Section III.
Network Analysis--The Gateway to Understanding Indigenous Farmworkers

Executive Summary:

- Indigenous Mexican immigrants to California agriculture are small town individuals whose primary loyalty is to their hometown network (HTN).
- We use the HTNs as the building blocks of our study.
- There are considerable differences across HTNs, accounting for how well individual networks adapt to U.S. institutions. It is important for those dealing with individual indigenous immigrants to understand the nature of the network to which individuals belong.
- To demonstrate the differences between networks, we compare nine case study HTNs using a set of key features of which perhaps the most important is the age or maturity of the network (median year of arrival).

III-1 The network approach:

Social networks based on relationships formed in the hometown are recognized as crucial to the behavior of international immigrants from rural areas. This migrant network structure evolved from traditional systems of mutual exchange necessary for survival in poor rural environments.[1] At first, the pioneering migrants from a village face great odds to cross borders, find housing and obtain employment. But over time those who come first facilitate the process by giving shelter and job tips to their friends and relatives from the home area. Soon, what started as an opportunity for those few willing and able to make the trek becomes a mass phenomenon open to a large proportion of the residents of the hometown.[2] In time, women and children join their men folk in the migration destinations. Meanwhile, the tastes of the home and destination communities begin to change because of improved economic opportunities. Those who go first are envied and emulated by those who follow them in the migrant circuit. The immigrant**s** settled in the destination regions begin to acquire more material goods and take the lead in pushing for more services in the United States. As the network gets more deeply rooted north of the border, it tends to form concentrated communities in a few destination points, while at the same time searching for new geographic opportunities. As the old networks become settled and seek better conditions for their members, often employers will switch to more newly arrived, and more easily exploited, immigrant communities that are just beginning the staged settlement process.

Indigenous farmworker networks fit this pattern, identifying strongly with their hometown communities.[3] This trait is true to some extent for all people "away from home" in a foreign environment. People from the same place tend to identify with each

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[1] Mines and Anzaldua, 1982, p. 85, also see Lomnitz, 1989
[2] Massey, et al, 1994, p. 1498, see also Nichols, 2006
[3] For other discussions of Mixtec social networks and migration see for example Kearney and Nagengast 1989; Bade 2004

other and seek ways to implement strategies of common assistance. This tendency is particularly strong among the Mexican indigenous settlers in the United States. These immigrants, largely from small towns, are not "mass society" individuals who easily identify their fate with broad collective objectives of the larger society. Instead, their experience teaches them not to trust the outsider who has traditionally discriminated against them. This tendency is further reinforced by the localized nature of the dialects of the indigenous languages these small town dwellers speak.[4] Often, people from a nearby town may speak their language with a different tone and vocabulary. Furthermore, the indigenous political organization[5] within the community often reinforces obligations of mutual help that create ties to the people in their hometown network. People from their hometown are their special *paisanos*.[6]

Because of the strength of these hometown ties, we decided to use the binational immigration network as the fundamental building block of our effort to understand Mexican indigenous farmworker issues. We consciously posited that to understand how to improve the lives of the indigenous immigrant community required that we understand the community networks that dictate the behavior of their members. We defined the universe for our study to be made up of a few hundred hometown networks that we identified early on in the study.[7]

III-2 How to understand the different types of networks.

It is crucial to understand the variation in the age and maturation of immigrant networks. There is a spectrum of newcomer to settled networks that have very distinct patterns of household composition, work, housing, organizational structures, and receipt of social services. To provide appropriate services to these communities, as well as strengthen their internal organization, it is important to grasp the great variation across communities. Some have long histories in the United States as migratory communities; others are newcomer networks. When dealing with individuals or groups from a given community, one needs to understand where they fit within the continuum of types of communities found in the universe of indigenous farmworker sending networks. These communities vary by a series of readily observable concrete factors that can be learned by paying close attention to the community traits of the hometown network.

The most determining characteristic of a migration network is its age or time that its members have spent in the United States. So, we make age of the network our point of departure for distinguishing among them, while remembering that there are many other equally important factors to keep in mind while familiarizing oneself with these communities. The point here is not to engage in fine academic distinctions but to help understand how to tell one network from another so that one can relate to the community with which one is dealing. Table III-1, below, identifies the nine communities we will

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[4] See Section II for a discussion of how the Mexican State intentionally fragmented indigenous communities in Mexico.
[5] Referred to as 'usos y costumbres' by Mexicans
[6] The towns are referred as "closed corporate communities" by anthropologists (see Wolf, 1957)
[7] See Sources of Data in Appendix I for details.

be discussing.   We did an in-depth survey with an average of over 40 people from each community. The first two communities are much more established than the other seven. However, as is detailed in Appendix II, there are important differences among the other seven as well. All the towns except for Magdalena Loxicha (i.e. eight of the nine) have managed to send large numbers of people and a significant proportion of their populations to California.

III-3 A short description of the nine community networks:

We will be using these nine quite distinct and representative communities throughout this report to demonstrate the variety of experiences faced by immigrant indigenous networks in the hope of understanding the key features of these communities.   Understanding these communities should facilitate an understanding of the variety of types of communities encountered in the larger indigenous settlement community.

Table III-1: Nine Community Case Studies: Examples of Hometown Immigrant Networks			
Level Of Maturity	Real Name	Shortened Name for Graphs	Language Spoken in Hometown
Very Settled	Santa María Teposlantongo	tepos	Mixteco
	San Miguel Cuevas	cuevas	Mixteco
Medium Level Of Connectedness	Santa Cruz Rio Venado	venado	Triqui
	San Juan Piñas	piñas	Mixteco
	Cerro del Aire	cerro	Chatino
Newcomer With Large Presence	Candelaria la Unión	candelaria	Mixteco
	San Martín Peras	peras	Mixteco
	Jicayán de Tovar	jicayan	Mixteco
Startup Newcomer Network	Magdalena Loxicha	loxicha	Zapoteco

In addition to age of the network, there are several other important traits about the typical person in each of the networks. These include the proportion of his or her life spent in the United States, the location of his nuclear family (Mexico or California), the cultural assimilation of his network back in Mexico and the assets he holds in the California. In Appendix II there is a systematic comparison of the nine case study towns with regard to all of these major distinguishing features. A review of these methods is helpful for those working with indigenous immigrant networks. Below, we describe in brief the major traits of each of the nine hometown community networks. Again, for a deeper comparison consult Appendix II.

1) Santa María Teposlantongo—very settled

This is a Mixteco-speaking Oaxacan community found in the San Juan Mixtepec region of Oaxaca, not far from, and equidistant between, the two well-connected cities of Tlaxiaco and Santiago Juxtlahuaca. Its people have been migrating for decades. They have settled populations in Veracruz and in Baja California. They participated in the Bracero Program and began coming in limited numbers to California in the 1960s.   By

the early 1980s, a substantial settlement community including women and children existed in the Arvin-Lamont area where they have done grape and vegetable work. Younger people continue to come to the United States from the village but go mostly to Florida and Indiana.   The settlers from Tepos speak Spanish without difficulty. They are predominantly an older group (median age=36) and have all their minor children with them in California. Their adult children are also in the United States. A few have houses and almost all have cars.

2)   San Miguel Cuevas—very settled

These Mixteco speakers come from a town right near the small city of Santiago Juxtlahuaca in Oaxaca, which is connected by paved road to the rest of Mexico. Its people have daughter communities in Baja California and Mexico City. The people from Cuevas also came as Braceros and settled in California first in the 1960s. Again, by the 1980s, they had settled as families in the Fresno area where they have specialized in grape work.   Many settlers from Cuevas still take the seasonal trek north to do farm work in Oregon where there is a settlement of people from their hometown. Younger people continue to come from the hometown to a growing California settlement. In general, the settlers speak Spanish well.   Again, they are an older group (median age=34) without minor children in living Mexico.   Their nuclear families have moved to the United States. A few have houses and a large number own trailers in the Fresno area. Most have cars.

3)   Santa Cruz Río Venado—medium level of connectedness

These Triqui speakers must traverse an unimproved dirt road (impassable in the summer rainy season) from their hometown to reach the small city of Putla de Guerrero, Oaxaca, which is connected by paved road to Tlaxiaco and thus to the rest of Mexico. The people of Venado travelled widely around Mexico and the town has filial communities in Sonora, Jalisco, Baja California and Veracruz. Though it had pioneers arrive before the immigration amnesty of 1986-1988, it had very little presence in the United States until the 1990s.   Settlers first went to the Madera area but at some time in the mid-1990s, they shifted their main settlement to Greenfield (Monterey County) where they are engaged in vegetable work.   The Spanish of the settlers from Venado is very uneven. This is a relatively young group (median age=29) and a large proportion of the settlers' minor children are still in the hometown. They all rent and live in crowded apartments in California, but most own cars.

4)   San Juan Piñas-- medium level of connectedness

Piñas is a Mixteco town that is situated on the western edge of the municipio of Santiago Juxtlahuaca, Oaxaca. It is joined by unpaved roads to the city of Santiago Juxtlahuaca. The people of Piñas travelled extensively around Mexico seeking farm work throughout the second half of the twentieth century and left settlements in Sonora and Baja California. A few participated as Braceros and the migration of male pioneers began in the 1970s.   The median age of the population of the settlers is relatively high (33 years).

However, women and families did not start coming until after the 1986 immigration amnesty, and settled family-based communities probably didn't appear until the mid-1990s.   They are mostly settled in the San Diego and Santa Maria areas where they work in vegetables and strawberries.   Some in San Diego have found work in construction. The ability to speak Spanish among the settlers from Piñas is mixed, perhaps a reflection of its isolation and relatively low educational levels. Despite the relatively early arrival of pioneers, a minority of the settlers are couples living together and a large proportion of the minor children of the settlers are in the village.   No one in the sample owned a home and a minority owned cars.

5)   Cerro del Aire-- medium level of connectedness

Cerro, which has a Chatino-speaking population, is connected by an improved (graveled) road to the main highway between Puerto Escondido and Oaxaca City.   It is a community that until recently has not been exposed to the outside world and has travelled very little around Mexico looking for work, unlike other towns in the study. Still, some people have settled in Oaxaca City.[8] In Cerro's case, once people found the means to leave their community, they came straight to the United States. In California, almost all have followed the lead of one pioneer who came to Petaluma where they work in wine grapes and landscaping.   Although this pioneer and his wife came in time for the amnesty of 1986, most Cerro settlers came in the late 1990s and most women came after 2000. Despite the late entry into the migration stream, most of the settlers from this coastal region speak Spanish well and use it with their children who are resident in California. Still, the majority of the relatively young settlers (median age=28) have not settled with their spouses in California and a majority of their minor children are still back in Oaxaca.

6)   Candelaria la Unión—newcomer with large presence

This Mixteco-speaking town, in the *municipio* of San Pablo Tijaltepec, is located over a long and tortuous, although graveled, road an hour from the small city of Chalcatongo de Hidalgo in the district of Tlaxiaco, Oaxaca.   The people from Candelaria did travel elsewhere in Mexico to work and formed settlements in Baja California and Mexico City. Although people from the Chalcatongo area have a history of Bracero participation, for the San Pablo Tijaltepec area, migration seems to have been delayed by the poor roads. They settled very late in California.   The first pioneers did not arrive until the 1990s, and most of the settlers arrived well into the decade of the 2000s.   They settled in Taft and Santa Maria where they work in grapes, vegetables and strawberries. Despite their isolation and recent arrival, many appear to speak Spanish well and the settlers have a relatively high educational level. With respect to the presence of the spouse and children, the men of Candelaria have an unusual pattern. Despite their late arrival in California, their relative youth (median age=27), and the fact that a large proportion (41%) of the minor children are still in the village, an extremely high percentage of the settlers (78%)

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[8] It is typical for Chatino girls to go to Oaxaca City and work as maids. It was in Oaxaca City that Chatinos learned of opportunities to migrate to the United States (personal communication with Yolanda Cruz, Chatino immigrant).

are here with their spouse.   It appears that the people have made the calculation that it is worth having two wage earners in California even if it means leaving the children with the grandparents in the village. Not surprisingly all are renters, and less than half own cars.

7)   San Martín Peras— newcomer with large presence

San Martín Peras, located in the far west of Oaxaca near the Guerrero border, is the chief town in the *municipio* of the same name. This Mixteco town is the region's administrative center and has the largest population of the nine communities under study. The town was founded and built into a population center only in recent decades. It is still isolated by poor roads from the city of Santiago Juxtlahuaca, from where the roads lead out of the region.   Despite its remoteness, the people of Peras have travelled widely in Mexico in search of work. There is a very large settlement of people from the town in the San Quintín Valley in Baja California.   The first pioneers came in the late 1970s to California but it was not until after the immigration amnesty of 1986 that large numbers crossed the border.   Most men arrived after the late 1990s and most women came after 2000.   They have settled predominantly in Oxnard and Watsonville where they work in the strawberry industry.   There is a great deal of seasonal movement between these two areas. The people of Peras speak Spanish in a very uneven way and have one of the lowest educational levels.   However, like Candelaria, a majority are in California with their spouse. Again, this is true despite their relatively young age (median age=27) and the fact that a large proportion of the minor children are in Mexico.   None own their houses, though a majority owns a car.

8)   Jicayán de Tovar— newcomer with large presence

Jicayán is a Mixteco-speaking town on the Guerrero side of the border. It has tortuous roads that until 2008 were impassable in the rainy season. To reach the outside world, one must pass through Santiago Juxtlahuaca in Oaxaca, since it is isolated from the rest of Guerrero.   Despite being isolated by bad roads, people from Jicayán managed to travel to the coast of Guerrero to work in the tourist and construction industry. They also have travelled to other states in Mexico, though they started in the 1980s, much later than many other towns. Settlement communities were established in Baja California, Michoacán and Mexico City.   Although one pioneer came before the immigration amnesty of 1986, most people came after 2000 (median age=26).   The settlers of Jicayán speak a very poor Spanish in general and their educational level is the lowest among the nine communities. A minority has spouses living with them and 60% of the minor children of the settlers live in Mexico.   No one owned a home but many had cars which they use to shuttle back and forth between Caruthers/Raisin City and Santa Maria, according to the fluctuating agricultural labor demand in grapes and strawberries.

9)   Magdalena Loxicha—startup newcomer network

Loxicha, a Zapoteco-speaking town, is located on an unreliable but gravel road in a remote area north of the highway between Puerto Escondido and Puerto Angel, Oaxaca.

This town was very late to enter the migrant stream.   There is no evidence of anyone leaving the hometown before 1990. There are no settlements elsewhere in Mexico. People came straight to the United States. No one in the older generation speaks Spanish very well in the town. However, despite its isolation and lack of migration history, the language skills are changing quickly.   Children converse in Spanish on the streets of the hometown, and the young settler population in California speaks Spanish well. Though there were isolated pioneers in the 1990s, almost all of the relatively small number of people from Loxicha has come to California since 2000 (median age=25). They have settled almost exclusively in the San Diego area where they work in the strawberry and tomato fields. Loxicha is the one town of the nine with very little settlement of women and children. We found only two women from the community in California and both had very young children. About 80% of the men in our sample did not have a spouse with them and a large majority of their children were in Mexico.   The men from Loxicha have no houses and only 20% have cars.