

Mixtecs and Zapotecs Working in California: Rural and Urban Experiences

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Introduction

In a fascinating paper written for the Asencio Commission (Goldring 1990), Luin Goldring compared the migration experiences of Las Animas, Zacatecas, and Gomez Far as, Michoacan, two villages that have been sending migrants to California for a long time, and for which thorough studies exist (e.g. Mines, 1981, Lopez Castro, 1986). Though the two villages had different patterns of land tenure and different wage labor opportunities nearby, she argued that the insertion of the U.S.-bound migrants into the California labor market had been the greatest determinant of migration patterns, settlement in the United States, and the evolving use of the villages.

Whereas 90 percent of migrants from Gomez Far as went to Watsonville to pick strawberries, migrants from Las Animas were spread around California in at least five important concentrations, and only 12 percent worked in agriculture--18 percent worked in manufacturing, 39 percent in construction, and 31 percent in other urban services. As a result, Animas had 15 percent higher wages in California, formed small businesses there, and tended to settle in the United States. In contrast, Gomezos, working in seasonal agricultural jobs in California, had developed a pattern of circular family migration, spending the winters in Mexico. This was facilitated by their access to a subsidized state farm labor camp in Watsonville, the use of which required that they continue to work in agriculture. As a result, Gomezos did not form businesses in California and relatively fewer settled out. Remittances were also spent in different ways.

This important idea, that the differential insertion of Mexican migrant labor networks into the U.S. economy has differential effects on the villages of origin has been little explored in the research literature. More attention has been given to the effects of such insertion on the outcomes for immigrant groups in the receiving country. In fact, the research on immigrant small business has evolved toward a focus on how such insertions condition the possibilities for entrepreneurship (Waldinger 1986). Though there are specific stories associated with how migrant networks started in specific industries and places, they are almost random occurrences, much as with the origins of many industries that are located in specific towns or regions (Krugman, 1991, 1995). That someone from Las Animas found a job in South San Francisco or, as we will see in this paper, that someone from Tlacolula found a job in a West Los Angeles restaurant, is not an occurrence that could be predicted from any prior history or cultural traits, rather it happened by chance. But just as with the cumulative effects that occur as an industry develops in an area, so the cumulative insertion of migrants from a particular village into certain types of jobs has distinct impacts on the pattern and consequences of migration.

Runsten and Zabin (1994) compared Mixtec migration to the received wisdom on Mexican migration, which had been derived from Western Mexican sending regions. They found that unlike the Western Mexican migrants to the United States, the Mixtecs had significant daughter communities in other states of Mexico, often arrived in the United States through a process of stage migration to Northwest Mexico, relied on labor contractors to secure jobs, and had a higher propensity to migrate as families. The

Mixtecs were found in most of the worst, short-term jobs in agriculture, and their access to jobs was generally controlled by mestizos. This led to speculation that the indigenouness--i.e. the history of racism in Mexico--of the Mixtecs had something to do with the distinctive nature of their migration experience.

In this paper, we control in a way for indigenous identity by comparing the migration experience of two indigenous groups from Oaxaca. We compare Mixtec migration, which is dominated by agricultural work, to that of Zapotecs from the Tlacolula District of Oaxaca, who mainly work in restaurants and other urban services in the Los Angeles area. Though both groups' migrations to the United States have occurred in a similar time frame, the outcomes and impacts of migration have been very different.

Oaxacan Migration

The current pattern of migration from Mexico to the United States is shifting, as more and more "non-traditional" Mexican migrants, such as indigenous people from the state of Oaxaca, find their way north, particularly to California. Compared to the mestizo population, indigenous migrants arrive in the United States with greater disadvantages: some are monolingual in their indigenous language or speak Spanish poorly, often their economic conditions are more difficult, and they are subject to racism by both Mexicans and Americans (Zabin, et al. 1993).

Oaxaca is divided into eight regions and is composed of at least 16 ethnic groups, each with its own characteristics. However, the Zapotecs and the Mixtecs are the predominant ethnic groups in the state. For example, in 1995, there were 355,000 Zapotec speakers (34% of the total Oaxacan population) and 229,000 Mixtec speakers (22% of the total population) who were 4 years old and older (INEGI, 1997: 23)

Although many different Oaxacan ethnic groups are migrating to the United States¹, the Zapotecs and Mixtecs, in addition to being the two largest groups found in Oaxaca, are also the major groups found in California. Given the importance of these two groups in the Mexican migration process, we seek to understand the different migration and settlement patterns, as they are conditioned by differential labor market access. We also consider to the different ways in which these groups organize themselves. Perhaps because of the different experiences that each group finds as they migrate, they tend to organize around different issues. The Mixtec groups tend to emphasize political issues whereas the Zapotecs tend to focus more on cultural issues.

We find that Zapotecs tend to migrate to urban areas and work in the service industries. They also tend to rely mainly on social and familial networks to migrate and to get access to jobs, and so they could be classified as having a traditional Mexican migration pattern. The Mixtecs, on the other hand, usually migrate to rural areas and work in the agricultural sector. The Mixtec migration history is linked to the *enganchadores*, or labor contractors, which do not seem to have played an important role in the Zapotec

¹ Other groups, such as the Chinantecs, Chatinos, Mixes, Triquis and Zoques have also begun to migrate to different parts of the United States.

experience. Another difference that we find between these two groups is that the Mixtec migrate and move in groups often composed of families, and have arrived in the United States often via stage migration to work in Northwest Mexico, whereas the Zapotec migration parallels the Western Mexican stages where members of families progressively migrate directly to the United States.

The long legacy of domestic *Mixteco* migration in Mexico has left its imprint, since by 1990, the Mixtecs were much more numerous in many Mexican states than the Zapotecs, particularly in Northwest Mexico and in states around Mexico City (Valdes 1995). Now we find Mixtec communities also along the US-Mexico border, especially in Tijuana where some of them find temporary jobs to earn enough money so they can make the jump into the United States. The Zapotec migration, on the other hand, has not created many satellite communities in the receiving areas within Mexico, with the exception of Mexico City and Veracruz.

How can we begin to explain the differences in the migration experiences of these two groups? In this first attempt, we trace through the recent migration histories of both groups and consider in particular the insertion of each group into the California economy and the cumulative consequences that have arisen as a result.

Communities Researched

For the purpose of this paper we have chosen to focus on the Zapotecs from the district of Tlacolula and the Mixtecs from the district of Juxtlahuaca (Figure 2).

Tlacolula: The district of Tlacolula is located in what is known as the *Valles Centrales*, or Central Valleys, of Oaxaca, which encompasses the districts of Centro, Ejutla, Ocotlan, Etlá, Zaachila, Zimatlan and Tlacolula. The district of Tlacolula, with 25 municipios, is one of the largest districts, covering about a third of the Valles Centrales (Acevedo and Restrepo, 1991: 15). (Figure 3)

Juxtlahuaca: The district of Juxtlahuaca is located within the Mixtec region, which is made up of 7 districts: Coixtlahuaca, Nochixtlan, Silacayoapan, Teposcolula, Tlaxiaco, Huajuapán, and Juxtlahuaca, enclosing 155 *municipios*. The district of Juxtlahuaca, with seven municipios, has been one of the districts most affected by migration. (Iñigo, 1980:176). (Figure 4) In the 1991 census of Mixtecos in California, Juxtlahuaca, Silacayoapan, and Huajuapán accounted for 78 percent of the people located, and Juxtlahuaca was the leading district (Runsten and Kearney 1994)

In addition to utilizing previous research, we interviewed a number of people from each district. For Tlacolula, we interviewed immigrants from Díaz Ordaz, San Pablo Guítil, Abasolo, Tlacoachayaya, Tlacolula, Matatlán, Santa Ana del Valle, Teotitlán de Valle, San Bartolomé Quijalana, San Lucas Quiavín, San Marcos Tlapazola. For the district of Juxtlahuaca, we interviewed immigrants from San Juan Mixtepec, San Miguel Cuevas, Tlacotepec, San Martín Peras, and Santa María Teposlantongo.

Mixtec Migration History

Already in the mid-1900 s, some researchers had begun to note migration in large numbers from various villages in the Mixteca (M. T. de la Pe a, 1950). Mixtecs were leaving to work in places like Valle Nacional (Oaxaca), Puebla, Mexico City, Veracruz and to the urban areas within the Mixtec region. Labor contractors (*enganchadores*) were already recruiting Mixtec workers to work in the sugar cane industry. As we find today, these *enganchadores*, in order to recruit workers, promised good jobs, better wages, and good living conditions. The *enganchadores* operated with verbal agreements and would give workers an advance so the workers could leave some money for their families while they traveled, and to pay for their transportation to go to work in Veracruz or Valles Nacionales (De la Pe a, 1950: 154).

De la Pe a (1950) contends that migration in the Mixtec region was caused by various factors, such as land erosion and the end of the livestock industry (after the Mexican Revolution). However, people also sought alternative ways to make a living in the Mixteca. For instance, some of them became involved in palm crafting, but this alternative did not provide a decent living wage, ultimately driving them to seek a better living elsewhere. De la Pe a notes that the Mixtecs who first began emigrating from this region were those coming from communities where Spanish was mostly spoken. Those who were monolingual Mixtec speakers usually did not migrate. People from Silacayoapam and Tlaxiaco went to work not only within the region to such places as Huajuapam and Nochixtlan, but also to Mexico City, Puebla and Veracruz.

As early as the first decades of the 1900 s we also begin to see what De la Pe a calls interval migration. That is, people leave seasonally to work in particular harvest seasons, a pattern that many Mixtecs continue today. During this period, Mixtecs were leaving by the thousands and the impact was already visible in some of these communities, including depopulation. For example, by 1950, De la Pe a estimates that in Tamazulapan about 1,500 people had left permanently. In another community called Yacuyachi, from December to April most males were absent, all one could find were women, children and elders. Furthermore, it was not only men who were migrating, but also women who left to work in Mexico City as maids.

These early stages of Mixtec migration Butterworth (1975) classified into two types: the more permanent migration to urban areas and the circular migration to rural regions. However, contemporary Mixtec migration can be classified *a grosso modo*, in three phases. 1) The first part of the 1900 s, people migrated largely regionally, to Mexico City, Puebla, and Veracruz. 2) Mid-1900 s, migration focused on Mexico City, Oaxaca City and the early migrations to the northwest of Mexico, especially to Sinaloa (Ojeda Ramirez, 2000). Also, between 1942-1964, some men participated in the Bracero Program. 3) In the 1970 s, there is a rapid increase and mass flow of migration to Northwest Mexico (Sonora, Sinaloa, Baja California Sur, Baja California Norte), and a constant migration flow to the United States.

In general terms, Mixtec migrants, in Mexico as well as in the United States, are found in rural areas, whereas Zapotecs are found in urban areas, even though both groups have essentially rural agrarian origins. However, we do find some Mixtecs in urban areas, just as we find some Zapotecs in rural areas. For instance, in addition to Mexico City or Oaxaca City, Victor Clark Alfaro notes that Mixtecs began to arrive in the city of Tijuana by the end of the 1950s, settling in the Colonia Obrera, the city's marginal area (Clark 1985: 12). Many of those who live in Tijuana now have become truly transnational migrants. In a survey that Emily Young conducted of Mixtecs in Tijuana in 1990, she found that 70% of those surveyed lived in Tijuana while working in San Diego. These people were able to obtain their US residency through the 1986 amnesty, established themselves in Tijuana and now commute to work in the agricultural sector in Southern California (Young).

Mixtec migration is embedded within the contract labor network, which perhaps partially explains the concentration in rural areas both in Mexico and in the United States. Interestingly, this type of network migration is rarely taken into consideration within the conventional Mexican migration literature, except in discussions of the Bracero Program, a kind of *super-enganchador*. It is generally agreed that the Bracero Program was crucially important in establishing patterns of migration to the United States, and the history of Mixtec migration shows that labor contractors not only precipitated some migration but also dictated its direction.

The *enganchadores* were important in the early stages of Mixtec migration, and continue to be important in contemporary Mixtec migration. After the second half of the 1900 s, the Mixtec journey to northwest Mexico was very much linked to these *enganchadores*. According to Esteban Ojeda Ramirez, beginning in the 1940 s ranch owners from Baja California Sur sent labor contractors to Sinaloa and Oaxaca to recruit workers. The recruiters who went to the Mixtec villages in Oaxaca offered good jobs, health and life insurance, and to return them back home. In many of these cases transportation ended up being only one way, since seldom were these workers returned home, and most promises were never kept (Ojeda Ramirez 2000:345-346).

By 1970 the migration that had begun in the 1940 s to northwest Mexico had not only become a mass migration, but also had begun to spill into the United States (Velasco 1994:114). By 1990, over eight thousand Mixtecs were residing in Baja California (Velasco: 115). Yet the number of Mixtecs in this region fluctuated according to the harvest seasons, as in peak season the Mixtec population was estimated to reach over twenty thousand (Zabin et al., 1993, Rubio et al. 2000). Recruitment of farm workers in the Mixteca reached farther and farther into more remote areas, encompassing new groups such as the Triqui as well. Surveying in San Quintin 1990-1992 by Runsten and Zabin found migrants from 55 Oaxacan villages, of which 25 were not found in California at the time, including more remote areas such as Miahuatlan (Runsten and Kearney 1994). And many Mixtecos were recruited from Northwest Mexico by agents of farm labor contractors who operated in the United States. One grower in San Quintin, interviewed in the early 1990s, said that of the busloads of Mixtecs he brought up from Oaxaca, as many as half headed straightaway for the United States.

In California, estimates vary, but the only attempt to actually count people led to a peak season estimate that the Mixtec population in 1991 might have been as large as 50,000 (Runsten and Kearney 1994: vii). However, Mixtecos are not only found in California, but all over the United States. In a 2002 trip to the Mixtec region, we observed in San Juan Mixtepec the multiple car licenses coming from the United States. Just driving by houses on the main road, we counted 37 license plates from different U.S. states.

Juxtlahuaca District

People from different pueblos, such as the *agencias* of San Lucas, Tejocote in the municipio of Mixtepec within the district of Juxtlahuaca began their migration process during the 1920 s. These early migrants usually went to work in Veracruz in the sugar cane fields, walking as many as seven days to get to their destination (Edinger, 1996: 132). Similarly, people from San Martin Peras also began to leave their community in order to look for better opportunities within the region. In the 1930 s they began to journey outside of Oaxaca, going to places like Veracruz to work in the sugar cane fields. As one person from San Martin Peras states From Huajuapán the boss came to take us to work. In 1945 it was the first time that I left to work to Acatlán de Pérez, Veracruz I was working there, cutting sugar cane, I was coming and going, I did it for eight years. We worked in Veracruz in January and February, and returned to the pueblo in March.² Antilano Flores contends that one of the main factors causing people from San Martin Peras to migrate to northwest Mexico instead of to Veracruz was the arrival of labor contractors from the northwest. This migration began in the 1970s, especially for those who spoke some Spanish.

Some people from the Juxtlahuaca municipio have followed the same pattern. For example, one of our interviewees from Asunción Naranjos, Juxtlahuaca, recounts the history of his pueblo. He contends that as long as he remembers people from his pueblo have migrated. There were those who participated in the Bracero Program, some of them continuing to go to California after the program to work for the same ranchers. By 1969, people had begun to go work in Culiacán and Sonora. At the beginning, those who wanted to go work in these states had to pay for their own trip, but in the 1980 s busses were sent to Asunción to take them to the fields in Culiacán. Now one can find people from Asunción in Northwest Mexican places like Camalé, San Quintín, Colonia Guerrero, Lázaro Cárdenas and El Rosario. Migration flows from Asunción to the United States began in 1977 to work in the agricultural sector in Del Mar, Vista, and Oxnard. In Oxnard, now, he contends, there are around 60 families. People from Asunción also migrate to Oregon, especially to Gresham.

The migration of Tlacotepec resembles the general migration pattern of the Mixtec region. For instance, although Algimiro grew up in Tlacotepec, yet he was born in

²Interview done by Juan José Antilano Flores (2000: 62).

Veracruz³ because of the constant migration of people from Tlacotepec to work in the sugar cane fields. Morales' migration history reflects that of other Mixtecs. He said that as long as he can remember he has always been on the road, to Veracruz, Mexico City, Culiacan, Baja California. However, he said his only home was Tlacotepec, until he immigrated to the United States. As a migrant to Sinaloa, witnessing the unfair treatment of Oaxcans, he became involved in activism and as a result faced many problems, threats and was even jailed for two years. Once he was no longer safe in Sinaloa, he saw Mexico City as an option for stability and a way to offer a better life for his family, but with the crisis of the 1980 s he lost his job and decided to come to the United States. Here he thought he would make enough money to send back home and also build a house there, which he did in 1986.

However, it is interesting that even though some of these communities have similar patterns, there are some that have concentrated in urban areas. For example, people from Tlacotepec, who have migrated to Vista (near San Diego), are mainly concentrated in construction, service and factory work. According to Algimiro Morales, one of the first immigrants from Tlacotepec, though there are people from the village in other communities--Madera, for instance, as well as in Oregon and Washington--nevertheless the main concentration of his pueblo is found in Vista, where 200 families reside, as opposed to 80 families in the San Joaquin valley. Morales points out that the new immigrants, who are mostly young men, look for jobs in urban areas, whereas the older immigrants tend to work in agriculture.

The pattern of Mixtec migration has thus been one of migration ever further afield, recruited by farm labor contractors. Regional migration gave way to migration to Northwest Mexico, which in turn led to stage migration to California and beyond. Migration to the United States was facilitated by the experience some had had in the Bracero Program, but was also due to active recruitment in Northwest Mexico. In the early 1990s, Runsten and Zabin identified about 150 Mixtec villages migrating to California. In such a large group, patterns of migration differed. Some had mainly back-and-forth migration to their villages. Some had families strewn around Mexico in the DF, Sinaloa, or Baja. Some had a lot of settlement in the United States and mostly empty villages. There were also stories of villages finding their way into urban sectors. Migrants from certain villages in Huajuapán and Juxtlahuaca reported *paisanos* in restaurants in Reno, Santa Cruz, and New York, selling paletas and working in factories in Santa Ana, working in construction in San Bernardino, in aircraft maintenance in Los Angeles, in gardening in New York, in the stables of the racetrack in Oceanside, and so on. Each of these might lead to distinct patterns of employment and business formation in the future, but up to now the Mixtecs have overwhelmingly continued to work in agriculture.

This insertion into the agricultural labor market has shaped their living and working conditions. The average agricultural worker in the United States has work for only six months a year and earns less than \$10,000. Surveys of the Mixtec showed that, compared

³ This is one of the principal problems of trying to count a migratory group like the Mixtec. They were born in many different states. Algimiro considers himself Mixtec from a village in Oaxaca, yet the statistics would show him to be an immigrant from Veracruz.

to the average farmworker, the Mixtec worked more in short-term jobs that paid less, they migrated more, they bore more side payments to labor market intermediaries, and they were more often the victims of non-payment of wages and other labor law violations. (Zabin et al 1993). This made it difficult for them to accumulate capital in the United States. Working on farms, they are often isolated from other labor markets. Upward mobility is limited, as there are few supervisory jobs, and these are tenaciously guarded by earlier groups of mestizo immigrants. Business formation is difficult in U.S. agriculture, which has become much more capital intensive, with larger-scale farms.

The history of California agriculture--or by extension that of Sinaloa, Baja California, Florida--is of the use of seasonal immigrant labor. It became apparent to immigrant group after immigrant group in California that there was no future in farm labor, so they helped one another to get out into other work or to start their own farm or business. This is proving more difficult for the Mixtec due to the structural conditions existing over the past 30 years.

Migration Experiences

Kearney, whose reference group are the Mixtec, has long argued that the experience of migration creates a certain self-consciousness, that as they move from place to place in Mexico, suffer discrimination, find that they speak a different language, that they develop an identity as Mixtec that is tied up with their ancestral land in Oaxaca. People who are born on the migrant trail and have never set foot in the village may still identify themselves as from Tlacotepec.

What are the implications for the Mixtecs as they move along the harvest seasons both in the United States and Mexico? Why do they stay in agriculture in spite of the constant seasonal movement, the low-paying jobs and the dangers that exist within the agricultural sector?

We are struck by how many of them continue to encounter serious obstacles and hardships. It is more obvious in the rural areas, in both Mexico and the United States, where indigenous migrants face different types of abuses, such as discrimination by their mestizo counterparts, or abuses from the Mexican authorities, which lead to violations of human rights. Also many find that their living conditions are not much better than where they came from (see for example, Clark Alfaro, 1991; Nagengast et al., 1992; Bacon 2002; Quinones 1998; Zabin et al., 1993).

For many Mixtec farm workers, abuses begin from the time they leave their community with the labor contractors who go to their village to recruit them. The promise of good jobs, decent pay and adequate living conditions sometimes turns into nightmares (De la Pe a, 1959; Rubio and Mill n, 2000; Antilano Flores, 2000; Alvarez, 1995; Diaz-Romo and Salinas Alvarez). For example, one reporter, describing the living conditions of farm workers in San Quint n, writes The camp has no electricity. The rooms are four walls and roofs of corrugated tin. There's no place to cook and no beds, only hard-packed dirt for floors. When it rains, people at Francisco Villa sleep in mud (Quinones, 1998).

Additionally, in Mexico many indigenous people are given worse treatment than the local mestizos working and living on the same ranch (Clark Alfaro 1988: 21-22).

However, these dismal living conditions for indigenous farmworkers are not only found in Mexico, but in the United States as well (Chavez 1992, Zabin, et al. 1993). In Malaga, California (by Fresno), for instance, over 200 Mixtecos from the district of Juxtlahuaca (most did not speak English or Spanish) were living in 56 trailers and cabins, surrounded by an oil dump, a scrap metal heap, a wrecking yard, a manure plant, and a propane business. As a result of living in this toxic environment, there was a high rate of miscarriages and respiratory problems (Hanley). The situation was so bad that the housing was torn down and replaced in a different area. Whether living in parked cars in Madera, in garages in Parlier, in the canyons of San Diego, or 50 to a hotel room in Santa Maria, whenever the worst living conditions are found, it is now usually the Mixtec who are suffering them (Zabin, et al. 1993; Runsten and Kearney).

In California, the incorporation of indigenous people into the agricultural labor market puts them in direct competition with the more established Mexican mestizo workers. Further, because these new indigenous immigrants were more susceptible to abuses--paying for rides, paying for tools, cash wages, etc.--they were increasingly preferred by farm labor contractors and growers, which impacted the condition for all farmworkers as employers chose a more vulnerable group of workers over the long-time, settled farmworkers competing for the same job (Zabin, et al. 1993).

This vulnerability is due to many factors, but one important factor is the language. Many indigenous people from the Mixteca, in addition to not speaking English, often do not speak fluent Spanish. Although we do not have a clear idea of the number of Oaxacan rural immigrants who are monolingual or speak little Spanish, yet the pervasiveness of this issue is reflected in the initiatives that some Mixtec leaders are taking on both sides of the border:

- In Tijuana, Mixtec community leaders have fought for bilingual education (Spanish-Mixtec) in local schools to fulfill the needs of the large Mixtec student population (Rubio and Mill n, 2000: 98; Golden 1996)
- In Madera, California, where there is a large Mixtec student population, a UCLA team has begun to assist some people from San Mateo Tunuchi, Juxtlahauca district, to develop written Mixtec materials⁴ to be used for instructional materials which can be used by children and other community members who want to learn to read and write their language and informational materials for teachers and others who interact with monolingual speakers (Munro 2002).

⁴ According to Timoteo Mendoza, who is a Mixtec teacher at a local school, there is a great need for Mixtec materials, which could be used for people who work in the school s administration to learn basic Mixtec vocabulary to communicate with parents who speak neither Spanish nor English.

- In Oxnard, California, two separate groups are offering adult Spanish programs for Mixtecs, who are mainly from San Martin Peras, Juxtlahuaca.
- The Santiago Ventura case, in which a farmworker from San Miguel Cuevas was wrongly incarcerated for murder in Oregon, led to demands for court interpreters for indigenous migrants, a campaign largely led by the Mixtec.

In contrast, apart from a few instances, these have not been pressing issues for Zapotec immigrants. In this sense, the Mixtec often appear more culturally isolated and without access to U.S. institutions. Nevertheless, the main determinant of the difficult conditions the Mixtec have endured has been their continued employment in agriculture. Seasonal, often short-term jobs lead to considerable migration and instability, low incomes, and blocked mobility.

History of Zapotec migration

Zapotec migration history, as with the Mixtec, dates to the early 1900 s. People from small villages in the Oaxaca Valley began to leave to look for better opportunities regionally and outside of the state of Oaxaca (see Cook 1982, Clarke 2000). Some people from small villages in the Valley left to work in the City of Oaxaca and the many haciendas found within the Valley of Oaxaca at the turn of the 1900 s (see for example Ornelas Lopez, 1982: 150; Diaz Montes, 1982, 65). Some began to leave to work to Mexico City, Veracruz and Tapachula (Chiapas) (Hulshof, 1991). Others had a short migration experience to Sinaloa and Sonora in the 1960 s (Hulshof, 1991). The lack of research on Valley Zapotec migrants in agriculture does not allow us understand the nature of this rural phenomenon. What is interesting, though, is why the Zapotec migration to Sinaloa and Sonora did not continue. For instance Marije Hulshof (1991: 3) reports that the community of San Bartolom did participate in seasonal migration to Northwest Mexico, but quickly returned shortly after arrival (Hulshof 1991: 3), dissatisfied with the conditions. Instead the people from San Bartolom re-directed their migration to the United States.

We did not find much evidence that Zapotecs have settled in major numbers in the northern parts of Mexico. However, we do find some Valley Zapotec living in Tijuana, especially people from Teotitlan (Clark Alfaro). For the most part, the Valley Zapotecs who have migrated within Mexico have chosen places such as Mexico City or the city of Oaxaca. Most of those who migrated did so due to the lack of jobs and opportunities, but some left due to village conflicts and violence, such as in the case of San Juan Teitipac, where many people left for Oaxaca and Mexico City.

During the Bracero Program (1942-1964) many men from valley villages such as Tlacolula, Teotitlan del Valle, Santa Ana del Valle, San Lucas Quiavin and San Miguel del Valle participated. Though some remained in the United States, there seems to have been no immediate impact on international Zapotec migration. It is not until the 1970 s that Valley Zapotecs begin to migrate to the United States as a constant flow.

Tlacolula District Migration

We found that Tlacolula de Matamoros, the district head town, has played an important role by becoming the link to the United States for other small villages in the district. Tlacolula is a small city and many people who live there consider themselves more mestizo than the people from the smaller villages. Less Zapotec is spoken, and the town has had a long history of migration, which many people tapped into.

Some of the first immigrants from the district of Tlacolula were three people who migrated to Los Angeles from the town of Tlacolula in 1956. Though there were some other Tlacolula immigrants who lived elsewhere in California, such as Santa Maria and Salinas, these three people in Los Angeles were instrumental in facilitating the subsequent Tlacolula district migration, according to Onofre Santiago, who came in 1968 to Los Angeles.

In the late 1960s, people from other Tlacolula Valley villages began to arrive in Los Angeles. In 1968, a man named Lucas Diego from San Lucas arrived after an invitation by his *compadre* from Tlacolula. He arrived in Santa Maria but was not happy because it was not safe from migration officers. After getting caught a couple of times he decided to go to Los Angeles to live with some of his friends from Tlacolula, who already had established themselves. With the help of one of the Tlacolula *coyotes*, after being caught and with no money, he arrived in Los Angeles at the end of 1968. He was housed by his friends and was helped by Onofre Santiago to get a job in a restaurant. Two years later he invited one of his younger brothers, Meliton, who ended up bringing one more brother, then a brother-in-law, and so forth.

Other surrounding villages also have their original connection via Tlacolula (Holshof, 1991). Additionally, Tlacolula provided a *coyote* for many *vallistas*. An important factor was that the Tlacolula *coyote* spoke some Zapotec, since many of those who first came to the United States did not speak Spanish or did not speak it fluently. Speaking Zapotec created a certain trust between the potential migrants and the *coyote*.

Those people who first tapped into the Tlacolula network were later sought by other people from neighboring villages that had no connections with Tlacolula. For instance, some of the early immigrants from San Marcos Tlapazola and Tanivet came with people from San Lucas.

The early Valley Zapotec migration to California seemed to be heading toward rural areas such as Santa Maria (Tlacolula and Santa Ana del Valle) or Santa Ana (Teotitlan and San Bartolome), yet nowadays the majority of them are concentrated in urban areas, especially in Los Angeles. The initial return to the United States in the late 1960s and early 1970s was no doubt directed by contacts and experiences obtained in the Bracero Program. Unlike the Mixtec experience, however, the Zapotecs quickly shifted into urban jobs.

By the mid-1970s, there were about 80 people from San Lucas living in Los Angeles. Those who came early in the process and had familiarized themselves with getting an apartment, getting around the city, and, most importantly, getting a job, took advantage of the new arrivals. For instance, some of the earlier immigrants initially rented almost all of the apartments for the people from San Lucas, and they collected the rent. However, as more people arrived in Los Angeles from San Lucas, by the end of the 1970s this practice hardly existed. However, the job accommodation among friends and families continued. Yet it became harder and harder for those who controlled the access to restaurant jobs to maintain their power because those who got the early jobs began to help their families and friends. Now of the more than 800 people from San Lucas that we estimate are living in Los Angeles, most work in restaurants.

In the case of Teotitlán del Valle, according to Julio Ruiz, about 25 people obtained legal residency and lived in Colorado after the Bracero Program, but some of them moved to California, establishing themselves in Santa Ana (see Stephen 1991). However, he notes that they did not have a major influence on migration from this community, as it was not until the 1980s that people from Teotitlán began to migrate as a constant flow. Nevertheless, now they are concentrated in Santa Ana and in Moorpark. However, he also notes that they are found in San Francisco, Stockton, and Oakland. Those who went to Santa Ana originally all worked in the agricultural sector, but today there are only 12 people who work in agriculture, while most of the 300 or so work in the service industry.

Some people from Tlacoahuay also stayed in California after the Bracero Program, according to Amador Sánchez, but the current migration from this community dates from the late 1980s. Although the majority of the people who have immigrated to the United States are concentrated in Los Angeles, there are also some people who have gone to New York, Chicago, Florida, and Michigan as well as to Mexico City. Similar to other people from the Tlacolula Valley in Los Angeles, they are overwhelmingly concentrated in the restaurant sector. According to Amador Sanchez, more than 90% of the more than 400 people from Tlacoahuaya work in restaurants.

More recent immigration from the district of Tlacolula is coming from San Pablo Gil, Santo Domingo Albarradas, and San Pedro Totolapa. People from the first two pueblos, as with the other communities from the Tlacolula district, are concentrated in the restaurant industry, but the small number of people from San Pedro Totolapa also work as day laborers. The people from San Pablo Gil began to migrate to the United States in 1990. According to one of the leaders of this community, there are about 200 people living on the west side of Los Angeles, as many as 440 in Chicago, and about 50 in Atlanta. Those who live in Los Angeles are young, ranging in ages between 16 and 30 years old. The majority of the immigrants are single males. Moisés López notes that he knows of only one woman from his *pueblo* in Los Angeles.

Working in Restaurants

Zapotecs who come from the district of Tlacolula are concentrated in the restaurant industry, though some are also taking jobs in construction, supermarkets, and factories. A person from Tlacolula, who owns a restaurant and had come to Los Angeles in 1980, points out that as far back that he can remember most of the people from his town have worked in restaurants. Before he came, his father had also worked in restaurants as well as his brothers.

We find that in the late 1960 s people from Tlacolula and San Lucas were already working in the restaurant sector, and might have started even earlier (Lopez and Munro, 1999 and forthcoming). Thus the growth of Zapotec employment in restaurants has occurred gradually over a long period, including epochs of rapid growth in the industry. One could argue that the insertion of Zapotecs in the restaurant industry stems from a growing need for labor within a growing industry.

For some Valley Zapotecs, the idea of working in restaurants was strange, since they had never done any similar jobs before. One of the first people who came to Los Angeles in 1970 recalled: They said A restaurant , but over there [San Lucas] who s going to work in restaurants? So I worked in a restaurant washing dishes. Well, when a person doesn t know anything, he washes dishes. I did [it] fast, and people liked what I did."

Unlike the work that is found in the rural areas, the jobs that most of the people from Tlacolula have are stable, such as restaurant jobs. Those who work in restaurants usually start to work in entry-level positions, as dishwashers or janitors. Some will eventually make their way up to work as prep-persons, leading cooks, kitchen managers, *sous chefs*, or sometimes chefs. For many, the minimum wage (which in October of 2002 was \$6.75 in California) they earn washing dishes is not enough to pay for their rents. So they have to live with several of their friends and family. To afford to pay their living expenses and send money to their families in Mexico, many have to work double shifts.

Most of the Zapotec immigrants find jobs through friends, family members and *paisanos*. Some of them are incorporated into the restaurant business by agreeing to cover someone s shifts while that person takes some time off to go visit family in Mexico. The time off varies. It can be a few weeks or months, or sometimes as long as a year. Those workers who would like to return to their jobs will try to convince the owner or manager of the restaurant to allow them to train a friend or a family member to cover their shifts while they are away. In this way, the person who covers the job will get the experience needed to find a later job or have a reference. Sometimes when the absentee worker returns, the owner might accommodate both workers.

In some restaurants it is not uncommon to find a whole kitchen crew coming from the same pueblo. Therefore the kitchen s dominant language might be Zapotec. In these cases those from that community do not have to speak English or even Spanish to be able

to get a job. However, this has created tensions between indigenous people and other non-indigenous people.

Oaxacan immigrants who work on the floor mostly will be working as either bus-persons or runners. To be a bus person it is important to have a good knowledge of restaurant vocabulary, but that person does not necessarily have to be fluent in English. However, a bus-person might actually know more English than Spanish.

The wage of a bus-person varies from restaurant to restaurant. Those who work in up-scale restaurants tend to make more money than those working in more casual ones. For example, in one restaurant on the west side of Los Angeles, a bus person was estimated to earn on average about \$60 a night plus minimum wage, whereas the waiter would make twice as much. In very up-scale restaurants, a bus-person might make as much as a hundred dollars a night plus minimum wage.

Most Zapotecs, with their limited English, are after busing jobs. A bus-person's hours are usually shorter than a cook's. They can potentially make more than a cook, even if the cook is paid more per hour, because the tips might make up for the difference, and in addition the bus-person has fewer responsibilities. However, both of these jobs are very physical and stressful jobs, many times without any health care or other benefits. One advantage to working in a restaurant might be that they are provided with food, helping them to save some money.

The urban Oaxacan indigenous immigrants in southern California, mostly Zapotecs, do not seem to confront the problematic issues that are found rural areas. However their experience with *mestizos* is similar to those in the rural areas of California. Many Valley Zapotecs have encountered discrimination coming from their fellow Mexicans. As a result, many people have denied their ethnicity. As Manuel Marcial, who experienced such discrimination, points out, many members of his community, even members of his own family, rejected their indian-ness by denying being from Oaxaca.

From Restaurant Workers to Restaurant Owners

The research literature indicates that restaurant work is a typical entry point for immigrant groups, and that the nature of the industry, with low barriers to entry, provides opportunity for workers to start their own restaurants once they have gained sufficient skills (Waldinger, Ram, et al., Herman). As Herman notes, a job as a dishwasher has more potential for self-employment than work in a mine, a lumber camp or a steel mill (Herman 1979 88). Immigrants who arrive with few skills and engage in manual labor have limited options for upward mobility, which often makes self-employment a goal (Waldinger). As Bailey argued in his study of New York restaurants, immigrants are willing to gain skills that have a low return for native workers, because immigrants do not have better options. Any ethnic group with a distinctive cuisine has a natural advantage in running such restaurants (Ram, et al.). And the nature of network migration provides a ready labor force to staff the restaurant.

Because of the experience that Valley Zapotecs have had in the restaurant industry, we are seeing an increasing number of Oaxacan restaurants all over the Los Angeles area. In surveying the Oaxacan restaurants, we find that almost all of them are owned by Valley Zapotecs. As shown in Figure 4, we have identified 28 Oaxacan-owned restaurants in Los Angeles, only one of which has closed.⁵

The first restaurant that we know to have been opened by a Oaxacan immigrant was Nelly's, which is owned by Gregorio Santiago from Tlacolula. He came to the United States in 1982, worked in various restaurants, and opened Nelly's Grill in North Hollywood in 1989. Nelly's does not sell Oaxacan food. He subsequently opened the Chulada Grill in 1994, which has evolved from a pizza parlor to Mexican food to a

Figure 4

Oaxacan-owned Restaurants in Los Angeles⁶

Name of Restaurant	Year Estab.	Owner's Village	District of Oaxaca	Restaurant Location
Nelly's	1989	Tlacolula	Tlacolula	North Hollywood (LA)
Tlapazola Grill	1992	San Marcos Tlapazola	Tlacolula	West Los Angeles (LA)
Guelaguetza I	1994	Matatlán	Tlacolula	Los Angeles (LA)
El Texate	1994	Tlacolula	Tlacolula	Santa Monica
Chulada Grill ⁷	1994	Tlacolula	Tlacolula	Los Angeles
Valle de Oaxaca Restaurant	1996	Santa Ana del Valle	Tlacolula	Mar Vista (LA)
Siete Regiones	1996	Tlacoahuaya	Tlacolula	Pico-Union (LA)
Tlacolula (closed) ⁸	1996-98	Tlacolula	Tlacolula	Los Angeles
Juquila	1998	Matatlán	Tlacolula	West Los Angeles (LA)
Guelaguetza II	1998	Matatlán	Tlacolula	West Los Angeles (LA)
El Sazón Oaxaqueño	1998	Matatlán	Tlacolula	Mar Vista (LA)
Tacomiendo	1998	San Lucas	Tlacolula	West Los Angeles (LA)
Tacos La Raza ⁹	1999	Yavesia	Villa Alta	Los Angeles
Zapoteca Restaurant ¹⁰	1999	Santa Ana del Valle	Tlacolula	West Los Angeles (LA)
El Danzante	2000	Yalalag	Villa Alta	Los Angeles (LA)
Guelaguetza III	2000	Matatlán	Tlacolula	Koreatown (LA)
Cristy's Restaurant	2001	Oaxaca City	Centro	Los Angeles
El Centaro ¹¹	2001	San Lucas	Tlacolula	Hollywood (LA)

⁵ The Tlacolula restaurant was located off Vermont Avenue in Los Angeles and was owned by the owners of El Texate. They report that business was good but they were repeatedly robbed after hours, so they closed it. A number of restaurants have been sold to new owners, as noted in the table.

⁶ There are also other Oaxacan-owned restaurants in the Los Angeles region, for instance in Moorpark (La Calenda), San Bernardino (Pancho's and La Victoria), Westminister (Café Westminister), Costa Mesa (Yucatan), Santa Ana (Moctezuma), and Fullerton (El Fortín).

⁷ This restaurant was first opened in 1994 on La Cienega, but in 1998 moved to San Vicente Blvd.

⁸ Another Oaxacan restaurant closed, El Tule in Hollywood, but we don't have information about it.

⁹ This restaurant was recently sold to a person from Puebla

¹⁰ The previous owner was from San Miguel del Valle, Tlacolula.

El Torito Oaxaque o	2001	Yalalag	Villa Alta	Los Angeles
Mi Lindo Oaxaca	2002	Talea de Castro	Villa Alta	Pico-Union (LA)
Yalalag Restaurant	2002	Yalalag	Villa Alta	Pico-Union (LA)
Clayuda, Caf Oaxaque o	2002	Yatee	Villa Alta	South-Central (LA)
La Chocita	2002	Teotitlan del Valle	Tlacolula	Los Angeles
Expresi n Oaxaque a	2002	San Francisco Yatee	Villa Alta	Los Angeles
La Casita de Oaxaca	2003	Talea de Castro	Villa Alta	Los Angeles
Lindo Oaxaca ¹²	2003	San Miguel Cajonos	Villa Alta	Los Angeles
Oaxacalifornia	2003	Tlacolula	Tlacolula	Los Angeles
Rinc n Oaxaque o	2003	San Marcos Tlapazola	Tlacolula	Pico Union (LA)

somewhat Oaxacan restaurant. In 1997 he opened the Tequila Grill in Costa Mesa. He has owned a large maintenance company and has investments in a number of other businesses.

The first Oaxacan cuisine restaurant that we know of was started in 1992 by a group of four brothers from San Marcos Tlapazola, an *agencia municipal* of Tlacolula. These brothers pooled their money to invest \$30,000 in the restaurant on Lincoln Blvd. in Santa Monica. All of them had actually worked as cooks at various upscale restaurants around West Los Angeles. According to Celerino Cruz, one of the brothers, he saw that there was a lack of high-quality traditional Mexican food in Los Angeles, and he believed that Los Angeles would embrace Oaxacan cuisine. He had arrived in Los Angeles in 1978 and had begun to work in an upscale restaurant in Venice, where he started as a dishwasher and worked his way up to running the kitchen as a cook.

At the beginning, though, the new Oaxacan food was seen as exotic or "too authentic," and so the restaurant had to adapt the food to their clientele. With the help of an *LA Times* food critic (sent by a local judge), who gave the restaurant a good review, people flocked to the Tlapazola Grill. However the restaurant on Lincoln Blvd. was forced to close due to increases in the rent and the refusal of the landlord to repair the building. In 1998, they closed down the restaurant and went to work for their former employers while they searched for a new location. They re-opened the restaurant about a mile away in a West LA mini-mall in 2000. At present, they employ 14 people, twelve of whom are from the Tlacolula area.

In 1994, two other Oaxacan restaurants opened, both of them owned by families from the Tlacolula district. El Texate, which is owned by the Macial family from Tlacolula de Matamoros, opened in Santa Monica a couple blocks from the ocean. Although this restaurant is run by four brothers and their sister, the idea of opening the restaurant came from their mother, who complained of the lack of good Mexican food in Santa Monica, and who began to cook and sell food from her home in 1990. She then became the cook for the new restaurant and the children (one had worked as a manager at an up-scale

¹¹ Was recently sold to Oaxacans and is now Antequera de Oaxaca .

¹²The previous owner was from Zoogocho, Villa Alta and it was sold in March 2003.

restaurant in Santa Monica) ran the front of the house. Now they employ seven people, all from Oaxaca.

The other restaurant opened in 1994, Guelaguetza, in the Koreatown area, was owned by a brother and a sister from Santiago Matatlán. This was the first of the three Guelaguetza restaurants in Los Angeles. The sister owns the Guelaguetza in Fresno as well.

Two other restaurants where we interviewed the owners:

Juquila. Owner from Matatlan. His brother came in 1976 and worked in hotels. The owner followed him in 1980, working in hotels and restaurants. His wife came later and began to sell food. They bought a vending truck in 1991 that they parked in front of a bar in Venice. The police eventually forced them to move the truck, so they opened this restaurant in 1998. He had previously owned a bar in Puebla.

Valle de Oaxaca. Owner from Santa Ana del Valle. His brother came in 1979. He followed in 1980 to try to make enough money to buy land and oxen in Oaxaca. Both worked in restaurants until he bought this restaurant with a friend from Santa Ana in 1996. Business was slow, so his friend sold out to him. He and his wife run the restaurant with a female cousin. He continues to work in other restaurants. He seeks to retire in Oaxaca when his kids are grown.

Of the 28 restaurants for which we have information, 18 are owned by Zapotecs from the Tlacolula district, nine are owned by Zapotecs from the Villa Alta district, and one is owned by people from Oaxaca City (Figure 4). Several of the early restaurants were oriented toward the *gringo* market, but all of the rest are selling to Oaxacan immigrants, with *gringos* a minor or non-existent part of the clientele.

The restaurants are thus mostly occupying the "ethnic niche" typical of such immigrant small businesses. They are also multiplying rapidly. Twelve restaurants have opened in the past 30 months and several more are about to open. Failure has started to set in, as six have closed or been sold. Their sheer numbers suggest a large population of Zapotecs in Los Angeles and a culture where food is important.

Their growth is being facilitated by the creation of Oaxacan food merchants in Los Angeles, such as *carnicerías* and *panaderías*, which has made it somewhat easier for Oaxacan restaurant owners. Before these stores were available, some of the items that were needed to prepare Oaxacan food had to be imported from Oaxaca, often as contraband, with the fear that such items as *tasajo*, chorizo, and *cesina* would be confiscated at the border. The restaurant owner or a family member had to fly to Oaxaca to get them. Some restaurants found ways to minimize their trips, which usually involved going to Tijuana to pick up the merchandise.

With the opening of the *carnicerías*, where these special meat cuts are being prepared, they no longer have to take unnecessary trips to Oaxaca or even to Tijuana. However, there are certain items that are still not made locally, for example the Oaxacan *quesillo* or

chapulines. Those restaurants that specialize in more regionally-oriented food still have to make trips or rely on a *paisano* to bring special items. Such is the case for the owner of one restaurant who contended that her village's signature dish could not be made without a specially prepared meat from this village in Oaxaca. Therefore, it is offered on the menu only occasionally for the villagers residing in Los Angeles.

It took 36 years from the time the first migrants from Tlacolula settled in Los Angeles for someone to open a Oaxacan restaurant. Large-scale migration did not ensue until the 1970s, still it took another 20 years for a restaurant to appear. Why so long? First, most of the immigrants were not wealthy, and needed time to accumulate capital. The restauranteurs we interviewed said it took them 10-20 years of working in the United States to reach that point. The Zapotecs have no history of rotating credit associations, so amassing sufficient capital was a family affair. A number of the restaurants were partnerships among family members. Second, most of the restaurants cater to immigrants, so their existence had to be preceded by a critical mass of Zapotec settlers. This immigrant market is always limited by the low incomes of the group, so the passage of time allowed for people to obtain better jobs and have sufficient disposable income to eat in restaurants. Third, potential entrepreneurs, in order to rent business property and engage in other legal transactions, really needed legal status. Most of the Zapotec immigration has been undocumented, but the 1986 amnesty provided legal status for earlier immigrants by 1990. Fourth, business formation requires a certain permanence, settlement, a commitment to the receiving country. Piore emphasized this point, that legal, settled immigrants with their families would be more likely to form businesses than temporary migrants who were remitting large amounts of money to their home countries. As Zapotec migration proceeded, male migrants were increasingly joined by mothers and wives, and in the cases we have studied, it was often the impetus of the women that led to the restaurants.

Restaurant locations

We have mapped the locations of 28 restaurants in Figure 5. One can see that they are basically clustered into two groups: along the 405 freeway on the Westside, and in and around Pico Union. All of the restaurants on the Westside are owned by immigrants from Tlacolula, whereas most of the restaurants further east are owned by immigrants from Villa Alta. This dovetails with the basic residential patterns of the two groups.

Because of the labor niche where the Valley Zapotecs are found, most of them work in restaurants in the western part of Los Angeles, in West Los Angeles, Santa Monica, Venice, and Culver City. Although the concentration of Valley Zapotecs has tended to center around Los Angeles, yet they are also found in other parts of California.¹³ The two Zapotec groups¹⁴ that are mostly found in Los Angeles are from the Highlands or *sierra*

¹³ For example, people from Teotitlan del Valle are found in Stockton, Oakland, and in San Francisco. However, their main concentration is in southern California, Santa Ana, where 300 families live (Ruiz) and Moorpark.

¹⁴ The Zapotec are usually divided into four major groups, Zapotecs from the Valley, Sierra Norte, Sierra Sur and the Isthmus. In Los Angeles we also find a small group of Zapotecs from the Isthmus of

norte and the Valley of Tlacolula. These two groups are concentrated in specific areas of Los Angeles according to their region. For instance, the *Serranos*, or Highland Zapotecs, have mainly settled in the area known as Pico-Union, but also in El Sereno and in the San Gabriel Valley. The *Vallistas* on the other hand are usually concentrated on the west side of Los Angeles. Recently however, they have begun to move to the San Fernando Valley, Costa Mesa, and San Bernardino, among other areas.

Urban Zapotecs, although they are not confronted with the worst living conditions that are found in rural areas, still tend to live in the poorer areas of West Los Angeles, Venice and Santa Monica, near to freeways, for instance. Originally, before Santa Monica became an upscale town, many people, from Tlacolula, San Lucas, and San Marcos lived on Third Street, between Ashland and Hill Streets, in order to be close to their work. Eventually all of them were driven out by escalating rents and moved to Venice and West Los Angeles.

Zapotec Home Town Associations

Although the Valley Zapotec migration began over thirty years ago, it is not until the 1990 s that we see people from this area beginning to form hometown associations or HTAs,¹⁵ with the exception of Tlacolula. One of the first organizations from the Valley of Oaxaca, to our knowledge, was created by Tlacolulenses in Los Angeles in 1978, but it lasted only two years. In 1989, a second HTA was formed, the *Comunidad Tlacolulense en Los Angeles* (COTLA). It was not until 1994 that another valley Zapotec village--Tlacoahuaya--formed an organization. Unlike the Mixtec organizations, whose work has tended to be more political, the Zapotec organizations in Los Angeles have focused mostly on cultural issues (Rivera Salgado 1999, FAO 1999).

Although many of these communities lack any formal *mesa directiva*, many *clubes deportivos* or sport clubs are created as soon as there are enough basketball players in Los Angeles to form a team for a particular village. These basketball teams have served as a mechanism of economic support to help their villages of origin, by raising money through basketball tournaments. Most of the villages have at least one basketball club, although some have a soccer club (see Lopez, Escala and Hinojosa 2001).

Possible Explanations for the Mixtec-Zapotec Migration Differences

Various explanations have been suggested for the differences in Mixtec and Zapotec migration experiences, including why the Mixtec continue to work in agriculture and the

Tehuantepec, especially from the community of Tequixtitlan and at least a family of Zapotecs from the Sierra Sur, specifically from the conflicted area of the Loxichas.

¹⁵ It is noteworthy to point out that the highland Zapotecs have formed hometown associations since the 1970 s and also have HTA s in Mexico. For instance, villages such as Zoogocho, San Francisco Cajonos, Santa Maria Tavehua and San Pablo Macuiltianguis have HTAs in either or both, Oaxaca City, Mexico City, at least one village has an HTA in Tijuana (such is the case of Benito Ju rez) (Ru z Lopez, 1998; Mendes, 1999; Cano, 1999; and Bernal, 2002).

central valley Zapotecs are in cities. We consider several such arguments and discuss them.

Language

The location of Tlacolula in the central valleys, near to Oaxaca City, led to greater use of Spanish, which facilitated access to distant labor markets without the need for labor contractors.

In Juxtlahuaca, 28 percent of the total population speak only an indigenous language, and 73 percent speak an indigenous language, whereas in Tlacolula only 9 percent are monolingual in an indigenous language and 63 percent speak such a language (INEGI, 2000). Thus there is clearly a higher proportion of monolingual indigenous in the Mixteca, which could lead to a certain cultural isolation and explain the importance of contractors. However, there is a large group of Spanish-speaking Mixtec who should have been as able as the Zapotec to obtain urban jobs.

Tourism

The location of Tlacolula close to Oaxaca City caused it to experience a rise in national and international tourism beginning in the 1930s, with the sites of Mitla and Yagul, and the Tlacolula Sunday market, which led to changes in occupational patterns to cater to tourists, such as the production of *tapetes* in Teotitlan del Valle, San Miguel del Valle, and Santa Ana del Valle, or the increasing production of commercial mezcals in Matatlan.

In the early 1960s, Diskin (1967) already found Tlacolula being transformed into a commercial center. There is little doubt that proximity to Oaxaca City had important effects and may have exposed the Zapotec population to urban service jobs. However, we have found little evidence that any of the Tlacolula migrants had prior experience working in restaurants

Education

Tlacolula is more educated than Juxtlahuaca.

In Juxtlahuaca, 57 percent of the adult population is literate, while in Tlacolula, 77 percent are literate. Literacy is of course defined in Spanish, so the higher proportion of monolingual Mixtec speakers accounts for much of the difference.

Enganchadores

Labor contractors did not recruit farmworkers in the central valleys.

This is not strictly true. San Bartolom Quialana sent people with enganchadores to Culiacan in the 1960s, but when they saw how bad the conditions were, they returned immediately to Oaxaca (Hulshof, 1991). Also, almost every village in the Tlacolula area sent Braceros to the United States. It is really after the Bracero Program that the migration patterns of the two groups diverge. Nevertheless, it is certainly true that labor

contractors seeking to take workers to the Northwest fields delved further and further into the mountains of the Mixteca.

Conclusion

In this paper we have tried to show that two indigenous groups from Oaxaca have had very different migration experiences in the United States. Reflecting on the history of their migration, we see that though both groups earlier migrated within southern Mexico to work in agriculture, both groups migrated to Mexico City, and both groups participated in the Bracero Program, nevertheless they have had significantly different migration patterns within Mexico in the last half of the 20th Century.

The Mixtecs have migrated in large numbers to Northwest Mexico since the 1960s, creating settlements throughout the region. This migration was facilitated by *enganchadores* who recruited workers for Northwest agribusinesses. Many Mixtecs then migrated to the United States in a form of stage migration, often recruited by contractors from the United States. In California, despite 30 years of experience, the Mixtecs continue to work mainly in agriculture, and often in the worst jobs, though there is some movement into construction and services. There has been little small business formation by the Mixtecs in California. Some have become mayordomos or *raiteros*--including the important early case of Rafael Morales in Sonoma--but their ability to accumulate capital has been limited by the low incomes from seasonal work, the constant migration, the need to remit money to their villages, and the use of their savings to survive periods of unemployment and to travel to Oaxaca.

In contrast, Zapotecs from the area of Tlacolula found work in Los Angeles restaurants in the 1960s, which led to a spreading pattern of network migration to Los Angeles from throughout the district. These networks became so predominant in Westside Los Angeles restaurants that a growing number of families have been able to open their own Oaxacan restaurants--they had the skills, the support of well-known restaurateurs, and sufficient capital that the families pooled from their permanent jobs. In the restaurants we have interviewed, these families were focused on the United States and not on remitting money to Oaxaca.

We hypothesize that these different trajectories over the past 40 years were due in part to the different distances of the two groups from Oaxaca City and all it implied. The Zapotecs of Tlacolula had the influences of more Spanish speaking population, more commerce opportunities, and more tourism. Diskin (1967) found Tlacolula becoming a commercial city 40 years ago. In contrast, the Mixtecs were more remote, more monolingual, had fewer business opportunities. Those that could speak Spanish were driven to migrate by deteriorating ecological conditions. Those that could not speak Spanish could still be recruited by labor contractors, who acted as intermediaries to the farm labor market. We hypothesize that language was thus a key differentiating factor, and that it continues to be an important difference in the United States between the two

groups, as evidenced by a greater focus on linguistic and political issues by the Mixtec organizations.

But the principal difference between the groups lies in their differential insertion into the U.S. economy. The Mixtecs' willingness to live and work under miserable conditions in large-scale agriculture in Mexico made them obvious candidates to be recruited by farm labor contractors for a similar purpose in the United States. The Tlacolula Zapotecs' rejection of such work led them to follow chance pioneers into Los Angeles restaurants. Large-scale, labor-intensive agriculture in the United States has proven highly resistant to improvements in labor conditions over the past century, and it is hard to be optimistic that this will change. Like other immigrant groups before them, the Mixtec will have to find their way out of agricultural work and into urban jobs if they are to prosper in the United States.

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