" are now the basis for the informal network of garage sales and other goods. The working class in many instances has now become the middle class and relates to the new immigrants as the professional middle class had previously.

The extended family network studied is representative of the transition from working-class professionals, and as such they regularly participate in the informal economy, particularly the garage sales. Someone in the family network has a garage sale at least once a month. Often the sale is marketed to the residents of "Little Mexico." An interesting twist on this phenomenon is a practice tied to this family network. The mother-in-law of family member (H) acts as a garage sale "broker." The mother-in-law is divorced with two older married sons outside the home and one schoolage daughter living with her. Her business

is brokering garage sale items. Often before a sale, she will spend time on the phone connecting buyers and sellers. If she has collected appliances, she then calls her appliance buyer by phone to arrange the sale before the formal garage sale. She may never see the item; she may simply direct the buyer to the seller's garage for payment and pick up. She then pockets a small sum for arrangements. The same process occurs for different items, such as second-hand clothes, kitchen items, or baby supplies. She has no need to have the actual garage sale. If there are items left over, she holds them for the next garage sale in a few weeks or calls a local flea market vendor to come pick up the items for a small fee as well. In this way, she is able to stay afloat financially, supplementing public assistance and the contributions of her sons.

Another way the respondents used the informal economy was as a means for social mobility. One family member (H-1) desired to enter the police academy, but he did not have the same social capital (cf. Portes, pp. 12-16) as other family members (such as D and F), because he was from San Juan and not the Delta area. He had difficulty securing a sponsor. Usually sponsors, such as the Elsa Police Department, pay for tuition and supplies while their candidate is at the academy. So the women in the family (A, C, and H) sold enchilada plates for a month to fund the police academy education. According to the informant, this was perceived as a worthy endeavor, despite the fact that it was labor intensive, since it enabled the couple to climb up the economic and social ladder. This is an important demonstration of the way in which the informal sector is used not

only for subsistence or income supplement but also for social mobility.

Overall the research shows that the goal of most is to be successful in the formal economy sector; however, informal economic sector participation is accepted as a fact of life. Therefore, it is a vital part of the economic fabric of this extended family's connection to the labor market of Monte Alto.

Conclusion

Like immigrant groups, Monte Alto residents, be they immigrant migrant workers or the Mexican-American middle class, use socially embedded networks in job location, job information, and job searching (cf. Sassen, 1995). Gender segmentation is also seen in this Monte Alto case, as with other immigrant groups (cf. Sassen, 1995). This case, however, demonstrates that this family's socially constructed definition of culture and its ties to the history of the region function together to facilitate their participation in the local labor market as a distinctive Mexican-American middle class. The integrative use of the formal and informal economy in the lives of these Mexican-Americans is further evidence that the social reality of the informal economy is not a carryover of third-world economies, but rather an American economic reality in a post-industrial nation (Castells, 1989). Informalization occurs when access and opportunity in the formal sector is denied or limited (Castells, 1989). Thus the "intentionless invention or regulated improvisation" of these Mexican-American middle class social actors, whom others marginalize within the large economic reality of the United States, is

a powerful testament of human agency (cf. Bourdieu, 1997).

In the case of Monte Alto, the truly immigrant population is that of "Little Mexico," and their dependence on the informal economy for survival may facilitate normative acceptance of informal economy practices. The insider's point of view interprets informal economy activity as part of the ethnogenesis of Mexican-American Rio Grande Valley residents. It is a particular cultural expression; therefore, it is part of the American economic reality. For example, the family made use of the informal economy for social mobility when the third generation couple, her mother, and grandmother made and sold enchilada plates on a series of Saturdays to pay for the husband's police academy education. (Women's roles in this example indicate that regardless of the social construction of ethnicity or immigrant status, gender segmented labor is a salient, albeit constant, similarity to other immigrant groups).

Social mobility and social class itself are dynamic concepts. Social class more than race or ethnicity underscores the use of the informal economy. The case establishes that the newly formed Mexican-American middle class uses the informal economy in similar ways as the old Anglo middle class. The only difference is enchilada plate sales instead of BBQ chicken plate sales, while garage sales were plentiful for all. There is a unique flavor to informal economic activity in the Mexican-American middle class. In addition, the

purposes for informal economic activity differed between the groups. In general, the old Anglo middle class supplemented agricultural incomes to sustain their status, while Mexican-Americans used informal activities to establish and gain social economic status.

Theoretical implications for further qualitative and quantitative work must focus on the unique flavor uncovered in this exploratory look at this local labor market. We see strategies of action which are shaped, but not bound, by cultural and historical definitions. Strategies of action such as integrated use of formal and informal economic activity, job search information, and job location are cultural products. As such, a reorientation of applied cultural research as treated in this paper requires a focus, not on cultures as unified wholes, but on chunks of culture which provide a toolkit of resources, each with its own history. A vital task for further research, as became evident in this case study, will be to understand how cultural capacities created in one historical context are reappropriated and altered in new circumstances that shape local labor markets (Swidler, 1998).

Throughout this analysis I have argued that creative social actors define labor markets in their own cultural and historical context. The integrative use by Monte Alto residents of both formal and informal economic activity in a nonterritorially bound labor market on a foundation of socially embedded networks is an example of human agency in restructuring the labor market in a so-called marginalized community.

Notes:

¹ "The informal economy is . . . a process of income-generation characterized by one central feature: it is unregulated by the institutions of society in a legal and social environment in which similar activities are regulated" (Castells, Portes, 1989).

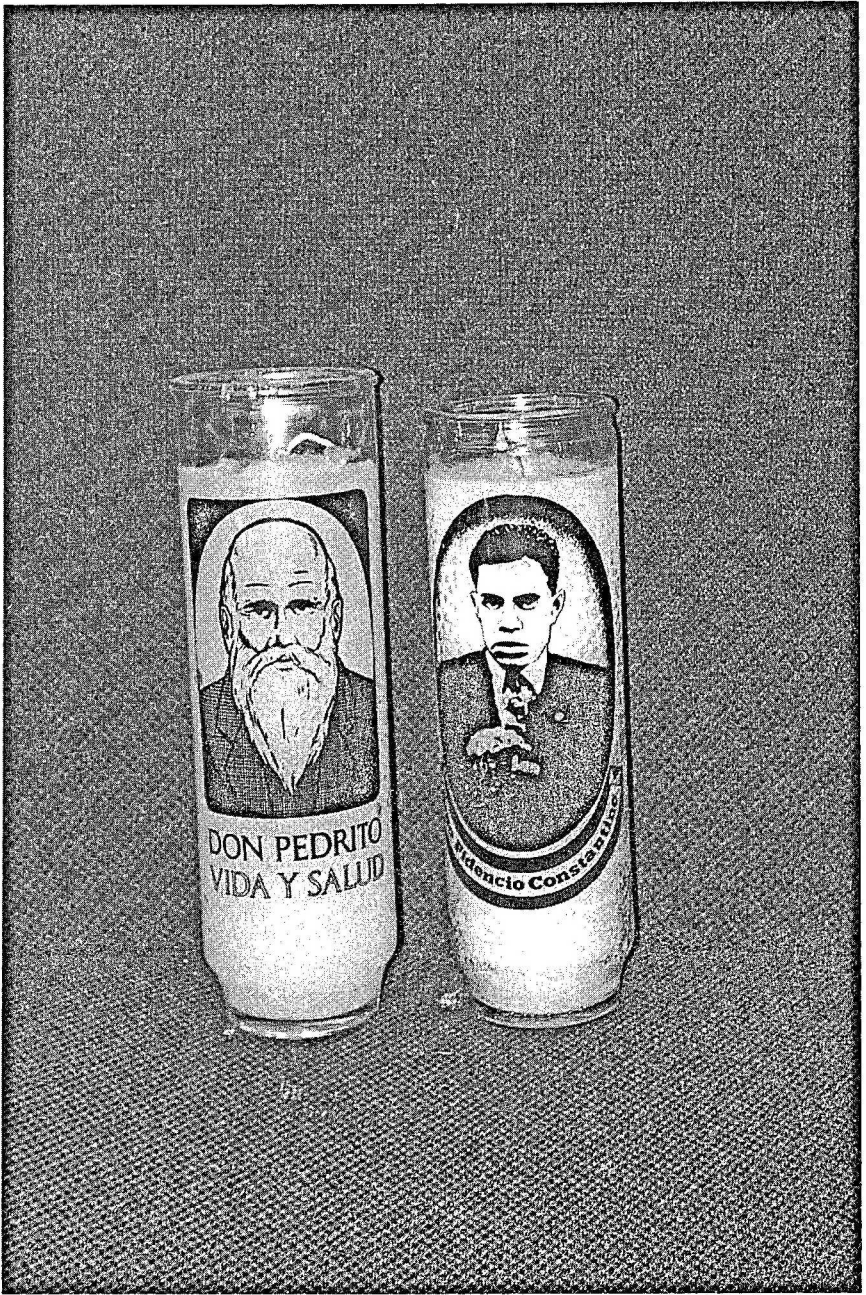
² My familiarity with this family and the special knowledge that social ties in a rural community lend, necessitated my need for distance in attempting research. For this reason, I chose to letter the respondents in the network as opposed to granting them pseudonyms.

³ *Compadre* is a Spanish kinship term which defines a trusted friendship that is as intimate as a family member; like a brother.

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—Dr. Mark Glazer

Laser Visa Implementation: Its Effect on the Arizona/Sonora Border Region

Victoria M. DeFrancesco

Resumen

Este artículo trata de los efectos de la nueva Tarjeta de Cruce de la Frontera Mexicana (BBC) sobre las relaciones transfronterizas sociales y económicas en la región fronteriza Arizona-Sonora. Se explica el nuevo sistema BBC con sus bases teóricas. Se presentan los resultados de un repaso a la literatura, entrevistas con la elite y una encuesta a las personas que cruzan la frontera, elementos que juntos apoyan el punto de vista del autor de que la nueva BBC no debe afectar significativamente las relaciones transfronterizas más allá del plazo corto (menos de dos años).

Introduction

For decades the United States government has been grappling with issues and problems related to Mexican border crossing policies. In 1996 Congress enacted a substantial revision of current crossing policies. This revision is contained in the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act. Section 104 of the Act calls for a complete transformation of the present Mexican Border Crossing Card system. The impetus for the creation of a new Border Crossing Card (BCC) was based on the need for a more secure document. The new BCC, called the laser visa, will be more difficult to counterfeit than the previous BCC; however, it comes at a significant increase in cost to the border crosser.

The purpose of this paper is to analyze whether the laser visa will improve,

degrade, or maintain the quality of current social and economic transboundary relations in the Arizona-Sonora border region. This paper discusses rationales that both support and oppose the laser visa and presents empirical data taken from a sample survey. The impacts the laser visa will have will be objectively projected through a review of the different positions and an analysis of the empirical data. Principal consideration has been given to the medium term (two to three years after implementation) and long term (three years and beyond) effects of the laser visa.

The research methodology employed for this project consisted of three main features: 1) a non-traditional literature review, 2) elite interviews, and 3) a survey. Due to the recent implementation of the laser visa, there is no schol-

arly literature directly treating this topic. Consequently, governmental reports and documents, position papers, university research studies, and current periodicals were referred to. A major source of information for this research was obtained through the Department of State (DOS). The "Mexican Border Crossing Card Study: Laser Visa Demand in Four Districts" prepared for the Border Biometrics Working Group of DOS; a speech by Donna J. Hamilton from the DOS at a meeting of the Border Trade Alliance (BTA) in Mexico City in February, 1998; and various information leaflets and handouts provided by the DOS concerning the laser visa were integral to the research. Two position papers proved especially helpful: "Anticipating the Storm" by Angelyn Pritchard, Project Manager, Mexico Policy, Arizona Office of the Governor; and "Harder to Cross the Border" by Luis E. Ramirez Thomas, MSFS-BTA Chair. These documents clearly projected, from a borderland perspective, the disadvantages of the laser visa program. A study concerning the "Economic Impact of Mexican Visitors to Arizona" by Randall G. Hopkins from the Economic and Business Research Program, College of Business and Public Administration at the University of Arizona (1992), provided an informative and detailed analysis of the effects of the Mexican border-crossers and their economic implications for the Arizona border. Numerous Arizona and Sonora periodicals addressed the impact of the new border crossing system. However, the articles that presented the best analysis were the *Douglas Daily Dispatch's* coverage and an article in *Inside Tucson Business*. The *Douglas Daily Dispatch*

has closely followed the laser visa and its developments and has also provided valuable insight to the reactions of American and Mexican border residents to the recent policy change.

Elite interviews accounted for a large portion of the research. Eight were conducted with American governmental officials and representatives of American commercial interests. The interviews lasted approximately an hour each. Information derived from the interviews was compiled through formal questions and casual conversation. In addition, a short survey was conducted on November 21, 1998, at the Douglas, Arizona, Wal-Mart parking lot and at the Douglas port of entry. A total of 33 Mexican border citizens/residents participated in the survey. The survey attempted to gauge border dwellers' perceptions of and concerns about the laser visa. Due to time and resource constraints, the survey did not attain statistical validity, but it did provide a window into the thoughts and feelings of some of the people who will be directly affected by the laser visa.

The paper consists of three sections. First, a brief historical background of previous border crossing policies and events leading up to the conception of the laser visa are presented; the legislation that mandated it and subsequent amendments to the plan are also included. Second is a presentation of both sides of the issue. The positive and negative aspects (as presented by those who were interviewed, the survey results, and anecdotal evidence) of the implementation of this program are delineated. Finally, the empirical data produced by the surveys are presented. To determine the

perceived impacts of the laser visa, the paper concludes with observations and suggestions based on the research conducted.

Previous and Present Border Crossing System

In the late 1940s, Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) inspectors at the land ports of entry and DOS consular officers throughout Mexico began issuing BCCs. BCCs, commonly referred to as micas or local passports, entitle the Mexican holder to travel up to 25 miles into the United States for up to a period of 72 hours. They were issued free of charge and void of an expiration date until the early 1990s, when they were limited to ten years. Presently, it is estimated that there are over five and a half million BCC holders. Of the five and a half million BCCs in circulation, over 15 different formats of the card exist. BCCs will no longer be issued. INS and DOS ceased adjudicating and replacing them on March 31, 1998. Existing BCCs in circulation, though, will remain valid until September 31, 2001 (DOS report).

If a BCC holder or visa holder wishes to travel beyond the 25 mile limit or remain more than 72 hours in the United States, he/she must complete an I-94 arrival and departure record. The I-94 grants the individual multiple entries into the United States for up to six months, unless otherwise adjusted by an INS officer. The document does not restrict the holder to specific travel areas in the United States. Previously issued for free, the I-94 since mid 1996 costs the applicant \$6.

The current BCC system suffers

from three main problems: the cards are relatively easy to counterfeit, photographic identification of the holder is difficult to ascertain, and a person can possess multiple "back-up" cards. BCCs are constantly being counterfeited. To deter and limit counterfeiting, frequent card format changes were carried out. "Basically, as soon as the counterfeiters had perfected the current type of BCC, the government would change formats" (Raehbein, 1998). Attempts were made by the government to make the cards more counterfeit proof, such as including a person's fingerprint and signature. Unfortunately, most efforts failed due to the increasingly sophisticated equipment and technology counterfeiters had at their disposal.

The pictures on the cards are many times outdated or faded, and as a result individuals attempt to pose as the person pictured in a genuine BCC. Decades-old photographs facilitate the fraudulent use of authentic cards. Deputy William Johnston, Regional Director of the Tucson INS office, described various scenarios where individuals would present cards with outdated or faded photographs belonging to someone else. For example, a man's brother dies, and the surviving brother uses the card of the deceased, issued 30 years ago, and starts crossing on it with no problem.

A third security problem inherent in the BCC is the ability of a person to possess "back-up" cards. A person could claim a lost or stolen card and acquire another one, sometimes up to three (the issuing inspector usually would get suspicious by the third or fourth claim of a lost/stolen BCC card) (Johnston, 1998). Back-up cards could be sold, borrowed,

or used when another copy of the BCC was confiscated on the American side for law violations (e.g., for shoplifting). Only rarely does an immigration officer take the time to punch in the information on the card so that it can be queried in the computer, when an I-94 form was not issued. Consequently, a person with a record and/or a confiscated BCC can still enter the United States with his/her completely legitimate back-up card without being questioned (Raehbein, 1998).

In light of the variety of security problems with the BCC system and because of the political concerns regarding illegal immigration, the United States Congress passed the Illegal Immigrant Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act in 1996 (Hamilton, 1998). Section 104 IIRIRA specifically calls attention to the BCC. The original legislation states:

Such regulations shall provide that (A) each such document [Border Crossing Identification Card] include a biometric identifier (such as the fingerprint or handprint of the alien) that is machine readable and (B) an alien presenting a border crossing identification card is not permitted to cross over the border into the United States unless the biometric identifier contained on the card matches the appropriate biometric characteristic of the alien.

Clause A shall apply to documents issued on or after 18 months after the date of the enactment of this Act.

Clause B of such sentence shall apply to cards on or after three years after the date of the enactment of this Act (Illegal Immigrant Reform and Respon-

sibility Act, 1996).

The issuance of the laser visa was divided between the INS and DOS. Each agency has its specific task with regards to the new laser visa. The DOS has become the exclusive adjudicator of the cards (DOS report). If a person wishes to apply for a laser visa, he/she must go to an American embassy, consulate, or temporary processing center. Individuals will no longer apply for the cards at land ports of entry. The INS is in charge of producing the actual card at one of its Integrated Card Production Systems (ICPS) facilities where the individual's biographic and biometric data is digitally encoded on the card by optical data storage technology (Hamilton, 1998). The distribution of the cards will be contracted out to various Mexican courier services by the State Department.

The laser visa will also begin to replace the B1/B2 (tourist/business) visas as they expire. The laser visa combines the B1/B2 visa and BCC onto one document. In practice, the B1/B2 visa and BCC have already merged, since in most instances an I-94 would be granted to a BCC holder or a B1/B2 visa holder.

Therefore, the laser visa adjudicated by State consular officers will be a combined business and tourist visa and border crossing document. It can be used as a border crossing document if the bearer wishes to enter the US for less than 72 hours and stay within 25 miles of the border. It will permit the bearer to travel anywhere in the U.S. and stay for up to six months (DOS report).

The laser visa is a credit card-sized document valid for 10 years. The initial

plan set out to replace all BCCs by late 1999 at a cost of \$45 per person.

As a result of protests from American border interests due to the unrealistic card replacement deadline and high laser visa cost, the Border Visa Simplification Act was introduced by Arizona Senator Jon Kyl and Representative Jim Kolbe. The amendment called for a fee exemption for children under 15 years of age, a delay in the deadline until 2003, and the establishment of facilities to process applications at various cities along the border (Border Visa Simplification Act). The original amendment was modified before legislation passed in October 1998. The deadline was reduced to 2001 and a \$13 charge for children under 15 years of age was implemented (the actual cost that it takes to produce one card) (Border Trade Alliance, 1998). The establishment of both permanent and temporary facilities to process laser visas was granted in the legislation, as originally requested.

Once implementation of the laser visa is underway, the government hopes to decrease the time involved in crossing the border substantially.

By providing more reliable and secure identification, the laser visa should make it faster and easier for individuals to enter the U.S. and reduce waiting times for Mexican citizens. It will be easier to carry than a visa in a passport as it fits in a wallet and, in most cases it can be used without a passport. (Nueva Visa Laser).

In order to illustrate the government's vision of how the laser visa system will work, the following is a scenario of an adult acquiring and using a laser

visa (all of the steps will be the same for a minor, except that the fee will be only \$13).

- 1) First, a person makes an appointment to apply for the laser visa. Currently appointments are made by calling a 900 number (the cost is 10 pesos [approximately one dollar] a minute, with a typical phone call lasting about three minutes); but it is possible that in the future the appointment may be made at Banamex, a principal Mexican bank located throughout the country.
- 2) After the appointment is set, applicants go to a Banamex to pay a non-refundable \$45 fee.
- 3) The applicant will be given a receipt at Banamex to be presented the day of the appointment, along with all necessary documents.
- 4) If the application is accepted, the "information collected by the State Department will move electronically to the INS domestic facilities where the new visas will be produced" (Hamilton, 1998). The card will take approximately two weeks to produce.
- 5) The applicant either collects the card after it is made at the place of issuance or pays a courier to deliver it directly to his/her house.
- 6) When a person presents his/her card at the border, the inspector swipes it through the laser reader to check for violations or irregularities that trigger a secondary inspection. A secondary inspection entails a comparison between the person's actual biometric data (the fingerprint) and the biometric data on the card.
- 7) If a person will travel beyond the 25 mile limit or remain more than 72 hours in the United States, he/she will still have to fill out an I-94; but electronic I-94s will be issued. An inspector swipes the laser visa and a com-

pleted I-94 will print out (currently the I-94 has to be filled out manually).

The logistical and technical aspect of the program requires the State Department to phase in the program. Ciudad Juarez started accepting new applications on April 1, 1998. Since then other consulates began accepting applications, but not all have launched the full program (DOS report).

By late 1999 approximately 1,250,000 laser visas have been issued. The Hermosillo, Sonora, consulate, which serves both Sonora and Sinaloa, began issuing the laser visas in early 1999. The consulate constructed a separate area in order to accommodate BCC replacements (Fitzgerald, 1998). Anticipating the large number of BCC replacements, this additional wing will expedite replacements of old BCCs, without bottle necking first time adjudications.

Concerns/Opposition to the Laser Visa

Since the inception of the laser visa plan, serious debate has ensued over effects the new document will have on transboundary relations and American border economies. Those who will have to apply for the new laser visas have expressed the most concern. State and local governments, trade organizations, and chambers of commerce along the American border have also voiced serious concern. Though the border communities and trade organizations agree on the need for a more secure border crossing document, they all consider the \$45 fee for an adult laser visa exorbitantly high, unjust, and contradictory to the idea of free trade within the North American continent. In addition to these concerns, it is feared that illegal immigration will surge, and

United States border economies will plummet.

The most vocal groups along the Arizona/Sonora border have been the Arizona state government, with Governor Jane Hull having direct involvement in voicing concerns; the Border Trade Alliance; the Arizona/Mexico Commission; the city of Nogales, Arizona, and the city of Douglas, Arizona. All of these groups think the \$45 fee for adults and \$13 fee for minors is far too expensive and excessive over the laser visa's actual cost. They contend that the failure to obtain a fee exemption for minors through the Visa Simplification Act will be detrimental, given that 47% of the Mexican population are children (DOS report). The hardest hit groups will be the middle-lower socio-economic classes and the poor, who previously crossed for free. Considering the Mexican minimum wage is \$5 a day, \$45 for a single document is considerable. In addition to the laser visa fee, the cost of acquiring other mandatory documents to apply for the card, travel expenses, lost pay for attending the appointment, and the cost of the 900 call increase significantly the real cost of the card (Pritchard, 1998). Maria Badilla, an Agua Prieta resident, commented on the laser visa saying, "Now what do I do? Forty-five dollars can go a long way to feed my family. I can't afford money for that or the trip to the American consulate" (*Douglas Daily Dispatch*, 1998).

American border communities and trade organizations worry that the fee and the cumbersome process will deter Mexican nationals from acquiring the travel document and thus deter them from

crossing into the United States. Douglas, Arizona, mayor, Ray Borane says, "We understand and support the imminent need to control our borders. However, we do not support the bordering and consequent isolation of interdependent economies and communities" (Borane, 1998). Mexican consumers represent an immense source of income for border communities. Douglas, Arizona, attributes approximately 30% of its retail base to northeastern Sonoran shoppers (Macias, 1998). In Nogales, Arizona, Mexican consumers generate 65% of the city's sales tax revenue (Barraza, 1998).

Of the \$45 fee, \$13 is allotted to the INS for the actual production of a card, and the remaining \$32 goes to the DOS for its time and resources in adjudicating a first time laser visa or replacing an old BCC. Opponents to the laser visa's high cost strongly advocate lower replacement fees. Luis Ramirez, chairman of the BTA, stated that it is more reasonable to believe that the full \$32 allotted to the DOS per laser visa be utilized for adjudications, since they involve more time and paperwork, but that replacements should cost the DOS much less due to their simplicity. "The fee should reflect the actual cost of the program and not subsidize additional federal government programs" (Border Governor's Association, 1998). Over \$270,000,000 in revenue is expected from the laser visa program.

The non-refundability of the \$45 fee if the application is denied has also sparked serious debate. If the application is denied, the \$45 is not returned to the applicant, regardless. "If anything, at least the \$13 fee for production should be returned" (Capin, 1998).

"The \$45 fee has the effect of adding insult to injury" (Barraza, 1998). Opponents of the laser visa argue that Canadians have never needed a visa to enter the United States, much less have they ever had to pay a fee; and that Mexicans should enjoy the same benefits as Canadians. Some argue that Mexico has a special relationship to the United States, by virtue of being its neighbor and partner in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and as a result the \$45 universal visa fee should be waived for the Mexican crosser. Perhaps the most persuasive argument is that the revenue that Mexican shoppers provide the American border region should be sufficient justification for a visa fee exemption. The Mexican shopper provides jobs and tax revenue both directly and indirectly.

Concern that the high cost and complexity of the laser visa might promote a surge in illegal immigration has arisen. In an article entitled "Harder to Cross the Border," Ramirez wrote, "The BTA is a proponent of simplifying the legal entry process. The lesson here is that they [Mexican nationals] would prefer to enter 'legally' but are either afraid of the process, find it too expensive, or simply too degrading."

It follows that money being used for fences along the border should instead subsidize costs for the laser visa, since it is easier to track someone who is legal than illegal. The inability to cross with a low-cost document could prompt present BCC holders to remain on the American side rather than have to deal with the laser visa. Beth Daley, Ex-

ecutive Director of the Nogales Chamber of Commerce, also believes that, "some people are just going to risk walking through the fence to cross into the United States when necessary, instead of paying the LV fee."

It is projected that Mexican consumers will begin to turn inward and travel to Hermosillo, the capital of Sonora, for high ticket items. There is also concern about low ticket sales decreasing more than large ticket sales throughout American border communities. High ticket items are expected to decrease, but not to the same degree as small sale ticket items. "Merchants on the border, especially those who specialize in low ticket sales rely heavily on our Mexican neighbors for clientele" (Pritchard, 1998). It is expected that one person from a family will be the designated visa holder and that person will be the designated shopper in the United States for the entire family. Low ticket items such as movie tickets or fast food hamburgers would plummet, because the entire family would no longer cross and spend on this type of purchases. Former Nogales, Arizona merchant, Harlin Capin projects that "people will stay in Mexico and shop there as their family outings."

The implementation of the laser visa has proved to be frightening and cumbersome to some. The lack of information dissemination compounds this problem. A protest against the laser visa in Agua Prieta, Sonora, in mid April, 1998, pointed out the frustration felt by those faced with either financing the new laser visa or no longer being able to cross into the United States (*Daily Dispatch*, 1998). Efforts to educate Mexican residents about the change in

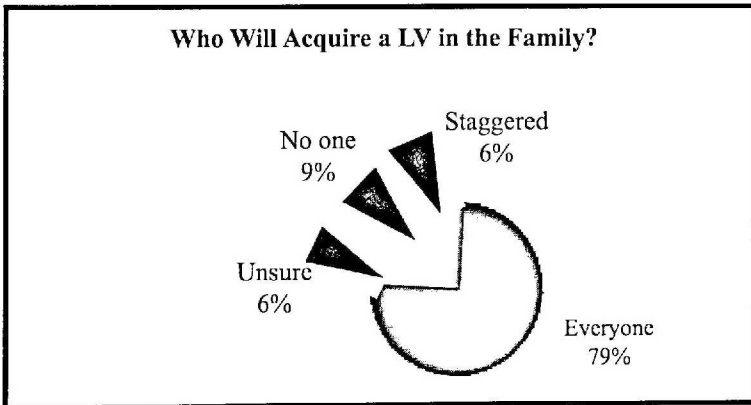
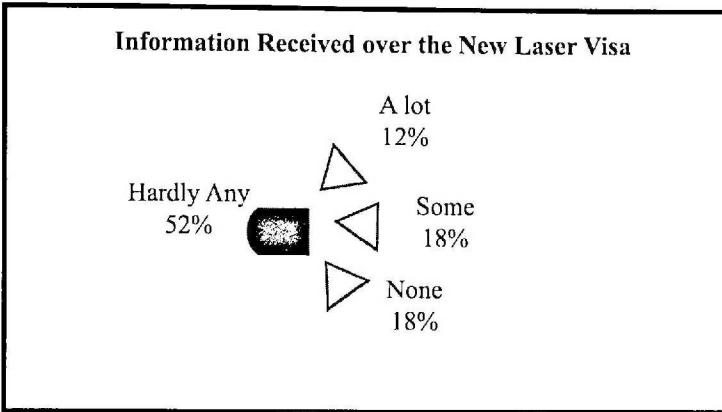
the BCC system are the responsibility of the DOS. The need for an effective laser visa education program directed towards the general population is paramount. The DOS's failure to inform and educate about the laser visa effectively has fostered many misconceptions and made the process appear more complex than it actually is. "The BTA has made various offers to assist in the dissemination of information, but we have not been taken up on it" (Ramirez, 1998). Nogales city manager, Ignacio Barraza, said that his border community would educate Mexican residents about the laser visa in order to alleviate the shock of the process, but that the funding for such a project does not exist at the municipal level.

Support/Defense for Laser Visas

The principal proponent and defender of the laser visa fee and process has been the federal government, more specifically the DOS and INS, who are responsible for the implementation of the program. Both agencies present the positive results that the laser visa will foster and disarm the arguments of opponents to the laser visa fee and process. INS and DOS claim that the laser visa will expedite rather than hinder border crossings and not deter Mexican residents from crossing over. Additionally, they believe it is not unfair to charge Mexicans the unitary visa fee, nor that the LV will cause a surge in illegal immigration. Last, the State Department rejects the contention that sufficient educational outreach has not been conducted.

In addition to creating a more secure border crossing system, they contend the laser visa will greatly expedite bor-

Chart 1



der crossings. Less doubt will arise about the authenticity of the document or that the card holder is actually the person pictured on the card. The time spent in initial revisions will substantially decrease, along with the number and duration of secondary checks. "It will be much quicker to swipe a card through than to type the BCC information into a computer, especially when thousands of people go through the port [Nogales] a day" (Raehbein, 1998). The efficiency of the laser visa is actually expected to enhance economic relationships along the American border (DOS report).

Though many federal officials, both from INS and DOS, concede that the \$45 fee is very high and will entail economic sacrifices from Mexican residents, they think that it is not a serious obstacle. The \$13 children's fee should also not pose a serious deterrent. These positive projections for the laser visa are based on observation and contact with the border, statistical figures, and economic/legal factors.

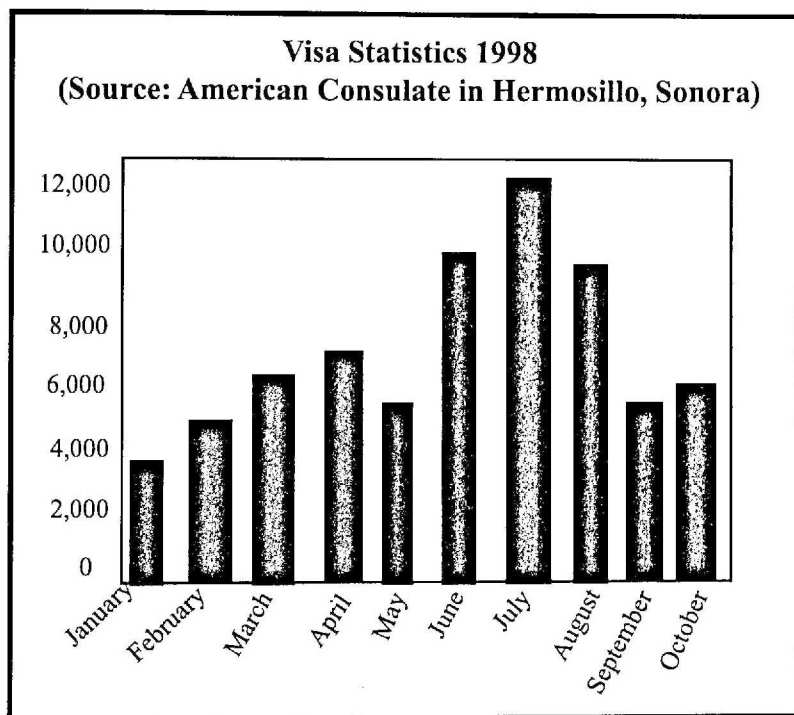
Deputy Gary Raehbien, who has been an INS officer in Nogales for over 20 years, offered his opinion on the economic impact the laser visa will have. He believes that low-income Mexicans will get the laser visa simply because their money can go farther in the United States. He also observed "that throughout all of the peso devaluations there has never been a drastic change in border crossings, and that even through the toughest times, kids always came." Deputy Johnston, from the INS Tucson office, (while acknowledging it is a cold-blooded view) believes that those who really need or want to cross will make

the sacrifice. An additional observation made by Barraza in reference to whether Mexican residents will ultimately acquire the laser visa was that "people are very resourceful and know how to make ends meet."

If the figures for total visa applications received in 1998 following the visa price increase in February of 1998 may be used as a forecast of how many laser visa applications will come in, the outlook is positive. Consul William Fitzgerald, from the American Consulate in Hermosillo, pointed out that, even though in February of 1998 the price for visas world-wide was increased, the total number of applications received by the Hermosillo consulate had actually increased steadily throughout the year (See Table 1 on page 63).

In economic terms, a principal reason why it is believed that the laser visa will not lower the number of people crossing over is that Mexicans' purchasing power, in terms both of quality and price, are greater in the United States. Another argument is that if a Mexican national can afford to shop in the United States, he/she can find a way to finance the laser visa. The proponents of the laser visa deny the contention that only one family member will acquire a laser visa to do all the family's shopping and, as a result, drastically hurt low cost ticket item sales. The Mexican limit on duty free imported goods is pointed out. There is a \$50 limit on merchandise each individual can bring into Mexico per day. Barraza said, "Even though the \$13 children's fee is quite substantial, especially in big families, most people will go ahead and pay it, mainly because of the \$50 per person limit." He noted that

Table 1



the reason entire families cross is not just because Mexicans are family oriented or like to shop together, but because each additional family member represents an additional \$50 worth of goods that can be crossed. It would be very impractical if, for example, a family's designated laser visa bearer had to go back and forth across the border every day for a week in order to complete all of the necessary shopping for one family.

The central argument offered in defense of the laser visa fee is that "American taxpayers should not bear the cost of the visa application and production, but rather the actual traveler should" (Johnston, 1998). Due to the governmental mandate that all agencies must be self-sufficient, the INS and DOS have to charge for the card. Because of this mandate, the BCCs were bound to be issued with a fee, even if the 1996 immigration reform never took place.

Representatives from the DOS and INS explained why Mexico cannot have and most likely will never have the same visa exemption as Canada. Many more violations are committed by Mexican nationals. This does not signify that Canadians do not commit violations in the United States, but rather the number of violations committed by Canadian nationals in the United States will always be less than those committed by Mexican nationals because of Canada's smaller population (in comparison to Mexico's). As a result, a screening process, like the visa application process, is necessary (Johnston, 1998).

DOS representative Edward Vazquez said that a visa fee exemption for Mexico would not be plausible for many reasons. If an exception were

made for Mexico, then other countries would want exemptions by also claiming to hold certain special relationships to the United States. Also, a unitary cost for visas is necessary, for it would be too complicated and too expensive to have over 200 countries researched and surveyed in order to determine what visa fee would be uniquely appropriate for each. As to having a separate adjudication and replacement fee, the DOS does not deem a differentiation necessary. "The difference in time employed between the two is insignificant, perhaps a 30 second difference in interview time; additionally, both procedures require the same amount of equipment and personnel" (Fitzgerald, 1998). The DOS also defends its stance concerning the non-refundability of the fee, by noting that an applicant who is denied consumes the same amount of time and resources as one who is accepted.

Representatives from the INS strongly disagree with the notion that the fee and initial confusion of the process will prompt an increase in illegal immigration. They rebut the argument with three premises. The first premise is that a previously law-abiding Mexican national will probably not be motivated to break the law and endanger himself/herself to avoid the \$45 fee. The vast resources that have been allocated to the border patrol, such as the exponential increases in border patrol personnel, are another reason why a surge in illegal crossings in the form of "fence-jumping" will not crystallize. Even if Mexican nationals attempted to cross illegally in response to the laser visa fee, they would more likely than not be caught by the border patrol

(Johnston, 1998). The concern that a person after receiving a laser visa would remain in the United States is plausible, but it is tempered by the DOS's screening process. The DOS screening process, which assumes "every applicant to be a potential immigrant until proven otherwise," is not fool proof, but it serves its purpose most of the time (Fitzgerald, 1998). Consequently, the INS expects the number of illegal aliens crossing will actually decrease, since the practice of crossing on fraudulent documents will diminish while physical border patrol resources increase.

The State Department claims it has conducted extensive laser visa educational outreach within Mexico. Nationwide, it runs television, radio, and newspaper advertisements that provide laser visa information. Information brochures have also been widely distributed throughout the country by local consulates (Vazquez, 1998). The Hermosillo consulate has supplemented the DOS nation-wide information dissemination by talking with various organizations and clubs throughout Sonora, appearing on local television and radio shows to discuss the laser visa, and providing press releases to local newspapers (Fitzgerald, 1998).

Data Analyzed

Up to this point, the actual process of the laser visa has been explained, along with the two differing points of view of the procedure. Following is a presentation of the results of a survey conducted in order to attempt to gauge what will be the effects of the laser visa among common Sonoran border residents.

On November, 19, 1998, 33 surveys were conducted at the Douglas, Arizona, Wal-Mart and at the port of entry of the same city with Sonoran residents. As mentioned in the introduction, this survey did not attain statistical validity but did provide useful insight regarding non-elite reactions to the laser visa. Each survey was structured to consume no more than five minutes. Involved or specific questions were prohibited by the hurried nature of the persons surveyed. The survey consisted of two questions: "How much information have you received about the new laser visa?" and "Will you and your family pay the fees necessary to acquire the documents?" The second question did not distinguish if the person had only a BCC or also had a visa. The researcher assumed that if the person was a visa holder and answered "yes," he/she would ultimately replace the visa with a laser visa.

The responses to the first question were divided as follows: 18% had received no information about the new document, 51% had received very little, 18% had received some, and only 12% said they received much information regarding the new laser visa and how it will work. Several respondents, when answering that they had received information about the laser visa, said that their source was a newspaper or radio. The 88% of those who had received "much" information about the laser visa commented that they would very much like to learn more about it and understand how exactly it will work.

For the second question, "Who will acquire a laser visa in the family?", the respondents were told the cost of the laser visa if he/she did not know

what it was. Response to the second survey question showed 6% saying they were unaware if they would get a laser visa, 9% that they would definitely not acquire one, 6% would stagger who got the laser visas in the family, and 79% would acquire a visa for everyone in the family. The most common heard remark by the respondents was "*La tendremos que conseguir, pues no hay de otra*" (We have no other choice than to get one, what can we do?). The 79% that said they would definitely get a laser visa were resigned and viewed the fee and process as simply another obstacle to overcome. The 9% who said they would not acquire the document were all adamant about not getting it and very angry about the accompanying fee and process.

The limited number of surveys performed was due to the great deal of time which was instead employed in answering questions that the survey respondents had regarding the laser visa process, which can be interpreted as a signal to educate Mexican residents about the laser visa. There were many misconceptions about what the rules and procedures are for the laser visa; almost all respondents possessed only a vague notion of what the process entails. The most common misconception was that a family cap existed; that is, regardless of how large a family is, a set fee would be charged. Additionally, many people expressed fear of having their application denied and as a result losing \$45. The majority, once they were given a few of the facts about the process, seemed less apprehensive and commented that if the process truly worked as set out by DOS, then it would not be as bad as they

thought. While conversing with a couple of the respondents, the researcher asked if turning inward to do shopping was an option? They all said that it was not a very likely scenario, especially for the border dwellers, because it is much more convenient to go to a store on the other side of the border than to travel three hours to Hermosillo (the capital of Sonora) to shop there.

Findings

Opposing viewpoints and empirical data have been collected in order to speculate without bias what the actual effects of the laser visa will be. Both perspectives concerning the laser visa offer valid points that can be interpreted in a variety of ways. What has been so difficult about this issue is that the same argument can be used as a defense for both sides, depending on how it is framed. However, after careful comparison of both sides and data analysis, four main projections can be made. These projections are: 1) The laser visa should not have a significantly negative effect on transboundary relations beyond the short-medium term (less than two years after full implementation). 2) Children should eventually cross over with their parents. 3) Illegal immigration should not increase as a result of the laser visa. 4) There is a tremendous need for educational outreach concerning the program.

After approximately two years of full implementation, Sonoran residents should assimilate and accept the laser visa. Sonorans, based on previous crossing patterns (Hopkins, 1992) and the survey responses, should continue to cross the border. The cost might pre-

vent individuals from acquiring the document immediately, but after one to two years, most Sonorans will probably have acquired a laser visa. Social and cultural factors should contribute to preserving Sonoran border crossing patterns, for Arizona and Sonora are not only economically but also socially interlocked. Crossing over to the United States is a component of Sonoran culture. The long-ingrained habit of coming to the United States for shopping, family visits, doctor's appointments, or weekend get-aways will most likely prove to be a habit not easily broken.

Mexican border residents, in particular, should be the group most likely to acquire the laser visa. The convenience and service that American stores offer Mexican border dwellers are extremely valuable. It can be expected that Mexican border dwellers will not travel three hours to attain a good or service that is readily available on the other side of the border. For a border resident, crossing back and forth is literally a fact of everyday life. Not being able to cross into the United States would probably trigger a greater disruption in lifestyle than the \$45 fee.

All members of a family should eventually hold laser visas. This projection is based on two principal reasons. Although the \$13 children's fee is a significant amount of money compared to a previously free card, it is relatively reasonable in comparison to the cost of the adult laser visa. A fee exemption for minors would have been ideal, but a \$13 fee should still be accessible. Once again, the survey demonstrated that 79% of the people interviewed said that everyone in their fam-

ily will acquire a laser visa. It is understandable that a family with five children will not obtain laser visas for all members at once, because of the high cost. But, the practice of staggering laser visa issuances in a family is a very realistic and practical solution.

The Mexican limit on duty-free imports is the second major reason why the entire family will likely acquire a laser visa, as opposed to having only one family member with a laser visa be the designated shopper in the United States. The convenience of being able to bring into Mexico over \$50 worth of merchandise at a time is substantial; even if a family has limited resources, the limit could prove burdensome during such times as the holiday season. At present, \$50 in groceries, clothing, or other items for a whole family is not significant. The ability to import over \$50 in goods into Mexico should further prompt heads of households and parents to acquire laser visas for the whole family.

An increase in illegal immigration in response to the laser visa fee and process will probably not occur. The physical resources that the Border Patrol presently possesses will prevent any significant increase of illegal immigration stemming from the laser visa in the form of "fence-jumping." Additionally, most people will more likely than not opt to acquire a laser visa and gain entry into the United States lawfully, as the survey shows.

The most important conclusion that can be drawn which will affect the short-medium term outcome of the laser visa is that there is an enormous need for laser visa educational outreach. The DOS has made attempts to inform

Mexican residents about the change in the border crossing policy (*e.g.*, television, newspaper, and radio advertisements), but they have not conveyed the information effectively. Results from the survey and anecdotal evidence indicate that the majority of the Mexican population does not fully understand the changes in the border crossing policy and the new procedures that accompany it.

Mexican residents seem to be eager to understand and learn about the changes in crossing policy. There is need to undo the misconceptions that many Mexicans have developed about the laser visa. Additionally, the fear that many individuals have concerning the whole process must be reduced with facts and information. A vigorous and extensive education program geared toward the general Mexican populace should be undertaken. Due to the time and resources a program like this would demand, the DOS should consider seeking assistance from trade organizations (*e.g.*, the BTA) or American chambers of commerce in order to execute such a large undertaking effectively.

The information dissemination should reach large numbers of people. Lower-middle classes and below should be especially targeted, for these are the people that depend solely on the free BCC to cross to the United States. The principal suggestion how such an educational outreach should be conducted, based on research, observations, and an-

ecdotal evidence follows. The DOS should provide general information sessions/public forums that hundreds of people can attend at once; for example, the Hermosillo consulate could hold weekly information sessions at the gymnasium of the state university. Mexican residents need the opportunity to ask questions and receive all the information at once (not bits and pieces, as presented by television and radio advertisements). Though the DOS and the individual embassies and consulates have limited time and resources, holding large public forums would prove more beneficial than briefings with small groups and organizations. An educational outreach program does not require fancy pamphlets or witty commercials, but rather the presentation of the facts in a clear format which is easily accessible (*e.g.*, a public forum).

Barraza commented that "Tombstone isn't the town too tough to die, but rather American border towns, are the ones too tough to die." In conclusion, based on this research the prediction can be made that the laser visa implementation will not substantially alter Arizona/Sonora border relations. The first year of full implementation should bring confusion and economic sacrifice to many Sonorans and American border merchants, but once the initial shock of the program disappears, transboundary relations can be expected to carry on as usual, and American border communities should continue to prosper.

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Appendix

Documents

A. Receipt of the Banamex payment

B. Identification Document

For first time visa applicants:

-Passport issued within the last 12 years or a Mexican Certificate of Nationality issued by the External Relations Department.

To replace a BCC or to renew a B1/B2 (business/tourist) visa:

If the solicitant is over the age of 18:

-BCC or expired visa

-A passport of Mexican Certificate of Nationality or Electoral Identification card

If the solicitant is under the age of 18:

-BCC or expired visa

-Passport or Mexican Certificate of Nationality or birth certificate

C. Documents to prove economic solvency and permanent residency in Mexico (salary receipts, bank statements, tax statements, etc.)

D. Completed visa application

Ethnicity, Nationality, and Criminal Case Disposition on the Border

Jon Sorensen, Amy Patterson, & Nigel Cohen

RESUMEN

Este estudio, basado en una jurisdiccion de la frontera entre los E.E.U.U. y México, no pudo encontrar una relacion entre el grupo etnico y la severidad de la sentencia. La ciudadanía si puede influenciar la severidad de la sentencia indirectamente a través de la dificultad de los ciudadanos mexicanos en obtener libertad antes de su juicio.

Two waves of recent studies of case disposition in El Paso found that Hispanic defendants were discriminated against in the border region. The first wave of studies was based on data collected as part of a larger study of plea bargains in robbery and burglary cases across six jurisdictions during 1975 through 1977. One study using this database found ethnic differences only in El Paso, with Hispanics being convicted more often than Anglos (Welch, Spohn & Gruhl 1985). Other researchers using the same database found that Hispanics sentenced by juries in El Paso received longer sentences than Anglos sentenced by juries (Holmes & Daudistel 1984; LaEree 1985).

The second wave of studies extended findings of ethnic discrimination in sentencing using data collected on a larger pool of felony offenses in El Paso during 1987-89. (Daudistel, Hosch, Holmes & Graves 1999; Holmes, Hosch, Daudistel, Perez, & Graves

1993; Holmes, Hosch, Daudistel, Perez, & Graves 1996). Overall, the researchers concluded that Hispanics received more severe sentences than Anglos, even after controlling for differences in the ability of each group's members to retain private counsel and obtain pretrial release (Holmes et al. 1996). Limiting their examination to cases sentenced by juries, however, Daudistel, Hosch, Holmes & Graves (1999) came upon the unexpected finding that Anglo defendants received longer sentences than Hispanic defendants from juries. The level of disparity in sentencing between Anglos and Hispanics was found to increase as the number of Hispanics on the jury rose.

When interpreting these differences in case processing, researchers have favored explanations based on ethnic conflict. Holmes & Daudistel viewed their findings as supporting the "minority threat hypothesis" (Holmes and Daudistel 1984: 274). According to this

hypothesis, the severity of the criminal justice response was related to the perceived threat to dominant group members posed by members of the minority group. In a later study, Holmes et al. (1996: 27) asserted that "the large population of poor Hispanics on both sides of the easily permeable national border [was] perceived . . . by many as threatening to the community's safety and well-being."

These explanations have perpetuated the historical view of ethnic struggles in the borderland, with the criminal justice system serving as an instrument of social control wielded by a small dominant group of Anglos against a numerically large class of economically deprived Hispanics (see Mirande 1987). Typically overlooked by these researchers is the fact that Hispanics currently often have control over local criminal justice agencies in the border region. LaPree (1985) suggested that part of the ethnic disparities found in case processing on the border may result from officials' beliefs that Mexican Nationals are likely to abscond if given pretrial release or sentenced to probation. It is conceivable that Mexican American criminal justice authorities discriminate against Mexican Nationals in this situation. Since previous studies have failed to control for citizenship, it is impossible to discern whether findings of differential case processing were related to ethnicity or nationality.

Broad generalizations drawn from this previous research performed in one county are unwarranted for several other reasons. First, El Paso is unique in its size and location on the U.S. side of the Mexican border. Second, the El Paso

District Attorney's Office has been observing a ban on plea bargains. Third, studies relying on the same databases have drawn varying conclusions.

In the brief analysis to follow, the methodology of Holmes et al. (1996) is replicated with data from a county in the lower Rio Grande Valley. The purpose of the current study is to determine whether the findings from El Paso hold true for a border county with a more traditional system of case processing in which most cases are settled by plea bargains. Further, this study examines the extent to which any detected disparities are related to nationality as opposed to ethnicity.

Data and Measurement

Data were collected from records kept by the Hidalgo County District Clerk. Sampled cases were chosen from the entire population of new felony indictments for 1991-1992. Cases involving parole/probation revocations were excluded from the population, resulting in a final sampling frame with 3,572 cases. A systematic selection procedure was used, wherein every tenth base was drawn from the sampling frame. Because some of the cases had been dismissed and some of the defendants had skipped bail, the total sample amounted to 8.5% (N = 304) of the total universe of cases.¹

The variables included in the analysis and coding of categories match those used by Holmes et al (1996). Four general categories of variables included those measuring legal relevance, social status, legal resources, and sentence severity. Legally relevant variables included the indictment/conviction charge

severity, number of indictment/conviction charges, violent indictment/conviction, degree of physical injury to the victim, use of a firearm, prior felony conviction record, prior misdemeanor conviction record, and jury trial. The social status variables included age of the defendant, sex of the defendant, em-

ployment status, and ethnicity/nationality variables. Legal resource variables included the retention of a private attorney and attainment of pretrial release pending trial.

The major difference between the coding of variables in this study versus

Table 1. Measurement of Predictor Variables

Predictor Variables	Categories
Indictment Charge Severity	3 rd Degree Felony=1 2 nd Degree Felony=2 1 st Degree Felony=3
Conviction Charge Severity	Misdemeanor=1 3 rd Degree Felony=2 2 nd Degree Felony=3 1 st Degree Felony=4
Number of Indictment/Conviction Charges 1-5+	
Drug Indictment/Conviction	No=0: Yes=1
Violent Indictment/Conviction	No=0: Yes=1
Degree of Physical Injury to Victim	None=1: Bodily Injury=2: Serious Bodily Injury=3: Death=4
Use of a Firearm	No=0: Yes=1
Prior Felony Convictions	1-5+
Prior Misdemeanor Convictions	1-5+
Jury Trial	No=0: Yes=1
Defendant's Age	16-69
Female Defendant	No=0: Yes=1
Mexican American Defendant	No=0: Yes=1
Mexican national Defendant	No=0: Yes=1
Stably Employed Defendant	No=0: Yes=1
Private Attorney	No=0: Yes=1
Pretrial Release	No=0: Yes=1

Holmes et al. (1996] relates to ethnicity. First, nationality was added to determine whether any discrimination against Hispanics, if found, was due to ethnicity or nationality. The importance of this distinction was noted, but not tested by, the previous researchers. Second, because nationality was perfectly correlated with ethnicity, it was necessary to combine these variables and dummy code them into Mexican American and Mexican National versus the reference category which included only

Anglos.²

Sentence severity was coded using the scale developed by Holmes and colleagues, which defines it as a continuous variable ranging from 0 = deferred adjudication to 30 = 15 years or more in prison.

Analysis and Findings

Holmes et al. (1996) predicted that legal resources would be differentially distributed by ethnicity and would also be related to the sentence received. In

Table 2. Measure of Sentence Severity with Descriptive statistics

Variable Categories and Values	Hidalgo County	
	N	%
Deferred Adjudication = 0	67	22.0
Probation 1 Year = 1	2	0.7
Probation 2 Year = 2	1	0.3
Probation 3 Year = 3	4	1.3
Probation 4 Years or More or Incarceration in Jail 6 Months or Less = 4	119	39.1
Incarceration in Jail/Prison 6 Months or Less and Probation for Unspecified Period = 5	1	0.3
Incarceration in Jail 7-12 Months = 6	1	0.3
Incarceration in Prison 2 Years = 8	7	2.3
Incarceration in Prison 3 Years = 10	4	1.3
Incarceration in Prison 4 Years = 11	5	1.6
Incarceration in Prison 5 Years = 12	33	10.9
Incarceration in Prison 6-7 Years = 14	14	4.6
Incarceration in Prison 8-10 Years = 17	29	9.5
Incarceration in Prison 11-14 Years = 21	6	2.0
Incarceration in Prison 15 or More Years = 30	11	3.6
	304	100.0

order to account for the possible confounding influence of legal resources on the relationship between race and sentence, Holmes et al. (1996) performed the regression analysis in two stages. The first stage was designed to assess the influence of predictor variables on the availability of legal resources, including both private attorney and pretrial release. Since those variables were dichotomous, logistic regression was used to model both outcomes. Legally relevant variables related to the number and severity of indictment charges were included in both of these models. Private attorney was also included as a predictor variable when modeling the pretrial release decision.

In the second stage, the legal resource variables were included along with other predictor variables to model the sentencing decision. Since the measure of sentence severity is continuous, Ordinary Least Squares Regression was used in the final model. Legally relevant variables related to the number and severity of convictions were included in this final model.

This examination proceeded similarly with a two-stage analysis. The legal resource variables, including private attorney and pretrial release, were treated as dependent variables in the initial equations, but were then treated as predictor variables in the remaining equations. Using this method, both the direct and indirect effects of ethnicity and nationality can be ascertained. To the extent that ethnicity or nationality influenced the legal resource variables in the first stage of analysis, and the extent to which legal resources in turn In-

fluenced sentence severity in the second stage of analysis, ethnicity and nationality may be considered to have had that level of direct effect on sentence severity.

The results presented in Table 3 show that all of the predictors of legal resources were related in the expected direction. The only predictor variable significantly related to the retention of a private attorney was drug indictment. This finding is consistent with the demography of the area, a region in which intensive poverty and a booming illegal economy coexist. Significant predictors of pretrial release included many legal and status variables. All the significant legal variables, including number of indictment charges, violent indictment, and prior felony convictions, were negatively related to pretrial release. The significant status variables, including female defendant, stably employed, and unstably employed, were positively related to pretrial release. Ethnicity/nationality variables were not significantly related to either legal resource; however, Mexican National would have been a significant negative predictor at $p < .10$. This finding suggests that their status and proximity to the border leads criminal justice officials to view Mexican Nationals as poor release risks.

Aside from the number of conviction charges, all of the predictor variables were related to sentence severity in the expected direction. Legal variables significantly related to sentence severity, in order of their beta coefficients, were prior felony conviction, conviction severity, use of a firearm, and

degree of physical injury to the victim. The significant coefficient for jury trial indicates that defendants who demanded a jury trial were penalized for their refusal to plead guilty. The only significant status variable indicates that female defendants received leniency. The ethnicity/nationality variables did not approach the level of statistical significance.

As expected, both legal resource variables were negatively related to sentence severity. Those who were able to obtain private counsel or pretrial release received leniency in sentencing. Because of this direct relationship, those variables that were significant predictors of legal resources indirectly influenced sentence severity. For example, while drug conviction was not directly related to sentence severity, drug indictment influenced sentence severity indirectly through the legal resource variables. Drug indictment was the only significant predictor of private attorney. The ability to retain private counsel was in turn the best predictor of pretrial release. Both the retention of private counsel and pretrial release were significant predictors of sentence severity. In short, because of their ability to acquire legal resources, those indicted for drug offenses received leniency in sentencing.

Conclusion

This study failed to find a relationship between ethnicity and sentence severity in one jurisdiction on the U.S. - Mexican border. Nationality may influence sentence severity indirectly through Mexican Nationals' difficulty in obtaining pretrial release. Overall the

system of case disposition appears to be driven by legally relevant factors, with the caveat that those indicted on drug offenses appear to have an advantage in obtaining legal resources, and in turn receive leniency in sentencing.

Given the current findings, the results from previous research examining ethnicity and criminal case processing on the border should be interpreted with caution. The findings do not support the contentions of Holmes and his colleagues (1984, 1996) that Anglos on the border are overreacting to a perceived threat by the subordinate, and yet numerically dominant group of Hispanics. From this study, it does not appear that Anglos use the criminal law as a means of repressing Hispanics in the border area. Neither, however, does this study support the contention of Daudistel et al. (1999) that Hispanics are using their numeric majority to pay back members of the "economically dominant" Anglo class.

A need exists for research that addresses interpersonal relations and group interaction among Hispanics and Anglos on the U.S.-Mexican border. Research that addresses ethnic relations within the realm of the criminal law or treatment in the criminal justice system is an issue of utmost importance. In researching these issues, however, investigators must be aware of the not so subtle interaction among nationality, social status, and ethnicity. Researchers should use caution in conceptualizing, measuring, and interpreting findings related to ethnic discrimination in case disposition, especially when researching these issues in the borderlands.

Table 3. Regression Coefficients and Standard Errors (in Parentheses) for Regressions of Private Attorney, Pretrial Release and Sentence Severity on Legal and Status Variables

Independent Variables	Hidalgo County		
	Private Attorney	Pretrial Release	Sentence Severity
Indictment Charge/ Conviction Severity	-.205 (.209)	-.200 (.258)	1.208*** (.317) .217
Number of Indictment/ Conviction Charges	.053 (.155)	-.339* (.196)	-1.069* (-.582) -.092
Drug Indictment/ Conviction	1.329*** (.402)	.056 (.523)	-.310 (.625) -.031
Violent Indictment/ Conviction	.149 (.600)	-1.351* (.709)	-.375 (.917) -.029
Degree of Physical Injury to Victim	-.086 (.335)	.599 (.444)	1.211** (.497) .160
Use of a Firearm	-.004 (.696)	-1.180 (.836)	3.087** (1.076) .160
Prior Felony Convictions	-.195 (.152)	-.859*** (.207)	1.691*** (.225) .436
Prior Misdemeanor Convictions	-.057 (.094)	-.081 (.116)	-.106 (.142) -.039
Jury Trial		----	-2.014* (1.170) .086
Defendant's Age	.019 (.016)	-.004 (.023)	-.013 (.025) -.027
Female Defendant	-.711 (.457)	1.883** (.698)	-1.323* (.722) -.102
Mexican American Defendant	-.426 (.428)	.214 (.604)	.630 (.676) .066
Mexican National Defendant	-.568 (.473)	-1.034 (.657)	.838 (.752) .080
Stably Employed Defendant	.311 (.372)	1.019* (.501)	.346 (.586) .036
UnStably Employed Defendant	-.204 (.416)	.987* (.534)	.902 (.629) .086
Private Attorney Defendant	-----	2.837*** (.524)	-.944* (.542) -.097
Pretrial Release	-----	-----	-1.852** (.607) -.188
Constant	-.458	.445	1.562
-2 Log Likelihood	277.6	182.0	-----
Model Chi Square	31.4	117.3	-----
Adjusted R ²	-----	-----	.514
N	232	232	232

Endnotes

¹The sampling procedure differs from that of Holmes et al. (1996). They stratified by jury trials versus guilty pleas, then over-sampled jury trials and weighted the cases accordingly for analysis. Lacking this data element in the Hidalgo County computerized database, it was impossible for us to stratify the sampling frame in advance. Perusing all of the cases to determine how they were sentenced was not possible. Since Holmes et al. (1996) weighted their sample according to the probability of occurrence in the population of cases, our method resulted in a similar outcome by chance.

²The dummy variable "Black" is not included herein because none of the sampled cases involved Black defendants. The only other variable code that differs from those included in Holmes et al. (1996) was related to employment status. In our analysis, two dummy variables were coded, stable employment and unstable employment. Due to the small number of cases, the "out of labor force" category included as a dummy variable by Holmes and colleagues is combined with unemployment in the reference category herein.

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Geografías ficticias en Tierra de Aztlan

Hay escritores americanos, no importa si viven en Estados Unidos o en alguno de los países al sur de este, que tienden a crear pueblos ficticios. Pensando en los famosos mundos míticos de William Faulkner (Jefferson), Gabriel García Márquez (Macondo), Juan Rulfo (Comala) y Juan Carlos Onetti (Santamaria), una posible pregunta sería por que fueron creados y por que crecen en número estas ciudades inventadas.¹

A manera de explicación, Octavio Paz nos recuerda en *Puertas al campo* que "Nuestra literatura es la respuesta de la realidad de los americanos a la realidad utopia de America. Antes de tener existencia historica propia, empezamos por ser una idea europea" (16). Existe, segun Paz y otros, la necesidad de inventar nuestra propia realidad en la literatura. Una manera de realizar esta meta, la creacion de pueblos ficticios, es lo que se trata en el presente estudio. Los pueblos de geografías inventadas tienden a basarse en ciudades reales con diferentes nombres son un compuesto de varios otros para crear uno diferente pero típico de todos. El propósito de este estudio no es enfocarnos en el irreal y fantástico espacio de escritores como Jorge Luis Borges sino que específicamente en el pueblo ficticio: el pueblo

donde el escritor funda un espacio americano típico mientras se desarrolla y se establece una realidad americana.

Paz, en el mismo libro ya citado, habla de la ciudad irreal que no estudiamos. El escribe que "El Buenos Aires de Borges es tan irreal como sus babilonias y sus ninives. Estas ciudades son metáforas, pesadillas, silogismos." (20). "La obra de este poeta no solo postula la inexistencia de America sino la inevitabilidad de su invención. O, dicho de otro modo: la literatura hispanoamericana es una pregunta intrigante relacionada con la America inventada y la America que existe: ¿Inventar la realidad o rescatarla?" (21). Se verá en este estudio que los escritores que utilizan la ciudad ficticia, lo sepan ellos o no, rescatan y muestran lo que es América, e igualmente, muestran que el continente y su gente no son lo que inventó Europa.

Como ya se ha dicho, los pueblos inventados son numerosos y se encuentran en las obras de autores de países tan diversos como los Estados Unidos (Texas, Nuevo México, Arizona y California), México, Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Cuba, Colombia, Uruguay, Argentina y Chile². Sin embargo, y por las dificultades de cubrir

las obras de un territorio tan vasto en este breve estudio, opté por una revisión de seis escritores (Marco Antonio Samaniego, Miguel Méndez, Mónica Lavín, Denise Chávez, Jesús Gardea y Víctor Hugo Rascon Banda) y sus pueblos imaginarios (Atabalpa, Santa María de las Piedras, Agua Oscura, San Lorenzo, Placeres y Santa Rosa) que se hallan en la región conocida como tierras de Aztlán y los estados norteños mexicanos. Chihuahua, Sonora y Baja California.

En los pueblos ficticios de este estudio se ven algunos rasgos que todos tienen en común. Tienden a ser pueblos remotos y aislados, perdidos en el desierto o las montañas donde la gente trabaja, ama y sufre en el calor. Y si has más de una novela, suelen aparecer los mismos personajes novela tras novela. El resultado de esta repetición autointer-textual³ es que nos sentimos cómodos al conocer a viejos amigos que continúan la lucha en el mismo espacio.

Placeres, del mexicano Jesús Gardea (1939), aparece en seis novelas y cuatro libros de cuentos empezando con su primera novela, *El so que estas-miranod* (1981) y formando así unas crónicas del desierto chihuahuense. En esta primera novela, el narrador describe la fundación del pueblo y presenta al primer habitante, el viudo Lautaro Labrisa y la primera familia, la Galvez, y a través de las siguientes novelas y cuentos, la saga gardeana continúa de manera que el lector llega a conocer a la familia Paniagua y a otros muchos que viven y mueren bajo el sol ardiente del desierto.

Conforma Placeres de acuerdo al

criterio que uno espera de estos pueblos ya que es remoto, hace calor y según Tego, "se caracteriza, al igual que otros pueblos del país, por sus marcadas limitaciones en varios renglones: pese a incipientes indicios de urbanización (energía, eléctrica, automóviles), conserva gran parte de la marginación de amplios sectores rurales de ayer y de hoy en la república" (61). Otra característica común es que Placeres, pueblo ficticio, se basa en otro real, Delicias. Según José Manuel García-García, "En verdad, la mayoría de los datos se refieren a la ciudad de Delicias y fueron tomados del *Diccionario de historia, geografía y biografía chihuahuenses* de Francisco R. Almada" (56).

Otro pueblo hipotético del norte de México es San Lorenzo de Mónica Lavín (1955) que se encuentra en *Tonada de un viejo amor* (1996). En esta, la primera novela publicada por Lavín, la narración cubre los años 40 y los 50 de este pueblo viticultor y algodonero donde viven los Velasco y los Fonseca y donde hay "una frontera abismal entre pobres y ricos" (117). Es un poblado atrasado de noticias donde la gente es un poco inocente, la cual está sugerido por la siguiente pregunta de Mercedes: "No estaría mal llevar jazz a San Lorenzo, ¿verdad prima?" (96). Nos dice la portada del libro que "*Tonada de un viejo amor* relata las calladas pasiones de los personajes que alrededor de San Lorenzo luchan por el amor, la posesión, la aceptación y el olvido." Pero lo que nos interesa más en este estudio es el mero pueblo.

Para ubicar San Lorenzo, localizado

en el norte del país, sabemos que esta lejos de la Ciudad de México y, por mencionar Ciudad Juárez y El Paso, debe estar en el estado de Chihuahua como esta Placeres y el próximo pueblo ficticio que comentamos a continuación, Santa Rosa. San Lorenzo carece de descripciones sostenidas a expensas de un gran número de menciones del pueblo al estilo de "la modista de San Lorenzo." O sea, sin importar tanto la mera mención, al nombrar frecuentemente el pueblo, se crea un punto de referencia regional que resulta en una definición territorial concreta aunque sea una geografía ficticia. También, y a menudo, hace mención de la Ciudad de México que sirve de contrapunto al pueblo de San Lorenzo. El personaje que pasa tiempo en San Lorenzo se aburre y cuando está en la capital ahora lo que ofrece el pueblo. La vida en San Lorenzo recuerda, en un sentido, la *Vida retirada* de fray Luis de León o, mejor, un eco lejano de *Beatus ille* horaciano en que si no alaba la placidez, y ventajas de la vida campestre, seguramente existe la sugerencia.

Reuniendo los pocos detalles que hay tocante al aspecto físico del pueblo uno puede crear un concepto rudimentario. Por ejemplo, se lee "los hombres y las mujeres se convencían de que la quietud de San Lorenzo era el paraíso" (29), "el polvo seco del desierto" (57), "la tierra generosa de San Lorenzo" (97) y "el verdor de San Lorenzo, la belleza del cerro de laja desnudo en el horizonte" (108).

Santa Rosa, que figura en *Volver a Santa Rosa* (1996), es la primera novela

publicada por el dramaturgo mexicano Victor Hugo Rascon Banda (1948). Es un "pueblo minero perdido en la Baja Tarahumara." (74) "Como todos los pueblos mineros" (69) y "nada iba a cambiar en Santa Rosa" (138). Santa Rosa, según Rascon Banda, es el pueblo donde el nació (Uruachic, Chihuahua) pero a continuación el mismo dice "Empiezo a recuperar mundos que viví, soñé o imaginé lo que coloca al pueblo entre la norma, o sea, un pueblo ficticio que se basa en uno real." Rascon Banda, como nos dice en la entrevista, trata de "revelar los mundos de los pueblos mineros que están suspendidos en el tiempo allá en la sierra" (14). Esta geografía norteña de Rascon Banda sirve para revelar no el mundo de los hombres de desierto que trata Gardea sino los de la sierra de Chihuahua. Así con Gardea (el desierto), Rascon Banda (la montaña) y la tierra agrícola (vino y algodón) de Lavín se cubre gran parte del territorio norteño de México. Con la obra de Samaniego que comentamos a continuación, resulta que esta cubierto casi todo el norte de la República Mexicana.

El tijuaneño Marco Antonio Samaniego (1965) y su *Donde las voces se guardan* (1993) da vida al pueblo ficticio de Atabalpa.⁵ En las primeras líneas de la novela se lee, "Es que allá en Atabalpa todo es distinto, la calor no te deja hacer nada. Puro sol todo el día, hasta de noche esta sudando la gente" (7). Estas dos oraciones son irónicas porque la descripción es típica de cualquier ciudad ficticia. Es un pueblo remoto donde ". . . el silencio se escuchaba en

cada rincón . . . "(73), y donde el sol y el polvo compiten para crear más molestia y todo es bien seco porque ". . . el agua nunca llegó a Atabalpa . . ." (58). Los atabalpenses sufren porque no hay agua: ". . . el arroyo se seco" (62) y en sus calles hay "polvo que se levanta a cada paso, sol imponente" (86) y son pobres: ". . . la mina dejó de escupir plata" (9) aunque en un tiempo ". . . el pueblo era rico y había mucho mineral" (8).

Cruzando la frontera uno espera mejor vida y es así en parte. *Face of an Angel* (1994) de Denise Chavez, la única novela de este grupo escrita en inglés, es donde surge su pueblo ficticio que ha nombrado Agua Oscura. Es un pueblo remoto y aislado— ". . . the Lagrimas Mountains, a vast range over six thousand feet high that encircled Agua Oscura like a crown of stones" (324)—de quinientos habitantes, en 1875, localizado en el condado de Natividad del estado de Nuevo México (7). Es en este pueblo donde Manuel Dosamantes en 1875 halla su fortuna. ". . . when he got to Agua Oscura, he found a job, right off, on a farm belonging to Jorge Campos. In time he became the foreman, and then the manager" (8). Con el tiempo se murió el patrón y luego su esposa y Manuel compraron la tierra. Para 1885 la población ha crecido, "Agua Oscura now had a population of nearly two thousand" (8). Es la historia de Soveida Dosamantes (1948) y la saga de la familia Dosamantes cuya historia en Agua Oscura se remonta al siglo pasado cuando Manuel Dosamantes Iturbide (1850 - 1935) vino al pueblo nuevomexicano.⁶

El bisabuelo de Soveida nació en Guanajuato, México y el joven aventurero cruzó la frontera en Nuevo Laredo y pasó algunos años trabajando en Texas (Fort Davis) antes de continuar su viaje para California, un viaje que terminó en Agua Oscura. Como se espera, hace calor en Agua Oscura, ". . . an unbearably hot June . . ." (331) lo que es común en esta tierra seca aunque hay inundaciones notables como la de 1885 (9) y luego en 1975 (362).

De los dos pueblos ficticios que se encuentran en la región fronteriza: Agua Oscura y el último pueblo que comento en este estudio, Santa María de las Piedras de Miguel Méndez (1930), no hay tantas oportunidades en Santa María como en aquella. El desierto de Sonora no ofrece tanta prosperidad y Santa María de las Piedras, nos explica Keith Watts, "esta a punto de caerse; esta sumergido en la miseria y rodeado de una naturaleza enemiga, donde el tremendo calor calentaba los sesos y hacía hervir el mar de frustraciones y ofios que anegaba a gente por generaciones . . ." (183). El pueblo aparece en algunas pocas líneas como "muchos juraron que el tal pueblo de Santa María de las Piedras, ubicado en el mero desierto, era pura alucinación de trastornados" (24) en *De la vida y del folclore de la frontera* (1986) y su presentación más importante y más sostenida se encuentra en *El sueño de Santa María de las Piedras* (1986).⁷ En esta novela el lector descubre como es el pueblo— ". . . el tremendo calor. . ." y ". . . su suelo es pedregoso y avaro . . ." (56-57). Y con estos rasgos que ya

se han visto que tienen en común la mayoría de los pueblos ficticios, Arturo C. Flores escribe tocantes a este, "El pueblo ficticio se transforma en metáfora y, a la vez, en una sintesis de cualquier pueblo fronterizo"(162).

De los seis pueblos que se estudian en el presente trabajo, se halla más historia fechada en los dos últimos. Por ejemplo, en Agua Oscura la primera fecha que se menciona es 1885 cuando el pueblo ya exista. El narrador, hablando de Manuel, dice que "He waited ten years. At age thirty-five Manuel Dosamentes was in the prime of of his manhood"(8). Al consultar la geneología descubrimos que Manuel nació en 1850 y, después de una espera de diez años, sabemos que llegó al pueblo en 1875. La edad de Santa María de las Piedras es aun mayor. Respecto a este, Rolande Walter nos recuerda que ". . . the historical fragmanes of a fictitious, yet universal Mexican town in the sonora desert between 1830 and 1987"(104) fechas que establecen una historia de existencia aun mas larga para Santa María de las Piedras. Sin embargo, y a pesar de tener mas años, nada es concreto, y al contrario, todo es efimero y mítico en el ultimo pueblo mencionado. Flores apunta que "Santa Maria de las Piedras no existe como pueblo. Ni siquiera se intuye su nombre. Es como un teatro vacío, sin público ni escenario"(268). Flores continua explicando que hay dos historias clasificadas en la dicstomia "no exis-

tencia" y "existencia." La primera división incluye la época de 331 años entre 1654 y 1985. El año de 1985 sirve como el centro. La segunda division es el tiempo del viaje de Timoteo que duró 14 años hasta el año venidero de 1999.

Al pensar en la realidad de cada uno de los seis pueblos ficticios del presente estudio, es claro que el clima, la gente y el espacio geográfico es netamente americano. A pesar de los toques de realismo mágico de *El sueño de Santa María de las Piedras*, no se ve la fantasía inventada por los europeos donde hay ciudades como El Dorado hecho de orno ni los pueblos utópicos como la Utopía de Thomas More que data de 1515 y la Arcadia de Phillip Sidney que se remonta a 1590. Pero si, existe la realidad que se encuentra en pueblos como Placeres, Atabalpa, Santa Rosa, Agua Oscura y Santa María de las Piedras. Y lo que es más, todo el mundo conoce un pueblo tal, como son estos y la gente que vive en cada uno de ellos. Existe la necesidad de inventer nuestra realidad americana en la literatura como acierta Propz y yo opino que no hay lugar mas apropiado que el espacio geográfico para esta meta. Ya mencionamos que las geografías inventadas tienden a basarse en ciudades reales. También, y a veces, son un compuesto de varias que existen en el mapa lo que subraya el aspecto realista de ellas. El escritor que funda un espacio ficticio americano no necesita inventar la realidad sino rescatarla.

Notas

¹ Este estudio es parte de un proyecto extenso sobre los pueblos ficticios que resultará en un libro. El título tentativo es *Fictional Worlds of Latin America*. Ya tengo seis artículos ineditos que tratan el mismo tema: "Mythical Worlds of Latin American Writers" (se publicara próximamente en *Confluencia*, vol. 4, num. 2), "¿Influencia faulkneriana o experiencia mundonovista?" "Las crónicas de Beyhale y Maravillas" fue presentado en la Universidad de Costa Rica en el verano de 1996 y que fue publicado en *Kanina: Revista de Artes y Letras de la Universidad de Costa Rica*, Vol. XXI, 71-75, 1997. Además del presente estudio, otros todavía inéditos son "carpentier, Puig y geografías inventadas," "Los pueblos ficticios de Rosa Maria Britton," y "El pueblo ficticio en escritoras hispanoamericanas."

² En este momento tengo listados unos treinta y tres pueblos ficticios con varios más como probables. Hay otros pueblos imaginarios de México y los Estados Unidos que serán tratados en futuros trabajos. Estos pueblos en tierras de Aztlan son: "Tome" de Ana Castillo y su país ficticio, "Sapagonia," "Taconos" de Mary Helen Ponce, y "Tierra Amarilla" de Sabine R. Ulibarri. Entre los mexicanos figuran: "Luvino" y "Comala" de Juan Rulfo, el pueblo sin nombre (Yahualica) de Agustín Yáñez, Albores de Alfredo Espinosa, Carrizales de Ricardo Elizondo Elizondo, Ciudad Moctezuma de Homero Aridjis, Puerto santo de Luisa Josefina Hernández y San Lázaro de Silvia Molina. Ya figuran en otros estudios del presente investigador "Klail City" del chicano Rolando Hinojosa y "Beyhual" y "Maravillas" del yucateco Joaquín Bestard.

³ Con este término se señala la costumbre de un escritor de utilizar el mismo pueblo, personajes e incidentes en varias de sus obras. Viene de Edward Walter Hood, "La repetición autointertextual en la narrativa de Gabriel García Márquez," Diss. U. of Cal., Irvine, 1990. Se encuentra en DAI, vo. 51-06A, página 2034, 258 páginas de extensión.

⁴ Estos datos se encuentran en una entrevista con Hernán Beerra Pino, "Entrevista con Víctor Hugo Rascon Banda: Los cuentos del dramaturgo," en el suplemento dominical de periódico mexicano *La Jornada*, 14, sin fecha.

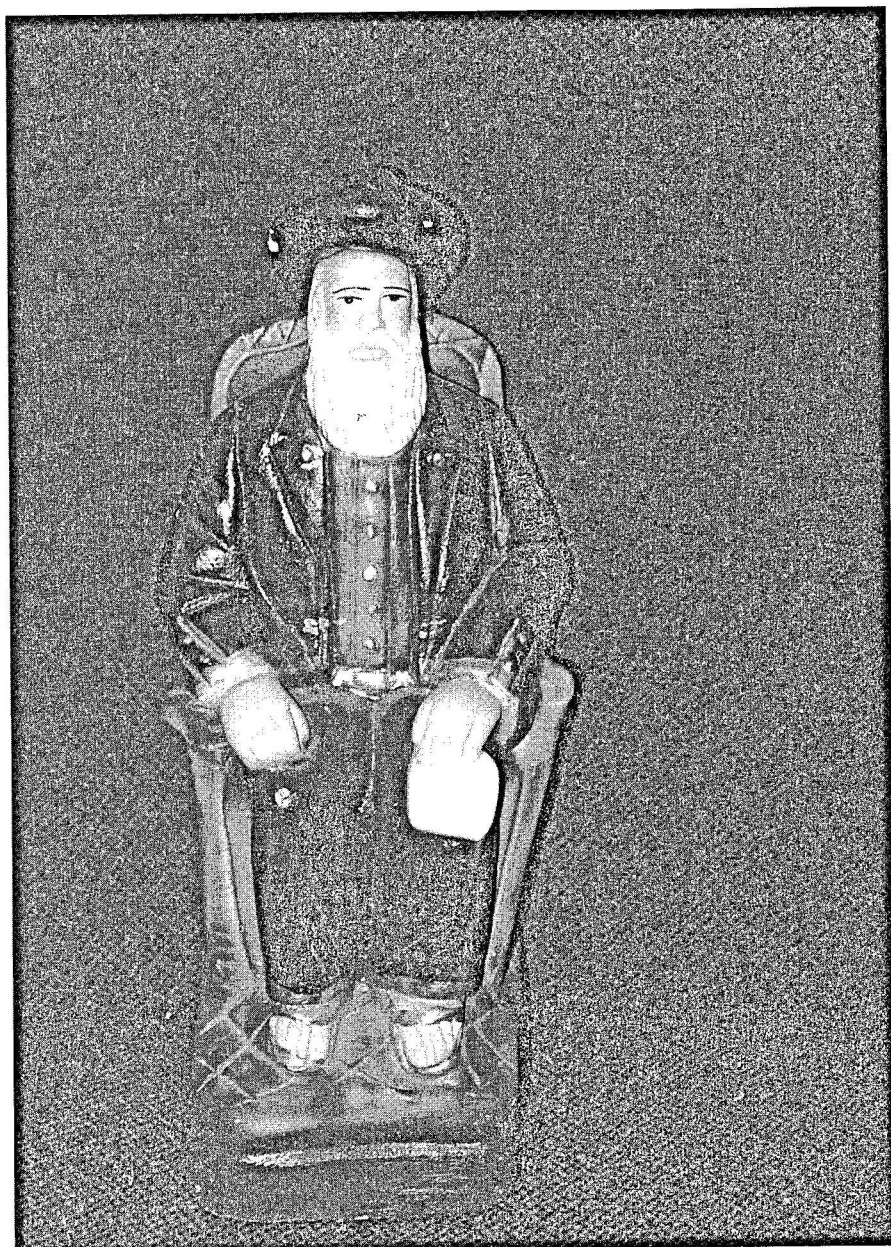
⁵ Esta primera novela de Samaniego ganó el Premio Agustín Yáñez en 1992.

⁶ Esta novela tiene su genealogía de la familia Dosaantes como *Cien años de soledad* tiene su genealogía de los Buendía.

⁷ Véase varios artículos que tratan *El sueño de Santa María de las Piedras*: Arturo C. Flores, "Compromiso y escritura: Miguel Méndez y la imagen referencial" en *Confluencia* (Spring 1990) 161-167; "La memoria como proceso constructivo en *El sueño de Santa María de las Piedras* de Miguel Méndez, en *Cuadernos Americanos*, 131-140; Roland Walter, "Social and Magical Realism in Miguel Méndez" *El sueño de Santa María de las Piedras* en *The Americas Review*, 18.1 (Primavera 1990) 103-112; Keith E. Watts, "Símbolos cosmológicos en el mundo narrativo de un sonador comprometido: *El sueño de Santa María de las Piedras* de Miguel Méndez" en *Confluencia* (Spring 1996) 177-187.

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Don Pedrito Jaramillo

—Dr. Mark Glazer

Reviews/ Reseñas

Chicano Empowerment and Bilingual Education: Movimiento Politics in Crystal City, Texas

Armando L. Trujillo

Crystal City, Texas, has long attracted the interest of scholars specializing in Chicano studies. It attracted the interest of Armando L. Trujillo, author of *Chicano Empowerment and Bilingual Education* (1998), in much the same way that it has attracted that of other people: because of the town's reputation as an epicenter of Chicano political organizing. When Trujillo first arrived in Crystal City in 1988, he brought this image of the town along with him. It was not until months later, he relates, that the mystique of Crystal as a "die-hard Chicano stronghold cultivating radical ethnic consciousness through schooling" (p.6) gave way to a very different picture. Instead of finding the Chicano community unified in its vision of bilingual/bicultural education, Trujillo discerned much more complex understandings of educational reform among locals. *Chicano Empowerment* is the story of this discovery for Trujillo.

His portrait of Crystal City educational and political developments begins with a description of the surrounding

"Winter Garden" region of Texas and of its prevailing ethnic relations. The Winter Garden is noted as a vegetable growing region whose commercial successes are due heavily to the abundance of cheap Mexican and Mexican-American labor. With the land-owning Anglo-American minority firmly in control of political and educational institutions, any Mexican-American directed change to these institutions amounted to a threat to Anglo hegemony. As Mexican-American political power grew in the 1960s, so grew the threat to Anglo elites, with the local elections of 1970 marking a turning point in the balance of community power. In this election the Crystal City school board came under the control of local Mexican-Americans for the first time in its history, setting the stage for two decades of educational policy experimentation.

As its title suggests, *Chicano Empowerment* places primary emphasis on the bilingual education experience in Crystal City. However, Trujillo set out not simply to chronicle the institutional

experience of bilingual education, but also to understand the environment in which bilingual education policies unfolded. He went about this in a very deliberate manner: beginning at the level of the school district, he narrowed his focus to particular themes, topics, and key informants, including administrators, coordinators, and teachers. Trujillo also explored student records, reviewing language proficiency test scores, questionnaires, and other documents. He then repeated this procedure at the community level, following up on leads provided by people in the education field. In this way he contacted key individuals who had either played important community roles in the 1970s or who were currently playing such roles.

Taking institutional and community conditions into account, Trujillo focuses on how Crystal City bilingual education policy shifted from one aimed at elevating the status of the Spanish language to that of the dominant language, to one aimed at transitioning students into English. This process took place steadily through the 1970s as support for K-12 Spanish maintenance weakened. In the 1980s, with the greater national emphasis on standardized test scores and attention to educational "excellence" over equity, the bicultural/bilingual program underwent its final debilitation.

To understand how this policy shift occurred, Trujillo frames local educational objectives against the ascendancy of La Raza Unida Party, the locally-

founded party which coalesced Chicano interests in the 1970 elections. He finds that, in important ways, the successes of bilingual education measures determined the political fortunes of LRUP. This became especially evident in the mid 1970s when community members increasingly broke ranks with the Spanish maintenance goals of the party and school board. Many Mexican-Americans left the party altogether, arguing that LRUP was forcing a bilingual program upon those families who preferred that their children not enroll in one. With growing doubt about the effectiveness of, and need for, bilingual education, many inside and outside the party voiced their dissent. In Trujillo's view, the lion's share of this dissent focused on one player: José Angel Gutiérrez.

As a founding member of La Raza Unida Party, Gutiérrez is credited with persuading Crystal City Chicanos to vote their way to social change in the late 1960s. The town, fresh from the experiences of the 1969 high school "blowouts," did just that when it elected him school board president the following year. As president, and with the support of other newly-elected LRUP officials, Gutiérrez set the bilingual/bicultural agenda in motion and remained the driving personality behind it through the early 1970s. Trujillo argues, however, that many local people eventually complained that LRUP officials, including Gutiérrez, were too militant in their goals, and too domineering in leadership style. They also argued that LRUP was making curricular changes too

quickly and that the party even expected local teachers to proselytize for it. As more Mexican-Americans became disaffected with Gutiérrez and the party, more of them distanced themselves from the original educational and other goals of the Chicano movement.

Trujillo repeatedly emphasizes that bilingual education policies in Crystal City came about not in a vacuum, but rather as the result of specific political behaviors. The Gutiérrez/LRUP case exemplifies, for him, how this is so. It also illustrates how Mexican-American "ethnoregional" and "ethnoterritorial" concerns can also motivate political thought and behavior. These concerns speak especially well to the Chicano experience in the U.S. Southwest, Trujillo argues, because of the way so much of the Chicano experience is underwritten by an awareness of cultural "space," or even by nationalist claims to "place."

Individuals familiar with the Crys-

tal City case will already be familiar with much of what *Chicano Empowerment and Bilingual Education* contains. Readers will likely find that, although Trujillo's work offers some useful insights on the case, the first three chapters of the book are somewhat terse, hinting at a dissertation. Later chapters, which incorporate interview materials and more recent community data, are more compelling, although some of the included quote translations lack fine tuning. To its credit, however, the text does attempt to be bilingual. Some readers might also find the text to be highly repetitive, especially with respect to the political underpinnings of bilingual education policy. Still, Trujillo does a commendable job of framing Crystal City events in a larger context of party politics, ethnicity, and changing educational needs. His work reminds us, as Crystal City *mexicanos* have found, that the electoral path to reform is not always a straight one.

Servando Z. Hinojosa
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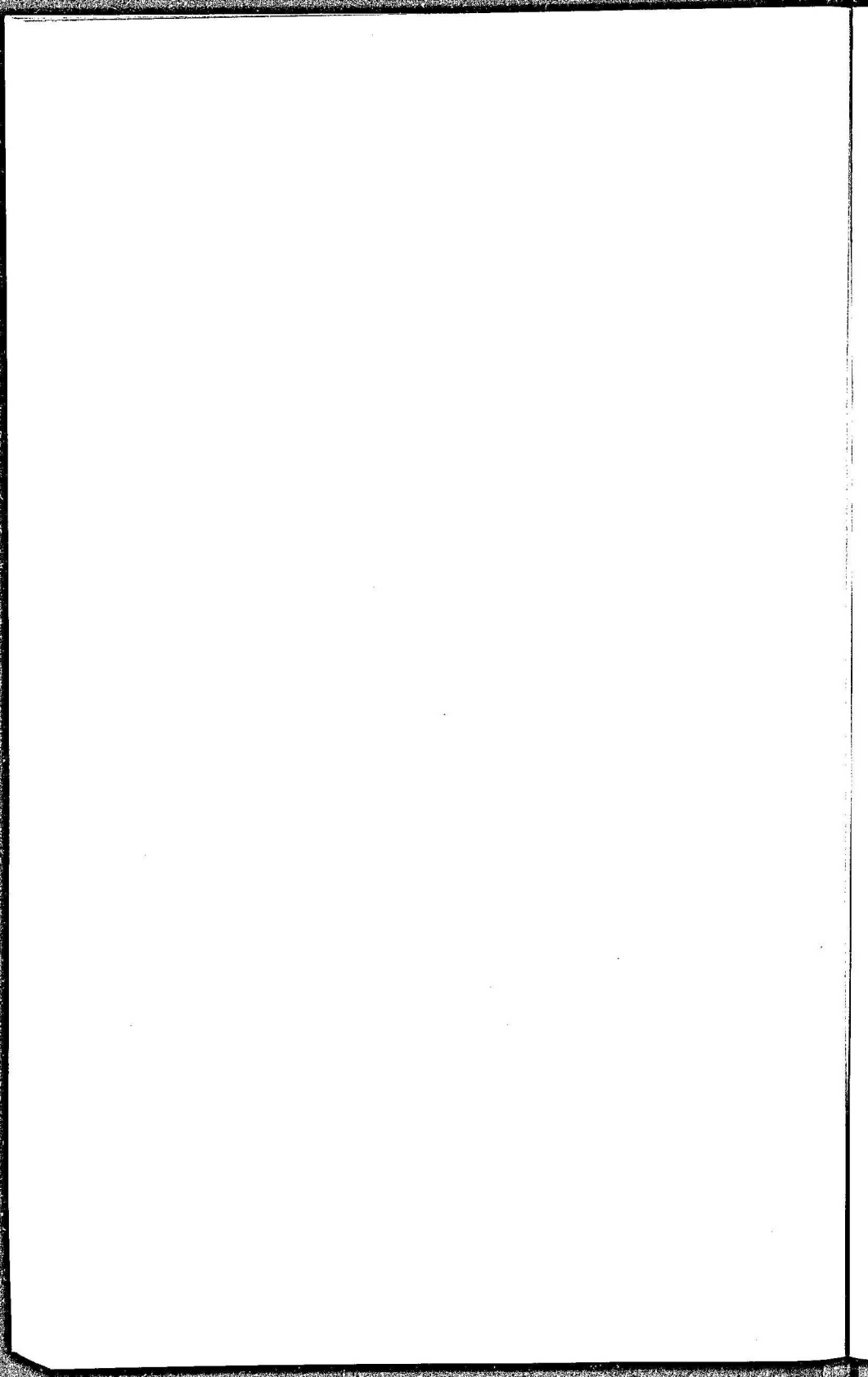
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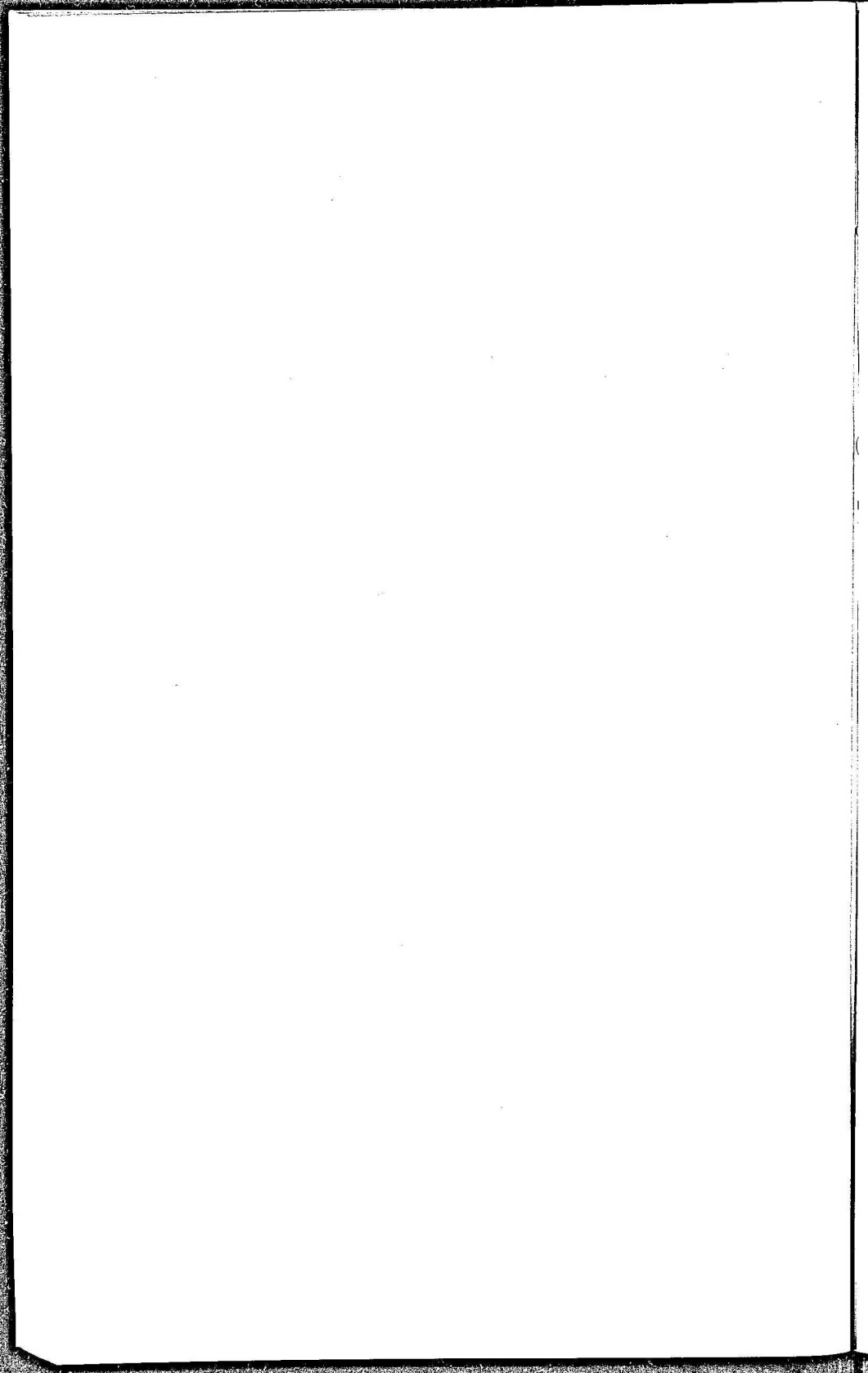
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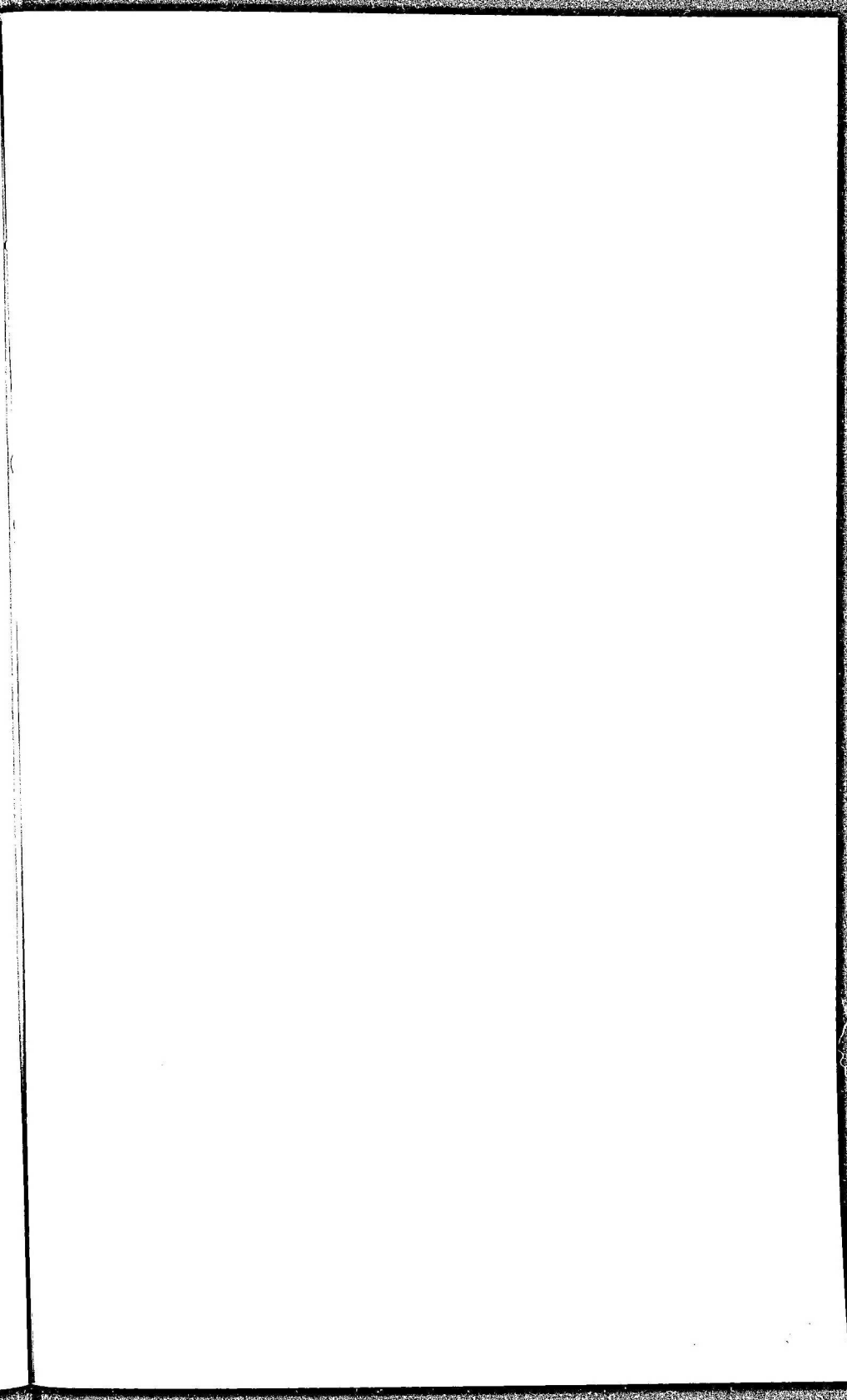
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