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Continuities in Transnational Migration: An Analysis of Nineteen Mexican Communities¹

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Researchers working in Mexican communities have observed both regularities and inconsistencies in the way that transnational migration develops over time. This article presents a theory that accounts for these uniformities and discrepancies and proposes a method to compare the process of migration across communities. It also argues that studies must report and control for the prevalence of migration within communities. Data from 19 Mexican communities show that predictable demographic, social, and economic changes accompany increases in migratory prevalence. Although international migration begins within a narrow range of each community's socioeconomic structure, over time it broadens to incorporate other social groups.

During the 1970s, field investigators working in Mexico began to uncover empirical regularities in the way that migration to the United States developed over time. The earliest emigrants from a community were almost always males of working age, usually married family heads from some identifiable niche in the socioeconomic structure. Typically they came from the middle of the local hierarchy—not so poor that they could not afford the costs and risks of migration, but not so affluent that migration was unattractive. Within the United States they went to a few specific locations to work in particular sectors of the economy, such as railroads, agriculture, or manufacturing. They adopted strategies of

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movement appropriate to the work they did, settling for prolonged periods to work in manufacturing or moving back and forth for agricultural labor.

Over time the proportion of people with U.S. experience tended to increase within the community. As migratory behavior spread, foreign experience accumulated in the population, kinship ties to migrants multiplied, and the stream diversified to include younger unmarried males, women, and children. Migration became progressively less class selective and more representative of the whole community. Within the United States the array of locations, occupations, and economic sectors where migrants worked expanded, and the timing and duration of U.S. trips reflected these changes.

Eventually, most men were drawn into the migrant workforce and a large plurality of women and children began migrating as well. In places with long and well-established histories of migration, information about jobs, housing, and life in the United States became widely diffused, and nearly everyone was related to someone who had been north of the border. The social, economic, and demographic composition of the outflow reached a high degree of diversity. In the United States the number of branch communities consisting of migrant families who appeared to have settled abroad permanently began to grow.

These trends were first noted by Joshua Reichert for the town of Guadalupe, Michoacán (see Reichert 1979, 1981, 1982; Reichert and Massey 1979, 1980). Richard Mines uncovered similar patterns in the town of Las Animas, Zacatecas (Mines 1981, 1984; Mines and Anzaldua 1982; Mines and de Janvry 1982). A systematic comparison of these communities by Mines and Massey (1985) showed that rising out-migration set off structural changes that made additional migration more likely. The self-feeding character of migration has been noted in other communities within Mexico (Wiest 1973; Massey et al. 1987; Alarcón 1992) as well as other countries (Baucic 1972; Fergany 1982; Pessar 1982; Rhoades 1979).

Despite these commonalities, studies have also found discrepancies among communities with respect to key variables in the migration process, such as the proportion of people with migration experience, the class background of migrants, the proportion of documented migrants, the number of migrant women and children, the importance of settled versus recurrent strategies, the number and types of destinations, and the kind of U.S. occupation held. Both Mines and Massey (1985) and Massey et al. (1987) attributed these community-level differences to structural factors that shaped the course of migration at each location.

As Mexican community studies accumulated during the 1970s and 1980s, however, intercommunity differences became more and more salient and began to overshadow the continuities identified by earlier inves-

tigators. Whereas some studies found that migrants were primarily landless workers (see Cornelius 1976*a*; Stuart and Kearney 1981), others concluded that they were mainly landowners (López 1986) or both landowners and sharecroppers (Mines 1981). Although married men dominated the migrant workforce in some towns (Wiest 1973; Cornelius 1976*a*, 1976*b*; Dinerman 1982), in others the participation of women and children came closer to that of men (Reichert 1979; Fernández 1988; Cornelius 1990).

Findings concerning the relative importance of different migrant strategies became particularly confused. In some studies, migrants appeared to favor a strategy of temporary migration, moving sporadically to the United States for short periods of work (Cornelius 1978). In others, they engaged in recurrent migration, moving back and forth annually for seasonal wage labor (Reichert 1979; López 1986). In some settings, migrants adopted a settled strategy, establishing themselves in one place for long periods of time (see the town of Santiago analyzed by Massey et al. [1987]), while in others, they employed several strategies at once, without appearing to favor any one in particular (see the town of Chamitlán in Massey et al. [1987]).

In order to resolve the tension between earlier findings of a common migratory process and the growing evidence of intercommunity differences, Durand and Massey (1992) reviewed studies of 25 Mexican communities. They found that “apparently inconsistent generalizations about Mexico–U.S. migration are not necessarily contradictory when they are examined in comparative perspective. Rather, diverse outcomes occur in various communities when common processes of migration are shaped and differentiated by structural variables operating at the community level” (p. 4). They argued for “a research design that would incorporate the study of many different communities into a common analytic framework” (p. 4). Goldring (1990, 1992*b*) reached similar conclusions from her comparative analysis of two migrant communities.

This common analytic framework ideally should involve more than the simple application of a standard survey instrument to a range of different communities. Although such an exercise would address the issue of sample generalizability, it would not provide a means of analytically comparing communities with different histories and levels of migration. Given the cumulative nature of migration processes, fruitful comparisons must somehow take into account prior migration histories.

People living in communities where migration has just begun, for example, generally face significant deterrents to international movement. Since the number of migrants is small, few nonmigrants have friends and relatives who have been abroad, and even if they do, the migrants are likely to have limited knowledge about jobs, housing, and transporta-

tion at destination sites. In contrast, people living in a community characterized by a long history and high prevalence of out-migration are very likely to be connected socially to people who have been abroad, and these people tend to have considerable knowledge about conditions and resources at points of destination. In communities with a well-developed migratory tradition, in other words, nonmigrants have access to valuable social capital that can be used to facilitate movement.

International migration is a costly and risky enterprise, and those who undertake it are usually selected on demographic, social, economic, and psychological grounds. Social capital, however, plays a powerful role in mitigating these costs and risks, and its accumulation over time tends to reduce the selectivity of migration. Variation in the amount and quality of social capital can, therefore, produce very different migration streams over time and across communities, making migration patterns appear to be discrepant when, in fact, they reflect the same underlying process.

The conceptual framework called for by Durand and Massey requires a technique that permits direct comparison among communities with different histories and levels of migration. In order to satisfy this methodological need, we introduce a new analytical tool: the migration prevalence ratio. For any community in any year, the prevalence ratio is defined as the number of people with international migratory experience divided by the total number of people alive. It can be calculated retrospectively for any year in the recent past given just two pieces of information about every community member: the date of birth and the date of his or her first foreign trip.

This ratio, when calculated for different years within a community, provides a simple indicator of how widespread migratory experience has become at any point in time. It serves as a proxy for the extent of a community's involvement in the migratory process and allows us to compare communities at very different stages of migratory development. In this way, the prevalence ratio partially controls for the effect of differences in the history and timing of migration. In essence, it standardizes the units of comparison.

In this article, we employ prevalence ratios to characterize the underlying process of transnational migration as it develops across a range of community settings. Our data, drawn from representative samples of 19 Mexican communities, are compiled using identical methods and instruments as part of a single, comprehensive study. Guided by the proposition that the nature of migration shifts as it becomes more widespread in a community, we describe the demographic, social, economic, and geographic character of international migration as communities go from low to high prevalence. Taking account of migratory prevalence provides a useful way of resolving apparent inconsistencies in the literature by

revealing common patterns in the development of international migration across communities.

Simply knowing the prevalence of migration does not, of course, identify which specific structural conditions (e.g., immigration policies, political conditions, or economic trends) might have influenced migration at key historical junctures. Although we recognize that structural factors shape the local expression of migratory processes in different communities at different times, our purpose here is not to study the effect of these differentiating factors but to characterize the basic processes across a range of sites.

We begin with a review of recent research on transnational migration that highlights the empirical commonalities and differences observed by earlier researchers. We then elaborate our methodological approach and describe a data set that allows us to employ it. Finally we use the data to characterize the migratory process as it develops across 19 communities that differ with respect to economic structure, ethnic composition, rural-urban status, and emigration history.

A CUMULATIVE THEORY OF MIGRATION

Prior empirical work suggests that transnational migration unfolds in a relatively consistent way over time. It displays a distinct tendency to become more prevalent and to broaden its base of demographic, social, and economic representation within the community. These trends follow theoretically from the fact that migration affects individual motivations and social structures in ways that encourage additional migration. As a result, transnational migration tends to become a self-reinforcing process that acquires an internal momentum all its own. Over time it becomes increasingly independent of the conditions that originally caused it.

This theoretical logic predicts the emergence of common empirical trends across diverse communities as migration becomes more prevalent. The seemingly diverse array of migration patterns that arises from the various case studies is explained by the different levels of migratory prevalence that each community has achieved.

Although we drew our theoretical argument primarily from research on Mexico-United States migration during this century, and to a lesser extent from recent research on migration from the Caribbean and Latin America, we put it forward as a general conceptual model. It is meant to apply to cases of transnational labor migration where host-country immigration policies are relatively open, particularly those cases where clandestine migration is feasible.

Transnational labor migration may originate for a variety of complementary reasons. Migrants may observe wage differentials between ori-

gin and destination areas and respond to expected positive returns to foreign labor (Todaro and Maruszko 1987). Households may seek to diversify risks to their economic well-being by sending family members to work in different regional labor markets, one of which is foreign (Stark 1991). Migrants may be recruited by foreign employers seeking to import workers for specific tasks (Piore 1979). People may be impelled to move because structural transformations in the local economy eliminate traditional sources of sustenance (Sassen 1988) or because political upheavals cause people to fear for their physical safety (Portes and Rumbaut 1990).

No matter how international migration begins, the first migrants from a community are likely to experience it as a very costly and risky enterprise, both in monetary and psychological terms. They have little or no knowledge of conditions in the host country and are ignorant of its culture, language, and ways of life. In most cases, they incur the expenses of the trip and absorb the opportunity costs of income forgone while moving and looking for work. They arrive having to pay off these overhead expenses and are thus relatively dependent on their first employer. Given their lack of knowledge about prevailing wage rates, work habits, legal conventions, and social expectations, they are vulnerable to exploitation and mistreatment, especially if they are undocumented and do not speak the language of the host country.

Given these costs and risks, the first transnational labor migrants usually come not from the bottom of the socioeconomic hierarchy but from the lower middle ranges (Portes 1979; Portes and Rumbaut 1990). Such people have enough resources to absorb the costs and risks of the trip but are not so affluent that foreign labor is unattractive.

Since families in low-wage countries typically follow a patriarchal sexual division of labor within the household, the first migrants are usually married men of prime labor force age who seek to maintain their economic and gender roles through migration (Lindstrom 1991; Pedraza 1991; Hondagneu-Sotelo 1992; Alarcón 1992; Goldring 1992*c*). Among rural and working-class families, men are seen as better able than women to absorb the physical risks of international movement (Reichert 1979); and given prevailing gender differentials in wage rates (England 1992), men can be expected to earn more on average, than women. Thus, if a family seeks to maximize foreign earnings by sending one worker abroad, the logical choice is the male household head or perhaps an older son.

This pattern of male-led migration appears to hold well for sending areas throughout the central and western states of Mexico. Mexican women in the northern states, however, have historically crossed the border to work as domestics, service workers, and industrial operatives (Ruiz and Tiano 1987; Taylor 1980). Moreover, Donato (1992) has shown that the gender composition of migration is shaped strongly by historical

relationships between nations, patterns of social organization in sending countries, and other structural factors.

Whether male or female, however, the earliest migrants leave their families and friends behind and strike out for solitary work in an alien land. Most transnational migrants begin as target earners (Piore 1979), seeking to earn as much money as possible as quickly as possible in order to recoup their initial investment, attain a predetermined income goal, and return home to family and friends. They have little interest in permanent settlement abroad.

Once one or more people have come and gone in this fashion, however, the situation in the sending community does not return to the status quo ante. Each act of migration generates a set of irreversible changes in individual motivations, social structures, and cultural values that alter the context within which future migration decisions are made. These changes accumulate across time to create conditions that make additional migration more likely. Massey (1990) has labeled this self-generating process "the cumulative causation of migration," following Myrdal (1957). Reichert (1981) calls it the "migrant syndrome" and Alarcón (1988, 1992) refers to it as "northernization."

At the individual level, participation in a high-wage economy induces changes in tastes and motivations that turn people away from target earning and toward persistent migration (Piore 1979). Satisfaction of the wants that originally led to migration creates new wants. Access to high wages and the goods they buy creates new standards of material well-being, and first-hand experience in an affluent society raise expectations and create new ambitions for upward mobility. As migrants earn high wages and alter their consumption patterns, they adopt new lifestyles and local economic pursuits become less attractive (Goldring 1992*a*, 1992*b*, 1992*d*).

The first-hand experience gained from migration makes the satisfaction of these new wants increasingly feasible. Once someone has migrated and returned, that person has direct knowledge of employment opportunities, labor-market conditions, and ways of life in the destination country; they use these understandings to migrate again with fewer risks and costs than before (Massey 1986). Once it has been experienced, therefore, migration becomes a familiar and reliable socioeconomic resource that can be employed again and again as new needs arise and motivations change (Reichert 1979; Mines 1981).

Empirical research in Mexico shows conclusively that once a man has migrated to the United States, the odds are extremely high that he will migrate again (Massey 1987*b*; Massey et al. 1987). Indeed, the probability of taking an additional trip rises monotonically as the number of trips increases (Massey 1985). The more a man migrates, the more he is likely

to continue migrating, a pattern that has proved to be remarkably persistent in the face of restrictive immigration policies (Donato, Durand, and Massey 1992).

Given their status as target earners, during the first few trips and in the early history of migration from a community, migrants tend to live under rather spartan conditions, sleeping in barracks or sharing apartments with other men and sleeping in shifts to save money. They work long hours and have little social life. In some cases they work two eight-hour shifts in the same day (Durand 1992). Most of their earnings are repatriated in the form of savings or remittances (Massey et al. 1987). Migrants see themselves as members of their home communities and not as participants in the host society (Piore 1979).

As migrants spend increasing time abroad, however, this form of social life becomes more and more problematic. As stays abroad lengthen and the number of trips rises, pressure from family members wanting to migrate grows (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1992; Alarcón 1992). The first relatives to accompany a married migrant are typically unmarried sons of working age, since they have the greatest earnings potential after the father and their migration is consistent with prevailing gender roles. Over time, however, unmarried working-age daughters, wives, and younger children are likely to accompany him as well. Other relatives, such as nephews, nieces, and cousins, eventually join experienced migrants. As increasing numbers of young men acquire migrant experience, they also begin to travel north in groups based on friendship as well as kinship (López 1986). As a result, the demographic base of migration steadily widens and the mean age of migration drops (Reichert and Massey 1979; Piore 1979; Massey et al. 1987).

The act of migration not only induces changes within individual migrants that make further movement more likely, it also initiates changes in social structures that spread migration through the community (Mines 1981; Massey et al. 1987). Each migrant is inevitably linked to a set of nonmigrants through a variety of social ties that carry reciprocal obligations for assistance based on shared understandings of kinship, friendship, and common community origin (Lomnitz 1977). Given the expectations and practices associated with kinship and friendship, each act of migration creates a set of people with social ties to the receiving country. Nonmigrants draw upon these ties to gain access to employment and assistance abroad, substantially reducing the costs and risks of movement compared to earlier migrants (Taylor 1986; Massey and García España 1987).

Every new migrant thus reduces the costs and risks and increases the attractiveness and feasibility of migration for a set of friends and relatives. With these lowered costs and risks, additional people are induced

to migrate for the first time, which further expands the set of people with ties abroad. This additional migration reduces costs and risks for a new set of people, causing some of them to migrate, and so on. Once the number of network connections reaches a critical threshold, migration becomes self-perpetuating because each act of movement creates the social structure necessary to sustain it (Massey 1990). Empirical studies in Mexico clearly show that having network connections greatly increases the likelihood of international movement (Taylor 1986; Massey and García España 1987; Massey et al. 1987).

As migrants make successive trips, they accumulate foreign experience and knowledge that render ties to them increasingly valuable. As information about the destination country and its socioeconomic resources accumulates in the population, the costs of migration steadily drop to make the cost-benefit calculation positive for an increasingly large set of people, while the risks of movement steadily fall to render migration a feasible risk-diversification strategy for a growing number of households. Over time, therefore, migration becomes progressively less selective and more representative of the community as a whole.

Migration also changes the cultural context within which decisions are made, and international movement becomes increasingly attractive for reasons that are not purely economic. Migrants evince a widely-admired lifestyle that others are drawn to emulate. Although some of its attractiveness is material—based on the ability to consume goods and purchase property—the lifestyle also acquires a strong normative component (Reichert 1979; López 1986; Alarcón 1992). In communities where foreign wage labor has become fully integrated into local values and expectations, people contemplating entry into the labor force literally do not consider other options: they expect to migrate frequently in the course of their lives and assume they can go whenever they wish.

As migration assumes a greater role in the community, it becomes increasingly important as a rite of passage for young men, providing an accepted means of demonstrating their worthiness, ambition, and manhood to others (Reichert 1979; Alarcón 1992). Moreover, as women become more integrated within postindustrial society, they begin to push for more egalitarian gender roles and encourage activities that lead to longer stays abroad, such as investing in household goods and buying property in the destination country (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1992; Grasmuck and Pessar 1991; Goldring 1992*b*, 1992*c*).

Over time and with extensive movement back and forth, communities of origin and destination increasingly come to comprise transnational circuits—social and geographic spaces that arise through the constant circulation of people, money, goods, and information (Rouse 1989, 1991, 1992). As these circuits develop, practices and values that once demar-

cated distinct societies begin to have a transformative influence on each other. Over time, migrant communities become culturally “transnationalized,” incorporating ideologies, practices, expectations, and political claims from both societies to create a “culture of migration” that is distinct from the culture of both the sending and receiving nation (see Reichert 1979; Rouse 1989, 1991, 1992; Georges 1990; Goldring 1992*b*, 1992*c*; Smith 1992).

As migration is increasingly taken for granted, the demographic composition and socioeconomic role of the place of origin undergo a dramatic transformation. In many places, women, children, and older people dominate a reduced population except during the few weeks or months when migrants return for holidays and celebrations (Reichert 1979; Mines 1981). In economically marginal agricultural areas, farming and other traditional activities lose importance (Mines 1981). As the place of origin becomes a site of rest and recreation, in sharp contrast to the routine of work abroad, its social meaning undergoes changes (Rouse 1989, 1992; Goldring 1992*a*, 1992*b*, 1992*d*). Migrants spend money collectively on infrastructure and other community projects aimed at transforming the landscape into a place of leisure, a place where migrants and their families can display their status and exercise political claims and power (Goldring 1992*a*, 1992*b*, 1992*d*; Smith 1992; Goldring and Smith 1993).

The first migrants from a community typically go to a specific niche in the destination country’s political economy, yielding little diversity with respect to destination, occupation, or strategies of movement. Early migrants follow the path of the first migrant because that is where the costs and risks of migration are lowest and the chances of success greatest. Once they have identified a promising migrant worker, moreover, labor recruiters and contractors tend to use them as vehicles to recruit additional workers from their circle of friends and relatives (Mines and Anzaldúa 1982). As experience in the host country accumulates, however, and as more people are drawn into the process, some migrants inevitably seek out better opportunities in new places and occupations. In this way the diversity of foreign destinations, jobs, and strategies increases.

As the migration process proceeds, however, typically someone from the sending community achieves a position of responsibility that enables him or her to channel employment, housing, and other resources to fellow townspeople (Mines 1981; Massey et al. 1987). The position may be a crew boss in a railroad, a foreman in a factory, a union representative in a company, a majordomo in a restaurant, a labor contractor for a grower, or perhaps even a business owner. Although it is impossible to predict where or how it will occur, sooner or later someone attains such a position and begins to recruit fellow townspeople for work.

At this point, the migration stream begins to focus more narrowly and

the diversity of jobs, destinations, and strategies begins to constrict, a process Jones (1982*a*, 1982*b*, 1984) has called "channelization." This concentration does not necessarily involve a single foreign location for a particular labor-exporting community (Mines 1981; Goldring 1990, 1992*b*), but the overall pattern of early diversity followed by increasing concentration in one or more sites is a general feature of the process by which migrants establish branch communities in receiving societies.

As migrants make repeated trips and accumulate more time abroad, as wives and children join the migrant workforce, as more people become involved in the migration process, and as stronger links are formed with specific employers in particular locations, a growing number of migrants and families settle in the host society. They acquire informal ties to its inhabitants and establish formal links with institutions such as banks, government, and schools. They learn the host-country language and become permanent legal residents. Empirical studies show that the probability of settlement rises steadily as migrant experience increases (Massey 1985, 1987*b*; Massey et al. 1987).

As families settle around specific places of employment, branch communities of long-term and permanent out-migrants begin to form. These communities anchor the networks and further reduce the costs and risks of movement by providing a secure and familiar environment within which new migrants can arrive, find housing and employment, and learn the ropes in the receiving country. Increasingly, migration is channeled to these communities and the diversity of destinations associated with a place of origin is further reduced.

As migrants become part of established communities in the host country, they adapt themselves to the local setting. Whether or not they have legal documents, they send their children to school, learn a minimum of the host country's language, and use financial institutions and social services. Over time the local landscape of the receiving community is transformed (Goldring 1992*a*, 1992*b*, 1992*d*). Whether or not they are immigrant entrepreneurs, the migrants contribute to the creation and growth of a market for specialized foods, entertainment, and cultural products. The formation of ethnic neighborhoods represents a process of socioeconomic adaptation and transformation that permits many "foreign" practices to be maintained in the new setting.

If the process of migration continues long enough, networks reach a point of numerical saturation. Larger and larger shares of the transnational community reside in the branch communities, more births occur abroad, and virtually all who remain in the home community are connected either to someone living abroad or to someone with substantial foreign experience. When networks reach this level of development, the

costs of migration stop falling with each new entrant and the process of migration loses its dynamic momentum for growth.

As the process approaches its limit, migratory experience becomes so diffused within the community that the stock of potential new migrants gets very small; increasingly it is composed of young children and the elderly. Labor shortages begin to occur in core sending regions and local wage rates rise (Gregory 1986). If the process of saturation coincides with a recessionary period abroad, an oversupply of immigrant workers may result, leading to lower wages and making it more difficult for experienced migrants to find work for friends and relatives. These developments further dampen the pressures for migration and cause the rate of entry into the migrant workforce to decelerate and trail off. The prevalence of migration and the stock of migrant experience then approach an upper asymptote.

Observed in the aggregate, this asymptotic trend may be difficult to detect, because new communities are continuously drawn into the migratory process. As the rate of out-migration decelerates in communities with long-standing traditions, new communities are drawn into transnational circuits and their rates of out-migration begin to accelerate. As a result, the total flow of migrants may remain constant or steadily increase. Only by studying data at the community level can we identify the general sequence of events that occur in the process of transnational migration.

Thus, our theory posits a cumulative model of transnational migration. It outlines how, once initiated, the process builds upon a growing base of knowledge, experience, social contacts, and other forms of social and cultural capital in self-reinforcing fashion. It argues that the process of migration alters sending and receiving localities in such a way that further migration is encouraged. Subsequent migration is made to and from communities that are undergoing profound cultural, economic, social, and even physical changes.

This theoretical argument elaborates upon earlier studies, synthesizes strands of theory that have appeared in diverse sources, and sharpens the underlying conceptual linkages. As constructed to this point, the model applies primarily to transnational migrant circuits arising in nonmetropolitan locations. The dynamics of international migration from large metropolitan areas have not been well studied. This topic merits further empirical research and may necessitate modifications in the theory.

DATA

Data for this analysis come from simple random samples gathered during 1982–83 and 1987–91 in 19 communities located in the Mexican states

of Jalisco, Michoacán, Guanajuato, and Nayarit, areas that have traditionally sent large numbers of migrants to the United States (Gamio 1930; Dagodag 1975; North and Houston 1976; Consejo Nacional de Población 1986; Jones 1988). Information about the samples is summarized in table 1. Within each community, 100–200 households were randomly selected and interviewed during the months of November through January, yielding sampling fractions that ranged from .029 to .699, depending on the number of households on the sampling frame. In all cases but one, the frame covered the entire community. In San Francisco del Rincón, Guanajuato, we constructed a frame for a single working-class neighborhood and sampled it instead.

These procedures produced a total sample size of 3,400 households across 19 communities, covering a total population of about 236,000 people. Refusals were generally not a problem: although the rate reached 15% in one case and 11% in another, in 14 cases the refusal rate was 5% or less, and overall the rate was only 4.8%. The higher refusal rates in the two communities reflect generalized distrust stemming from local political conditions rather than suspicion of our study per se.

The winter months are generally the best time to locate and interview returned migrants within Mexico, since most come back to spend the holidays with their families. In the case of La Yerbabuena, however, initial fieldwork revealed that large numbers of migrants also returned in July (because they worked in Florida's winter citrus harvest), so we sent an interviewer during the summer to complete the survey. In general, however, the Mexican community samples are representative of dwellings occupied during the winter months of 1982–82 and 1987–91 in 19 nonmetropolitan Mexican communities.

These community data were supplemented with nonrandom samples of out-migrants located in the United States during the summer subsequent to each winter's survey. From the community samples, we determined where in the United States migrants went and then sent interviewers to those areas to survey out-migrant households that had permanently settled abroad. Snowball sampling methods (Goodman 1961) were used to compile this U.S.-based sample. In most of the communities, 20 out-migrant households were interviewed, but in Mineral de Pozos only 10 were sampled. In Tepec we were unable to include any U.S. households, because this sample was incorporated from another study after the fact and no U.S. sample had been originally compiled (see Massey et al. 1987). Although these U.S. samples are not representative of all out-migrants, they do provide some control for biases stemming from selective emigration and settlement in the United States.

In choosing communities for study, we sought to include a range of sizes and economic bases, but the prevalence of U.S. migration was not

TABLE 1
 CHARACTERISTICS OF 19 MEXICAN COMMUNITIES SAMPLED FOR A STUDY OF MIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES

Community	State	1990 Population	Year of Survey	Households on Sampling Frame	Size of Sample	Sampling Fraction	Refusal Rate	Size of U.S. Sample
Small cities:								
San Francisco del Rincón	Guanajuato	52,291	1987	780*	200	.256	.034	20
Los Reyes	Michoacán	32,474	1989	6,776	200	.029	.037	20
Ameca	Jalisco	30,882	1991	1,776	200	.113	.044	20
San Felipe Torres Mochas	Guanajuato	20,614	1990	3,771	200	.053	.047	20
Ixtlán del Río	Nayarit	19,645	1990	4,472	200	.045	.029	20
Romita	Guanajuato	16,535	1988	2,723	200	.073	.057	20
El Salto	Jalisco	11,546	1982	1,903	200	.105	.038	20
Las Varas	Nayarit	11,541	1990	2,693	200	.074	.010	20
Towns:								
Chavinda	Michoacán	7,437	1982	1,925	200	.104	.015	20
Nahuatzen	Michoacán	7,025	1990	1,441	200	.139	.057	20
Ario de Rayón	Michoacán	6,429	1989	1,395	200	.143	.050	20
Unión de San Antonio	Jalisco	4,760	1988	799	200	.250	.115	20
San Diego de Alejandría	Jalisco	3,516	1988	510	200	.392	.038	20
Amacueca	Jalisco	2,685	1982	579	106	.183	.038	20
Ranchos:								
Santa María del Valle	Jalisco	2,321	1988	534	200	.375	.010	20
La Yerbabuena	Michoacán	2,240	1989	448	150	.335	.152	20
Tepec	Jalisco	1,573	1982	438	94	.215	.037	0
Mineral de Pozos	Guanajuato	1,737	1988	248	150	.605	.085	10
La Soledad	Guanajuato	1,080	1991	143	100	.699	.029	20
Total		236,331		33,354	3,400	.102	.048	350

* Sampling frame constructed for a neighborhood within the city; all other frames cover the entire community.

itself a criterion for inclusion. Although samples were gathered in five large metropolitan areas with populations over 100,000, these data are excluded from the present analysis. Limited data suggest that U.S.-bound migration from Mexican urban areas may be rising (Cornelius 1992), but we believe that the social dynamics of migration from major cities are sufficiently different from those of smaller towns and cities to warrant separate study.

The populations of the communities under study range from 1,000 to just over 50,000. The eight small cities included in the data set have populations in excess of 10,000 inhabitants and include two industrial cities (San Francisco del Rincón and El Salto), several commercial cities serving agrarian hinterlands (Los Reyes, Ameca, San Felipe, Ixtlán, and Romita), and one coastal community engaged in fishing, tobacco growing, and sugar cane cultivation (Las Varas). All except the last community are seats of their respective *municipios* (the rough equivalent of a U.S. county).

The six communities designated as towns have populations ranging from 2,500 (the official definition of an urban place in Mexico) to 10,000; all are essentially agrarian communities. Chavinda and Ario de Rayón are located in Michoacán's lush Zamora Valley, a region of intense, highly capitalized commercial agriculture. Amacueca, located in southern Jalisco, is a more traditional agrarian community of small landholders and *ejido* farmers. Unión de San Antonio and San Diego de Alejandría are located in the Los Altos region of Jalisco, a dry, windswept region of rain-fed agriculture and cattle ranching. Finally, Nahuatzen is a Tarascan Indian community located in the highlands of Michoacán. Except for Ario, all of these communities are *municipio* seats.

The five smallest communities are rural *ranchos*, political dependencies within their *municipios* with populations under 2,500 inhabitants. Three of the communities (Santa María, La Yerbabuena, and Tepec) are small outlying settlements in agrarian regions; they are composed of poor tenant farmers and small landholders. The small *ranchito* of La Soledad is located just outside the city of Irapuato, Guanajuato, and its inhabitants divide their time between agrarian and industrial pursuits. Mineral de Pozos is a half-abandoned mining town whose deposits gave out around the turn of the century, turning it into a poor farm town.

Respondents living in these communities were interviewed using ethnographic methods (Massey 1987a; Massey et al. 1987). Within each household we gathered basic information about the social, economic, and demographic characteristics of the head, the spouse, the head's children, and other household members. We also determined which household members had ever been to the United States and from them gathered basic data about their first and most recent trips: the date, duration, and

destination, as well as the migrant's legal status, occupation, and wage earned on those trips. From each household head we collected a detailed life history that included a labor history (including a migration history), a property history, a marital history, and a fertility history.

THE PREVALENCE OF MIGRATION

The fundamental insight emerging from our earlier theoretical discussion is that migration unfolds in a regular, predictable way over time. We argue that questions about migrants' characteristics—whether they are predominantly male or female, young or old, legal or illegal, rich or poor, sojourners or settlers—are misplaced because these traits do not describe the migrant flow *per se*, but rather, a phase in its development. These outcomes must be understood as qualities of the migration stream that evolve as part of a larger developmental process, not as fixed characteristics of migrants from particular communities. We therefore classify communities according to their level of migratory prevalence and examine the characteristics of migrants in communities at roughly the same level of migratory development. Our objective is to chart the changes that occur in a community as it moves from limited participation in transnational migration to a state of mass involvement.

Tracking changes in this fashion allows us to overcome the problems inherent in making general conclusions based on individual case studies. It also provides a more tractable way of describing migratory processes that emerge over time in a cumulative, nonlinear fashion. A disadvantage of the technique is that it tends to dehistoricize migration: specific events such as the Bracero Program of the 1940s or the economic crisis of the early 1980s may occur at different prevalence levels in different communities, a fact that should be kept in mind when interpreting our findings.

We define a community's stage in the migratory process based on prevalence ratios computed for each year in each community. These ratios are calculated using every respondent's date of birth and the date of his or her first U.S. trip. The denominator of the ratio is the number of people 15 years old or older alive in a given year, and the numerator is the number of such people who have ever been to the United States up to and including that year. Within each community, we computed prevalence ratios for each year from 1940 to the survey date to create an annual estimate of the proportion of adults who have ever been to the United States.

Since this computation is based on retrospective data, it assumes that migrants and nonmigrants experienced similar rates of mortality and internal out-migration in the past. The mortality assumption is likely to be quite robust. Although small numbers of survivors from early periods

can produce random fluctuations in the ratios, there are not likely to be large mortality differentials based on migrant status. In order to enhance the stability of estimates, however, we do not consider prevalence ratios for years before 1940.

To the extent that the communities experienced permanent out-migration within Mexico, however, and to the degree that this internal migration is a substitute for international migration, the ratios will tend to overstate the prevalence of U.S. migration. This overestimation results because internal migrants who were in the base population in earlier years had left by the time of the survey and were thus excluded from the denominator, biasing the ratio upwards. This bias tends to be more severe in earlier periods because the number of permanent internal out-migrants accumulates over time. Since prevalence ratios tend to rise over time, however, the bias is conservative: an upward bias in earlier years acts to mitigate the curve of rising prevalence that is observed empirically.

Another source of potential bias stems from permanent out-migration to the United States. To the extent that we have failed to include people who began migrating at some point in the past and then settled in the United States permanently, we have excluded cases that contribute strongly to the numerator and proportionately less to the denominator, thereby biasing the prevalence ratios downward. Moreover, because settlement tends to occur among those who have built up considerable U.S. experience, we are most likely to exclude people who left on their first trips some time ago, thereby exacerbating the bias more in earlier periods than later ones, and thus yielding a pattern that is not conservative with respect to the empirical trends we observe. To the extent that we have captured the experience of settlers through the snowball samples compiled at U.S. destination sites, we have mitigated this problem.

Although these potential biases should be kept in mind, we believe that our conclusions are robust. In order to gauge the potential for bias, however, table 2 presents information about internal and international migration in each of the 19 samples. The first column shows the year of the first U.S. trip in each community to indicate the rough beginnings of international migration, and the second column reports the prevalence of U.S. migration as of the survey date. The third and fourth columns report the corresponding data for trips within Mexico, and the last column shows the percentage of adult respondents born within the community (an indicator of the degree of in-migration).

The sample clearly offers a wide range of U.S. migratory experiences. Some communities, such as La Yerbabuena, became heavily involved in U.S. migration early on and rapidly moved toward mass migration: the first migrant left this community in 1923, and by the survey date 60%

Continuities in Migration

TABLE 2

PREVALENCE OF INTERNAL AND INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

Community	Year of Earliest U.S. Migration	Prevalence of U.S. Migration in Survey Year (%)	Year of Earliest Mexican Migration	Prevalence of Mexican Migration in Survey Year (%)	% of Population 15 and Older Born in Municipio
Small cities:					
El Salto	1923	21	1936	14	62
San Francisco del Rincón	1920	21	1918	5	84
Romita	1940	17	1933	8	78
Los Reyes	1943	30	1923	21	57
San Felipe Torres Mochas	1940	30	1921	21	78
Ixtlán del Río	1941	27	1928	16	45
Ameca	1942	31	1936	18	76
Las Varas	1943	29	1944	11	55
Towns:					
Chavinda	1914	34	1930	9	79
Amacueca	1920	34	1927	17	82
San Diego de Alejandría	1919	43	1926	23	78
Unión de San Antonio	1925	23	1926	23	83
Ario de Rayón	1935	39	1949	11	76
Nahuatzen	1940	18	1936	28	95
Ranchos:					
Tepec	1940	18	1915	16	85
Santa María del Valle	1923	25	1928	13	78
Mineral de Pozos	1949	9	1937	23	87
La Yerbabuena	1923	60	1928	10	83
La Soledad	1939	28	1932	6	95
Average	1932	28	1930	15	77

NOTE.—Prevalence ratios are calculated for migrants 15 years old and older whose first trip was for two months or longer, for trips made in the period 1940–89.

of the entire adult population had been to the United States. Similarly, San Diego de Alejandría began sending migrants in 1920, and by the time of the survey 43% of its adult population had acquired U.S. experience. At the other extreme, U.S. out-migration did not begin in Mineral de Pozos until 1941, and only 9% of its adult population had migrated by the survey date. Across all communities, the prevalence of U.S. migration averaged 28% in the survey year.

Internal migration constitutes a potential source of bias in estimating prevalence ratios for international migration to the extent that it is permanent, substitutes for U.S. migration, and is prevalent. If internal migration is not permanent, then migrants are likely to have their experience reflected in the computed ratios because they returned to be interviewed.

If internal and international migration are not substitutes, then people with and without U.S. experience are equally likely to migrate internally and thus little bias enters the computation of prevalence ratios, because the absence of experience affects the numerator and denominator equally. Even if internal out-migration is permanent and acts as a substitute for international migration, moreover, the bias would be small if it were not very prevalent.

Although we have no way of knowing whether there is much *permanent* out-migration to Mexican destinations, the overall prevalence of internal migratory experience does not appear to be high, averaging only about 15% overall, about half the prevalence of international migration. The ratios range from 5% in San Francisco del Rincón to 28% in Nahuatzen. In some communities, like Tepec and San Francisco del Rincón, internal migration began in the early teens of this century, whereas in others, like Ario de Rayón and Las Varas, it began in the 1940s. There is little evidence, however, that U.S. and Mexican migration are substitutes for each other. If that were true, we would expect an inverse correlation between the two sets of prevalence ratios across communities; in fact the correlation is nearly zero (.02).

In most cases, the communities have experienced little in-migration as well. Overall, 77% of the adult respondents were born in the *municipio*, but the percentage varies somewhat by size. The percentage is exceptionally high in small *ranchos*, where it averages 86%, but is somewhat lower in towns (78%) and cities (68%). The percentage of locally born residents is lowest in Ixtlán del Río and Las Varas, both in the state of Nayarit, and the latter in a growing coastal area.

In general, therefore, although internal migration cannot be dismissed as a potential source of bias, the evidence marshaled in table 2 suggests that it is unlikely to be serious in most cases. To the extent that internal migration does bias the computation of prevalence ratios, however, it will tend to be conservative if the observed empirical trend is one of rising prevalence over time. Although it is not practical to show graphs of prevalence ratios for all 19 communities in the sample, figure 1 plots trends for six cases for the period 1940–89. Ratios are shown for all community members, as well as for men and women separately.

To varying degrees, the communities show a pattern of rising prevalence over time, which suggests that any bias stemming from internal migration is likely to be conservative in nature, working against the direction of the apparent trend. Despite the general consistency of the trend, however, there are pronounced differences in the rate of change over time. In general, trends in U.S. migratory prevalence follow one of three characteristic patterns.

La Yerbabuena and San Diego display the classic pattern of rapidly

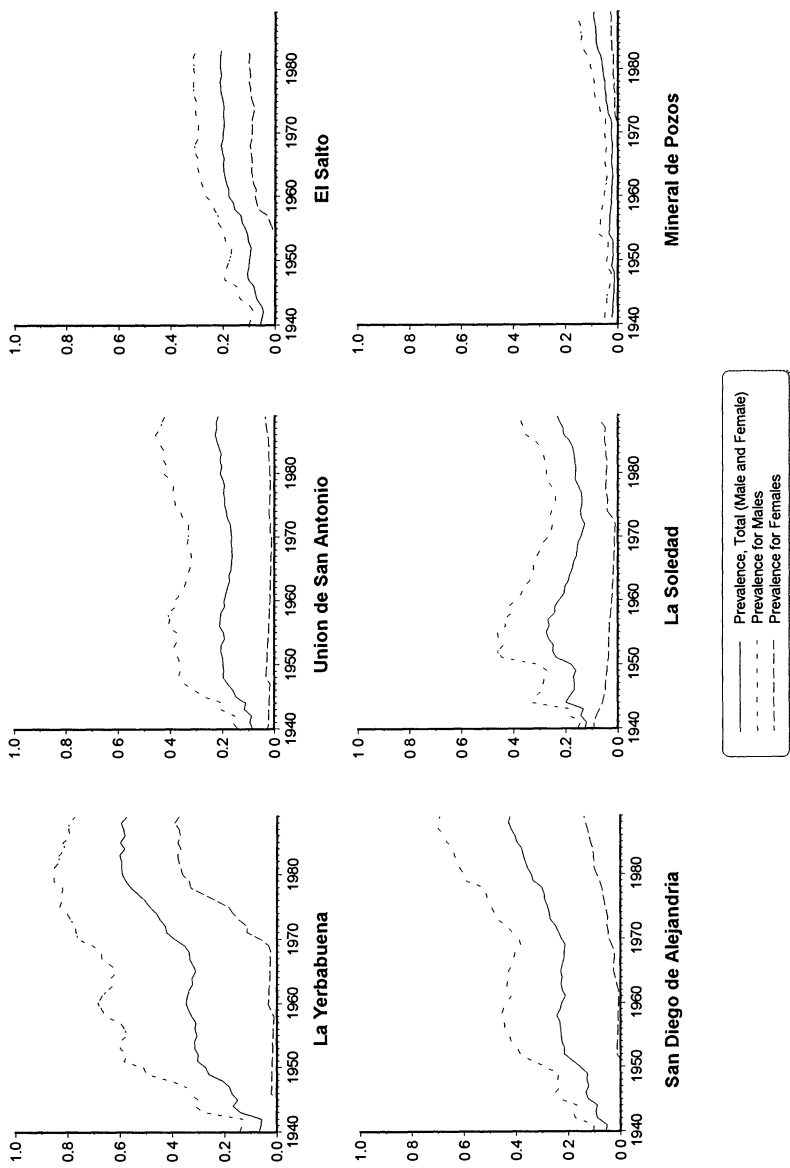


Fig. 1.—Trends in the prevalence of U.S. migration in six Mexican communities, 1940–89

rising prevalence noted first by Reichert (1979). (Indeed, La Yerbabuena is his community of "Guadalupe," which we have resampled.) The top curve shows prevalence ratios for men, the bottom one is for women, and the middle curve captures the trend in prevalence for the population as a whole. In both places, U.S. migration really took off as a cumulative process in 1942, when the United States initiated labor recruitment in Mexico under the auspices of the Bracero Program (Galarza 1964; Samora 1971). After this date, the prevalence of migration among adult men rose very rapidly, reaching 50% in La Yerbabuena by 1950 and 80% by 1980. Women were largely uninvolved until 1970, when their prevalence levels began to rise, very steeply in La Yerbabuena, to reach 40% by 1989. The lag between the onset of male and female movement is 20–30 years in both communities.

The second pattern, observed in Unión de San Antonio and La Soledad, is that of a rapid rise in the prevalence of migration early on, followed by a stagnation and decline during the 1950s and 1960s, then a revival of growth during the early 1970s. A decline in the prevalence of U.S. migration does not mean that new people were not entering the migrant workforce. It simply means that the number of new migrants in any year was less than the number of people turning 15, causing a decline in the average prevalence of migratory experience within the population. The last pattern, that of very slow growth, is expressed by Mineral de Pozos and El Salto. In these communities, prevalence ratios rose very slowly and never achieved high levels.

Our purpose here is not to explain intercommunity differences in the timing and rate of growth in migratory prevalence but to describe the characteristic changes that occur in migration flows as prevalence moves from low to high. We accomplish this task by classifying communities according to their stage in the underlying process of migration each year, based on the estimated prevalence ratios. We inspected trends in prevalence ratios for all 19 communities in order to discern whether rough break points could be defined to capture distinct phases in the developmental process of transnational migration, but in the end we simply created four progressive categories at evenly spaced, arbitrary cutpoints.

The first stage occurs when under 10% of adult community members have been to the United States. At this stage, migration is overwhelmingly male and may persist for prolonged periods without increasing. The next stage occurs when 10%–19% of all community members have acquired experience abroad. In this phase of the process, male migration continues apace but women have not yet begun to migrate in large numbers. The third stage is reached when the overall prevalence ratio varies between 20% and 29%. Here, male migration decelerates as women begin

to enter the migrant flow in significant numbers, causing the overall prevalence ratio to reach a temporary plateau. The fourth stage occurs when prevalence varies between 30% and 39%. At this stage, female migration accelerates and male movement continues, bringing the level of community participation to high levels. The fifth stage constitutes a situation of mass migration, with overall prevalence ratios above 40%—as prevalence among women approaches 30%, that among males reaches 80% or more.

These five prevalence categories correspond roughly to successive stages in the process of migration. In the ensuing section we employ them as independent variables to study qualitative changes in migrant streams as communities move from an initial, tentative participation in U.S. migration to a situation of mass involvement. Specifically, we examine changes across communities in the stock of U.S. experience, the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of migrants, and the nature and destination of U.S. trips as the communities go from low to high prevalence.

COMMONALITIES IN TRANSNATIONAL MIGRATION

The Accumulation of Social Capital

Table 3 examines changes in U.S. experience that occur as migration becomes more prevalent. For each community and year from 1940 to the present we computed prevalence levels among men, women, and all community members, then we calculated the total stock of U.S. experience and the percentage of people with kinship links to U.S. migrants. We assigned each community-year to one of the five prevalence categories and computed averages by prevalence level to derive the numbers shown in the table. Because communities were sampled at widely different rates, the averages computed in this and all subsequent tables were estimated using the inverse of the sampling fraction as a case weight.

In interpreting our findings, it is important to remember that only two communities reached the highest prevalence category. In contrast, 18 communities achieved migration levels placing them into the second prevalence category, 15 reached levels putting them in the third category, and eight reached levels placing them in the fourth category. All communities, of course, contribute years to the first prevalence category (since each community begins at a low prevalence level). This distribution across categories suggests that patterns of change will be fairly robust across the first four categories but that those in the fifth category should be interpreted with some caution, since they are based on the experience of just two communities, both agrarian. Heterogeneous patterns may

TABLE 3

PREVALENCE RATIO, RATE OF CHANGE IN PREVALENCE, AND CUMULATIVE U.S. EXPERIENCE IN COMMUNITY

CHARACTERISTIC	PREVALENCE OF MIGRATION IN COMMUNITY				
	0%–9%	10%–19%	20%–29%	30%–39%	≥40%
Prevalence ratio (%):*					
Males	14.3	27.8	41.6	58.7	80.8
Females .....	.9	5.1	11.3	12.5	29.8
All	7.6	15.7	25.4	33.7	54.9
Change in prevalence ratio (mean absolute % change [t to $t + 1$):*					
Males	1.5	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.4
Females .....	.3	.6	.6	1.0	2.0
All .....	.7	.8	.8	1.1	1.4
Cumulative stock of U.S. experience (mean years per person):**					
Males .....	.1	1.1	3.6	2.7	7.3
Females .....	.0	.7	1.3	1.8	3.7
All .....	.1	1.1	3.5	2.6	7.1
Kinship links to U.S. migrants:**					
% with migrant parent	13.8	27.7	41.6	60.5	75.4
% with migrant grandparent	1.8	4.7	10.3	19.3	40.1
% with migrant sibling	22.6	38.6	59.0	62.7	77.8
% with no migrant relatives	65.6	45.2	25.3	10.3	7.8
Community-years (N)	228	384	234	56	23
No. of communities	19	18	15	8	2

* Estimated from the sample of all household members in 19 communities.

** Estimated from the sample of all household heads in all 19 communities.

partially reflect the progressive selecting out of communities with rising prevalence.

The first panel traces shifts in the prevalence of U.S. migration as communities pass through the various phases of the migration process. Although the total prevalence ratios follow directly from the criteria used to define the five stages, trends for males and females capture the interplay of sex-specific movements at different phases of the migration process. At the earliest stages of migration, few people, male or female, have been to the United States: only 14% of men and under 1% of women. In the ensuing phases, however, migration spreads progressively throughout the adult male population, and by the time mass migration is achieved eight out of ten men have been abroad.

The prevalence of U.S. migration among females lags behind that of males at all phases of the migration process, but the differential grows progressively smaller as migration becomes more prevalent. At low levels

of migration, male prevalence levels exceed those of females by a factor of nearly 16:1. Moving through the next two levels, the differential drops to 5.5:1 and then to 3.7:1. In the fourth category, the ratio climbs minimally, to 4.7:1, but in the highest prevalence category, when 30% of all adult women have been to the United States, the sex differential drops to 2.7:1. As Reichert (1979), Mines (1981), and others noted, transnational migration begins among men but ultimately incorporates women as well.

The next panel of the table shows how rapidly U.S. migration spreads within community populations at different phases of the migration process. We estimate the instantaneous rate of change in prevalence by computing the average absolute percentage change in prevalence between times $t - 1$ and $t + 1$, where t stands for the target year, which is then classified by prevalence category for presentation in the table. These computations reveal that male migratory behavior spreads at a relatively constant rate. At the lowest prevalence level, the absolute percentage change for males is 1.5%, a figure that fluctuates only 0.1%–0.2% across prevalence categories.

In contrast, the rate of change of migration for women is much lower in the first prevalence category, but it nearly doubles in the second stage, remains constant in the third, climbs again in the fourth, and doubles again in the fifth. Thus, transnational migration appears to spread among men at a fairly constant rate irrespective of the degree of migratory prevalence that has been achieved, but the spread of migratory behavior accelerates rapidly among women as prevalence rises, yielding a steady acceleration in migration at the community level.

The last two panels of table 3 show how U.S. migrant experience and network connections accumulate as migratory behavior becomes more diffused in communities. Special questions put to household heads allow us to compute the total amount of time people have spent migrating to the United States and whether or not certain relatives had gone to the United States before them.

As these figures indicate, the spread of migration brings about qualitative changes that alter the decision-making context for actors at different points in the developmental process of migration. Potential migrants deciding whether or not to migrate from a community with a low prevalence of migration generally have little access to information about potential jobs and opportunities in the United States. At low prevalence levels, the typical household head has accumulated only 0.1 years of experience in the United States, only 14% have a parent with migrant experience, 22% have a sibling with U.S. experience, and just 2% have a migrant grandparent.

As U.S. migration spreads within the community, however, kinship connections to the United States proliferate and migratory experience

accumulates to the point where nonmigrants contemplating a move can draw on substantial social capital to reduce the costs and risks of a U.S. trip. Moving through the second, third, and fourth prevalence levels, the average years of U.S. experience per person grow from 1.1 to 2.6 and the percentage of people with a migrant parent increases from 28% to 60%. Across the same categories, the percentage with a migrant sibling goes from 39% to 63% and the percentage with a migrant grandparent grows from 5% to 19%.

Once a level of mass migration has been achieved, potential migrants considering a trip have a vast store of experience and kin connections they can use to gain access to jobs, housing, and other resources in the United States. At the highest prevalence level the typical household head has accumulated an average of seven years of experience in the United States, 75% have a parent who has been to the United States, and 78% have a sibling who has been there. Indeed, the depth of kin connections to the United States is such that 40% have a grandparent with U.S. migrant experience.

This growth of the stock of migratory knowledge and experience and the proliferation of network connections to the United States are both causes and effects of the spread of migratory behavior throughout the community. They are effects because each new migrant adds to the stock of experience and expands the range of network connections. They are causes because connections to experienced migrants constitute a valuable form of social capital (Coleman 1988) that people who have not yet migrated can employ to improve their odds of obtaining a job and income in the United States.

Increasing Demographic Diversity

According to the theory we outlined above, as migration becomes more prevalent in a community its demographic base progressively broadens. This hypothesis is generally confirmed by the data presented in table 4, which examines the demographic background of migrants leaving sample communities at different stages in the migration process. In this table, migrants are classified by the prevalence level of the place they were in when they made their first trip.

The first panel shows that the share of females rises as migration develops and expands. Although there is a slight drop between the third and fourth prevalence categories, the rate climbs sharply in the fifth category. Whereas only 6.7% of U.S. migrants leaving on their first trip are female in the lowest prevalence category, by the time mass prevalence is achieved 44% of new migrants are women. Thus, the share of women rises as migration moves from being a rare to a mass phenomenon.

TABLE 4

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF MIGRANTS ON THEIR FIRST U.S. TRIP

CHARACTERISTIC	PREVALENCE OF MIGRATION IN COMMUNITY				
	0%–9%	10%–19%	20%–29%	30%–39%	≥40%
Sex:					
Female (%)	6.7	25.6	32.6	27.5	44.3
Age of male migrants (years):					
0–14 (%)	10.3	13.9	19.5	27.8	42.6
15–19 (%)	20.7	23.2	29.8	33.7	39.8
20–34 (%)	57.6	53.7	44.2	40.6	13.6
≥35 (%)	11.4	9.2	6.6	8.0	4.0
Mean age	23.7	21.8	19.4	19.9	14.5
Diversity (above groups, <i>n</i> = 4)	57	74	83	83	78
Diversity (5-year groups, <i>n</i> = 11) ...	52	67	68	64	51
Age of female migrants (years):					
0–14 (%)	54.4	43.9	42.7	39.6	33.8
15–19 (%)	2.9	13.0	16.5	14.5	24.8
20–34 (%)	27.9	32.2	27.0	32.2	24.3
≥35 (%)	14.8	10.9	13.8	13.6	17.1
Mean age	13.7	16.4	16.3	17.7	20.1
Diversity (above groups, <i>n</i> = 4)	20	69	83	81	87
Diversity (5-year groups, <i>n</i> = 11) ...	16	50	63	66	72
Household position:					
Head (%)	86.0	59.7	43.3	41.5	19.2
Spouse (%)	3.4	15.2	12.4	10.6	23.2
Son (%)	7.3	15.1	25.7	30.7	38.5
Daughter (%)	3.0	8.6	16.6	14.1	18.7
Other (%) .....	.3	1.4	1.9	3.1	.5
Diversity (<i>n</i> = 5)	18	53	71	66	78
No. of migrants (unweighted)	227	1,148	1,480	635	343

The representation of different age groups likewise broadens over time. Among men the proportion of migrants 35 years old or older falls steadily as communities proceed through the five categories of migratory prevalence, going from 11% and 9% at low prevalence levels at 4% at mass levels. The percentage of males who are 20–34 years old likewise declines across stages, going from 58% to 14%. In contrast, the percentage of males who are 15–19 years old steadily rises from 21% to 40% and the mean age correspondingly drops from 23.7 years to 15 years, yielding a progressive “greening” of the male migration flow.

In general, lower prevalence levels correspond more to earlier historical periods than do higher prevalence levels. For those in the lowest prevalence category, the mean year of migration for people leaving on their

first U.S. trip was 1953; it was 1964, 1971, and 1974, respectively, for those in the second, third, and fourth categories. Among migrants in the highest category, the mean year of migration was 1981. Thus, older migrants who began migrating when communities were characterized by low prevalence levels are less likely than those leaving from communities with high levels to have survived to the survey date to report their trip. The selective mortality of older migrants from earlier periods constitutes a conservative bias, however, and the drop in the mean age of first migration is probably even more pronounced than indicated by our data.

These figures suggest that transnational migration begins among males in their peak labor force years and spreads progressively to other age groups. In order to measure this increase in age heterogeneity more succinctly, we computed entropy indices (Shannon 1948; Theil 1972; White 1986) to measure diversity at each level of prevalence. These indices are reported in table 4. The entropy index (henceforth called the diversity index) is defined by the formula:

$$\text{Diversity} = \frac{- \sum_{i=1}^n p_i \times \log(p_i)}{\log(n)} \times 100, \quad (1)$$

where n is the number of categories (in this case, age groups) and p_i is the proportion of people in category i .

The index varies between 0 and 100. Minimum diversity occurs when all people are concentrated in one category and the index equals zero. Maximum diversity occurs when each category contains the same proportion of people, yielding an index of 100. We computed indices to measure diversity by prevalence category within each community separately, then averaged them to obtain the indices shown in the table. The resulting figures indicate average within-community diversity. We computed indices for the four broad age groups shown in the table, as well as for more detailed five-year age groups (11 categories).

Both sets of indices show an increase in age diversity occurring among male migrants subsequent to the initial stage of transnational migration, although there is a drop in diversity at the highest level of prevalence. According to calculations based on the five-year age intervals, diversity is limited at first, with an index value of 52. It then rises to 68 by the third prevalence phase before edging downward to 51 in the mass-migration phase. Thus, the concentration returns to a level that is close to the original value, but migrants are now concentrated in different, younger, age groups.

The next panel of table 4 shows the age composition of female migrants

by prevalence level. Moving from low to mass prevalence categories, it is clear that developmental trends in diversity roughly parallel those of men, moving toward steadily greater heterogeneity with respect to age. In the case of women, however, the trend continues unabated through the mass migration category. The diversity index computed for five-year age intervals increases from 16 in the lowest prevalence category, through values of 50, 63, and 66 in the intermediate categories, to end up at 72 under conditions of mass migration (compared to a value of 51 among men).

Unlike men, however, the average age of female migrants increases steadily as migration moves through the successive stages. In general, the percentage of women younger than 15 drops, while the percentages of those who are 20–34 years old and of those 35 and over rise. Thus, whereas among men migration begins among older married household heads and then spreads to younger heads, older sons, and finally to young boys, female migration appears to begin among young and working-age daughters and then spreads to wives and older women. The order of precedence in migration thus appears to be fathers, older sons, older daughters, young mothers and children, and then older women.

This conclusion is consistent with the information presented in the last panel of table 3, which shows household position by stage in the migration process. These data must be interpreted with caution because household position is measured at the time of the survey, not at the time that migrants left on their first trip. Thus, a significant number of the household heads shown in the panel are likely to have been sons when they actually made their first trip.

As a community moves from a state of low to intermediate to mass prevalence levels, the share of household heads among migrants progressively falls while the proportion of sons, spouses, and daughters rises. Accordingly, diversity in household positions begins with a low value of 18 at the lowest prevalence level and ends up at a high value of 78 under conditions of mass migration.

Sons begin their upward trend at an initial level of participation that is quite low compared to heads but is over two times that of spouses and daughters (7% at the lowest prevalence levels), and they eventually come to dominate the outflow (38% at the highest prevalence levels). Daughters rapidly increase their participation (from 3% at the lowest level to 19% at the highest). Spouses are only a small part of the flow at the lowest level of prevalence (3%), but they increase their representation, substantially matching sons, in the second prevalence category. The share of spouses then drops, but rises again in the highest category, surpassing the proportion of daughters (23% vs. 19%).

The order of precedence is consistent with the prevailing division of labor within the household and with norms about how men and women should occupy and move through space. It also reflects changes in norms that occur as wives negotiate with husbands in order to secure a larger economic role for themselves through migration and as they seek to join family members abroad. The prevailing view of Mexico–U.S. migration, which sees women as an undifferentiated group of wives following their husbands abroad, thus needs modification.

Rising and Falling Diversity of Trip Characteristics

According to the developmental model outlined above, the diversity of trip characteristics should first rise and then fall as migration unfolds over time. This curvilinear pattern is evident when U.S. destinations are examined by the prevalence of migration, an analysis that is carried out in the top panel of table 5.

Although southern California attracted a majority of all migrants at every prevalence level except the first, the share going to Los Angeles rose and then fell, while the portion going to Ventura County increased steadily. Those going to the inland valleys represented the highest initial share, but their proportion fell, rose again, and then dropped. The percentage going to the San Francisco Bay area generally rose across developmental stages, the proportion going to Texas and Illinois fell, and the share going to other locations dropped, except in the last prevalence category.

The trends observed in the highest prevalence category are largely due to the particular communities represented here. People from La Yerbabuena and San Diego de Alejandría, the two places that achieved mass migration, are overwhelmingly involved in agricultural work in the United States, which is reflected in the destinations to which they travel.

It is somewhat difficult to see the curvilinear shift in diversity from the geographic distributions shown in the table, because they are aggregated across communities and grouped into broad zones. The pattern of changing diversity is more clearly detected using indices computed from detailed geographic categories (not reported in this article; no. of categories = 67). At the lowest level of prevalence, migrants go to a relatively small number of U.S. locations (diversity = 35), but the range of destinations increases markedly when prevalence reaches the second category (diversity = 46). It then stops increasing and remains between 43 and 46 across the remaining stages.

A similar pattern typifies the distribution of migrants by trip duration, shown in the second panel of table 5. Once again diversity is relatively

low in the first prevalence level, then it increases as prevalence moves through the second and third phases, decreases slightly in the fourth category, and then falls further when migration reaches a mass stage. At low levels of prevalence, migrants take either long or short trips. In this category 54% of the trips lasted under one year and 20% for five years or more. This bimodal distribution yields a mean trip length of 3.4 years.

As migration spreads and becomes more prevalent, the share of people staying over five years at first rises but then progressively falls. The proportion taking moderate-length trips (one–five years) rises but then drops, and the average trip length shortens. The greatest levels of diversity (91 and 90) are reached in the third and fourth prevalence categories, but diversity falls back to 87 during the mass phase. At this prevalence level, only 24% of people stayed over five years, 49% stayed under one year, and 27% stayed one–five years.

Although there are no strong developmental trends in the aggregate distribution of migrants by legal status, there is a pattern of rising, falling, and then rising diversity within communities. At low prevalence levels the diversity index is only 43, it rises to a peak of 57 in the second prevalence stage, and by the time mass migration has been achieved it has fallen back to 54. In the initial phases of migration, 46% of all migrants are undocumented, 16% are legal, and 38% are braceros, but at the final stage braceros have dropped to zero and the share of legal migrants has increased to 64%.

The foregoing results suggest an orderly shift in migrant strategies across developmental stages. At the beginning of the migration process, migrants tend either to adopt a settled strategy of long-term residence or a short-term strategy of back-and-forth movement. During intermediate stages migrants experiment with variations on these strategies as they try out different locations and different jobs. As the developmental process proceeds, however, migrants turn toward settled strategies, which are made more attractive by the formation of stem communities in the United States, or toward recurrent strategies, which are enabled by the emergence of well-developed migrant networks. In some cases a community may “specialize” in more than one strategy, depending, for example, on whether migrants have achieved a toehold in more than one destination or occupation (Goldring 1992*b*).

In order to study migrant strategies, we employed the criteria used by Massey et al. (1987) to characterize the period between migrants' first and most recent trips. New migrants made their first trip to the United States during the three years prior to the survey. Settled migrants either stayed in the United States for three years on their most recent trip or had an average trip duration of at least three years between their first

TABLE 5
CHARACTERISTICS OF FIRST U.S. TRIP

CHARACTERISTIC	PREVALENCE OF MIGRATION IN COMMUNITY				
	0%-9%	10%-19%	20%-29%	30%-39%	≥40%
U.S. destination:					
California:					
Southern California (%)	24.0	55.6	52.4	44.1	42.4
Los Angeles County (%)	15.1	43.8	36.2	22.1	3.9
Orange County (%)	5.9	3.0	4.8	5.2	3.9
Riverside County (%)	.5	.5	1.3	1.8	.7
San Diego County (%)	.4	3.6	3.0	2.4	.2
Ventura County (%)	2.1	4.7	7.1	12.6	33.7
San Francisco Bay area (%)	8.4	7.1	7.6	10.8	1.3
Inland valleys (%)	27.3	14.5	13.2	28.9	5.3
Salinas Valley (%)	6.7	1.7	3.0	6.9	.9
Other California (%)	5.4	2.4	2.7	2.7	1.3
Texas (%)	11.8	8.7	10.9	.5	.5
Illinois (%)	.6	2.3	1.8	2.0	.2
Other (%)	15.9	7.9	8.2	4.0	48.0
Diversity (above groups, <i>n</i> = 12)	46	57	56	63	63
Diversity (original groups, <i>n</i> = 67)	35	46	43	44	46
Trip duration:					
1-2 months (%)	14.2	11.1	7.7	8.2	6.0
3-5 months (%)	20.9	14.9	11.7	14.1	11.4
6-11 months (%)	19.2	17.9	20.0	24.8	31.9
1-2 years (%)	18.3	19.0	20.3	20.8	19.3
3-5 years (%)	7.3	7.3	12.8	11.7	7.4
>5 years (%)	20.0	29.9	27.5	20.5	24.1
Mean trip length (years)	3.4	4.6	3.5	2.4	1.9
Diversity (above groups, <i>n</i> = 6)	71	87	91	90	87

Legal status:									
Bracero (%)	37.8	15.1	3.9	8.3	0				
Undocumented (%)	45.7	55.8	63.6	61.8	36.0				
Documented (%)	16.5	29.1	32.5	29.9	64.0				
Green card (%)	7.3	8.8	6.3	9.6	39.0				
Legalization or amnesty (%)	.5	.6	2.1	.8	1.6				
Citizen (%)	6.5	12.7	19.0	16.3	22.2				
Tourist (%)	2.2	7.0	5.1	3.1	1.2				
Diversity (above groups, <i>n</i> = 6)	43	57	56	47	54				
Strategy:									
New	.9	1.5	2.8	5.3	1.0				
Temporary	14.2	15.4	12.2	11.0	5.5				
Recurrent	50.4	38.2	44.8	49.5	73.4				
Settled	34.5	44.9	40.3	34.3	20.1				
Diversity (above groups, <i>n</i> = 4)	46	59	67	73	61				
U.S. occupation:									
Agriculture (%)	83.3	52.1	41.5	71.1	84.1				
Nonagriculture (%)	16.7	47.9	58.5	28.9	15.9				
Skilled manual (%)	2.0	5.6	7.9	1.9	.2				
Unskilled manual (%)	11.1	27.3	27.3	17.8	10.0				
Services (%)	2.9	10.7	17.8	7.1	4.4				
Other (%)	.6	4.4	5.6	2.2	1.3				
Diversity (above groups, <i>n</i> = 5)	24	60	71	51	57				
Diversity (original groups, <i>n</i> = 55)	15	34	45	27	33				
Diversity (males, original groups, <i>n</i> = 48)	24	30	39	39	41				
Diversity (females, original groups, <i>n</i> = 41)	16	37	50	34	38				
No. of migrants (unweighted)	227	1,148	1,480	635	343				

NOTE.—The diversity figures for “original groups” are based on a breakdown of the data into smaller, more specific categories not reported in this article.

and last trip. Recurrent migrants took at least three trips and averaged one trip every two years or spent at least half of the time between their first and last trip in the United States. Finally, temporary migrants, the residual category, took fewer than three trips, averaged fewer than one trip every two years, or spent less than half of their time between trips in the United States. We used the midpoint of the period between the first and last trip as the year by which to classify strategy by prevalence. For people who had made only one trip, we used its date to define the relevant prevalence category.

As the migration process unfolds in stages and transnational movement becomes more prevalent, migrants generally shift away from settled and temporary strategies and increasingly favor a strategy of recurrent movement. Across the five stages, the relative number of migrants employing a temporary strategy falls from 14% to 5%, the share using a settled strategy drops from 34% to 20%, but the proportion using a recurrent strategy increases from 50% to 73%. At the same time, the diversity of strategies rises from 46 at the lowest prevalence level to 73 at the fourth prevalence category but drops to 61 when mass migration has been reached.

Thus, the general tendency is toward greater diversity in strategies over time, despite some curvilinearity. When migration becomes extremely prevalent, however, there is a tendency toward renewed specialization, focusing principally on a recurrent strategy. The growing predominance of recurrent migration is enabled by the accumulation of social capital in the form of network connections and community migrant experience, which enable anyone, even new migrants, quickly to adopt a pattern of recurrent movement back and forth for regular periods of paid labor abroad.

The last panel of table 5 shows shifts in the U.S. occupations held by migrants at different stages in the migration process. Once again, there is a pattern of rising and falling diversity. Occupational variation increases sharply between the first and third prevalence levels, then declines across later phases. There is, however, an apparent reversal of the shift away from agricultural employment between the third and fifth prevalence levels. Whereas the proportion of migrants working in agriculture drops from 83% at the lowest prevalence level to 42% in the third category, it rises again to 71% and 84% during the last two phases.

The general tendency is probably toward greater concentration in urban jobs as prevalence rises; the apparent respecialization in agriculture within the last two categories reflects the nature of the communities that achieved high levels of prevalence. Whether specialization in U.S. agricultural labor is itself a factor that promotes the emergence of mass

TABLE 6

SOCIOECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF MIGRANT HOUSEHOLD HEADS
PRIOR TO LEAVING ON THEIR FIRST U.S. TRIP

CHARACTERISTIC	PREVALENCE OF MIGRATION IN COMMUNITY				
	0%–9%	10%–19%	20%–29%	30%–39%	≥40%
Education:					
None (%)	23.2	23.5	16.4	21.6	6.4
1–5 years (%)	54.5	36.8	29.9	50.0	65.3
6+ years (%)	22.4	39.7	53.7	28.4	28.3
Mean years of schooling	2.7	3.7	5.2	2.9	4.3
Diversity (<i>n</i> = 20)	36	53	55	51	63
Land ownership:					
Landowners (%)	6.1	8.1	4.9	5.1	.5
Business ownership:					
Business owners (%)	9.3	5.8	7.4	3.9	8.1
Mexican occupation:					
Agriculture (%)	61.2	48.7	38.0	70.0	57.5
Nonagriculture (%)*	29.4	38.7	46.9	15.5	10.8
Professional-manager-owner (%) ...	.0	1.0	3.2	.0	.0
Technical-sales-clerical (%)	5.8	7.2	6.0	3.0	2.0
Skilled manual (%)	7.2	12.8	18.1	6.5	6.2
Unskilled manual (%)	9.6	11.3	10.7	2.8	2.0
Services (%)	6.9	6.5	8.8	3.2	.8
Not in workforce (%)	9.4	12.6	15.1	14.5	31.7
Diversity (above groups, <i>n</i> = 7)	32	50	59	47	41
Diversity (original groups, <i>n</i> = 64) ...	27	45	48	48	38
No. migrant household heads	172	670	674	190	57

NOTE.—The diversity figures for “original groups” are based on a breakdown of the Mexican occupations into 64 categories more specific than the seven general categories reported in this article.

* Categories of nonagricultural employment may not sum to nonagricultural total due to rounding error.

migration or whether those communities we selected just happened to be small agrarian towns cannot be determined from these data.

Increasing Socioeconomic Heterogeneity of Migration

The gradual accumulation of network connections and migratory knowledge across developmental stages makes migration an increasingly common social and economic practice and lowers the costs and risks of movement, making migration a less selective process. Table 6 examines the socioeconomic selectivity of migration in terms of education, property ownership, and Mexican occupations. These variables are measured for migrants in the year before they take their first U.S. trip.

Changing educational distributions are somewhat difficult to interpret because the stages of migration tend to occur at different historical times. Overall levels of education have been rising in Mexico and the local availability of postprimary education has expanded over time. In general, both educational levels and diversity increase as migration becomes more prevalent, indicating that the educational selectivity of migration decreases. Mean education increases from 2.7 to 4.3 years from the lowest to the mass prevalence level, and the diversity index increases from 36 to 63, after remaining relatively constant in the second through fourth prevalence categories.

Distributions of property ownership also suggest that migration becomes less socioeconomically selective as migration spreads throughout the community, although there is some curvilinearity. In the first two prevalence categories, 6% and 8% of the migrants are landowners, but the percentage drops to about 5% in the third and fourth stages and ends up at 0.5% in the mass prevalence category. Trends in business ownership are less clear. In the initial stage, 9% of migrants are business owners, but as migration becomes more prevalent, the proportion falls, rises, falls again, then rises.

It is possible that some of these fluctuations reflect a process in which early migrants use remittances to acquire businesses or property that later migrants in the family report as being their own prior to their first departure. That is, the accumulation of property over time by individuals who pass it on to family members may explain some of the fluctuations. It may also reflect the particular kinds of communities that achieve high levels of migratory prevalence.

The broadening of socioeconomic representation is suggested by the Mexican occupational data, shown in the last panel of table 6. At the lowest level of prevalence, migrants are drawn largely from agricultural occupations: 29% come from nonagrarian pursuits, while 61% report an agrarian occupation. Among nonagricultural occupations, migrants are distributed relatively evenly among four categories: technical-sales-clerical workers make up 6%, skilled manual workers 7%, unskilled manual workers 10%, and service workers 7%. As migration proceeds through the third prevalence category, however, there is a clear shift of migrants' origins to include a higher proportion of nonagricultural backgrounds. By the time this stage is reached, 38% of all migrants are engaged in agricultural occupations, while nonagricultural workers have risen slightly to a 47% share. The increase is particularly large for skilled workers.

The trend toward lower shares of agricultural backgrounds among first-time migrants reverses in the fourth prevalence category, where the share jumps sharply to 70%, before falling back down to 58% in the

last category. This increasing predominance of agricultural backgrounds probably again reflects the nature of the communities achieving high levels of prevalence in our sample, but it might also reflect Mexico's sharply worsening economic conditions during the early 1980s. The "crisis" sent many people north, as did the possibility of legalization through the Immigration Reform and Control Act.

The occupational data in table 6 also show that the proportion of migrants reporting no Mexican occupation prior to leaving on their first trip increases across prevalence categories. In the initial prevalence category 9% of migrants report not having worked before leaving Mexico, a percentage that rises steadily through the fourth phase and jumps to 32% in the highest prevalence category. This pattern reflects the decline in the mean age of migration noted in table 4, which yields a steady increase in the percentage of migrants outside of the labor force. This pattern also suggests a phenomenon of "northernization," whereby U.S. migration gains force as a social and cultural phenomenon and people increasingly migrate abroad without gaining local occupational experience first.

As migration moves from low to mass prevalence, the degree of diversity in migrant's occupational backgrounds follows a curvilinear pattern. When calculated using the broad occupational groups shown in table 6, it grows from 27 to 48 and then falls back to 38. When based on more detailed categories (55 categories, not reported in this article), it rises from 32 to 59 and then falls back to 41. Although there is some tendency for occupational diversity to constrict between the third and the mass phases in curvilinear fashion, the overall tendency is toward broader representation and less socioeconomic selectivity in the stream of out-migrants.

CONCLUSION

Field investigators working in Mexico during the 1970s and early 1980s uncovered a variety of empirical continuities in the way that transnational migration developed within communities. Migration to the United States generally began with a small number of migrants leaving the community from a rather narrow socioeconomic and demographic niche. Over time, however, the number of migrants tended to grow and eventually came to incorporate virtually all groups and classes in the community.

In this article we outlined a cumulative theory of migration that accounts for empirical regularities observed by earlier investigators. Migration tends to increase in prevalence and become more diverse because transnational movement causes relatively permanent changes in individual motivations, social structures, and cultural milieus, and these changes

cumulate over time to change the context within which subsequent migration decisions are made. As information about migration grows and network connections to the United States ramify, the costs and risks of international movement drop and migration becomes more attractive. As more people are induced to migrate, knowledge and network connections expand further, inducing more people to migrate, and so on. With time, migration becomes a generalized social and economic practice.

No previous study has examined developmental processes of migration using such a broad sample of communities surveyed using identical methods and procedures. Drawing on data from 19 Mexican settlements, we defined five basic stages in the social process of migration based on the overall prevalence of migration in the community. We showed that when high prevalence levels are achieved, the vast majority of townspeople are related to someone who has been to the United States and average U.S. experience has accumulated to very high levels.

This accumulation of social capital qualitatively changes the decision-making environment for potential migrants and makes transnational movement accessible and attractive to community members. Although the first international migrants tend to be married male household heads of prime labor force age, usually from a nonagricultural background and often from a property-owning class, as migration becomes more prevalent and social capital accumulates, this profile changes.

Migration spreads among males at a relatively constant pace, but among females its prevalence grows at an increasing rate. As a result, the representation of females among migrant cohorts increases markedly as the level of prevalence rises. The range of ages steadily broadens among both men and women. Among the former, migration generally spreads from fathers to older sons and then to young boys. Among women, migration begins among older daughters and young wives, then moves to older wives and young girls. As migration develops from an isolated set of events to a mass phenomenon, it also becomes less selective in class terms. Educational and occupational backgrounds become more diverse as the percentage of landowners and agricultural workers falls.

At early stages in the developmental process of migration, migrants from a community tend to go to a rather narrow geographic and occupational niche in the United States, largely following in the footsteps of the first migrants. As networks develop and migrants acquire greater experience abroad, however, they seek out new opportunities in new locations. Eventually, however, someone achieves a position of authority that allows him to distribute employment to the people in his community network, which causes the diversity of destinations to stop rising.

Our empirical analyses showed that geographic diversity was low in

the initial stages of migratory development, increased dramatically during the intermediate stages, and then stayed constant or fell slightly as a mass level of migration was achieved. Movement strategies and trip durations displayed a pattern of rising and then falling diversity as communities moved from the lowest to the highest prevalence category. Occupations and legal statuses for migrants in the United States displayed a general trend toward greater diversity across developmental stages.

Thus, using a broad sample of Mexican communities, we find evidence of common developmental patterns of migration that are in line with the empirical observations of early investigators and the developmental theory of network migration outlined above. Our results reinforce Durand and Massey's (1992) conclusion that common migration processes occur across a wide range of Mexican communities, even though their expression may be shaped by factors operating at the community level.

We also underscore Durand and Massey's caveat that care must be taken when attempting to generalize from isolated community studies. As we have shown, depending on whether one selects a community where transnational migration is incipient or well established, the "nature" of transnational migration may be characterized very differently in social, demographic, and economic terms and the patterns of movement may vary considerably. In order to aid in future comparative work, investigators undertaking case studies of migrant communities should report the degree of migratory prevalence so that others can determine what phase the community has achieved in the developmental process and can avoid comparing communities at markedly different stages.

Our contribution thus lies in synthesizing available material and suggesting a conceptual model that can reconcile seeming discrepancies reported in individual case studies. If identifiable patterns are associated with the expansion of migratory behavior and accumulated experience, then these differences should be the result of diverse histories and levels of migration experience. Simple cross tabulations of data from multiple sites offer little insight into the process of migration unless they are standardized for purposes of comparison. We introduce the prevalence of migration as a conceptual and empirical measure that can capture the cumulative process of migration as it unfolds.

Having discussed commonalities in migration from a broad sample of Mexican communities, we next need to study the structural factors and population processes that shape the spread of migration within communities to understand why some places rapidly attain a state of mass migration while others develop more slowly and achieve only modest rates of out-migration. We hope to address these more complicated multilevel analyses in future research.

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