

**Emigration's Challenge to the 'Nation-Church':
Mexican Catholic Emigration Policies, 1920-2004**

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Since the 1990s, stories have spread through Mexico of the ‘coyote saint’ helping migrants cross the U.S. border illegally. In one version, three migrants lost in the desert are saved by a man who offers them a ride in his pickup truck. When the migrants later visit his home village of Santa Ana in the state of Jalisco to thank him, they see his photograph and realize their rescuer was Saint Toribio Romo, who died in 1928. More than 5000 pilgrims now clog the village on a typical weekend. Many come to pray for the safety of loved ones heading north or to leave votive images thanking Toribio for helping them cross the border (see Figure 1 in the Appendix). The local priest is trying to have the Mexican episcopate recognize Toribio as the patron saint of migrants. Left unmentioned in all this is that in life, Toribio was an outspoken critic of emigrants. In a 1920 play entitled “Let’s Go North!”¹ Toribio lambasted Mexican emigrants who have “betrayed the motherland,” become Protestants, are embarrassed to work their fields, and wear such effeminate gringo clothes “one can’t tell whether they crow or lay eggs.”

The story of Saint Toribio as myth and political actor illustrates fundamental changes and continuities in the Mexican Church’s emigration policies since the 1920s. It is part of an answer to a major outstanding question in the religion and migration literature: how do religious institutions in source countries respond to emigration (Ebaugh and Chafetz 2002; Levitt 2003)? The question can be divided into responses to *emigration per se*, with the potential for influencing levels or kinds of migration, and responses to *emigrants* which implies the incorporation or disincorporation of people already on the move. This study answers those questions by taking a centennial view of the Mexican case, a critical case given the massive volume and long duration of Mexican emigration (Massey et al. 1998). In broad strokes, the Church continues to prefer a sedentary population and tries to minimize emigration’s disintegrative social effects. The great difference is that while during the 1920s and 30s there was a concerted campaign to dissuade emigration and encourage repatriation, today the Mexican Church has accepted that emigration is a deeply rooted part of the cultures and economies of the source regions. Priests now promote migrants’ ties with their source community without necessarily advocating permanent return. Keeping the family unit intact is seen as more important than keeping family members in Mexico.

In the following pages, I outline basic analytic themes, which I then fill in through a history of the Mexican Catholic Church’s policies towards emigration and emigrants from 1920 to 2004. My goals are 1) to explain how a policy developed in a case of inherent historical interest; 2) to expand the sociological framing of immigrant integration to include its flip side of emigrant disintegration; and 3) to analyze how two institutions – the putatively transnational Catholic Church and the national state – have attempted to manage mass migration in ways that reveals shared essential qualities and differences. Evidence is based on Church documents examined in archiepiscopal, diocesan, parish, and vicariate archives; Catholic and secular newspapers;² interviews conducted with 17 priests in Jalisco, Michoacán, and Southern California; and participant-observation of migration-related Church events in those three areas. This research is part of a larger project based on 18 months of fieldwork in Mexico on how the Mexican state, Church, and local elites have managed emigration and its effects over the

¹ All translations from Spanish are the author’s.

² See list in References. Archival sources for citations in the text are available from the author upon request.

last century. I focus on formal policy and actual practices in Los Altos de Jalisco, the conservative heart of the traditional migrant source region (see Figure 2 in the Appendix).

INTEGRATION OR DISINTEGRATION?

Scholars of the immigrant experience have argued that religious institutions are a vehicle for reproducing and transforming immigrant ethnicity (Herberg 1960; Orsi 1985; Warner and Wittner 1998; Ebaugh and Chafetz 2000; Casanova and Zolberg 2002; Levitt 2003). Religion may be so tied to ethnicity that the two are functionally indistinguishable and mutually reinforcing. Ethnicity is also altered through religious institutions, like the Catholic Church, which has successfully lumped together Italians, Irish, and Slavs into “American Catholics” (Herberg 1960). The U.S. Catholic Church historically has tried to assimilate immigrant and minority Catholics while sometimes discriminating against them at the same time. Mexicans and Mexican Americans in the United States were long treated as second class citizens by the U.S. Church, which over the last century shifted from a general stance of enforcing the Anglo-conformity of Mexicans to a more pluralist mode of assimilation (Dolan and Hinojosa 1994). The theoretical point is that host country religious institutions, like governments, have sought to manage the challenge of immigrants’ heterogeneity by *integrating* them into the host society in ways that will attenuate, if not erase, the distinctions between natives and foreigners.

On the other hand, institutions in migrant source countries, particularly those engaged in a nationalizing project, face the challenge of heterogeneity from a radically different perspective. How can they avoid the *disintegration* of their communities when emigrants become foreigners and possibly return with the cultural baggage acquired in a more heterogeneous environment? For the Catholic Church, this presents a special problem, because the Church includes branches in sending and receiving countries that are often divided on the question of (dis)integration. The perspective in the U.S. immigration literature that Latinos are a source of revitalization for the U.S. Church (Warner and Wittner 1998) ignores the fact that the same process represents the potential decimation of churches in Catholic source countries. By turning the question of the integration of immigrants on its head and asking how the Mexican Church has responded to emigration, the disintegrative side of the same Durkheimian coin is revealed.

A NATIONAL OR TRANSNATIONAL CHURCH?

Scholars of “transnational” life have highlighted migrants’ religious ties across country borders (Ebaugh and Chafetz 2002; Levitt 2003; Hagan and Ebaugh 2003; Vertovec, forthcoming). Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, and Hindu groups are shown to engage in cross-border religious practices and imagine their community of believers in ways that do not neatly coincide with nation-state boundaries. Roman Catholicism is perhaps the premier example of a “global religion,” as it is structured by a transnational institution that integrates hundreds of millions of believers all over the world into one religious community overseen by a hierarchy based in the Vatican. The Church does not belong to any nation-state, which makes it particularly suited to attend to its internationally dispersed and mobile believers. Recent depictions of religious *transnationalism* fit neatly into a common narrative in the nationalism literature that opposes traditional imaginings of community based on religion with modern imaginings of a political community based on secular nationalism (Gellner 1983; Anderson 1991;

Juergensmeyer 1993; van der Veer and Lehmann 1999). Are the border-transcending qualities of transnational religion really incompatible with the border-enforcing quality of the modern nation-state?

In practice, Catholicism and nationalisms are closely intertwined where “Catholic” and “non-Catholic” countries meet. Nationalism, a claim that a particular people belong to a particular place and should control and be protected by a particular state, sometimes reinforces and is reinforced by a particular religion, and even particular symbols within a common religion. For example, Ireland has its St. Patrick and Poland its Black Madonna of Czestochowa (Kohn 1944). The nexus between nationalism and the Church is most obvious in the Eastern rites, like the Ukrainian and Armenian Catholic Churches, but it also exists in the Latin rites, which include Roman Catholics in Mexico and most of the rest of the world. The Mexican case is a strategic site to understand how religion is what Eric Hobsbawm (1990:68) calls “a paradoxical cement” for modern nationalism, given the tension between transnational religion’s universal pretensions and the state’s jealous monopolizing of members’ loyalties.

Part of the difference between the universal and national faces of the Church can be attributed to the different levels of the Church and the targets of their policies. In one sense, the national and universal are not in *opposition* to each other so much as they are *nested*. Structurally, parishes are nested inside dioceses and national episcopates, which then form part of the transnational Church based in Rome. Universal human rights are emphasized in macro-level church policy emanating from the Vatican and national episcopal conferences. The targets of these statements are often international policy makers in specific migration circuits. Local church officials, especially at the diocesan and parochial level, emphasize rootedness to a specific place and eliminating foreign cultural imports. Their organization is local and the targets of their policy are local migrants and priests. Yet acknowledging different levels and audiences of the Church does not resolve the national/ universal tension completely, because there have been explicitly nationalist conflicts between the Catholic Church in Mexico and the Catholic Church and government in the United States over assimilation, jurisdictional responsibility for migrant members, and migrant rights. The nationalist face of the Church is important analytically because it points to the ways that emigration creates similar challenges for church and state. Even when church and state are at each other’s throats in struggles over economic privileges, political rights, and social policy, both institutions may share a project of cultural nationalism that is disrupted by migration and the possibility that returnees will have become foreigners who spread dangerous ideas.

CHURCH, STATE, AND NATIONALISM IN MEXICO

Explaining the Mexican Church’s response to emigration requires a basic understanding of church, state, and nationalism in Mexico. Mexican nationalism and Catholicism have been tightly bound despite a history of intense church-state conflict dating back to the 1858 - 1861 War of the Reform. The secular state has long painted the Catholic Church in Mexico as anti nationalist because of its ties to a foreign pope, support for the installation of the Austrian Archduke Maximilian as emperor of Mexico in 1864, and its control over education and economic resources coveted by the state. In a country in which 99% of the population was nominally Catholic, the 1917 constitution expelled foreign priests and nuns, nationalized Church property, prohibited public worship and

religious education, stripped priests of political rights like voting, and gave the government the authority to regulate the numbers of priests. The Mexican state in 1920 was “exclusive and monopolistic” and explicitly sought to *replace* Catholicism with revolutionary nationalism as the cement that joined a Mexican populace fractured by differences of ethnicity, class, and region (Quirk 1973). The attempt by President Calles to enforce these laws led to the 1926-1929 Cristero War between Catholic rebels and the government. Calles also promoted a schismatic Mexican Apostolic Catholic Church independent of the Vatican, but it never achieved mass appeal and has practically disappeared (Camp 1997). Many Church rights were restored in 1992, but Church involvement in Mexican politics continues to be an extremely sensitive issue.

Despite this history of church-state conflict, Guadalupano Catholicism and *mexicanidad* continue to be bound because of the two foils against which Mexican nationalism has been historically defined. The Virgin of Guadalupe was an important symbol during the war for Mexican independence from Spain in the early 1800s, because the Virgin’s appearance to the indigenous Juan Diego had become the basis for claims to parity in religious legitimacy between natives of the Americas and the Catholic kings of Spain. Second, Mexico has been considered the frontline state in a clash between Catholic Latin America and the Protestant United States. Against the master narrative in Mexican historiography pitting church and state against each other across the board, I argue that both institutions have promoted a complementary cultural nationalism, even when the Church was actively resisting nationalization by the state in the 1920s and 30s (Turner 1967). As its emigration policies demonstrate, the Church in Mexico has both a nationalist and transnational face.

A “HOLY CRUSADE” AGAINST EMIGRATION

Mexican migration to the United States accelerated rapidly during the 1910-1920 Revolution (see Figure 3 in the appendix), prompting the Archbishop of Guadalajara’s 1920 call for a “holy crusade” against emigration, which was outlined in a circular read aloud in Sunday mass throughout the archdiocese. The following year, emigration policy was developed during a national episcopal conference in Guadalajara to study agrarian problems. The four major problems discussed in the archbishop’s circular and the conference were the peril to the nation in its struggle against the United States, family disintegration, religious apathy and Protestant conversion, and economic decay caused by labor shortages and the lazy attitudes of returnees and the stay-at-homes who imitated them.

The putative national perils caused by emigration included disadvantage in a zero-sum game with the United States, in which human capital was the object of competition, and the denationalizing of workers. The archbishop’s chief complaint was that an emigration already bad for an economy still recovering from the revolution was even worse because workers were gained by Mexico’s northern nemesis.

The abandonment of the country in these precarious conditions it faces is a lack of patriotism; and this lack of patriotism takes on greater significance if one considers that they go to work, and thus to aggrandize with their work, a nation that has always been considered an enemy of our own and the cause of our greatest national disgraces.

The archbishop's position follows the mercantilist logic common in eighteenth century Europe that population was a scarce good that countries should hoard like any other factor of production (Zolberg, forthcoming). The national threat caused by a labor drain was intensified by the denationalizing ideas that returnees introduced.

Another evil that should not pass unmentioned is the loss of patriotism. When the Mexican worker has spent just a year in the North, he becomes a panegyrist for everything North American. He is an admirer of that country's customs, of its organization of work, its pastimes, its language, and even its vices, and he looks down on everything about his motherland with a certain sadness because he considers it inferior to that country of gold and liberty... [H]e would not care if his motherland was annexed by the United States, and he might even celebrate that it happened.

According to the agrarian conference, the threat to Mexico's sovereignty was not so much the annexation of territory, but rather a kind of annexation of the mind. Invidious comparisons between the quality of the U.S. and Mexican governments, and exposure to U.S. socialists, would exacerbate the illegitimacy of the Mexican regime. Even as the 1926-1929 war between church and state loomed, Catholic leaders feared that returnees undermining Mexico's government vis-à-vis the United States would harm the country as a whole.

Family disintegration was the second major problem caused by emigration, according to the Archbishop's circular. Husbands returned to Mexico to find their households in ruin with "wife or daughter dishonored" and "sons abandoned to their instincts, prepared for crime." A primarily male emigration presented a gendered predicament by leaving women at home "unprotected" and exposed to the temptations of infidelity, unsolicited advances by other men, and even prostitution when men did not send remittances. The absence of fathers also left a gap in the disciplining of sons, a task that could not safely be left to mothers. The critical problem with family disintegration identified by at the 1921 agrarian conference was a breakdown of nationalist as well as gendered obligations. In the presenter's view, the absence of fathers and husbands "annihilated" the worker's family - the basic unit of society's moral and material strength. Workers' families were "a redoubt of national traditions" because under normal circumstances, workers did not migrate or travel as often as members of higher social classes, who were regularly exposed to outside influences. By threatening the worker's family, emigration threatened Mexico herself.

Loss of religious faith was the third problem of emigration identified in the archbishop's circular and a constant theme in the 1921 conference and Church discourse since. Four main motors were said to drive harmful religious change.

- Few priests were available in destination areas to sustain Catholic practices.
- Protestant proselytizing targeted needy migrants and offered material aid in return for conversion.
- Latin Americans were susceptible to Protestantism, even though it is fundamentally an Anglo-Saxon religion, because they would identify it with the power and prestige of the United States.
- The United States was an inherently dangerous environment because of its cosmopolitanism.

The clerical fear of cosmopolitanism, which was apparently understood to mean heterogeneous beliefs, crystallizes the nationalist face of the Church. Maintaining

national cultures as discrete units with little exposure to each other was seen as the best way to maintain religious orthodoxy.

What can a worker do ... in the United States ... among what is truly a cosmopolitan people? There he comes unexpectedly in contact with Jews and Protestants. He has to encounter a heap of different tendencies. And we know what is most influential in our lives. It's daily conversations; it's ordinary and trivial contact with the world. And it's clear that this man, upon finding himself in that heterogeneous, dissolvent environment, must feel a great deal of doubt in the middle of that religious apathy (*Curso Social Agrícola Zapopano* 1921:231).

In effect, these clerics were folk sociologists of assimilation, and perceptive ones at that. They understood that acculturation can not only happen as a conscious decision or through coercion, but also as the quiet result of daily exposure to difference (see Alba and Nee 2003). A priest in Arandas noted that emigrants' religious apathy was caused in part because emigrants "see a different mode of life, go to dances, movies, etc., and have other diversions" (Taylor 1933:58). A similar argument about exposure to heterogeneity in the United States weakening religious practices of Mexican migrants is made by historians of the period (Gamio 1930; Monroy 1999). Social closure along ethnoreligious lines is constituted by barriers to interaction between groups (see Weber 1978). Such closure was difficult to maintain even in the deeply racist context of 1920s America.

The perspective of source country actors shows that the same processes of "assimilation" about which a library of literature has been written is simultaneously a process of "dis-assimilation" (Waldinger 2003). Assimilating immigrants are simultaneously dis-assimilating emigrants. The assimilation literature has historically viewed that process as a good thing, prompting contemporary pleas to maintain the analytic concept while casting off its normative baggage (Alba and Nee 2003). Still, even the most depoliticized understanding of the term tends to adopt the perspective of the target group towards which someone or a group assimilates. From the perspective of the group from which migrants dis-assimilate, the same process is often understood as a wrenching loss and subversive danger.

Economic effects of emigration were the fourth concern of Church officials, who feared shortages of hard workers would diminish agricultural production and the supply of primary materials for industry. The story of a vicious cycle of laziness emerges in official Church accounts of emigration from the period. The supposed lack of a spirit of sacrifice among peasants created poor economic conditions that forced many to emigrate. The situation was exacerbated by repatriates who returned with unacceptably high expectations of salaries and working conditions. To make matters worse, indolence spread to the population that never left because they knew emigration was always an alternative.

Given perceived threats to the Mexican family, Church, and motherland, the archbishop in 1921 urged priests and lay leaders to fight the "fever of expatriation that seems to have seized all Mexicans" by countering the misleading stories returnees told of an easy life in the North. Peasants were to be informed that conditions were miserable in the North while work was plentiful in the archdiocese. The 1921 agrarian conference developed a more detailed plan to stem emigration that centered on an emigration affairs office, voluntary land reform, and an end to the state's political persecution of the Church that was expelling the faithful. The emigration office would coordinate the dissemination

of information about U.S. conditions with potential migrants, foment communication between emigrants and their families, attend to the needs of families left behind to save them from the moral and material dangers described above, send priests to U.S. fields to preserve workers from the dangers to their faith and traditions, and facilitate repatriation. That year, parishes collected funds to repatriate migrants as part of a national campaign.

In 1929, the Mexican episcopate drew up a similar 15-point plan to organize Mexican emigrants in the United States. The episcopate proposed the creation of a binational liaison office in the United States. Parishes in Mexico would send reports to the office about whether repatriated Mexicans maintained their faith and good customs, and if they do not, report where they had been in the United States and the causes of their perversions. The office would coordinate trips by Mexican priests to minister among Mexicans in the United States. A day was designated every year to raise funds from Mexicans on both sides of the border so that North American bishops would not be solely responsible for the ministry's expenses. There was a strong ethnonational aspect to the episcopate's 1929 15-point plan. Church officials in Mexico considered *mexicanidad* and Catholicism to be deeply linked, and emigration threatened to sever the connection. As the Archdiocese of Guadalajara expressed the problem in private correspondence, "With the loss of their religion, [emigrants] often lose their love of the motherland." Thus, Mexicans were encouraged to join "Guadalupano" clubs in the United States that would "sustain their faith and love of their nationality." The episcopate recognized that there would inevitably be jurisdictional disputes between parish priests in the United States and visiting priests from Mexico.

The discussion of a binational ministry illustrates two different axes of Church organization that have co-existed uneasily for centuries. In one, the Church is a *transnational* organization superseding national divisions in its ideology and divided up into territorial districts for administrative purposes. In another, the Church is a *multinational* organization in which the faithful are divided by national origin or language rather than their residence in a defined territory. Linguistic, and later "national," parishes have co-existed with territorial parishes at least since the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, but national parishes have provoked controversy when are imposed on an existing territorial organization to create a sort of "hyphenated Catholicism" (Wozniak 1998). National parishes for European immigrants became popular in the United States from the mid-1800s to the 1920s, when they declined with the advent of immigration restrictions. The modern Vatican has attempted to slowly integrate permanent immigrants into destination parishes, while providing a missionary ministry run by co-nationals for temporary migrants along the lines of the Scalabrinian order established in 1887. The 1952 papal encyclical "Exsul Familia" laid out a series of regulations for integrating these two different forms of organization, specifying that while any resident Catholic fell under the authority and responsibility of the local territorial parish, the authority of the national missionary was limited to immigrants and their direct descendents to the first degree. Pope Paul VI's 1969 "De Pastoralis Migratorum Cura" then assigned primary responsibility for the migrant ministry to the parish of destination, while recognizing a principle of extraterritoriality in which the Church in the origin community had "co-responsibility" for migrants. In general, the post-Vatican II Church has been more accepting of cultural pluralism as well as binational coordination.

The tension between framing a specific Church community in territorial or ethnic terms is similar to differences between territorial and ethnic conceptions of nationhood negotiated in nation-states. The debate is about the extent to which boundaries of membership should be made based on 1) residence or birth in an area circumscribed by a territorial and jurisdictional boundary or 2) by ethnonational affinity transmitted generationally (Brubaker 1992). In the case of the Church, the question is how a community should be defined and resources like collections and priests apportioned – at a national or pan-ethnic (e.g. ‘Latino’) level on the one hand, or by territorial Church jurisdiction on the other. Vatican documents from the 1950s and 60s are replete with detailed instructions about how to negotiate these different ways of organizing the Church’s ministry towards migrants. Like states facing mobile populations, the Church also faces the challenge of avoiding a sort of ‘statelessness’ by making sure that at least one parish is responsible for every migrant. Since 1969, the authority of sending and receiving parishes over the same person has created a sort of ‘dual parishality’ akin to dual nationality. Defining the conditions under which status as a ‘migrant’ ends, in this case, the possibility of immediate ‘naturalization’ into a new parish, and a sort of automatic double *jus soli* by which the third generation become members of the local parish whether they like it or not, is another strategy the Church has developed to file its mobile members neatly and systematically into the Church system. Despite these intriguing similarities between Church and state strategies for dealing with migrants, international migration’s challenge to the Church is not the same as its challenge to the state, because the Church has a transnational umbrella organization based in the Vatican that can impose its will on local administrative units in a way that does not happen in a system of sovereign states. Even here, however, each bishop and his diocese have a significant level of autonomy that is often underappreciated by outsiders (Camp 1997).

FROM TURNCOATS TO PRODIGAL SONS

Pope Pius XI in 1937 ordered Mexican and American bishops to work together to minister to Mexican migrants. Two years later, U.S. and Mexican church authorities agreed to ensure that Mexican, or at least Spanish-speaking, priests were available to minister to Mexicans in the United States. Parishes in source areas were urged to form committees to help repatriates find work. The same year, the episcopate urged parish priests to develop registries of emigrants in the United States that could be used to send them invitations to the patron saint fiestas and exhortations to keep their religious obligations. Using more conciliatory language than the usual condemnations of emigrants, the letter said emigrants “have had to estrange themselves from the motherland,” implying that emigrants were forced into leaving by circumstances at home, rather than because they were dupes or adventurers.

The decreasing nationalist tone of the Mexican Church with regards to emigration was likely the result of papal pressure insisting on cooperation between bishops in the United States and Mexico. In a complementary explanation, Espinosa (1999) argues that the more conciliatory attitude towards emigrants was the result of the 1926-1929 Cristero War, during which the Church hierarchy exiled itself in Texas while parish priests sometimes used the social networks of migrants from their hometowns to flee to satellite settlements in the United States. Haranguing the population for leaving was not discursively effective when the clergy itself had left because of the same push factors

driving out local peasants. Following the war, local priests throughout the region sought funds to rebuild damaged churches from paisanos that had fled to safe cities in the Mexican interior, and to a lesser extent, from emigrants in the United States.

The emigrant program in Arandas (1940 pop. 28,000) was a model for the Archdiocese of Guadalajara. In 1944, the archbishop instructed parish priests to form a Pro-Emigrant Section of the Mexican Catholic Union following the Arandense model. Section members had compiled a directory of Arandenses living in other parts of Mexico or the United States. The parish then sent emigrants local news, moral exhortations, and programs for the patron saint fiesta. Emigrants living in the United States, Mexico City, Guadalajara, and León were asked to establish a “Colonia Arandense” in each city to mutually aid each other. As a result, more emigrants returned for the fiesta, and the parish priest reported that “repatriates and absentees ... show themselves to be extremely generous in the donations they voluntarily offer for diverse purposes.” Throughout the 1940s, 50s, and 60s, absent Arandenses donated money for church construction and other parish expenses. The on-going connections of absent migrants with their hometowns thus reversed the old problem of peasant flight eroding the tithe base. In 1912, church officials in Arandas had complained to the archdiocese that tithing income had declined due to “the considerable emigration of its inhabitants to the North and losses of harvests.” Now, emigrant contributions were a source of the parish’s economic revitalization.

By the late 1940s, Arandas Colonies had formed in nine cities and towns around the republic, but participation of organized groups of Arandenses living in the United States did not begin until the 1970s. As elsewhere in Los Altos, it was not until a massive wave of settlement in the United States that migrants were incorporated on a large scale into the procession as a corporate group of U.S.-based emigrants (Espinosa 1999). In this sense, both the transnationalism and classic assimilation literatures are misleading. It is the permanence of settlement, rather than increased circularity, which has driven emigrants to make claims to membership in the community of origin *as a corporate body* despite their physical absence. The religious sphere has been the primary means for migrants’ reincorporation into the public life of their hometown in ways that have promoted the local Church’s financial and moral interests.

FROM BRACERO GUEST WORKERS TO IRCA SETTLERS

Following the repatriation of an estimated 400,000 Mexicans in the 1930s, the 1942-1964 Bracero guest worker era renewed emigration’s challenge to the Church. In 1951, the Archbishop of Guadalajara told priests in Jalisco to warn prospective migrants of the spiritual and material dangers facing them in the United States “so they will not abandon their homes, families, work, and motherland for this adventure.” By 1960, the policy changed from simple dissuasion to a campaign to prepare Braceros heading north for the moral dangers they would face. The campaign included a “Manual for Braceros,” special Bracero masses and charity in churches in Mexican contracting centers, and a multimedia campaign. Clergy appeared to recognize that simply telling workers not to leave was an ineffective policy. The trend of management of the negative moral effects of emigration, rather than dissuasion, continued.

The Church hierarchy in the United States shared the Mexican Church’s concern for the spiritual welfare of Braceros subject to Protestant inroads. As it had done at least since the 1930s, the U.S. Church asked Mexican bishops to recruit priests to minister to Mexican workers in the United States. In 1960, 16 priests from the Mexico attended to

Braceros for twelve to sixteen week stretches in Oregon, Washington, Michigan, Ohio, and California. Sixteen priests were hardly adequate for a 1960 Bracero population of more than 315,000, not to mention a probably higher number of undocumented workers (García y Griego 1988). At a 1960 meeting between the episcopate's (CEM) emigrant affairs committee and U.S. Catholic leaders, participants agreed that American priests would come to Mexico to learn Spanish and the "mentality of the Mexican people." The CEM developed a standardized policy for the exchange of priests, in which bishops in both sending and receiving areas were required to give their authorization. The slow bureaucratic process was resisted by parish priests seeking the right to make brief visits North without authorization by the hierarchy.

When it became clear that the Bracero program would not be renewed following its 1964 demise, the CEM's emigrant commission met in 1968 to plan the Church's response. The episcopal leadership understood that migration patterns were already shifting away from circularity. Permanent emigrants represented a different kind of challenge to the Mexican Church than seasonal migrants who had regular contact with priests in Mexico. Priests based in the United States would now have to do the heavy pastoral lifting. Following two meetings between U.S. and Mexican bishops, the Scalabrinian order opened a seminary in Guadalajara in 1980 to prepare priests for ministering to the growing Latino population in the United States and to convince the Mexican Church to develop a more consistent policy towards emigrants (Espinosa 1999).

In keeping with what Aristide Zolberg (forthcoming) calls "the Exit Revolution" to describe state emigration policies, the transnational Catholic Church has increasingly emphasized a right to emigrate. These Vatican positions have been incorporated into the daily discourse of the Mexican Church. The right to emigrate and migrant rights more generally figured prominently in meetings between U.S. and Mexican bishops in the 1970s to discuss the growing problem of illegal migration. Bishops on Mexico's northern border were most intensely involved in this effort because they directly dealt with denouncing human rights abuses of migrants and providing charity to migrants in transit. During the heyday of open illegal migration across the U.S.-Mexican border at Tijuana, Scalabrinian priests running a migrant shelter even held daily outdoor masses in the shadow of the border fence to bless scores of migrants waiting for nightfall to cross.

At the same time, the Mexican Church continued to worry about emigration's effects on Mexican culture and the economy. Especially in economically backwards regions, the emigration of productive forces were blamed for depriving "the community of the material and spiritual benefits it needs." The Scalabrinian seminary's weekly, *Migrantes*, recurrently warned of a *brawn* drain as well. In sum, the emigration of brains, skilled workers, and unskilled workers would all cause maladjusted labor markets. In *Migrantes's* portrayal, temporary migration, permanent settlement abroad, and repatriation were all bad things, underlining the fact that a sedentary population has generally been the Mexican Church's ideal but unattainable preference.

MANAGING SETTLEMENT: CONTEMPORARY POLICY IN LOS ALTOS

The Church has attempted to manage massive emigration and out-settlement as best it can. Concerned with the potential effects of the 1986 U.S. amnesty that included 2.3 million undocumented Mexican migrants, the diocese of San Juan de los Lagos, to which Arandas belongs, conducted a study in its 56 parishes to determine the extent of

emigration and its effects. According to the study, three-fourths of Alteño families had at least one member working in the United States. A fifth of the population lived in the United States permanently. Church officials widely lament the U.S. street fashions, tattoos, body piercing, and gangs introduced by returning migrants or their U.S.-born offspring. In light of these perils, the diocese gathered addresses of U.S.-resident migrants and mailed letters to them in 1988 in which the new bishop pledged to work for the salvation of the entire diocese, including “the absent sons, whom the further away you are, the more you are respected and loved.” While the usual anathemas of Protestantism, materialism, family disintegration, and ostentation are mentioned, the most striking feature of the letter from a long-term historical perspective is the legitimacy that it accords the decision to migrate. “The determination that you took to find in far-away lands and with great sacrifice, the work that permits you to secure your future and the happiness of your families, has been very just and very Christian.”

The editorial board of *Migrantes* told clergy that given the problems created by emigration, it would be best if the faithful did not abandon their places of origin. Those who insisted on emigrating, however, should be prepared to confront the cultural, religious, and economic problems they would face. Bishops of northern Mexican states called on priests in the sending areas to discourage emigration, but recognize, “If there is no alternative, the whole family should look for a way to emigrate to preserve family unity...” Official San Juan diocesan policy directs priests to urge wives to follow their migrating husbands as soon as possible to preserve family unity. Seminarians in San Juan de los Lagos even have copies of the questions on the U.S. naturalization exam so they can teach migrants to take the exam (field notes 2003). Encouraging U.S. naturalization is a conspicuous reversal of the relentless dissuasion of emigration, much less settlement abroad, which marked the 1920s through the early years of the Bracero program.

The diocese of San Juan de los Lagos has developed a migrant’s devotional booklet small enough to be carried in a shirt pocket while crossing the border. It includes special prayers for migrants who are leaving home; crossing the border without papers; facing deportation; looking for work; and losing a job; as well as prayers for family members, wives, priests, and even the Mexican government back home. There is a short section on Church teachings on migration and a list of Catholic shelters on the border. The Mexican Episcopal Conference published a similar devotional for migrants from the entire country in 2003. The diocese of San Juan de los Lagos also produced a 119-page migration policy book for local priests in the late 1990s. The book includes a sophisticated sociological understanding of the causes and effects of Mexico-U.S. migration; a profile of migrants from Los Altos based on a 1993 survey; theological reflections on the obligation to protect migrants; a detailed plan of the diocesan migrant ministry including a template for migrant masses and special celebrations of absent sons; and a database from a 1996 survey of priests in 60 Los Altos communities estimating the numbers of emigrants from their parish living in the United States, their principal destinations, seasonal migration patterns, local ministries towards emigrants, and information on hometown clubs.

Contemporary diocesan policy makes familiar claims about the negative effects of emigration on family life and socialization. The diocese argues that marital separation creates mutual suspicions of infidelity, greater opportunities for bigamy and cohabitation, and an absence of male role models that leaves children “virtual orphans.” Yet according

to the 1993 diocesan survey, less than one percent of Los Altos migrants have converted from Catholicism. In contrast to alarmist proclamations in the 1920s that migrants were falling prey to Protestantism or religious indifference, and then subverting the source communities with their new ideas, the official contemporary view is that emigrants attend mass less often, but they remain Catholic. While warning about “the scarce social control of a plural culture” in the United States, official diocesan emigrant policy states that cosmopolitan environments and differences should not be “a source of division or conflict, but of mutual enrichment.” Following the Vatican’s lead, Mexican bishops and diocesan officials now argue that emigration even presents an opportunity for migrants to evangelize in their destinations. They also note that some migrants return with a faith that is more robust than ever. Exposure to a heterogeneous and even hostile environment in the United States can stimulate a stronger Catholicism based on sacrifice and self-discipline rather than simple adherence to the local norm

In economic terms, the diocese recognizes the vital part that remittances play in the Los Altos economy and that some migrants return with new technologies that raise productivity. The view of emigration’s effect on agriculture, on the other hand, is that it causes a scarcity of farm labor and a drop in production by peasants who abandon their land. A vicious cycle develops in which “many leave because there are no jobs, and in the long term, there are no jobs because many left” – a neat summary of a key component of the theory of cumulative causation explaining the perpetuation of international migration (Massey et al. 1998). Seminarians in the diocese taking a class on migration are taught that economic development is the best long-term alternative to emigration. According to the director of the diocesan migrant program, the 8 to 1 salary differential with the United States that stimulates migration could be lowered through better-paying jobs and farmers’ cooperatives. Price supports and protection for locally produced agricultural products like dairy and cattle are suggested “not as a solution, but as an aid, because migration will not be stopped.” In the final analysis, even if it were possible to stop emigration through economic development, emigration is a “human right.”

In the meanwhile, the diocese has a four part migrant ministry structured around prospective emigrants, emigrants in the destination community, post migrants, and those who stay behind. Prospective migrants are educated about U.S. labor rights and charity organizations. Priests commonly bless migrants before they embark on their journey and provide addresses of migrant shelters to those who will cross the border illegally. Ironically for a Church that sees emigration as undesirable, if inevitable, Church networks make redundant the familial and hometown social networks that facilitate emigration by driving down costs and uncertainties (see Massey et al. 1988).

The ministry for emigrants abroad revolves around short visits by priests to destination communities, sending sacred images of hometown patron saints on tour to satellite settlements, and forming hometown clubs abroad. I discuss these trips in detail in the following section. The post-migration ministry consists of absent sons events, discussed in detail further below, and training migrants returning to the United States as catechists to supplement the limited number of Mexican priests there. Finally, the ministry for family members who stay behind includes special monthly masses to pray for the well-being of absent loved ones and the establishment of migrant directories linked to hometown associations in the United States. All of these elements are not practiced in all parishes, but pieces of them are found throughout Los Altos. The absent

sons activities and clerical visits to the North are practically universal and deserve special attention to their development.

FOLLOWING MIGRANTS NORTH

There have been efforts to send Mexican priests to the United States at least since the 1920s. Mexican clerical visits targeted a seasonal population of workers from diverse origins scattered across diverse destination sites. Following the end of the Bracero program, social networks increasingly channeled migrants from a particular source locality to specific U.S. destinations (Massey et al. 1987). At the same time, the secular trend has been for long periods of residence or permanent settlement to take the place of circularity (Marcelli and Cornelius 2001). By the 1970s, Mexican parish priests were able to target large concentrations of paisanos effectively by making short trips to U.S. satellite settlements. During these visits, a mass or party is usually held in a paisano's back yard or a public park. Visiting priests perform baptisms, first communions, and weddings. The performance of rites is supposed to only take place with the permission of the U.S. parish priest, though that is not always the case in practice, sometimes causing tension between priests. An increasingly common activity encouraged by the binational episcopal leadership is to take a sacred image of a hometown saint on tour among paisanos in the North.

Fund-raising is often a component of these trips, as part of a trend away from raising funds *for* migrants, via the repatriation campaigns of the 1920s, for example, towards raising funds *from* them. The first project of many migrant hometown associations is to renovate the church back home or sponsor a charity project in which the source parish priest is intimately involved. The binational Church hierarchy's unequivocal promotion of Mexican clerical visits to Mexicans in the United States was tempered in the 1980s by the recognition that the fund-raising character of many of these visits was sometimes at odds with their spiritual mission. An editorial in *Migrantes* lamented that many priests went north not so much to maintain contact between emigrants and their hometowns, but rather to "shear sheep" by asking the faithful for dollars "for their personal lucre, or under the pretext of social or religious projects, for prestige" (see Figure 4 in the Appendix). *Migrantes* called on bishops to control the transborder visits of parish priests by eliminating fundraising, enforcing the rule that priests must visit the United States with a bishop's permission, and ordering visiting priests to coordinate their activities with the destination parish.

Many priests in the traditional source regions are former migrants themselves, including two directors of the Los Altos migrant ministry who went to work in the United States during a break from their seminary training. Although they said they had visas to enter the United States legally, they chose to cross illegally to gain a better understanding of the experience of many Jaliscienses. One spent five years in Los Angeles packing plastic utensils for an airline catering company. Another spent four years near Los Angeles picking strawberries. They both assisted priests in Santa Monica on weekends. One Michoacano priest I met even combined an undocumented pastoral trip to Los Angeles with a job washing dishes in which he saved enough money to buy a used car back in Michoacán.

The U.S. Catholic hierarchy prefers long-term or permanent postings of Mexican priests in the United States. In 2003, there were 14 formal petitions and many more

informal requests in the San Juan de los Lagos diocese alone from U.S. bishops asking for Mexican priests to work in U.S. Spanish-speaking communities. The difference between a priest's permanent transfer to the United States and a short visit has important implications for the locus of identities that are promoted and their attendant social practices. On the one hand, priests permanently posted in Spanish-speaking areas of the United States minister to Mexicans from all over the republic. They may also find themselves ministering to Catholics from Central America or the Caribbean. The U.S. Church is an institutional promoter of Latino pan-ethnicity because language, not national origin *per se*, is the basis of organizing the ministry. On the other hand, when priests based in Mexico visit the United States for short trips, they usually seek out paisanos from the same Mexican hometown. Their visits are occasions for paisanos in the United States to renew hometown solidarity and participate in the organization and sponsorship of the patron saint fiesta back home. It is the localistic orientation towards a hometown of origin that encourages migrants to participate in a bundle of cross-border practices, rather than the identitarian aspects of Mexican religiosity like Guadalupanismo that can easily be adopted as a Mexican ethnic identity in the United States without implying cross-border practices.

ABSENT SONS FIESTAS

Priests in Mexico have become part of the migration circuit in which their members move. Partly as a consequence, their strategies for dealing with emigration and emigrants have become much more sophisticated. But emigration still separates members of a community from those who stay behind, prompting the Church to institute new rituals to reintegrate absentees. Parishes throughout the sending regions have a special day during the patron saint fiesta that celebrates emigrants or the 'absent sons' along the lines of the 1940s Arandas fiesta described earlier. In some parishes, workshops are held for returning migrants, who are told about the rights of detained illegal immigrants and given telephone numbers in the United States and Mexico to report abuses. The workshops are also a sort of purification ritual to cleanse migrants of the sins they have committed in the United States and reintegrate them into the home community (Espinosa 1998).

There is a close relationship between the ecclesiastical and state-sponsored Absent Sons events that take place during the fiesta. The Mexican government at the federal, state, and municipal levels has attempted to appropriate an existing religious ritual for its own nationalizing project. Although there are sometimes tensions between the Church and the state in this regard, especially as the Mexican government has tried to channel collective remittances towards secular infrastructure and "productive projects" rather than church renovations, the state and Church projects are surprisingly complementary. This sort of cooperation is a result of the common goals shared by the Church and state of integrating emigrants culturally and economically by cultivating migrants' intensely localistic affection for the hometown or ranch of origin. Absent sons festivals are desirable for the state because they promote permanent emigration with continued homeland ties and paisano tourism, considered the best recipe for extracting higher rates of remittances and the formation of a Mexican lobby in the United States (Fitzgerald 2004). The same strategy is useful from a strictly financial perspective on the part of local priests in high emigration areas that rely on remittances.

In 1988, *Migrantes* directed that a Day of the Emigrant should be established in each diocese, but always avoiding the goal of obtaining economic benefit for the parish. The current Church stance is a backlash against the Arandas model adopted in 1944, where the fundraising possibilities of a Day of the Absent Sons was explicitly mentioned as one of the factors favoring its widespread establishment. In practice, patron saint fiestas imply huge expenses for impoverished rural areas, and migrants pay for a significant share of the costs of the bands, fireworks, decorations, food, and drink. Even after subtracting expenses, the funds raised can be relatively lucrative for rural churches. Raising funds from emigrants and ensuring a large turn-out for the fiesta requires first keeping track of them, a challenge to which I now turn.

ADMINISTRATION OF A MOBILE POPULATION

To meet the administrative challenge of mobile members, the Church adopts many of the same instruments of the state, including registries, censuses, and identification documents. Pope Pius XXI in 1923 ordered that Italian migrants should be provided with “ecclesiastical identification cards” from the local ecclesiastical authority before departure, so that they could be more readily recognized in their new homelands. The order was renewed in the 1952 “*Exsul Familia*.” Los Altos priests often continue this practice today by writing letters to departing migrants recommending them to destination parish priests. Coordinating church records of migrants presents an even greater bureaucratic headache. In the 1930s, the archbishops of Guadalajara and Los Angeles, California, instructed Mexican parish priests to be more careful about investigating the backgrounds of brides and grooms to avoid multi-sited polygamy. The archdiocese of Morelia, Michoacán, encouraged communication among Mexican parishes and U.S. liaison offices to synchronize their vital statistics relating to emigrants. Such policies appear to have been practiced. For example, in the 1950s, prospective grooms in Arandas who had lived in the United States had to produce witnesses testifying that they had not married while they were abroad. Keeping track of the Church membership requires intensive effort in a diocese that estimates three fourths of its families have at least one member in the United States.

In the vicariate of Agua Negra in the county of Arandas, a team of young volunteers went door to door throughout the villages and ranches of the jurisdiction in 2002 surveying the population and asking for addresses of family members in the United States so the priest could send them invitations to participate in the patron saint fiesta. According to census takers, the 2002 Agua Negra vicariate census was also conducted with the aim of determining Agua Negra’s eligibility to become a parish, which requires a minimum population of 5000. Absent migrants were included in the total population because they are still considered part of the local religious community. Counting absentees for the purposes of church administration districts is strikingly similar to demands by a successful social movement in San Ignacio Cerro Gordo, in the municipio of Arandas, to secede from Arandas and form its own municipio. For several years, the secessionist committee argued that Sanignacienses in the United States should be included in the population to achieve the required number of 10,000 in the county seat. The demand was only dropped when natural growth and domestic in-migration enabled San Ignacio to surpass a resident population of 10,000 in 2003 and achieve the Jalisco state legislature’s approval of municipal status.

International migration creates similar challenges for both church and state. Rogers Brubaker (1992) argues that national citizenship is a sort of “filing system” for states to manage the world’s population. Twentieth-century states have gone to great lengths to establish procedures that prevent international migrants from disrupting that system by creating complex nationality regimes assuring that everyone is in some state’s file, and as few as possible are filed by more than one state (Koslowski 2000). Yet even within the same organization, the Catholic Church, migration creates profound challenges for filing members in the right place. Just as states must “embrace” a population through identification papers and control apparatuses in order to extract resources like taxes and conscripts from a population in exchange for providing welfare and security protection (Torpey 2000), the Church hierarchy must first identify its members and record its interactions with them in order to extract financial resources and deliver spiritual services. In other words, to *minister* to a mobile population effectively, the Church must first be able to *administer* that population. Administering extends to the most literal aspect of filing – ensuring that different parts of the church have access to a member’s records and are aware of the different rites conducted in multiple locations. The sequential ordering of rites, for example, the fact that marriage builds on baptism, means that the ritual life course of a member must be carefully tracked by coordinating the exchange of locally-produced documents across ecclesiastical jurisdictions.

CONCLUSIONS

The Catholic Church is a leading institutional voice for universalism in the politics of international migration. While Torpey (2000) convincingly argues that the nation-state monopolizes the “legitimate means of movement,” the modern Church has promoted a right to emigrate, a qualified right to immigrate, and universal civil and social rights of personhood. The Church relies even more than the state on *authority* rather than raw power. The Church’s embrace of mobile members is facilitated by a hierarchal structure imposed over most of the globe. The consulates of a nation-state attempt similar coverage, but the fundamental difference is that while a religious organization does not inherently violate sovereignty, a consulate is a sort of cyst that exists in the receiving state only through the legal fiction of extraterritoriality and reciprocal agreement with host country governments. As a result, the migrant source state is limited in its capacity to embrace emigrants by the particularist, sovereign nature of the state system. The Church is in a better position than states to embrace emigrants because it has a universalist face and transnational organization allowing it to embrace, organize, and direct emigrants in multiple state jurisdictions.

There is a national and even nationalist face to the Church as well that is shown in preoccupations over migrants’ introduction of cultural pathologies from the United States. What scholars of immigration have described as “assimilation” is experienced by the source Church as dis-assimilation and disintegration. Emigration undermines nationalist ideology when large numbers of citizens migrate to a country against which official nationalism has been defined. State-led nationalism seeks to homogenize the population *inside* the state’s borders while defining it *externally* in relation to foreigners (Deutsch 1966). Church-led nationalism shares that same project. The boundaries separating ‘us’ from ‘them’ are not equally contrastive with all other foreigners. Specific countries are the foils against which a nation is conceived. The problem for sending

country nationalists is that the same interventions by core states that stimulate nationalism in the periphery also stimulate migration flows to the interventionist core states. Mexicans have gone to the United States not only because the latter is a rich neighbor, but because the United States conquered half of what was then Mexico in the nineteenth century, regularly intervened through the early twentieth century, and invested in Mexican transportation networks and an economic infrastructure that integrates Mexico into the U.S. economy as a source of cheap labor and raw materials. As the world systems approach to international migration theory emphasizes, such interventions by core states in the periphery generate migration streams (Sassen 1999). Emigration publicly symbolizes the weakness of the peripheral source country vis-à-vis the destination country by underscoring the negative (push) factors in the source country and the positive (pull) factors in the destination country that also drive migration. Moreover, migration exposes emigrant workers to humiliations abroad, which are interpreted not only as the humiliations of individuals, but also of the nation and state they represent. As a result, the fact that Mexican emigration is almost exclusively directed towards the United States has been seen by the Mexican Church and Mexican political actors across the board as a national disgrace.

Like the Church, the state has also carried out a peculiar kind of cultural nationalizing mission among Mexicans in the United States. On the one hand, it promotes Mexican national holidays, Mexican textbooks, and the use of Spanish, while on the other it encourages emigrants to become U.S. citizens and learn English. The nation-state cannot by definition be transnational, but it does promote dual nationality and its cultural accoutrements. The ability of the Mexican state or any other sending state to engage in such activities is strongly dependent on the will of the host country government to allow it (Waldinger and Fitzgerald 2004). The Church, on the other hand, is an effective institutional promoter of reactive nationalism precisely because its transnational organization and universal human rights discourse free it to move with migrants across nation-state boundaries.

Church nationalism is an end to itself, as Mexican clergy have been socialized into a defensively nationalist posture vis-à-vis the United States through the same processes of education and patriotic ritual that influence the rest of Mexican society (see Camp 1997). Nationalism is also a means to a religious end in the specific context of Mexico-U.S. migration. The Mexican Catholic Church was disestablished in the nineteenth century as the state monopolized political control. Yet in the religious realm, the Church has retained a near monopoly. In 1910, Mexico was 99 percent Catholic. In 1990 it was still 90 percent Catholic (Camp 1997), with Protestants comprising only 4 percent of the population in 1986 (Stoll 1990). The Catholic Church in Mexico, particularly in the conservative historical migrant source states of the Central-West, is clearly a “church” in the Weberian (1978) sociological sense of a hierocratic organization with a monopoly of “psychic coercion” in religious matters. Weber’s notion of “psychic coercion” is another term for Gramscian hegemony, where alternative options are unlikely to be even considered because they are not readily available. The Catholic Church, as an organization operating in a specific local context, is most church-like in the absence of religious pluralism. As the faithful leave that environment and migrate to the United States, they encounter a pluralistic “religious marketplace” where the Catholic Church is much more sect-like in the sociological sense. Membership is voluntaristic.

The American Catholic Church in many ways is a *de facto* denomination like Methodism or Presbyterianism (Herberg 1960; Warner 1993). The Church as an institution is different in Mexico and the United States, despite forming part of the universal Roman Catholic Church. Migrants crossing the U.S.-Mexico border do not simply transfer themselves from one branch of the same organization to another, like an employee of a multinational corporation who leaves the corporate office in New York for the branch in London. Ascriptively categorized as Mexican Catholics at birth, migrants in some sense still “belong” to the Mexican Church even when they enter the North American marketplace. Mexican cultural nationalism is a sort of glue by which the Mexican Catholic Church attempts to bind its members to the monopolistic Mexican church rather than leave them to the vagaries of the North American religious marketplace.

The goals of sending Church and state with regards to migrants are not always the same. Mexico is one of many migrant source countries in which governments and political parties are trying to create ethnic lobbies in the United States and competing to obtain domestic political support from migrants abroad – aims that are outside the interest of the Church (Fitzgerald 2000, 2004). The Church is also more concerned with problems of emigration’s moral disintegration of the community than the federal state, though at the local level, the discourses of government and Church leaders are the same. Yet Church and state projects generally have overlapped. For example, during the 1920s and 30s, both the Mexican Church and government objected to emigration on the same nationalist grounds that emigrants were aiding the enemy with their labor and introducing U.S. ideas upon return. Both institutions used propaganda campaigns to dissuade emigration and raised funds to repatriate Mexicans in the United States and ease their reentry into Mexico by helping them find jobs. Beginning in the 1980s, both Church and state have paid increasing attention to educating migrants about their civil rights in the United States. Both organizations promote remittances and decry high transfer fees, though the rationale is different for each institution. The Church emphasizes migrants’ familial responsibility to provide for women and children left behind, while the government emphasizes spending money on investments rather than consumption (i.e. family sustenance).

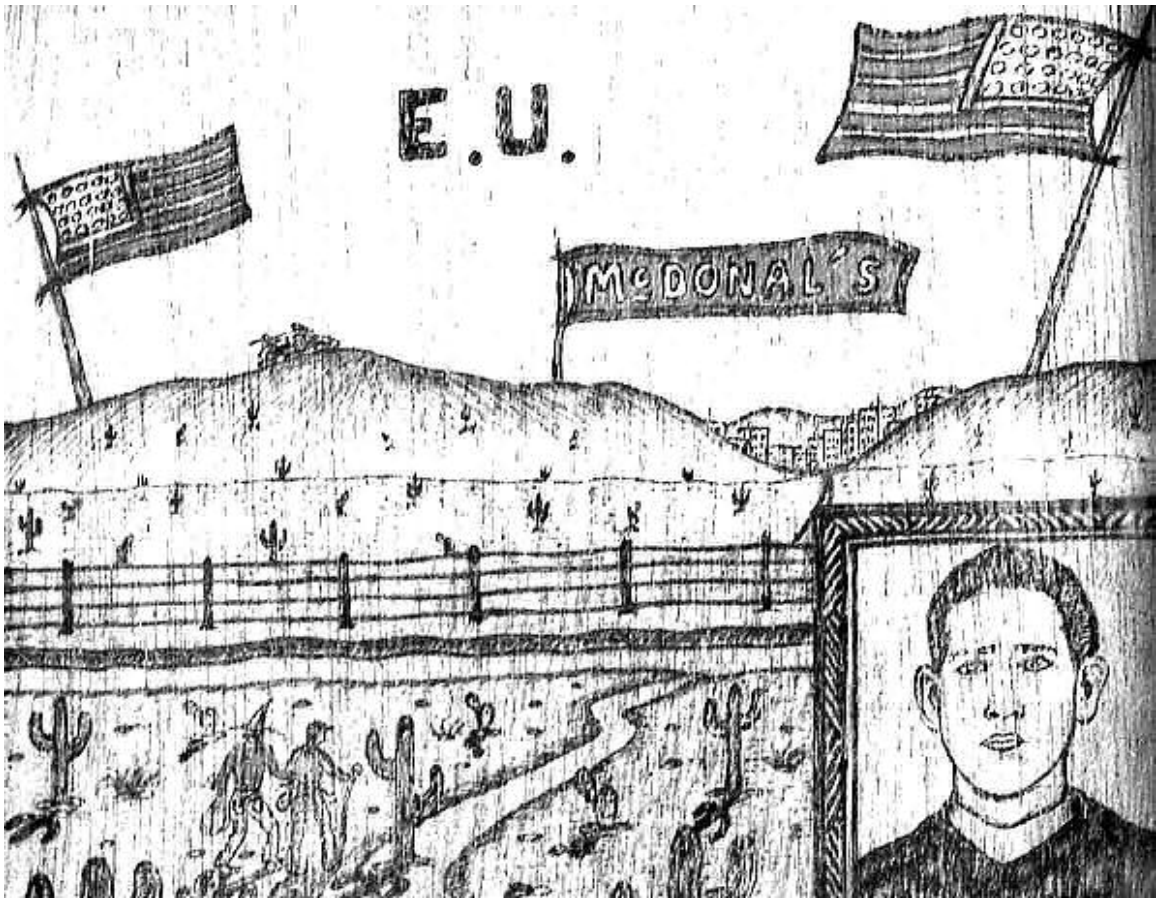
A final advantage of the Church relative to the state is that the Church’s ties to members are voluntaristic, whereas in the final analysis, the state’s ties to members are subject to physical coercion.³ The fact that emigrants are outside the country does not affect the sending Church to the same extent as it affects the sending state, because the Church does not rely on physical coercion in collecting resources from members. For example, the sending state cannot easily extract taxes from emigrants, so it develops schemes to increase remittances and channel them to “productive projects.” By bringing emigrants’ wealth into the sending country economy, it becomes indirectly available for coercive extraction as it circulates, even though the remittances themselves are not taxed. The sending church cannot forcibly extract tithes from anyone, including emigrants, so it relies on “psychic coercion” and affective ties to raise funds. Individual priests like the vicar of Agua Negra continue to successfully raise tithe money from emigrants abroad using the same methods they use at home. Ironically, the state’s triumph over the Church

³ Relative to membership in a state, membership in a church is voluntary. Relative to the voluntary membership in a sect, membership in a church is ascriptive. In other words, church membership is ascribed but not coerced.

in the nineteenth century, which ended forced tithing and stripped the church of its sovereignty, created a Catholic institutional arrangement for obtaining resources from members and delivering services to them that is better equipped than the state in an environment of international mobility.

APPENDIX

Figure 1



Two migrants left this wood-burning depicting their crossing into the United States thanks to Saint Toribio Romo at the church dedicated to the saint in Santa Ana, Jalisco. Photographed 2003.

Figure 2

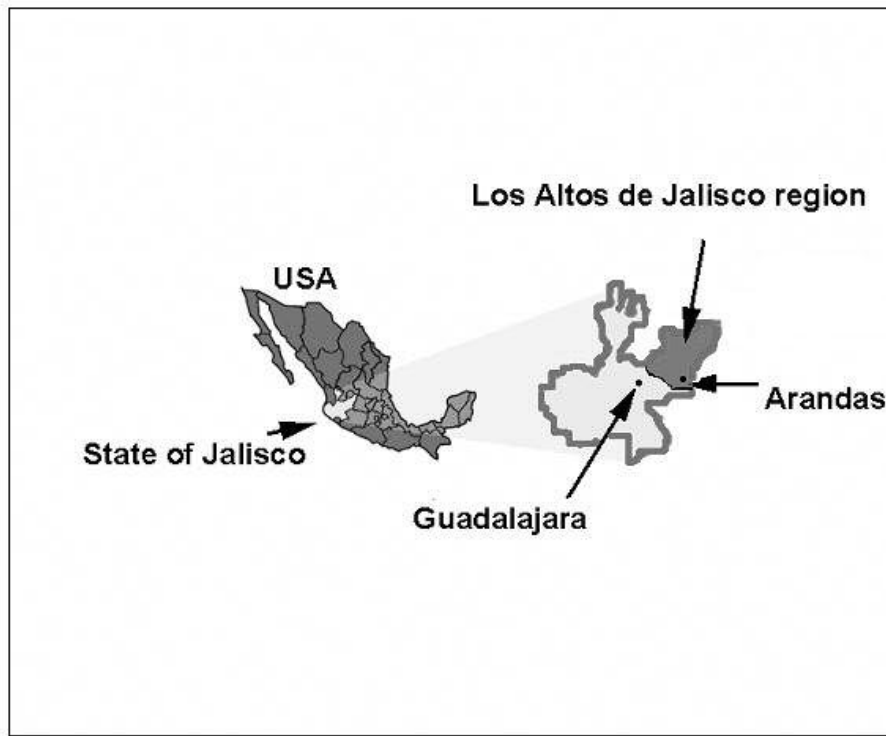
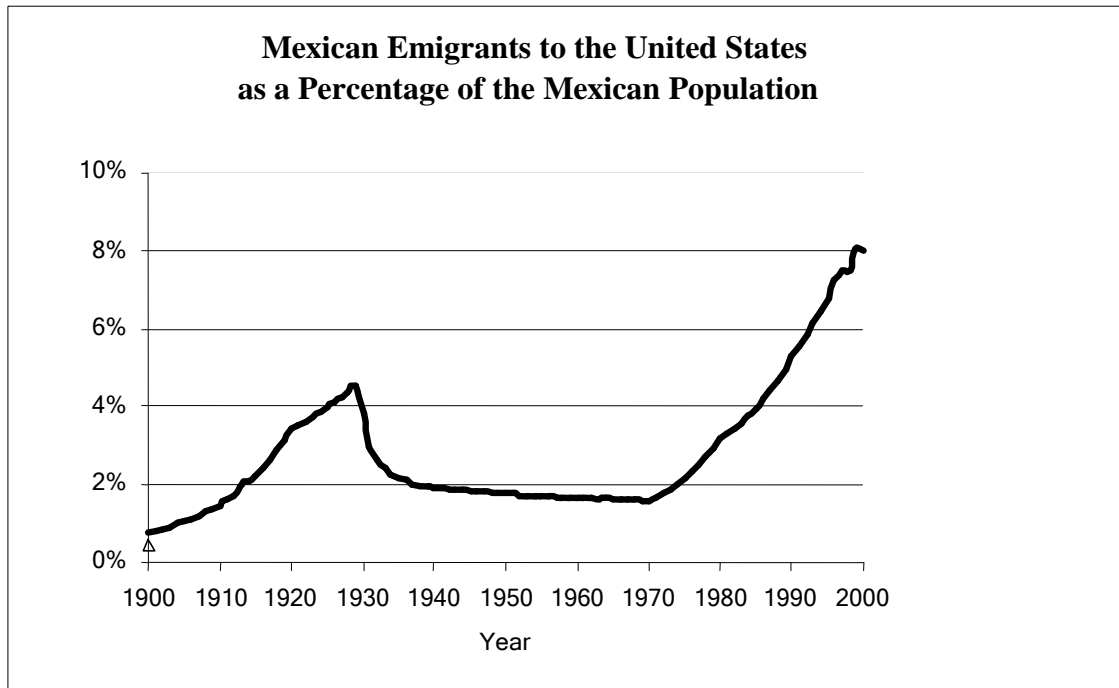
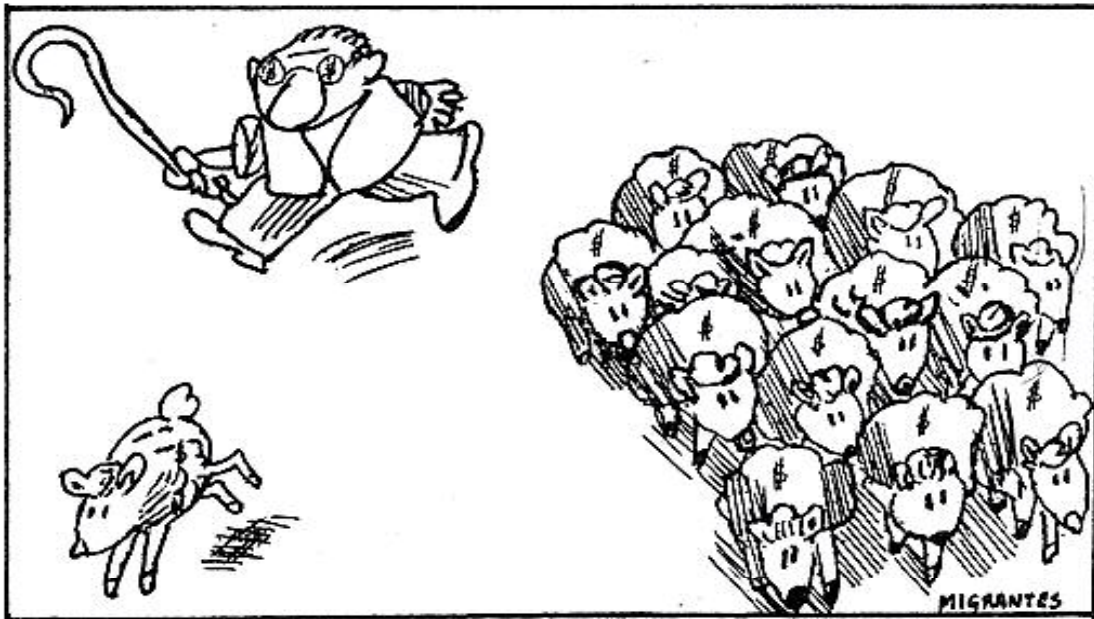


Figure 3



Sources: Calculated from decennial U.S. and Mexican Census data taken from the Mexican Migration Project NATLHIST file 2002. <http://mmp.opr.princeton.edu>.

Figure 4



A Mexican priest tries to “shear sheep” (collect donations from migrants) in the United States in this editorial cartoon in the newsletter, *Migrantes*, published by the Scalabrinian seminary in Guadalajara (April 1984).

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