

## RETURN MIGRATION OF TAMAULIPAS LABORERS

SIMÓN PEDRO IZCARA PALACIOS

### **Abstract.**

The new economics of labor migration explain return as a result of increased deprivation and decreased satisfaction in the host society; i.e., immigrants will return to their country of origin if others in the host society have more goods than they do and they have access to fewer goods than before. This article argues that rural workers from Tamaulipas who are employed in the U.S. agricultural sector are returning to their communities of origin because their position within the U.S. social hierarchy is lower than in Mexico, and they have access to fewer assets in the United States because the cost of living is higher than in Tamaulipas.

**Keywords:** Return migration, day laborers, new economics of labor migration, Tamaulipas, United States.

## INTRODUCTION

Until the mid-1980s, return was widespread within the Mexico-United States migration system because the main motivation to emigrate was not the desire to settle permanently in the United States (Massey et al., 2009: 59). However, the Amnesty Act of 1986 and the strengthening of border control disrupted the ongoing system and interrupted return frequency; the 1990s saw a significant decrease in the return rate (González González, 2009: 60). As the cost of emigrating increased, return became more and more counterproductive.

Members of the rural Tamaulipas population have migrated for decades to the United States as day laborers to compensate for their reduced agricultural income in Mexico. This has been taking place illicitly and through guest worker programs. Until the 1980s, Tamaulipas laborers crossed the border without much problem, settled mostly in the Texan valley, and only stayed for a few months. U.S. measures against irregular migration altered this pattern. Since the 1990s, laborers have had to move further away from border areas in search of higher wages, and returning to Mexico after a short stay has ceased to be profitable. As of 2004, but mainly after February 2010, the growing involvement of criminal groups in border management has increased the risks and costs of migration. The number of Tamaulipas laborers who migrate without documents is lower than five years ago and return frequency has decreased. As a result, guest worker programs have become more attractive, and an increasing number of day laborers is seeking to migrate using the H-2A visas.

Durand (2004: 105) distinguishes three types of return: that of temporary migrants subject to guest worker programs, that of migrants who return after a long stay abroad, and transgenerational return. This paper focuses on Tamaulipeco workers employed in the U.S. agricultural sector, addressing the first two types of return and the reason why workers go back to Tamaulipas.

## METHODOLOGY

This research is based on a qualitative methodology using in-depth interviews. Respondents were chosen via intentionally stratified sampling so that the sample was segmented into two layers: (i) laborers who had migrated at least once to the United States without documents, and (ii) workers who were hired with H-2A visas to work in the agricultural sector.

The sample comprised 100 respondents. Between the months of March 2007 and June 2008, 50 laborers who migrated without papers were interviewed across 38 rural communities in 13 Tamaulipas municipalities. Half of the interviews were conducted southwest, in the most marginalized area of the state (the municipalities of Tula and Jaumave), where the low profitability of maize, beans, and Aloe Vera is forcing peasants to emigrate. Thirteen interviews were carried out in the central citrus-growing area (the municipalities of Guémez, Hidalgo and Victoria), and the sugarcane area of the south (El Mante and Antigua Morelos), both characterized by a strong presence of laborers. Six interviews were carried out in the livestock-raising area east of the state (Aldama and Soto la Marina). Four interviews were carried out in the center-northwest region (Villagrán and San Carlos), an area where the low price of maize, beans, safflower and sorghum have led to depopulation. Finally, 2 interviews were conducted in the north of the state (Valle Hermoso).

Fifty Tamaulipas workers who have participated at least once in the H-2A guest worker program were interviewed between the months of March, 2007 to October 2008. Interviews were conducted in 30 communities across 9 municipalities. Thirty-five took place in the citrus area of the state (composed of the municipalities of Guémez, Hidalgo, Padilla, Llera, and Victoria). Six laborers were interviewed in the southwest (Tula and Jaumave), the poorest area of the state. Two final rural municipalities were selected, one in the center-northeast zone (Abasolo, 6 interviews) and one in the center-northwest (San Carlos, 3 interviews). These areas are characterized by a high rate of emigration and population loss due to the fall in maize, beans, safflower and sorghum prices.

The selection of a large number of representative Tamaulipas agricultural localities was intended to provide encompassing answers (Mason, 1997: 6; McCracken, 1988).

## ON RETURN MIGRATION.

Theoretical studies on international migration have not sufficiently addressed migrant return. Neoclassical economic theory, the new economics of labor migration, and the theory of social capital offer conflicting and contradictory explanations.

Neoclassical economic theory explains migration from a cost and benefit viewpoint. Migration processes are the result of economically guided individual decisions that seek to maximize income by moving from areas characterized by low wages to areas with higher wages (Harris and Todaro, 1970: 127; Herrera Lima, 2005: 55 and 56).

This theory views migration as a one-way process that entails a definitive departure from the place of origin. Because emigrants seek to maximize earnings in the host society, where they find better economic opportunities, return is seen as an irrefutable expression of the failure of the migration process. Emigrants return to their community of origin only if they were not able to benefit from the host society's more favorable labor market. Therefore, successful return is impossible. Returning migrants do so in a situation of economic hardship because they were unable to obtain more economic resources in the host society. Return is a reversal, going back to the place of departure.

In contrast, the new economics of labor migration stress the transitional character of the migratory process: emigration aims to save enough money to return and enjoy greater prestige and social status in the community of origin (Constant and Massey, 2002: 9-12).

Emigrants live halfway between the origin and receiving societies, where they experience different levels of "deprivation" and "satisfaction." The concept of deprivation is relative, because it measures the ability of an individual to acquire property in relation to the extant standard in their group of reference. This term is defined by absence. Deprivation is not having that which is common in the reference group and the con-

cept of satisfaction measures an individual's capacity to procure certain goods and services. Migrants experience more or less satisfaction in the country of destination than in the home country depending on whether their purchasing power there allows them to acquire more or less goods and services than in the place of origin. By the same token, migrants suffer more or less deprivation in the host society depending on whether their capacity to acquire goods compares favorably or negatively to the reference group's prevalent standard.

Satisfaction and deprivation are not symmetrical concepts. An immigrant can find more satisfaction and less deprivation in the destination country than in the place of origin; more satisfaction and further deprivation; less satisfaction and less deprivation, or less satisfaction and further deprivation. Only when the immigrant experiences less deprivation and more satisfaction in the host society than in the place of departure does the migration process become unidirectional (Izcara Palacios, 2009: 13).

According, Stark and Yitzhaki (1988: 63), return is only prevented by the following scenario:

$$(P_B < P_A) + (S_B > S_A)$$

Where:

P = deprivation.

S = satisfaction

A = society of departure

B = society of destination

An example of this scenario is described by Thomas and Znaniecki (2004: 255) in their analysis of the Raczkowski series. In a letter written on June 27, 1906 to his sister Teofila, residing in Poland, Adam Raczkowski from Wilmington, Delaware states, when speaking of his brother Franciszek Raczkowski: "And as to our country, brother says he will not return, because there is nothing to return for ... He has no property there, and it is better for him in America, because in our country he could not even earn enough for a loaf of bread." Then, referring to his own situa-

tion, he writes: “And I also do not know whether I shall return or not. If I can return then perhaps I shall return some day or other, and if not I don’t mind, because I do ten times better in America than in our country.” The Raczkowski brothers did not plan to return to Poland because, in the United States,  $(P_B < P_A)$  and  $(S_B > S_A)$ . That is, deprivation in the United States was lower than that in Poland. As pointed out by Thomas and Znaniecki (2004: 250), a Polish peasant in the United States could ascend in the social hierarchy faster than in Poland and their satisfaction was higher (as Adam Raczkowski put it, ten times better than in Poland).

The new economics of labor migration see staying in the host nation as the exception rather than the rule. While a single “ $(P_B < P_A) + (S_B > S_A)$ ” scenario means the settlement in the host country, there are three more: “ $(P_B > P_A) + (S_B < S_A)$ ”; “ $(P_B < P_A) + (S_B < S_A)$ ”; “ $(P_B > P_A) + (S_B > S_A)$ ,” all of which favor a return to the home community. That is, return occurs when deprivation in the host country is higher and satisfaction is lower “ $(P_B > P_A) + (S_B < S_A)$ ”; when the first and last are lower “ $(P_B < P_A) + (S_B < S_A)$ ,” or when the two are higher “ $(P_B > P_A) + (S_B > S_A)$ ”.

In contrast to the neoclassical model, which envisages the return as a failure, the new economy of labor migration views it as proof of success. A person migrates due to high levels of deprivation and low levels of satisfaction in the place of origin. Return means that he or she managed to reverse this situation thanks to the savings accumulated in the host country. Returning migrants are always successful and they would not go back voluntarily if, upon arrival, they found themselves unable to access more goods and services than those enjoyed before migrating or climb up the social ladder because their acquisition capacity remains below the standard of their reference group. Therefore, emigration will last until the migrant manages to exceed the standard threshold of access to goods and services among those who constitute their reference group in the community of origin.

Social capital is the totality of actual or potential resources associated to the possession of a durable network of relationships, or a set of resources based on group membership (Bourdieu, 2001a: 83; 2001b: 148). Migration networks are a form of social capital (Deléchat, 2001: 458, Arango, 2000: 291), as are social ties that bind sending communities

with specific destination points and join migrants and non-migrants in a complex network of complementary social roles and interpersonal relationships maintained by mutual expectations (Massey et al., 1987: 139). This social capital promotes access to economic assets and employment, and leads to a decrease in the costs and risks of migration (GarcíaCabrera, 2004: 468). According to Durand (2004: 110), “social capital can aid both in the undertaking of migration and return.” In the same way as a family or a community’s accumulated migration experience energizes emigration, the successful return of a group member motivates others to return. As noted by Durand (2004: 112), by increasing their social capital over time and maintaining and strengthening ties to the place of origin, migrants have “a system of support that will facilitate the return and make the adventure less risky.” Furthermore, the human capital acquired in the host country can encourage return because it facilitates economic opportunities in the place of origin (Artola, 2009: 324).

However, the social capital acquired by migrants does not imply the likelihood of return, since it is useful in both receiving and sending countries. As networks mature, they generate a permanent social infrastructure that facilitates settlement in the host society without breaking ties with the community of origin; the movement of people and information across two poles strengthens the ties between them and allows migrants to become rooted in both places (Massey et al, 1987: 163). Durand (2004: 115) affirms that the human, social and monetary capital accumulated by migrants who have worked for many years in the host country can be used for both settlement and return.

Table 1 schematically presents the different views on return posited by the above-mentioned theories. Neoclassical economic theory focuses on settlement; by contrast, the new economics of labor privileges return, while social capital theory takes an intermediate position. The first theory implies a break of ties with the place of origin; the other two emphasize their maintenance and/or strengthening. The ability to earn a higher income in the country of destination encourages a person to take the risk of migrating, but the wage gap has different connotations as far as return is concerned. Neoclassical economic theory understands the wage gap as a factor that annuls possibilities of the return. If wages

are much higher in the country of destination, return makes no sense in terms of a system the goal of which is the maximization of income. The new economics of labor migration see the wage gap as an accelerator for return—the higher the wage gap between the countries of origin and destination, the faster the migrant will reach the desired wage threshold and return. The theory of social capital views wage increase as a factor that can encourage both return and settlement. The wage gap can foster return during the formative stage of migration networks but encourage settlement once they have matured. Finally, while neoclassical economic theory understands return as a failure of the migration project and the new economics of labor migration explain it as success, the theory of social capital views it as neither. A successful migrant can return because he or she accumulated an income threshold, or settle in the host society because of access to better economic opportunities. I.e., the social, human and monetary capital accumulated by migrants in the host countries allows both return and settlement. Ports (2010: 662) points out that first-generation adult immigrants maintain close ties with the country of origin but transnationalism tends to disappear by the second generation.

Table 1: Explanatory frameworks of return migration			
	Neoclassical economic theory	The new economics of labor migration	Theory of social capital
Goal of the emigrant	Final	Temporary	Temporary <sup>1</sup> /Final <sup>2</sup>
Links with the place of origin	Rupture	Maintenance	Strengthening
Difference in wages	It decreases the likelihood of return	It increases the likelihood of return	Increases or reduces the likelihood of return
Return	Failure of the migration project	Success of the migration project	Success or failure of the migration project
Source: Author's table.			



## UNDOCUMENTED MIGRATION AND RETURN.

The undocumented migration of rural Tamaulipas workers to the United States in search of agricultural jobs is based on a high degree of deprivation and low satisfaction in the place of origin. The feeling of deprivation arises because remittances increase the social hierarchy of those families that receive them and entail the decline of those who lack them. Deprivation means lack of goods and services that are accessible to other individuals or families in the same group of reference (Izcara Palacios, 2009: 19). As Javier puts it, “I wanted to leave because of an acquaintance here at the *ejido*<sup>1</sup> who went over there; I could see his family here lived very well. They had a good home, a truck, were well dressed, and I didn’t have those things, and that made me and my wife unhappy.” Low satisfaction emerges when economic opportunities are so scarce that an individual or family cannot meet their most basic needs. In the words of Andrés:

There was little work in the plots of the *ejido* because most of the families did their own work, so those of us looking for work had to go all the way to El Mante. To go to El Mante we had to get up very early, like at 3 a.m., since we had to go on the highway to get a lift, or had to walk all the way, because we had to be at 5 a.m. on the bridge, which is where all of those looking for work in the fields gather. There were days when we just traveled all the way to El Mante and didn’t find work, so we came home without money. It was a very difficult situation, I found it very unpleasant and I even wanted to cry; remembering that, I had an even bigger desire to go to the other side.

The return of Tamaulipeco undocumented workers is due to the fact that their position in the receiving social hierarchy was always below that in their community of origin. Tamaulipas laborers experience a high degree of deprivation in the United States because when they compare their purchasing power with that of their new reference group, they find themselves well below average. That is, the local population and other workers who are legally in the United States have more goods than they do.

1. Translator’s note: an *ejido* is a collectively owned land.

Being undocumented means receiving lower wages, working for longer hours and having to be more productive than documented workers. Interviewees stress that workers with documents receive higher wages and refer to the discriminations suffered by undocumented immigrants: “If one has papers, one gets paid better by the hour” (Eduardo). “People who go illegally get less money than those who are legal” (Jacinto). “One gets paid miserably, because even I could see that people who have papers beyond charge a lot by the hour” (Julia). “Those people who had papers got paid more” (Graciano). “If they hire people with papers they have to pay them better; then, if work piles up and they want to get cheap workers, then they hire illegals” (Daniela).

This situation generates deep anger in some undocumented workers: “[As] illegals we felt we worked the most; legal workers had rights because they had contracts, but we had nothing and that made some colleagues angry” (Ambrosio). “There were people who got angry because they didn’t have papers, because having them meant getting well paid and not being exploited.” (Augustín)

Still, the majority of illegal immigrants end up accepting they will not enjoy access to the same working conditions enjoyed by those with a work permit. Some authors (Linder 1987: 1335; Holley, 2001: 579; Ko-reishi and Donohoe, 2010: 68) have emphasized the second-class status of day-laborers, who are isolated from the rest of the working class by discriminatory policies rooted in the New Deal, which excluded agricultural workers from the right to collective bargaining, minimum wage and paid overtime. The situation is more precarious for undocumented workers because they have broken the law. Once they have crossed the border they cannot turn back and are forced to labor under any conditions, even if the wages are lower than expected and the working conditions most difficult. Expressions such as “whatever they pay you is good” (Daniela); “you have to work on whatever’s available” (Felipe) or “once there, whatever you get is good” (Ángel) reflect the lack of bargaining power and defeatist and conformist attitude of undocumented workers.

Employers run risks when they hire someone who cannot prove he or she is legally in the country and can get punished. This risk is offset by lower wages and increased labor requirements. In addition, they always

tell undocumented workers they cannot pay them as much as they pay those who are legally in the country. As Claudio points out, “they take a risk by giving us work, so they pay us half.” Some employers refuse to pay the agreed wages, discount working hours and can even make the migrants work for weeks without paying them. When this happens, the workers are helpless; according to Felipe, “sometimes they still owe us, but when you don’t get paid that’s it, what are you going to do?” Having no papers they cannot report their employer without risking deportation; their only option is to accept a very underprivileged situation or seek employment elsewhere.

Therefore, Tamaulipeco undocumented laborers do not suffer less deprivation in the United States, because their status within the new group of reference lies further from the prevalent standard than in their place of origin. That is to say, the social status of the migrant worker is higher in Tamaulipas than in United States.

Undocumented workers get higher wages in the United States than in Tamaulipas, but this does not lead to an increase in satisfaction and the cost of living is also much higher than in their community of origin. Higher U.S. wages do not increase their satisfaction because the cost of U.S. goods and services rises in proportion to their income. Almost all interviewees stated that the money they earn in United States is not enough. Living and working there does not give them access to more goods than they can get in Tamaulipas. Respondents tend to emphasize the idea that one U.S. dollar buys the same amount of things that one Mexican peso buys in their place of origin. Therefore, a salary that can be up to ten times what they would receive in Tamaulipas for a similar kind of work does not lead to increased satisfaction. As Eduardo said, “it’s the same as here, because over there it is a dollar, a peso here, five dollars there, five pesos here.”

Tamaulipeco laborers who cross into the United States without papers do so for a particular reason, and as soon as they reach their initial goal (build a house, buy a car, pay off a debt or cover their children’s education), remaining there is meaningless. That is when they begin to plan their return: “I do not like the United States. I was there all that time because I had a goal, and when I achieved it I came back”

(Enrique). “I missed my children and my parents, so I came back. I said: ok, I already have a bit of money, I already helped my parents a bit, I’m going back to Mexico.” (Celestina)

## TEMPORARY MIGRATION AND RETURN.

H-2A temporary visas are a mechanism for the promotion of undocumented migration (Durand, 2006: 67). Most of the laborers who receive these visas return to their place of origin when they expire, but a few do not. The fact that most of the guest worker interviewees remembered cases of people who stayed in United States after the end of their contracts indicates that the contractual requirement to return is not always fulfilled.

U.S. Homeland Security issues H-2A visas expecting the worker’s eventual return to Mexico and rigorously selects the candidates. Preference is given to those who have participated in the program on previous years and returned. By contrast, those applicants who have not been previously involved in the program and, especially, those who come from urban areas or have a high level of schooling are likely to get rejected.

An element that interferes with return is social networking. Those laborers who have family or friends in the United States are less likely to return after the end of their contracts. In Santiago’s words, “a few did not like the work or had relatives there, so they’d go elsewhere.” Melchor stated, “I was hired in Virginia for three months and finished the contract; but when I was done, I had a friend in Florida and I called my friend, he told me how to do it and I went with him to Florida to work in the orange fields.”

Most of the interviewees pointed out that staying in United States after the expiry of their visas was counterproductive because this barred them from participating again in the program. In addition, remaining there without documents would prevent them from earning fair wages. Many interviewees such as Paulino think that not complying with the return demand entails “doing things the wrong way”: “many go to other places, but that is wrong because then one’s going around as an illegal, and that’s a risk; it’s better to do things properly.”

Almost all respondents expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the H-2A program but none declared their intent to settle in the United

States, preferring temporary work thana permanent stay. Expressions such as, “settling there, no thanks” (Nicanor); “didn’t like it as a place to live in, I did not like the food” (Sergio) or “what one wants is to work and save money to send back here, that’s the goal, not to live there” (Paulino) show up frequently in interviews. The harsh work and the difficulties in adapting to another culture with a different work ethic and a very different cuisine make them feel uncomfortable in the United States (Izcarra Palacios, 2010: 270). As Manuel put it, “we are used to our customs, over there they have another kind life.”

Immigrants will only aspire to permanent residence if they find a more satisfactory socio-economic and employment situation in the country of destination and their status in the host society is higher than what they previously enjoyed than in their community of origin. However, Tamaulipecos who migrate with H-2A visas do not find increased satisfaction in the United States. They additionally experience an increase in relative deprivation because they have fewer economic resources than their reference group in the host society: they live in poorer houses, their diet is deficient, and their access to consumption is more limited than that of the local population.

The H-2A visa program allows them to work for a few months in United States and return to their communities at the end of the agricultural season. During the time spent in the States they periodically send their savings to their families. Generally, the wife will use some of the remittances for family reproduction, saving the rest so that it is available when the husband returns. This means that the families of remittance-senders significantly increase their community status. In contrast to undocumented laborers, who go through good as well as bad times, finding themselves either over- or under-employed, guest workers have a guaranteed constant income. As a result, it is possible to glimpse a before and after in the lives of those involved in the program. The most noticeable aspect is housing: they enlarge their homes or build houses that stand out. Their children are better fed, better dressed, and have access to a better education. Most of them buy a vehicle, and many have savings. This increases their satisfaction and decreases their deprivation when they return to Tamaulipas.

Their earnings in United States do not give them access to a dignified life there: their wages are low, they live in remote places, work up to fourteen hours a day and almost never get to rest. In Tamaulipas, the situation is very different: they have lots of leisure time and more economic resources than their neighbors. They do not want to stay in the United States and going there is a sacrifice. Interviews reflect clashing feelings between the desire to work there (e.g., “we all hope to work there again” [Marcelino] or “one keeps hoping they will call” [Rogelio]), and attachment to the place of origin. The latter is reflected in the speech of Orencio, a 40-year-old daylaborer who has been working in Arkansas since 2000 for periods of nine months but still shakes before departure: “When I’ve one day left, with just hours left, I’m already shaking, all nervous, because, for me, this place is very nice; truth be told, I’d rather be here.”

The United States is described as the place where they work and can save money quickly, but none of the interviewees saw it as a space where they could rebuild their lives and reside permanently. The higher U.S. wages made little sense there because the higher cost of living hampered their purchasing power and ended up being counterproductive. The guest workers’ strategy is to reduce expenses in the United States in order to maximize their savings and thus increase satisfaction and reduce deprivation on their return. As the following quotes indicate, the money earned in the United States is only profitable if it is invested in Tamaulipas: “Four hundred dollars a week, you don’t get that here in a month (...) it is here that the money yields, because if one starts spending the money there, then there’s no point” (Rogelio). “If you want to buy things there you are left with nothing; the only option is to save the money that you win there, and when you come back here then you buy what you want, because the money you make over there yields here” (Ramiro). “Here is where that money yields, because there you only keep money for food and you send the rest here” (Paulino). “It is better to save the money there and send it here, here is where it yields” (Santiago). “That money is more valuable here, it pays more” (Rodolfo).

## CONCLUSION.

Tamaulipeco rural workers who migrate to the United States, with or without worker visas, tend to return. The States are seen as a space where they can earn, in months, what would take years in their places of origin. However, the U.S. labor market is more demanding than the Tamaulipas one: they have to work longer hours, suffer from social isolation and are confined to the agricultural fields; also, money is tight because the cost of goods and services is very high.

These laborers are not seeking to maximize their income: they migrate with a specific purpose and are satisfied once they have saved the amount they desired. Those without documents successfully return to their original communities and those who crossed the border with an H-2A visa are less motivated to do so again.

During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Polish farmers who migrated to the United States tended to settle permanently in the host country. The Raczkowski brothers did not plan to return to Poland given that their situation there would have been far worse than in the United States. These farmers could climb the social ladder more quickly in America than in their place of origin. In contrast, Tamaulipeco farmers experience a decline in their social position when they go to the United States. Those who cross without papers are relegated to the last rung of the social ladder because they are illegals in a strange country, only have access to the lowest-paid jobs, and are at the mercy of their employers. Workers who migrate with a temporary visa do not enjoy the same rights as the native workers, are selected to carry out activities nobody else wants to do, and their wages never exceed the legal minimum. In addition, they cannot raise their satisfaction level in the host country because, even though they earn more money than in their communities, this does not translate into greater purchasing power.

As noted by the new economics of labor migration, the return of migrant Tamaulipeco laborers explains why they suffer greater deprivation in the United States than in Tamaulipas: their position in the social hierarchy is lower there than in Mexico and their satisfaction is not higher. This is a scenario where  $(P_B > P_A) + (S_B < S_A)$ ; return is the only feasible option.

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<b>Annex: Interview data.</b>	
Agustín	Interview of a 23 year-old laborer from Barra del Tordo (Aldama) conducted on November 2007; he emigrated to the United States without documents and worked in Georgia between 2002 and 2003 in the melon and papaya industries.
Ambrosio	Interview of a 60 year-old laborer from El Barranco (Aldama) conducted on November 2007; he emigrated to the United States without documents and worked in Oklahoma and Atlanta from the 1980s to 2005 in the tomato, chili and melon industries.
Andrés	Interview of a 43 year-old laborer from La Loma (Antiguo Morelos) conducted on December 2007; he emigrated to the United States without documents and worked in Texas from 1978 to 1982 in the sorghum and cattle industries.
Ángel	Interview of a 38 year-old laborer from México Libre (Antiguo Morelos) conducted on December 2007; he emigrated to the United States without documents and worked in Texas between 1978 al 1982 in the cattle industry.
Celestina	Interview of a 45 year-old laborer from Palomas (Jaumave) conducted on December 2007; she emigrated to the United States without documents and worked in Texas between 1990 and 1992 in the melon, watermelon and onion industries.
Claudio	Interview of a 40 year-old day laborer from La Reforma (Jaumave) conducted on January 2008; he emigrated to the United States without documents and worked in Texas between 1990 and 1996 in the lemon and cattle industries.
Daniela	Interview of a 37 year-old day laborer from San Lorencito (Jaumave) conducted on June 2008; she emigrated to the United States without documents and worked in Florida and Virginia between 1991 and 1992 in the tomato and chili industries.
Donato	Interview of a 43 year-old laborer from Barranco Azul (San Carlos) conducted on October 2007; he emigrated to the United States without documents and worked in Texas, North Carolina, Virginia and Florida between 1979 and 2007 in the cattle, cucumber, apple, tomato, tobacco and orange industries.
Eduardo	Interview of a 28 year-old laborer from Barranco Azul (San Carlos) conducted on November 2007; he emigrated to the United States without documents and worked in Texas and North Carolina between 2003 and 2004 in the tobacco and watermelon industries.
Enrique	Interview of a 32 year-old laborer from Soto la Marina conducted on April 2008; he emigrated to the United States without documents and worked in Texas, Virginia and Florida between 2004 and 2007 in the cattle and cotton industries.

Felipe	Interview of a 30 year-old laborer from Tanque Blanco (Tula) conducted on December 2007; he emigrated to the United States without documents and worked in Georgia between 1997 and 2007 in the pine and tomato industries.
Graciano	Interview of a 39 year-old laborer from Los Charcos (Tula) conducted on April 2008; he emigrated to the United States without documents and worked in Texas during 2005 in the melon and watermelon industries.
Jacinto	Interview of a 56 year-old laborer from R.F. Magón (Valle Hermoso) conducted on October 2007; he emigrated to the United States without documents and worked in Louisiana and Tennessee between 1975 and 1980 in the cotton industry.
Javier	Interview of a 53 year-old laborer from Victoria conducted on January 2008; he emigrated to the United States without documents and worked in Tennessee between 1995 and 1997 in the tomato and chili industries.
Julia	Interview of a 46 year-old laborer from Guadalupe Victoria (Villagrán) conducted on October 2007; she emigrated to the United States without documents and worked in Texas, Florida, New Jersey y Missouri between 1986 and 2002 in the orange, cucumber and watermelon industries.
Manuel	Interview of a 34 year-old laborer from Guía del Porvenir (Abasolo) conducted on November 2008; he emigrated to the United States with an H-2A visa and worked in California between 2003 and 2004 in the apple and vegetable industries.
Marcelino	Interview of a 24 year-old laborer from Abasolo conducted on November 2008; he emigrated to the United States with an H-2A visa and worked in Illinois during 2004 in the corn industry.
Melchor	Interview of a 32 year-old laborer from Santa Engracia (Hidalgo) conducted on April 2007; he emigrated to the United States with an H-2A visa and worked in Virginia during 2002 in the apple industry.
Nicanor	Interview of a 33 year-old laborer from Santa Engracia (Hidalgo) conducted on March 2008; he emigrated to the United States with an H-2A visa and worked in Texas between 2003 and 2007 in the tomato and orange industries.
Orencio	Interview of a 40 year-old laborer from Guadalupe Victoria (Hidalgo) conducted on October 2007; he emigrated to the United States with an H-2A visa and worked in Arkansas between 2000 and 2007 in the pine industry.
Paulino	Interview of a 35 year-old laborer from Guillermo Zúñiga (Hidalgo) conducted on October 2008; he emigrated to the United States with an H-2A visa and worked in North Carolina between 1999 and 2008 in the tobacco industry.
Ramiro	Interview of a 42 year-old laborer from San Lorencito (Jaumave) conducted on January 2008; he emigrated to the United States with an H-2A visa and worked in North Carolina between 2001 and 2007 in the pine industry.

Rodolfo	Interview of a 27 year-old laborer from La Unión Morales (San Carlos) conducted on August 2008; he emigrated to the United States with an H-2A visa and worked in Florida, Texas and Louisiana between 2002 and 2008 in the orange and sugar cane industries.
Rogelio	Interview of a 46 year-old laborer from Tanque Blanco (Tula) conducted on December 2007; he emigrated to the United States with an H-2A visa and worked in North Carolina between 1995 and 2005 in the pine industry.
Santiago	Interview of a 53 year-old laborer Vicente Guerrero (Victoria) conducted on October 2007; he emigrated to the United States with an H-2A visa and worked in North Carolina between 1998 and 2006 in the tobacco industry.
Sergio	Interview of a 34 year-old laborer from Rancho Nuevo (Victoria) conducted on April 2008; he emigrated to the United States with an H-2A visa and worked in Arkansas during 2003 in the tomato industry.
Source: Author's table.	
The names are pseudonyms	

## (Footnotes)

- 1 When networks are emerging.
- 2 When networks are consolidated.