

Parlier: The Farmworker Service Economy

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I. Introduction

We originally chose to study Parlier for the Department of Labor's Farm Labor Supply Study¹ (FLSS) both because it was considered a farm worker town and because it is almost entirely Latino--in fact the 1980 and 1990 censuses listed it as the town with the highest proportion of Latinos in California--and it has been controlled for over 20 years by the local Chicanos. But political control is not equivalent to economic control, and Parlier is caught in a structural position that makes it, from the growers' point of view, merely a convenient place to house farmworkers. Trujillo quotes the last Anglo mayor as saying in 1971 that "Parlier is a giant migrant labor camp, no more and no less, and should be dealt with as such."

We came to the town to examine the hypothesis that the apparently large pool of settled and former farm workers, many of whom reported low incomes, might be available to work in agriculture if a labor shortage were to develop as a result of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA).² We knew that Parlier had been a farm worker "dormitory" for at least half a century and was a center of activity for the United Farm Workers (UFW) during the 1970s.³ We were therefore surprised to discover the extent to which the people who are the "residents" of Parlier are not farmworkers and are not interested in doing farm work. As we will discuss below, the ethnic uniformity of Parlier hides a highly stratified community that mirrors in many respects the job structure of the surrounding agriculture and related businesses. The Anglo and Japanese growers continue to control the economy of the Parlier area, while Mexican migrant workers, at the bottom, do most of the seasonal farm work.

In between the growers and farmworkers are the year-round, Mexican-American residents of Parlier, who control the community's political infrastructure and public institutions. They include long-term immigrant settlers born in Mexico, Texas-born migrant families who settled out in the area, and locally-born Mexican Americans. They are socially, economically, and politically distinct from either the peak season labor force of recent Mexican immigrants or the Anglo and Japanese farm owners. They work in year-round and supervisory farm jobs, in the packing houses, in blue-collar semi-skilled jobs, and in small local businesses. Many commute to jobs in nearby towns. One of the most striking observations from Parlier is the extent to which the local economy is based on providing services to farmworkers via monetarized artificial support

¹See *Farm Labor Recruitment After Immigration Reform*, Interim Report No. 1 to the Office of Policy, U.S. Department of Labor, Micro Methods, Berkeley, September 30, 1989; David Griffith, Ed Kissam, David Runsten, Jerónimo Camposeco, Anna García, *Assessing the Availability and Productivity of the U.S. Farm Labor Force under Enhanced Recruitment, Wage, and Working Conditions*, Second Interim Report to the Office of Policy, U.S. Department of Labor, Micro Methods, Berkeley, April 14, 1990; Ed Kissam and David Griffith, *Final Report of the Farm Labor Supply Study*. Vols. I and II. Report to the Office of Policy, U.S. Department of Labor. Berkeley: Micro Methods, 1991.

²The idea at the time was that farmworkers legalized by IRCA might leave agriculture for other jobs, and that IRCA would control the influx of new workers. Of course neither of these proved true.

³Parlier was one of the towns that had a UFW office.

networks, through which established, long-term immigrants mediate between landowners and arriving migrants: as labor brokers, workplace supervisors, "raiteros" providing expensive private transportation to the fields, and as landlords of crowded and sub-standard housing.

Some might argue that Parlier is a special case because of its ethnic homogeneity, the long-time political control by Chicanos, and the lack of a diversified business structure. But we will argue that Parlier is in fact representative of a growing number of farm worker towns in California, such as Orange Cove, Huron, McFarland, Guadalupe, or Coachella, towns that Juan Vicente Palerm has termed "rural ghettos" (University of California 198). Parlier can be contrasted with nearby communities such as Selma and Reedley, which are more ethnically diverse, have higher levels of capital investment, greater business diversification, and are in general in economically better shape. In effect what is occurring is a polarization of settlement patterns in rural areas, where some towns are ethnically diverse and concentrate business activities, and other towns are abandoned to farmworkers and their children. These latter towns, lacking an adequate tax base, are dependent on public sector investments to create employment and mitigate poverty.

Latino political control of local government is thus in some respects a Pyrrhic victory in small agricultural towns. Though political control results in civic priorities that respond better to the needs of the resident population, the fundamental economic and social inequities of California agriculture remain unchanged. Without access to adequate sources of capital for business diversification, immigrant entrepreneurs are unable to establish and maintain the types of enclave businesses that could create either stable employment or upward career mobility for the local population. The exceptions to this are the publicly funded social services (e.g. education, health). In the absence of private investment in non-farm businesses, and in an era of decreasing investments in public sector services and infrastructure, Parlier and towns like it will continue to experience under-employment, poverty, and high rates of out-migration of its youth.

II. Parlier History

Larry Trujillo's 1978 dissertation on Parlier provides an extensive history of the town. Here we briefly summarize some of his main points.

Early in the century, Parlier was a hub for a group of small towns south of Fresno, including Del Rey, Reedley, Selma, Sanger, Fowler, and Kingsburg; Parlier had a bank, packing houses, wineries (Trujillo 1978:45). The area became an important center of raisin grape production, and Parlier was called the "buckle of the raisin belt" in 1914 (Ibid.:48). The California Associated Raisin Company was formed in 1912, which became Sun Maid in 1923; Parlier growers were important participants in this development and a raisin plant was located in the town (Ibid.:51). The Great Depression hit Parlier hard: packing houses closed, the raisin processing plant relocated, businesses and ranches were foreclosed. The town never again reached the economic strength it had before the Depression (Ibid.:99)

The region was characterized by a small-farm settlement pattern, as was the whole east side of the San Joaquin valley, based on homesteading and land sales by the railroads. Apart from German

and Scandinavian immigrants, the area was also settled by the Armenians and the Japanese. The development of labor intensive irrigated agriculture led from the start to the use of ethnic immigrants as a seasonal labor force.

As with other areas of California, the Chinese, who had been brought to the United States to build railroads, were employed first; they built the local canal system (Ibid.:64). The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 halted this immigration and vigilante groups drove the Chinese out of rural California (Ibid.:65). They were succeeded by the Japanese. By 1912, there was a settled Japanese community in Parlier, consisting of farm workers, growers and shopkeepers (Ibid.:69). They were set back by the exclusionary Immigration Act of 1924, and more significantly by internment during World War II. Nevertheless, today many of the principal grower-shippers of fruit in the area are Japanese. The Armenians came during the 1894-1921 period, but especially in 1915-16. By 1920 there were 600 in Parlier. Many were skilled vineyardists who helped to develop the raisin industry (Ibid.:77), and they are still important farm owners in the Parlier area.

Labor shortages in the raisin harvest led to a strong demand for Mexican workers during World War I (Ibid.:91). The first Mexican-origin families settled in Parlier about 1920. Most of them were from Texas, specifically the Rio Grande valley. In fact, the western area of Parlier, long known as *La Colonia*, is sometimes referred to as "little Texas" (Ibid.:93). However, most of these Tejanos were originally from northern Mexico, a pattern that persists today in the state farm labor camp in the same area of town. Parlier became spatially ethnically segregated, with the Armenians in the southwest area of town, the Asians in the west, and further west in its own separate enclave was "Mexican town" or *La Colonia* (Ibid.:41).

Parlier was incorporated in 1921, when 95 percent of the population was Anglo. Every elected official was Anglo until 1968, when a Japanese American was elected to the city council. By 1971, on the eve of the Chicano "revolt," 80 percent of the population was Latino. That Parlier became incorporated at all is due to its long history. Had Parlier not been Anglo-dominated, it would probably never have come to have a local government. In rural unincorporated areas of California where Latinos are now settling, Anglo-dominated entities at the county level routinely oppose incorporation.

Development of a permanent year-round Chicano population allowed some children to finish high school and go on to college. A few of these students became leaders in the community in the early 1970s, especially Andrew Benites (who became mayor in 1972) and Arcadio Viveros (mayor from 1982 to 1994) (Ibid.:154). In 1972, the Chicanos elected their own to office, recalled the rest of the Anglos, and took over Parlier, most of this precipitated by arguments over the high school, bilingual education, police violence against Chicanos, and the failure of the city council to appoint a Chicano chief of police. This political activism was of course also caught up in the Chicano student movements and the UFW struggles of the time (Ibid.:209).

Most of the remaining non-Latino population subsequently left Parlier, and the 1990 Census recorded the population as 98 percent "Hispanic." Since the Census missed most of the farmworkers, all of whom are Latino, the actual Latino share is probably 99.9 percent.

The take-over of the town by the Chicanos led to increased government transfers from outside. A community center was built, as was a clinic, a library, and an array of subsidized housing. West Parlier was incorporated into the town, roads paved, and other services upgraded. The United Farm Workers' real estate arm also built a tract of single family homes.

And yet these improvements in public sector services did not lead to economic growth. Parlier only has a few more businesses than it did 20 years ago. The only factory in town in 1974, Calspun Mills, which produced yarn and employed 150 persons (Trujillo 1978:143), has closed. In fact, one facet of the Chicano takeover was a decline in one of the most booming sectors of Parlier's service economy-- bars and bar-girls--an important element in Parlier's role as a super-labor camp for migrant farmworkers. At the urging of a newly reform-minded local government (responding to the concerns of settled families, as opposed to young male farmworkers), several of the bars along Parlier's main street were closed by the state Alcoholic Beverage Control Board in the 1980's. Technically, they were closed because in the course of cheating their farmworker patrons by serving watered-down beer at high prices, they were also cheating the state tax authorities. In political terms, closing the main street bars was a re-statement of Parlier's identity. Viveros, who led this effort, observed, "Families didn't like the late-night noise."⁴ But he had also discovered that a large share of police time was spent patrolling the bars, and their closure allowed him to close down the town's police force and balance the city's budget.

If quieter and more middle-class than in the past, Parlier nevertheless continues to be a dormitory for farm workers. For the most part they are too poor to own property, although some year-round workers own their own homes. But it is much more likely that the front houses are occupied by school teachers, clinic workers, small business owners, city employees, or packing house workers. This group of residents in effect lives off the existence of the farm worker population, which rises and falls with the seasons, and whom they increasingly house in shacks and garages in their back yards. They sell them food, rent them space, deliver health care and education, transport them to work, and pack the fruit they pick. These residents are the children or grandchildren of farm workers. Perhaps they once did some farm work themselves. But they are not now mostly farm workers. The "real" farm workers are virtually all Mexican-born, many are shuttle migrants, and they have no more say in the town now than they did before the Chicanos took over.

Parlier lives in a strange world somewhat apart from the economic base that sustains it. Few of the local ranchers or packing house owners live in the town, and few of them participate in its management. It is a town of farm worker services run by the service-providing staff, a place with little control over its economic destiny. However, it has not been entirely abandoned by the middle class, who may even prosper through astute property management, and in this sense it is not really a ghetto.

Trujillo concluded that the Parlier revolt was led by an emerging Chicano petit bourgeoisie for

⁴Interview with Arcadio Viveros, May 19, 1995.

their own interests, and that it led to predictable outcomes that did not necessarily serve the interests of farm workers (Ibid.:251).⁵ The rest of this paper seeks to examine this hypothesis in light of the subsequent 20 years.

III. Farm Structure and Labor Demand

Overview

Life in Parlier, as in most factory towns, revolves around the industry which dominates the local economy. What is extraordinary is that the peculiar labor demands of California's "factories in the fields" fuel large-scale transnational migration flows which, in turn, shape virtually all patterns of social life. Farmwork is not a job one goes home from; it is rather a way of life where seasonality of labor demand molds courtship, marriage, child-rearing practices, celebration of holidays, consumer spending, all of which draw a large measure of their texture and style from the society's accommodation of underlying patterns of seasonal labor demand. The patterns and rhythms of social life in Parlier are not arbitrarily determined cultural constructs, but are complex and elegant adaptations to the underlying parameters of economic transactions in a sector of agricultural production which has as its very essence the utilization/exploitation of a low-cost labor force of Mexican migrants.

Essential structural features of this economic syntax include: casual employment in short-term tasks (e.g. thinning, harvesting); weak links between workers and their employers; piece rate-based employment; high worker turnover; and the prevalence of intermediaries. Because the whole machine of the agricultural workplace is driven by crop maturation, a pervasive feature is the preoccupation of both workers and their employers with ways to make the constant churning of the labor market yield them a small measure of economic advantage. In the following section we discuss how the specific exigencies of local agriculture form the macro-context for the process by which Mexican immigrants are drawn to rural California and become integrated into its economic and social life.

Geography

There is an historical division between the eastern side of the San Joaquin valley and the western side. The eastern side, lying below the foothills of the Sierra Nevada, is traversed by various rivers that flow northwest towards the San Francisco Bay. In part because of the availability of this water, the railroad lines were built along the eastern side and it was settled with family farms

⁵Trujillo's review of the literature on the earlier Crystal City, Texas, Chicano takeover arrived at a similar conclusion:

In Crystal City, the "militant accommodationist" thrust took concrete form in the post revolt emphasis on getting federal monies (what Gutierrez calls "getting the bread from the feds game") and incremental bureaucratic change...the pre-revolt plan to control the means of production essentially never materialized. The gain in grassroots political control without the accompanying control of the economic base left the material life of the Chicano majority working class population essentially unaltered, although the federal monies did increase social services to the workers (Trujillo 1978:133-134).

and many small towns. The western side of the valley remained little more than desert until new irrigation works were developed after World War II. Now the western side is characterized by large farms growing field crops, tomatoes, melons, and vegetables, with a few impoverished towns sprinkled here and there. The eastern side around Fresno is still characterized by a diverse farm structure and grows mostly fruits, such as grapes, peaches, nectarines, plums, and citrus.

Parlier is one of many small towns around Fresno that sit in this eastern belt, in the middle of a highly developed agriculture of tree fruit and vines, probably the largest contiguous area of intensive fruit horticulture in the world. One can drive for many miles in any direction from Parlier and see only orchards and vineyards. To the east of Parlier, as the foothills start to rise toward the Sierra, there is a bench of citrus, mostly oranges. But Parlier itself sits in the middle of stone fruit orchards and grape vineyards. Because these crops are not for the most part mechanized, they present significant peaked labor demand at certain times of the year, a situation that has not changed much in the past century.

Thus this area has been characterized by an extreme need for seasonal agricultural labor, but also characterized by a large number of small producers who were not organized to participate in government guestworker programs such as the Bracero Program or H-2. Fresno area growers have therefore always pushed for laissez faire immigration policies that would deliver to them new waves of immigrant workers without recourse to better jobs. The raisin industry is the paradigmatic example of this situation.

While there are many thousands of grape and fruit growers, most production is accounted for by a relatively small number. The exception to this is raisins, where some 5,000 growers of all sizes survive, many through off-farm work activity. The process of concentration has speeded up in recent years, in part because of financial stress but also due to the aging of the farm family population, many of them who live on relatively small acreages and sell out when they retire, since the farms are not viable enterprises for their children. Driving around Parlier one finds for-sale signs on dozens of properties. Some of these are bought by new part-time farmers escaping to the country, but most are purchased by the larger diversified operations. Packing house owners in Parlier told us they need additional acreage in order to expand the diversity of the fruit mix that they provide. One owner said that he used to have 50 small growers who sold him their fruit, but he has bought out all but a few over the years.

Parlier Cropping Pattern

Agriculture around the town of Parlier is dominated by perennial orchard and vineyard crops. Table 1, compiled by the California Institute for Rural Studies, shows reported acreages in 1991 of all crops on farms that have at least one field in the Parlier zip code area. Of 48,398 acres of crops reported, 21,535 acres (44 percent) were grapes, 21,787 acres (45 percent) were the main fresh stone fruits -- peaches, plums, and nectarines -- and 2,539 acres (5 percent) were other fruit and nut orchards. Thus orchards and vineyards accounted for 94 percent of the agricultural land in use.⁶ For all intents and purposes, then, it is sufficient to concentrate on grapes and stone fruit

⁶The proportion of land in perennial crops may be even higher, since some of the field crops and the processing

in analyzing labor demand in the area.

Stone fruit: Peaches, Plums and Nectarines

While the principal crop of the area historically has been grapes, there have been increasing plantings of stone fruit in recent years. The improved ability of California to export such fruit has increased its profitability, and there is a slow evolution in the Parlier area toward more fruit orchards.

In 1991 in Madera, Fresno, and Tulare counties, the broad region that surrounds Parlier, there were a total of 76,320 bearing acres of freestone peaches, plums and nectarines. The bearing acreage of freestone peaches in the three counties rose 71 percent from 1976 to 1991, that of plums rose 77 percent, and that of nectarines rose 94 percent. The Parlier zip code alone had over a quarter of this acreage.

The labor process in each of these crops is similar. The trees are pruned in December and January, thinned during a three-week period in April and May, and harvested from

tomatoes are likely out west of Fresno, on other parts of farms that have some acreage in the Parlier area. We know this to be the case for two large farming operations.

Table 1 here

May to September, depending on the variety. Each of these tasks is done largely by seasonal workers and the crops require 330-350 hours per acre for these purposes (Mamer and Wilkie 1990).⁷ Other cultural practices are performed by year-round employees, using about 50 hours per acre (Ibid.).

Labor Demand Profile

If year-round employees work 50-hour weeks on average for 48 weeks a year, then about 450 such workers were needed for the Parlier area stone fruit in 1991. In contrast, the thinning is usually accomplished in a three-week period in the spring. If a thinner works 50 hours a week for three weeks, then the total labor requirement of Parlier-area stone fruit for thinning (1,763,749 hours) was 11,758 workers.

If we look at the consequences of the expansion of stone fruit acreage, the labor demand dilemma becomes clearer. The expansion in acreage 1976-1991 in the three county area added over 13 million person-hours, as shown in the Appendix in Table A-2. If year-round workers work 50 hours/week for 48 weeks, then the expansion of these three crops in the three counties required only an additional 705 permanent workers. At the other extreme, assuming all the thinning must be done in three weeks in the spring, at 50 hours/week an additional 18,986 workers were needed to thin in 1991 as opposed to 1976. If we assume the harvesting could be done over four months, then only 5,565 full-time workers (50 hours/week x 17 weeks) would be needed to meet additional harvesting needs, and, similarly 9,744 full-time workers for a two-month pruning season.

Thus, under the scenario that assumes the most efficient use of labor, the expansion added year-round work for 700 workers, 7 months of work for 5,500 workers, 3 months for an additional 3,500, and only 3 weeks for another 9,000. In fact, because of peak harvest periods, the seasonality of labor demand is probably greater than this. Since Parlier represents about one-quarter of the acreage (28.5 percent in 1991), we can assume that the additional labor in Parlier was approximately one-quarter of each of these estimates.⁸

Local Labor Depolyment Strategies

The labor management practices of the stone fruit growers in the Parlier area reflect this seasonality. There are approximately 100 shippers of stone fruit in the region, with most of the packing houses scattered throughout the small towns, and others located on farms. Parlier itself has four principal packing houses.

⁷ See Table A-1 in the Appendix.

⁸ Since we do not have the Parlier data from earlier years, we are assuming that the expansion occurred evenly across regions. It is also not clear what crops were displaced by the expansion of stone fruit in Parlier, though it is likely that some grapes were removed, which would have had the effect of shifting labor demand from the fall back to the spring and summer.

A typical strategy is to employ a core labor force of local, settled workers, supplemented by a 6-month seasonal labor force, which in turn is supplemented with peak-season workers in thinning and harvesting. For example, one firm employed in the field 20 locals year-round, another 30 locals for most of the year, including pruning in the winter, and about 100 back-and-forth migrants from Mexico for 6 months, starting with the thinning in April. This own-hire labor force was then supplemented by farm labor contractors at the peaks of thinning and harvesting, the contractors providing another 100 or more workers. Workers hired by the firm are thus employed continuously for at least 6 months, and as the firm expands it expands both this own-hire labor force and its demand for contract labor.

An integrated firm such as this also expands its seasonal packing house employment as acreage grows. Packing house employment was about 70 workers at the time of our interview (1990). Fruit packing jobs are seen as desirable employment by the settled population of Parlier, so most of these jobs are taken by local women or by the wives of back-and-forth migrants who return year after year.

Another ranch operated with 30 year-round workers, hired 30-40 more for the 6-month season, and then supplemented this work force with a contractor who provided 100 or more workers at the peaks. The proportions of contract vs. own-hire labor vary according to the particular mix of varieties and crops, and to the extent the firm desires to hire its own workers or to minimize its responsibility to provide them work. Some of the larger firms in the region have taken to using contractors for almost everything that has a seasonal nature to it, including packing house crews.

The growth in the size of many of these grower-shippers implies that they are better able to spread work out through the year, since they plant new varieties to fill in time gaps and provide a continuous flow of fruit through the packing house. Thus there is probably a steady tendency to decrease the seasonality of employment as the mix of fruit grows and the number of firms declines. Nevertheless, certain tasks such as thinning or, as we will see below, the raisin grape harvest, which must be done everywhere at the same time, create large seasonal spikes of labor demand that have been exacerbated by increased acreage.

It is these peaks which represent the problematic need for an excess supply of labor, and which the firms have resolved by turning to farm labor contractors. The contractors are then faced with the task of stringing together enough jobs to be able to hold a labor force from the spring thinning through the grape harvest in September. Since this is the daunting challenge that firms are unwilling to confront themselves, the contractors must usually endure high rates of turnover as workers leave to find enough work.

Grapes: Table, Wine, and Raisin

A commonplace axiom of agricultural policy debates is that standard processes of supply and demand operate so that labor increases result in decreases in wage rates. While broadly true, there are some significant respects in which the agricultural labor market diverges from what

would be expected from this ideal supply-demand model. For example, where labor is paid on a piece rate basis, upward or downward forces on rates are weaker than if the wage were stated as an hourly rate.

The case of the Central California grape harvest provides insight into the complexity of the processes by which agricultural wage rates are determined and the relationship between labor demand and migration. What we learn from examining the structure of the grape harvest in detail is how fine-textured the internal structuring of labor demand is and how the structure of labor demand affects the composition of the farm labor force. Far from being just "unskilled labor," there is in fact extensive internal segmentation within this sphere of economic transactions. Accurate description of the dynamics of Mexico-US migration and the closely-related processes by which Mexican immigrants are integrated into California society require careful consideration of these interactions.

The Fresno area has been the world's principal raisin grape producer since before the turn of the century. This continues to be the case, but the grape grown for this purpose, the Thompson seedless, can also be used to mix in wine or can be shipped fresh as table grapes. The cultural practices employed differ slightly according to the end use, but the possibility of alternative markets to siphon off overproduction has been important in sustaining the growth of the industry.

The total bearing grape acreage in Fresno, Madera, and Tulare counties increased by 63,677 acres in the three counties 1976-85, or 21 percent, but 26,335 acres were removed 1986-91, leaving the 1991 acreage only 12 percent above the 1976 figure. Breaking that down, over the whole period 1976-91 table grape acreage increased 6 percent, wine grape acreage 10 percent, and raisin grape acreage 14 percent. It is worth noting that raisin grape acreage increased the most.

There was a generalized overplanting of grapes in California in the 1970s, fueled in part by tax shelter arrangements, which we do not need to analyze here. It suffices to note that several markets that sustained this overplanting declined, in particular the bulk wine and wine cooler markets, which in turn lessened the ability of raisin growers to divert their grapes into wine, as a 1983 law decreased the percentage of varietal wine that could be accounted for by such blending grapes as Thompsons. As Nuckton, Heppel, and others have noted, this led to a crisis in 1983, when the largest raisin crop ever was delivered to packers at the same time as the Thompson seedless share of the wine crush fell from 20-25 percent to 12 percent. As a result, raisin growers' returns fell from an average of \$1204/ton 1979-82 to \$590/ton in 1983. This in turn led to a fall in raisin vineyard values from \$10,840 per acre in 1982 to \$6,850 in 1984 (Nuckton) and to \$4,000 in 1986 (Heppel). A number of growers who had expanded by buying acreage during the boom faced foreclosure.

From the point of view of the labor market, this scenario had an important result. On the one hand, there was a significant expansion of grape acreage, which required more workers. In particular, the expansion of raisin grapes, and their increasing use as raisins and not as wine, meant that the labor demand spike in the raisin harvest in late August and early September was

exacerbated. On the other hand, the extreme financial pressure on growers in the mid-1980s led to downward pressure on wages. Thus the Fresno area needed more workers willing to work at lower wages during this brief season.

Grape Labor Demand

Recent Cooperative Extension Farm Advisor estimates of labor usage for grapes in the Fresno area are shown in Appendix Tables A-3 to A-5 (Mamer and Wilkie). The significance of the numbers lies in the seasonality of the work. While table grapes have a long harvest season and other work spread out through the year, both raisin grapes and wine grapes require only a few year-round workers except for pruning and harvesting.⁹ Since pruning can be done over a several-month period in the winter, it is really only the harvest that is an issue.

The wine grape harvest is accomplished by hand-cutting grapes into picking pans, which are in turn dumped into a gondola pulled through the field. Crews of 3-6 people are used for a 1-ton gondola, or larger crews with 5-6 ton gondolas. The crews are paid piece rate jointly by the gondola. This is considered a good job by the workers.

The raisin grape harvest begins late in August, with most of the fruit picked during the first two weeks of September. Bunches of grapes are cut into pans, which are in turn dumped onto paper "trays" and spread over the paper to dry. Workers are usually given individual rows to harvest and are paid according to the number of trays. This is considered a bad job by the workers because it requires a great deal of bending to spread out the grapes and because it is relatively dirty. Piece rates are such that it requires extremely hard work to make significant amounts of money, but there has traditionally been a large amount of work available over a short period of time. Workers have often dealt with this by bringing out their families to help them pick. This has further depressed wages--as large families can meet their earnings targets even at the currently depressed piece rates.

In 1989 there were 234,427 bearing acres of raisin grapes and 81,537 bearing acres of wine grapes in the three counties. Farm advisors estimate that it takes 40 hours per acre on average to harvest raisin grapes and 32 hours per acre to harvest wine grapes by hand.¹⁰ Thus the raisin grape harvest in 1989 required 9,377,080 person-hours of seasonal labor and the wine grape harvest 1,826,429 person-hours of seasonal labor in this region.

If we assume that people work 60 hours/week for four weeks on the raisins (although some work 70 or more, and the time period of the raisin harvest varies), then the industry needs 39,071 workers just to get the fruit on the ground. If we assume that half the raisins harvested in that

⁹There is a growing demand for workers to remove leaves to allow more sun to reach wine grapes. This is a relatively labor-intensive practice that has created demand in May at a fairly slow time of the year.

¹⁰Approximately 30 percent of the wine grapes are harvested mechanically, which requires about 5 hours per acre of labor provided by permanent employees.

month also must be turned and rolled within the same time period, at 17 hours an acre, an additional 1,992,630 person hours are required, or the equivalent of 8,303 additional workers. This is a total of 47,374 workers. The industry estimates that 55,000 workers are needed, which is the equivalent of saying that all the raisin grapes must be picked, turned, rolled, and boxed within one month with people working 60 hours per week.

The increase in raisin acreage of 40,860 between 1976 and 1985 translated into an increased demand for 9,700 additional workers under the same assumptions. Thus the industry faced a 25 percent increase in labor need at the harvest, at the same time as the increased acreage was leading to financial disaster by depressing prices and eroding margins. This in turn caused piece rates to be cut by \$.04/tray between 1983 and 1984. The 1988 EDD Fresno raisin wage survey even found some workers earning 15 percent below the minimum wage, as did our 1990 survey of Mixtecs (Zabin, et al. 1993). Thus piece rates in raisins were about \$.15-\$.16 per tray, as they were 10 years earlier. This meant a significant loss in hourly income to farm workers, a decline of 40 percent in real terms from 1981 to 1988 alone (CIRS 1990).

Overall Labor Market Implications

This helps us to understand the efforts of Fresno-area growers actively to implement the SAW provisions of IRCA, which in turn contributed to a flooding of the agricultural labor market in California. The failure collectively to manage the peak harvest labor demand in the Fresno area, and the continued planting of crops that exacerbate the situation, virtually guarantees a crisis at some point in the future. That such a crisis would precipitate efforts to bring yet more workers to the area should be seen as the inevitable consequence of this situation.

To manage the increasing numbers of farmworkers in a deteriorating labor market, the growers turned to farm labor contractors. This shift to contractors has a whole series of implications for the working and living conditions of the farmworkers, since these arrangements are now between settled Latinos (usually from earlier cohorts of migrant networks) and more recent Mexican migrants. Though large grower-shippers hire a core labor force, most use farm labor contractors for seasonal workers and some use contractors for virtually everything. Crops such as raisin grapes, that once relied on workers simply to show up looking for work, have shifted rapidly to contractors in recent years (Alvarado, et al. 1992). In the FLSS, 78 percent of farm workers interviewed in Parlier reported working at least once for a farm labor contractor in 1988 or 1989 (Kissam, García and Runsten 1991:231). This shift to contractors means that workers must find employment via the contractor, not the grower, which changes the ethnicity of the employer (most contractors are Latino and most growers are not) and the locus of hiring from the farm to the local town (where the contractor and his mayordomos are based).

One of the important consequences, for example, in the shift of the locus of hiring is to link more tightly transportation and access to employment. In Parlier, for example, one prevalent mode of recruiting casual labor is drive-by hiring of recently-arrived migrants, where labor contractors drive by houses which are known to house groups of recently-arrived underemployed Mexican migrants. Another is the reliance on *raiteros* who charge a fee for a ride to work, which reflects

not only compensation for transportation, but also what is, essentially, an informal job-finding fee.

In sum, the concrete structuring of the processes through which social and economic transactions in towns such as Parlier take place is linked to macro-level developments in the agricultural industry. Because these links are indirect, and because the relationships are not immediately clear to outside observers, it is generally difficult for federal or state public policy initiatives (such as wage and hour regulations, employee benefit provisions, etc.) to affect the actual day-to-day life of communities such as Parlier.

Moreover, because the syntax of these transactions between workers and labor contractors rests on a foundation of unwritten but real rules that govern reciprocal transactions in Mexico, they are difficult for outsiders to replicate, meaning that labor contractors operating within this semi-private social universe are partially protected from potential competitors. While geographically located within the United States, Parlier as a locus for economic and social transactions lies within a largely separate domain. The economic and social dimensions of transactions taking place within this non-standard virtual geography--i.e. the transnational social universe where agricultural labor market transactions take place and the global commodity market within which California agribusiness operates--are crucial to understanding the dynamics of both immigrant-reliant industries such as agriculture and relations between immigrants and U.S.-born individuals and groups.

Implications for Parlier's Economic and Social Life

Parlier is situated in the midst of a particular sort of agriculture, namely stone fruit orchards and grape vineyards, that acts as a structural determinant of the composition and functioning of the town. Unlike Salinas or other areas with almost year-round work availability, the Parlier area offers a limited number of permanent jobs in agriculture for settled workers. These fruit and vine crops also require a large number of seasonal workers, divided into two groups: 6-month workers, who thin and harvest stone fruit; and short-term workers, who thin fruit, harvest raisins, and generally have to move on to other areas to string together enough employment. The packing houses employ the wives of the permanent farmworkers as well as some 6-month migrants on a seasonal basis.

One consequence of this labor demand structure is that there is a constant ebb and flow of residents in the town. There is a sizeable group of 6-month workers, some of whom stick around to collect UI and do some pruning in the off-season, but many of whom return to Mexico or South Texas where the cost of living is lower. There is also a large number of workers who come to the town for relatively short periods of a month or two, and for whom the housing market must be very flexible. This creates a pronounced seasonality to the demand for goods and services in the town as well.

The dependence of raisin grapes and tree fruit on large numbers of very seasonal workers leads to a constant flooding of the local labor market and consequently lower wages. This occurs because the region comes to be seen as an entry point for new immigrants: almost everyone can find work at the peak raisin harvest in September. Consequently, the Fresno area has become a key node in new northward migrations, and this is demonstrated most clearly by the Oaxacans. The Oaxacan farmworkers reported a lot of work in grapes and thinning tree fruit (Zabin, et al. 1993), and Madera and Fresno counties are the most important nodes of migration for the Mixtec (Runsten and Kearney 1994).

Earlier cohorts of immigrant networks resent the new arrivals and try to insulate themselves from them. This occurs in two ways: on the one hand the earlier groups attempt to segment the labor market and to control the "better" jobs, in this case such as year-round jobs on farms,¹¹ irrigators, tractor drivers, packing houses, mayordomos, or even steady 6-month harvesting jobs; on the other hand the earlier network cohorts turn to exploiting new arrivals through housing rentals, farm labor contracting, charging for rides (raiteros), and other services. In Parlier, such network divisions are clearly demarcated, with most of the better jobs held by earlier cohorts of networks from West-Central Mexico (Guanajuato, Michoacán, etc.) or from South Texas/Northeast Mexico, and the short-term population increasingly composed of recent immigrants from southern Mexico, Mexico City, and other non-traditional sending areas.

Apart from the seasonality of labor demand, the Fresno agricultural labor market has another important consequence for a town such as Parlier. The declining real wages paid the workers and the increased costs of the labor market borne by the workers implies a high rate of poverty and a lack of effective demand for goods. The effective demand problem is compounded by remittances to Mexico. There is a basic contradiction in the idea of Parlier as a prosperous farmworker town. Only a limited number of farmworkers can be prosperous under the current labor management structure of Fresno agriculture, the rest will be poor. The economic strategy of the poor must be shuttle migration, controlling the cost of living by returning to Mexico regularly, because the career pyramid is narrow rapidly, affording upward mobility for only a small portion of the immigrant labor force. This means there is no future in farm work for most of the children of farmworkers, and that the town will continue to have a transient group of seasonal farmworkers.

IV. Parlier is Not an Isolated Rural Community

Parlier is not an isolated rural community but rather a part of ex-urban California (Friedland), strongly influenced by other urbanized areas, such as Fresno, Los Angeles, and the San Francisco Bay Area. Residents shop and work in Sanger, Reedley, or Fresno. Colleges are in Reedley, Fresno, and the more distant cities. The nearest hospitals are in Sanger and Reedley.

Parlier is also a transnational community in the sense of being a node in a variety of migrant

¹¹Rafael Alarcón has described the effort of one such Michoacán network in Madera to insulate themselves from the labor market impact of the Mixtecs (Alarcón 1995).

networks. For over 50 years, the Fresno area has been considered a strategic hub in the migrant stream (Trujillo 1978:86). Parlier was a key destination during the Bracero Program because of its location amidst the grapes and stone fruit. This led to it becoming an arrival point for a series of Mexican village networks.

It is incorrect to refer to Parlier, or any other town with an important immigrant presence, as simply an "immigrant-receiving area." We have referred to Parlier and similar towns with a long history of immigration as nodes in the migration streams of transnational migration networks (Griffith and Kissam 1995). This serves as a reminder that Mexico to United States migration patterns are a complex interweaving of village- and kin-based networks that tie many such nodes together in a type of virtual geography. Parlier is a transnational community, but its transnationalism does not consist simply in being a "sister city" to some sending villages in Mexico. Such a dyadic characterization of migration is an artifact of research designs that chose one or another village migrant circuit as a focus. Multiple extended family/village migration networks co-exist and interact in Parlier, and this hierarchical interaction of networks is what feeds Parlier's social structure. Furthermore, each migrant network encompasses a number of nodes in the United States, and this brings towns such as Parlier into important relationships with other U.S. immigrant destinations.

The Social Structure of Parlier: Networks

In our 1989-1990 survey of Parlier we found that multiple networks and migrant circuits are superimposed in the town. Parlier, at the time of our survey, had immigrants from 17 Mexican states of origin: Baja California Norte, Colima, Coahuila, Chihuahua, D.F, Estado de México, Guanajuato, Guerrero, Hidalgo, Jalisco, Michoacán, Nayarit, Nuevo León, Oaxaca, Sinaloa, Sonora, Tamaulipas, and Zacatecas. At the highest level of generalization, three distinct network origins can be observed: 1) from core-sending areas of west-central Mexico, 2) from Mexico's southern Pacific coast, and 3) from northeastern Mexico and the lower Rio Grande Valley.

Present-day life in Parlier cannot be understood without considering how the community's history has shaped its current functioning. Although multiple transnational migrant networks maintain ongoing flows of migrants to Parlier, these networks are not equal in the town in terms of population, social prominence, economic and life strategies, or economic well-being. Pre-eminent among Parlier networks are several well-established, traditional networks with strong linkages to migrant-sending villages in Mexico (and Texas). As long ago as the 1920s, migrants were coming directly to Parlier from central Michoacán, Guanajuato, and Jalisco --all part of the traditional migrant-sending areas of Mexico. During the same period, many migrants were also coming to Parlier from the lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas. However, what we know of South Texas immigration patterns suggests that these "Texas" migrants were probably themselves recent immigrants from north-central Mexico (San Luis Potosi, Hidalgo) and from northeastern Mexico (Tamaulipas and Nuevo Leon).

Table 2 below provides an overview of the relative importance of each of the leading migration networks in the composition of Parlier. It is useful to observe that the distribution of households

and population are somewhat different, as some of the networks tend to have larger households than others.¹²

This network-oriented perspective on Parlier is useful in showing Parlier to be a transnational community with very strong linkages to distinct areas of Mexico. While other researchers have carefully detailed how pairs of Mexico-US communities have a transnational dimension (e.g. Animeños in Las Animas, Zacatecas and in South San Francisco [Mines 197 ; Goldring 1990]) what we focus on here are the implications of communities such as Parlier where multiple transnational migration networks co-exist. Where the ties within the domain of a transnational network tend to unify apparently disparate groups, the ties among co-existing transnational networks tend to segment social life and separate apparently similar groups --i.e. recently-arrived Mexican migrants.

The well-established traditional networks with ties to Mexico's core sending areas, to the lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas, and to Mexico's northern tier make up at least two-thirds of the community and perhaps as many as four-fifths of the households in Parlier, since the households that we designated as being primarily "California" or local have ties of varying strength to one or another of the traditional immigrant networks of Parlier. For example, two of the older U.S.-born Mexican-Americans in our sample, a 60-year old Mexican-American born in Parlier in 1930 and a 75-year-old widow born in Colorado, are almost certainly tied to the core networks. Because of intermarriage, it is likely that the influence of these traditional networks (i.e. those from west-central Mexico, northern Mexico, and Texas) has diffused throughout Parlier's social and economic sphere, providing the basis for the emergence of an "old timer" elite which, not surprisingly, is well-represented in community leadership.

By the same token, Parlier has a particular form of underclass, made up of transnational migrants who have affiliations only to a newer sending network or to no network at all. In analyzing the social ecology of Parlier, we have found at least three extended-family and village networks which we refer to as "new" sending networks. These networks consist of clusters of shuttle migrants from Guerrero, Oaxaca, and Colima, and account for about 15 percent of the households in Parlier, but due to crowding account for almost a quarter of the town's population during the season. While we know that the origins of some of these new networks go back at least to the Bracero era, they appear to be at some disadvantage in the ongoing competition for stable employment. Not only are they out-numbered by the traditional established networks, they have less of a history in the area and, consequently, fewer opportunities to have moved upward in the supervisory structure of agriculture to control blocks of employment. Thus, newly-arrived migrants from these new sending areas are much more likely to live in crowded lone-male households, to be reliant on immigrant brokers for a wide spectrum of social transactions, and to

¹²By household, we actually mean "group of persons sharing a single dwelling," an analytic concept corresponding to the census definition of household. We recognize, and discuss below, the extent to which each of these households is internally structured as well as the varying relationships among the social, economic, and sub-family groups living in each household.

migrate within the United States in search of employment.

Another 2 percent or so of Parlier residents have few ties. These are persons whom we categorize in Table 2 as being from central Mexican and urban areas. These emigrants from urban Mexico, states with little history of sending migrants to Parlier, together with a few local Californians with no ties to the town, are at a distinct social disadvantage. Most have arrived with work companions from another farmwork job, or via ordinary opportunistic migration. Our sample includes, for example, one family from New Mexico, and several immigrants from D.F. and Zacatecas with no village ties (or at least weaker ones.) It is this group which is, in fact, most vulnerable, having no access to established network benefits and being "loners" without even support from traveling companions from one's own village. Finally, there is a small proportion of Parlier,

Table 2
Network Affiliations of Parlier Households and Residents
in the FLSS sample¹³

Networks	Number and Percent of Households Affiliated with Networks	Number and % of Parlierians Affiliated with Networks
West-Central - Mexico (Michoacan, Guanajuato, Jalisco, Zacatecas)	18 (25%)	96 (27%)
South Texas - US-born	17 (23%)	70 (20%)
Northern Tier - Mexico (Tamaulipas, Nuevo Leon, Coahuila, Chihuahua, Sonora, Baja California)	15 (20%)	72 (20%)
Southern Mexico (Oaxaca, Guerrero)	10 (14%)	74 (21%)
California -- US-Born	8 (11%)	20 (6%)
Pacific Coast - Mexico (Colima, Nayarit, Sinaloa)	3 (4%)	15 (4%)
Central Mexico and Urban areas (D.F., Edo. de Mexico, Hidalgo)	2 (3%)	7 (2%)

Source: FLSS HH dataset -- 73 households, 354 persons.

categorized in Table 2 as local Californians, who are ordinary mobile Mexican-Americans --

¹³Households in the FLSS sample were reviewed and assigned multiple network affiliations. Here we scored each household as having a "primary" affiliation based on what we knew about the head of household in order to estimate the overall distribution of affiliations. In actuality, as we discuss in the following section, many, but not all, households have multiple network affiliations, giving each network a "fuzzy" boundary as it intersects with other networks.

technically-trained, managerial, or professional workers whose jobs brought them to Parlier.

The Fuzzy Boundaries of Networks and Social Dynamics in Parlier

While much analysis of immigrant life is presented in terms of network dynamics, there has been, to our knowledge, little attention to the formal dynamics of such networks, although obviously social networks, like neural networks, have specific processes by which "waves" of information are propagated and ways in which differently organized network nodes inter-connect to give rise to complex behavior within immigrant society as a whole.

Networks (be they biological or social) are not static arrays of components or cells, but rather dynamic interconnected arrays that give rise to higher-order phenomena, behaving in many regards like living organisms. In the Farm Labor Supply Study (FLSS) we pointed to the role of lone male households as an example of how the farm labor market relies on such "switchboards" for different family and village networks to share information about new destinations and farm labor demand areas. Although we were not able to quantify the ways in which different initial network arrays of contacts drove diffusion of migrants into pioneering new areas, it was clearly possible to give qualitative descriptions of these processes.

Although we are continuing to search for fruitful new ways in which it might be possible to use cross-sectional data such as that of the FLSS to better understand the dynamics of migration (i.e. processes and rates of change in networks, propagation of information), we do not yet have them. However, the first order of business in such an analysis is to look at the basic interconnections of such networks. In Table 3 below, we present such a tabulation of the within-household overlaps among different network domains.

This tabulation of single-network and multi-network households shows that there is a relatively high proportion of persons with multiple network connections within the household in which they live -- approximately one-third of the population. Thus, although a Parlier resident's social interactions are strongly affected by the "primary" network with which he/she is affiliated, it does not mean that these are his/her only affiliations. Table 3 also serves to quantify in a rough way the degree to which different networks are isolated within Parlier. For example, 84 percent of the Guerrerenses and Oaxaqueños in Parlier live in a household dominated by their own network. In contrast, households with U.S. affiliations -- the South Texas and California network households-- have more people with multi-network ties.

Table 3
Distribution of Parlier Residents
in Single-Network and Multi-Network Households

Network	# of Persons in Households with only 1 network	# of Persons in Households with 2 or more networks ¹⁴
West-Central Mexico	53	27
South Texas	24	35
Northern Mexico	61	20
Southern Mexico	63	11
California	20	16
Pacific Coast Mexico	9	6
Central Mexico and Urban areas	4	3
Totals	234	118

Source: FLSS HH dataset (Includes only interviewed households).

Network Affiliation and Living Arrangements

The tabulation presented above in Table 3 provides only a general outline of the way in which network connections serve as a mechanism for shaping social transactions in Parlier. In Table 4 below, we present another example of the ways in which network affiliation relates to social behavior -- namely configuration of housing arrangements. Housing arrangements are important in part because they play such an important role in personal relationships and economic transactions (such as obtaining work), but also because they have a tremendous impact on costs for housing -- a major component of overall living costs for low-income individuals and families.

¹⁴ Multi-network households are listed in the row for the network with which the head of household is affiliated or, in the case of lone-male households, by the network to which the majority belong.

Table 4
Network Affiliation
and Living Arrangements

Network	TYPE OF HOUSING ARRANGEMENT (Percent of Total Population of each Network Affiliation Living in Each Type of Household)					
	Couple with Children	Female Headed HH w/ Children	Couple w/ No Children	Extended Family -- Couple and Parents	Extended Family-- Couple and Same Generation	Lone Male Crowded HH
West-Central - Mexico (N=96)	51%	4%	2%	12%	27%	4%
South Texas (N=70)	79%	3%	6%	13%	---	---
Northern Tier - Mexico (N=72)	80%	10%	---	7%	4%	---
Southern Mexico (N=74)	5%	7%	---	7%	8%	73%
California (N=20)	50%	25%	20%	---	---	5%
Pacific Coast - Mexico (N=15)	40%	---	13%	---	---	47%
Central Mexico and Urban areas (N=7)	43%	57%	---	---	---	---

Source: FLSS HH dataset (Interviewed households only)

As can be seen from Table 4, each network has its own distinct "style" in terms of housing arrangements. In some regards, housing arrangements can be looked upon as a feature of social life closely correlated with network recency. The most recent networks, Oaxacans and Guerrerenses from Southern Mexico, are heavily concentrated in lone-male households, while the Pacific Coast networks of Colima and Nayarit have a mixture of families with children, shuttle migrants, or pioneering new migrants living in lone-male households. The high proportion of South Texas and Northern Mexico households consisting of couples with children is also distinctive, in part reflecting these networks' access to the Parlier state farm labor camp, which makes it possible for families to migrate together and live cheaply at their destination.

Table 4 provides insight into housing-related cash flows within Parlier. Parlier is not simply a town of farmworkers, but also a town that lives off farmworkers by providing housing, food, and a variety of other services for transnational migrants. Table 4 shows the degree to which established networks "make it on their own": with networks linked to Michoacan, Guanajuato, and Jalisco providing housing for new arrivals in their extended network for free (or at reasonable cost); with networks based in northern Mexico and Texas controlling access to family housing in the Parlier Labor Camp; and with local residents (most of them affiliated with one of the core networks) renting crowded "back-house" dwellings to lone males (and some couples) arriving from Oaxaca, Guerrero, Nayarit, and Colima. To a substantial degree, even these economic relationships--in which long-time local residents, among them labor contractors, mayordomos, and retired former farmworkers, generate income from their role as cultural and social intermediaries--are an artifact of migration history and public policy. The marketability of marginal rental housing stems, in part, from underlying economic factors, such as the high demand for short-term housing due to peak season influxes of migrants, the unavailability to migrants of land for building their own cheap housing (in stark contrast to immigration to South Texas in the 1940's-1960's), and the official "criminalizing" of labor migration from Mexico to California.

It can also be observed, even at this level of analysis, that the political stereotype of immigrant populations as generating tremendous social service costs is unwarranted when we take into account the characteristic life strategies and living arrangements of each group. The rural sending networks with a long history of migration to the United States, which generate the highest volume of migration, do not include substantial numbers of female-headed households. The households with affiliations to core sending areas of Mexico consist primarily of intact families, couples with children, some of whom are providing housing to members of their extended family network who are more recently arrived from Mexico. These households generate minimal public assistance costs because they internalize many of the costs of employment and economic insecurity. The households with affiliations to newer sending areas -- sending regions of Southern Mexico and the Pacific Coast -- are dominated by lone males. Young men generate virtually no public assistance costs. The cluster of female-headed households that might generate substantial public assistance costs are those of immigrants from relatively urbanized areas of Mexico -- the Distrito Federal, Hidalgo, Sonora -- areas which are not traditional sending areas and whose migrants cannot access family or village network resources to assist them.

Networks as a Determinant of Employment

In the immigrant labor market, networks represent a form of social capital. In communities such as Parlier, most people routinely make assessments of the utility of network connections (e.g. when Chicanas tell their daughters not to marry recent immigrants). The quality and number of one's network connections play a major role in determining the occupation one enters (as most recruitment of low-wage workers in immigrant-dominated industries is via employee referral), the stability of employment in a given occupation, and working conditions. In addition to affiliations with regional networks of *paisanos*, extended family network connections (including linkages via marriage) and fictive kinship relations (based on *compadrazgo*) make a crucial difference both in initial employment and in facilitating career advancement.

While length of time in the United States does play a part in explaining immigrants' patterns of employment, network connections (i.e. the network's length of time in the United States) can outweigh not only educational or personal qualifications for employment, but also experience in the U.S. labor market. In one of our Parlier interviews we discussed how a young unauthorized migrant with ties to one of Parlier's established networks was able to cross the border for the first time, move into a reasonably-priced apartment within a day of arriving, and be employed in a good job in a packing house within a week of first setting foot in Parlier -- because of linkages to a well-regarded extended family network of an established village network. In other interviews with a group of eight young men, most stereotypically regarded as unauthorized workers, we learned that none had been employed for more than five days of their first month in the California farm labor force -- because they were from a village network in Guerrero with only weak ties to Parlier.

Table 5 below provides a comparison of the employment profile of the labor force affiliated with the different networks found in Parlier. The employment profile of each network group provides at least a proxy for assessing how well each sub-population of immigrants is doing currently in the labor market. Table 5 includes only persons determined to be in the labor force (working or actively seeking work).¹⁵

Table 5 shows the extent to which network affiliations give rise to clusters of employment. There is occupational segregation within the farm labor force, a form of labor market segmentation that is of course not fixed. Workers from the newer, less-established networks are confined exclusively to field work. Although the older networks exhibit some access to non-agricultural employment, an important (if limited) pathway for upward career mobility lies within agriculture, where mayordomos, troqueros, and labor contractors can find relatively steady employment and opportunities to profit from their status as intermediaries between recently-arrived immigrants and agricultural producers.

It is also clear just how broad is the base of the occupational pyramid and how narrow the apex. The only middle class jobs held by Parlier residents are public sector jobs (including paraprofessionals) and professional/managerial jobs (including immigrant entrepreneurs operating their own small businesses). These make up only 8 percent of labor force employment. At the same time, seasonal agricultural work makes up 69 percent of the

¹⁵Variations in the labor force/population ratio for each network group are described in Table 6 below.

Table 5
Networks and Employment

Network Affiliation	TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT						
	AG-Fieldwork	AG-Supervis. Manag.	AG--Packing/ Processing	Blue Collar- Unskilled and Semi-Skilled Svcs and Mfg.	Public Sector Services	Professional or Manager	Post-Sec Stuc
California (N=14)	1 (14%)	---	2 (14%)	5 (35%)	3 (21%)	2 (14%)	--
South Texas (N=38)	10 (26%)	1 (3%)	3 (8%)	12 (32%)	3 (8%)	3 (8%)	5 (13)
Northern Tier - Mexico (N=39)	26 (67%)	1 (3%)	1 (3%)	5 (14%)	---	1 (3%)	2 (6)
West-Central-Mexico (N=42)	21 (50%)	4 (10%)	5 (12%)	6 (14%)	4 (10%)	---	--
Pacific Coast- Mexico (N=11)	10 (90%)	1 (9%)	---	---	---	---	--
Southern Mexico (N=61)	60 (98%)	---	---	1 (2%)	---	---	--
ENTIRE LABOR FORCE (N=199)	128 (63%)	7 (3%)	11 (6%)	29 (15%)	10 (5%)	6 (3%)	7 (3%)

Source: FLSS HH dataset (Interviewed households only)

* Unemployed includes only medium to long-term unemployed (1 mo. or more); Central Mexico and Urban areas, N=3, not tabular rows do not add to 100% due to rounding.

employment, much of it at close to the minimum wage. Agriculture is indeed the "open door" to U.S. employment for a continuing stream of Mexican immigrants, but beyond the open door in rural areas there is only a semi-arid landscape offering virtually no upward mobility. From this perspective, immigration to California does not import poverty so much as the structural demand for labor in the agricultural industry stifles access to economic well-being, as it offers limited upward mobility, and only for certain network cohorts.

In summary, the superimposition of multiple extended family and village networks drives the social processes by which immigrants are integrated into Parlier society and economic life. Persons -- either Mexican-born or U.S.-born -- with ties to these dominant networks can rely on them to facilitate their integration into local life -- providing housing, finding them jobs, loans, and friendship. In contrast, workers from newer, less-established networks are much more likely to need to rely on one of the "artificial networks" to integrate them into community life. Having arrived in Parlier, they will need to rely on a labor contractor or mayordomo to give them their first job, on one of Parlier's slumlords to give them a sleeping place in a garage, a backyard cot, or bunkhouse, and on a *raitero* for transportation to the job--all of these at a price. While arriving migrants from traditional established networks will still incur substantial costs in connection with migrating to work in Parlier, their share of family household expenses, rides to work, and food, are likely to be much less than the costs incurred by workers from the new sending networks. At the bottom of the totem pole, then, are the "loners." Though usually linked to a household of lone males by one or more workplace friends (*compañeros de trabajo*), they are likely to be the last hired when there is not enough work to go around for everyone in the household.

Standard vs. Network-Based Analyses: Demographics

In contrast to the data presented in Tables 2 to 5 on the social texture of Parlier, gross demographic data presents a very different picture of the community. Table 6 below presents a standard view of two important dimensions of the demography of Parlier. This comparison shows not only the limitations of a cross-sectional analysis of the composition of Parlier but, also, the limitations of standard data. We begin by considering the age structure and birthplace of Parlier's population to demonstrate how important it is to: a) disaggregate summary demographic data, and b) use extreme caution in interpreting standard data sets that poorly reflect the realities of immigrant life.

While gross 1990 census data on Parlier show a community which is 59 percent U.S.-born and 41 percent foreign-born, we believe the FLSS provides a more accurate figure -- 46 percent U.S.-born and 54 percent foreign-born. A repeat survey in Parlier in 1992 also found more foreign-born residents. The census misses many of the lone-male households in residents' backyards.

Table 6
Foreign-born Parlier Residents by Age

Age Group	Foreign born (FLSS, 1990)	Foreign-Born (1990 Census)	Foreign-Born (CIRS, 1992)
Adults --18+	69%	56%	64%
Children and Youth: 0-17	23%	18%	
Overall Population	54%	41%	

Source: FLSS data¹⁶; 1990 Census (STF-3A), CIRS, 1992 Health Survey

While most immigration policy tends to categorize immigrants in terms of arrival year cohorts, legal status, or citizenship, the social reality of communities such as Parlier is that migration network affiliation is more powerful than national boundaries. The "Texas" networks, for example, maintain cross-border ties with *norteños* from Nuevo Leon, Tamaulipas, and Coahuila. Areas we know to be important sending areas to Texas, such as Linares in Tamaulipas (probably due to the easy occupational migration from Mexican to Texas citrus work) are also represented in Parlier. As discussed with regard to housing arrangements, households such as the extended families of Michoacanos and Guanajuatenses found in Parlier contain household members with virtually all combinations of citizenship and immigration status, reminding us that these arbitrary administrative categories do not designate "populations" in any sense.

In contrast to the legally-important, but socially-misleading categorization in terms of immigration cohort or place of birth, network affiliation, once again, provides a basis for making very important distinctions among sub-populations in immigrant communities of rural California such as Parlier.

¹⁶In the FLSS, households headed by persons 65+ were not interviewed but summary demographic data on household composition was collected (in a process comparable to households which are not directly enumerated in the census). FLSS data reported here are corrected to include non-interviewed households. Data used throughout this paper, unless otherwise noted, are corrected to include non-interviewed households in tabulations. In general, non-interviewed households in the FLSS consisted of older couples or widows (7 households) who were screened out of the survey and 11 refusals or "never-homes", of which 5 were Chicano households and 6 where the head of household was Mexican foreign-born.

Table 7 below provides summary demographic profiles of the different sub-populations that can be distinguished by an analysis of network affiliation in Parlier. These data show that there are very important differences between

Table 7
Network-Based Demographic Profile of Parlier

Characteristic	West-Central Mexico (N=96)	South Texas (N=70)	North Mexico (N=72)	Southern Mexico (N=74)	California (N=20)	Pacific Coast Mexico (N=15)
Gender ratio -- Male/Female	49/51	49/51	42/58	87/13	50/50	67/33
Mean Age	22.4 years	28.0 years	26.9 years	25.4 years ¹⁷	31.1 years	26.5 years
Children 0-12 as % of Total Population	36%	30%	24%	14%	15%	20%
Teens 13-17 as % of Total Population	11%	10%	12%	7%	--	13%
Adults 18-64 as % of Total Population	51%	59%	63%	79%	85%	67%
Older Person 65+ as % of Total Population	2%	1%	1%	--	--	--
% of Network born in U.S.	46%	87%	31%	7%	100%	27%
Mean Household Size	5.3 persons	4.1 persons	4.8 persons	7.5 persons	2.5 persons	5.0 persons
Ratio: In Labor Market/Total Population ¹⁸	44/100	46/100	44/100	84/100 ¹⁹	75/100 ¹⁹	72/100 ¹⁹

Source: FLSS HH data set

¹⁷ Age is missing for 2 persons.

¹⁸ This is at the time of the interview. NILF includes: disabled persons, children too young to work, K-12 students, and women stating that they did not work because they were pregnant or full-time housewives. This tabulation does not take into account labor force participation of in-school youth.

¹⁹ This includes 1 percent who are categorized as temporarily disabled.

the sub-populations that make up the community of Parlier.²⁰ Determination of the "community profile" of immigrant sub-populations within rural California communities experiencing rapid sociological change due to immigration will be necessary to: a) estimate aggregate demand for publically-funded services, b) project types of services in demand, c) project future population growth, d) understand the dynamics of future migration flows, and e) project future labor supply.

Table 7 presents a striking contrast to politically-motivated efforts by California's Governor Pete Wilson and other anti-immigrant forces to depict California's immigrant population as a dependent one. Parlier, despite its extreme poverty, does not have an underclass in the sense W.J. Wilson (1987) and others have used the term (Wilson 19). Labor force participation is extremely high, although earnings remain low and short-term involuntary unemployment is frequent. Given the age structure of the Parlier population, overall employment/population ratios are adequate. While mean household size is large for all groups except local Chicanos with weak network ties, the composition of these large households is very different, as has been shown in Table 4. Household crowding in nuclear and extended family households makes economic stability possible by minimizing housing costs. Interestingly, household crowding plays a similar function in the economic strategies of lone males sharing housing, as minimizing housing expenses (at the cost of living in sub-standard or degrading conditions) maximizes the proportion of their earnings that can be returned as remittances to Mexico to support wives, young children, and aging parents.

Policy Implications of Multiple Networks

Rational policies to address binational migration issues and social policy must come to recognize that not all Mexican immigration takes place in the same way and that not all social and economic integration takes place in the same way. In particular, newly-arriving migrants with some affiliation to well-established networks such as the Guanajuatenses, Michoacanos, or Texans in Parlier have access to extended family support networks for finding housing, jobs, and coping with emergencies. In contrast, newly-arriving migrants whose networks are less well-established need to rely on (and pay for) local markets for housing, access to jobs, and transportation. Understanding this internal social stratification is crucial to analyzing correctly both demand for social services and the impact of various strategies for managing Mexico-US migration. We argue below that any adequate analysis must account for differences in both the migration behavior and economic strategies of sub-groups within the general population of Mexican immigrants.

V. Estimating Social Service Demand and Cost

Virtually all currently proposed solutions to immigration "problems" -- including social policy

²⁰ A profile is not included for the group of central Mexican, primarily urban immigrants, as the group is too small to yield a meaningful profile -- consisting of 7 persons in 2 households.

initiatives such as California's Proposition 187 and the rising demand for some form of guestworker program--can be shown to have grossly flawed assumptions due to inadequate or fatally-flawed analyses of the demographics and socioeconomics of distinct immigrant sub-populations. A critical shortcoming of contemporary policy analysis and political debate regarding immigration policy and immigrant social policy is that most analyses take place at the macro-level, using data sets with highly aggregated data. We argue here that such analyses are inherently flawed -- because the most commonly used datasets are systematically biased in profiling immigrant populations and because the analyses are based on constructs which fail to capture the complexity of social interactions in immigrant communities. One of the most pernicious consequences of contemporary methodological approaches to immigration policy research is to base analyses on macro-level data sets with scant detail beyond information on year of arrival, summary information on language ability and educational attainment, and (sometimes) immigration status. In actuality, such sparse datasets provide only an extremely shaky basis for imputing social service utilization or cost.

In Parlier, the immigrant heads of households who arrived with access to established networks, in fact, include some very low-income families with women of child-bearing age and children. However, even though these arriving families are, indeed, young, much of the costs of meeting their social service needs are absorbed by extended family support networks. Conversely, the 35 percent of arriving immigrants with little access to established networks consist disproportionately of young working men, many of whom are shuttle migrants. Thus, the sub-population with some level of need for social services (young families with children) generate less social service demand than would be expected from their socioeconomic status, in part because they are likely to be more stably employed than arriving migrants with inferior network connections. At the same time, the most unstably employed and poorest sub-population within the farm labor force --young men from Oaxaca and Guerrero -- have little need for social services.

At the core of political debate regarding the cost of services provided to immigrants is the question of access to public assistance -- AFDC, Medi-Cal, SSI, and General Assistance (GA). Here we report public assistance use in Parlier as determined in the FLSS, focusing on AFDC. We then examine Parlier residents' use of other publicly-funded services -- Food Stamps, WIC, subsidized health care, and subsidized housing

The 1990 Census reports that approximately one-quarter (26.6 percent) of Parlier's residents live in a household receiving some form of public assistance. However, when we looked specifically at the politically charged issue of AFDC utilization, during the FLSS research we found only 5 female-headed households receiving AFDC -- 5.5 percent of all the households for which we have information. All of the children receiving AFDC support were U.S.-born. Of the five AFDC households, only two (2.7% of the total household sample) were headed by recently immigrated women -- neither of whom had connections with traditional networks (they were from the states of Hidalgo and Sinaloa). One of the other female-headed households was headed by a woman born in Coahuila but raised in Texas. The remaining two households were headed by California-born Chicanas. Of these five AFDC households, three appeared to be chronic public assistance recipients, one was headed by an unemployed woman who had worked recently enough to qualify

for UI, and the other one by a college student (who would presumably be employed in the relatively near future). For publicly-funded services other than AFDC, the FLSS data provide fairly detailed breakouts of service usage among different sub-populations in Parlier.²¹ Table 8 below provides information on incidence of service use among various sub-populations in Parlier.

Table 8 has several important implications for California social policy regarding immigrants. First of all, the overall profile of service use is what we would expect from that of a population of working poor, not a chronically dependent population. In terms of conservative fears of an "immigrant underclass," there is no indication of a population "on the dole".

That there is more use of the Food Stamp program (19 percent) than AFDC (6 percent) is, we believe, a result of Parlier's being made up of a population of working poor who experience intermittent cash crises. However, there is cause for social policy concern because the patterns of service use, taken together with data on employment patterns for different sub-populations, indicate that the Mexican-American population, i.e. those born in the United States, has problems of economic stability. Though some in this group demonstrate upward mobility (as evidenced by enrollment in post-secondary education and adequate representation in steady blue-collar, managerial, professional, and public sector jobs), things are, in many regards, worse for the children of immigrants than for their parents.

Our informal talks with Parlier residents suggest some use of public assistance in the form of SSI by older or disabled residents of the town, but, at the same time, we know that renting housing space to shuttle migrants plays an important role in the subsistence strategies of aging, ex-farmworkers.²² Even if we assume that half of the elderly in

²¹We have not yet merged service use data with detailed information on individuals' and households' network affiliations. The tabulations here are based on broader characterizations of sub-populations than those used in Tables 1-6 of the current paper.

²²FLSS data do not provide us a basis for estimating the extent of reliance on public assistance among Parlier's older residents as the study excluded respondents 65+ because we did not consider them to be part of the core farm labor force (although we know that some continue, in fact, to work in the fields). Our survey data show 7.7% of the households we sampled to consist only of older people -- 4 widows, and 3 couples. This is consistent with 1990 survey data which show 3.3% of the town to be 65+ (as the households with only older persons are smaller than the average household size).

Table 8
Use of Publically-Funded Services
Among Different Groups of Parlier Residents

	Prevalence by Type of Service Used (% of Heads of Household in each group report HH use)					
Network Affiliation	Food Stamps (N=132)	WIC (N=123)	Reduced-price health clinic (N=132)	Reduced-price rent (N=122)	Adult ed -- ESL, ABE, GED (N=132)	Job Training (N=127)
Established MX network -- N. MX or W. Central	7 (17%)	7 (18%)	16 (38%)	5 (12%)	10 (24%)	2 (5%)
New MX network -- S. MX or Pacific	1 (3%)	1 (3%)	4 (11%)	1 (3%)	8 (22%)	---
Long-Term Immigrants >20 yrs in US	2 (29%)	---	2 (29%)	---	3(43%)	1 (14%)
Non-traditional networks Central or Urban MX	---	---	2 (40%)	---	3 (60%)	---
US-Born -- Texas	10 (46%)	6 (30%)	8 (36%)	13 (68%)	4 (18%)	2 (9%)
US-Born-- California	5 (26%)	2 (12%)	2 (10%)	2 (10%)	2 (10%)	2 (10%)
Overall Community-Wide	25 (19%)	16 (13%)	34 (26%)	21 (17%)	30 (23%)	7 (6%)

Source: FLSS -- Head of Household File.

Parlier use SSI, overall incidence of receiving public assistance would appear to be below 10 percent of the total population. The ubiquitous construction of extra backyard dwellings to rent out to arriving migrants is one mechanism by which the immigrant community internalizes the costs of its own services (i.e. support for the elderly)--essentially by allowing low-income entrepreneurs who bought housing relatively cheaply to convert these meager assets into a substantial revenue stream.

The minimal use of services by the recent immigrant men indicates quite clearly the extent to which the costs of reproduction of the transnational agricultural migrant labor force are being borne in Mexico, not in the United States. Large flows of remittances leave Parlier to Mexico to support the home village wives and children of migrants from the new networks. This is the situation Pete Wilson has advanced as the most desirable: keep the families in Mexico. It is also probably the reasoning behind new calls for a Bracero Program. But it is not possible to prevent family settlement, as desertions from the earlier Bracero Program demonstrated. What might be an alternative is more back-and-forth migration by families, which requires facilities such as the Parlier Migrant Camp, discussed in more detail below.

David Hayes-Bautista has made a valuable contribution to the debate on immigrant health policy in arguing that Latinos are a healthy population, with relatively little need for the package of services considered essential for supporting an economically disadvantaged population. The data on overall cross-program use of services in Parlier provide insight into the practical side of this issue -- how local control of public institutions by Latino majorities can make government more responsive to the actual rather than the presumed needs of their constituents.

After the Latino takeover of Parlier and the whole period of Chicano activism in California in the 1960s and 1970s, the new Latino leadership in Parlier and similar small towns had an opportunity to provide the services their constituencies really needed. The current relatively high use of reduced-price health services (26 percent) and subsidized housing (17 percent) is evidence that they developed delivery systems to address actual needs, not presumed ones. The development of facilities such as the United Health Centers clinics is an example of good planning by investing in services which could make a difference not only in the short-run but also in the long-run (since preventive health care expenditures decrease the very substantial liability of needing to provide emergency services to an uninsured population).

Access to publicly-subsidized housing is an important case of where the services that are available (and used) make a difference in Parlier residents' lives. Among long-term (pre-1975) immigrants and US-born families, monthly rent payments range from 13% to 28% of monthly income, while among immigrants in new Mexican networks and among immigrants from traditional networks (who were more commonly living in nuclear-family households), rent was computed as 48% of monthly income. Access to publicly-subsidized housing has an impact on economic well-being by increasing the disposable income of its beneficiaries -- primarily U.S.-born families.²³ We discuss

²³There is actually very high variance in the proportion of rent paid as a percentage of monthly income among U.S.-born Texans, attributable to whether or not they were able to secure room in the Parlier Labor Camp. This also serves to highlight the importance of publicly-subsidized housing, as access to the Labor Camp facilities plays an important role in these

this in more detail below.

Theoretically and practically, investments in low-cost services, such as maternal-child health programs and even expensive services (such as housing initiatives) that serve to prevent social pathology, can be better justified from a rational perspective than mitigating the costs of social problems which emerge without effective program intervention (e.g. costs for incarceration, emergency medical treatment, the costs of deficient basic information-handling skills). The area where we do not have full information yet is on the costs and impacts of human capital investments in Parlier. Adult education services were widely used by all groups of Parlier residents, but job training was not (almost certainly due to lack of availability).²⁴ However, the crucial data in the "big ticket" debate of K-12 education costs rests on what proportion of the immigrant population of California are school-age children. In Parlier, school-age immigrant children make up only 7 percent of the total population of Parlier (and 30 percent of the school-age population). This is a much lower proportion of the population than is assumed by anti-immigrant politicians such as Governor Wilson.

The crucial issue is not whether the cost of educating immigrant children is warranted or not, but rather whether these children are benefiting from the education they are receiving. Statewide data such as those generated by the California Adult Literacy Survey certainly suggest that even those Latinos who do graduate from high school have are not been well served by rural schools such as Parlier High School and high school dropout rates remain high. Anecdotal information and labor market data suggest, albeit not definitively, that the real crisis is a future one -- affecting the U.S.-born children of Mexican immigrants as much as the foreign-born.

In summary, the immigrant residents of Parlier do generate social costs that are publicly funded, but not at the level which is assumed by analysts such as Huddle (199_), based on calculations using prevailing incidence of poverty to develop estimates of costs. 1990 census data show that at least 37 percent of Parlier residents live in a household with an income below the poverty level. Our own estimate is that the incidence of poverty is much higher (about 70 percent) but that incidence of service use is much lower than indicated by the 1990 Census data.²⁵ The decennial

U.S. farmworker families' decisions to continue as migrant workers.

²⁴Arcadio Viveros has noted that the Fresno County Private Industry Council has not funded JTPA services in Parlier (personal communication, May, 1995). Therefore, access was probably quite difficult.

²⁵The standard officially-designated poverty level is not very meaningful in Parlier. Farmworkers who are "lone males" with a mean income of \$4,005 in Parlier may appear to be in fairly good shape if considered to be families of one. However, in reality, many are supporting families in Mexico. Our re-analysis of income data from Parlier suggest, but do not definitively establish, that about 70% of Parlier lives below the poverty level. Accurate computation of incidence of poverty would require detailed consideration of off-the-books revenue (e.g. renting of garages) and household structure. What does appear to be clear, based on an analysis of mean family size and mean incomes for each group is that U.S.-born Mexican-American households are significantly better off (mean income \$21,552) than any of the immigrant groups and that workers from less-established networks are worst off (mean income, \$3,866).

census, by missing low-visibility ephemeral households of working men in new networks but finding more visible established households with greater familiarity and inclination to use the services which are available, systematically distorts our picture of rural immigrant California and the policy debate based on those data (Kissam, Gabbard, Martin 1993).

VI. Business Development

Is Parlier becoming an ethnic enclave economy? Rochin (1993) asked this question of a wide array of Latino towns in California and concluded that it was not the case. He found that most such small towns were characterized by low levels of business investment, and that townspeople had to travel elsewhere to purchase certain types of goods and services, such as pharmaceuticals or professional services. He concluded that residents of these towns exhibited neither the capital nor the business knowledge to start more local businesses.

In Parlier, the town historically was run by the local growers and storekeepers for their own purposes. Trujillo reported that the city council had voted on many occasions to block outside economic interests from developing in Parlier because they feared competition (Trujillo 1978:143). One result was that people had to go outside the community for medical, dental and other professional services, for household goods and clothing, and in 1970 half went out for food (Ibid.:146). Nearby towns, such as Reedley and Sanger, had a variety of agricultural processing, manufacturing, and commercial establishments in comparison to Parlier.

Since political control of the town was taken over by the Latinos, some of this has changed. A rural clinic was started, which has expanded into a sizeable operation; another medical office exists in the town. A supermarket chain, Food King, was convinced to open a store in 1984, which increased price competition with the smaller food stores and lowered the numbers leaving the town to buy food. A couple of small shopping centers have been built to increase the available retail space. But efforts to attract larger stores or chains have failed because the town is so small. The town was being run as a farm labor camp by the Anglos, and it is hard to turn around decades of decisions that sent development to neighboring towns.

There still are no shoe stores, no furniture stores, no place to buy appliances. There are no new car dealers, just used cars. There is no drug store, no real hardware store, no toy store.

Parlier is still a labor camp in the sense that the main business in the town is providing services to farmworkers: housing, food, alcohol, health care, hair cuts, videos, agricultural contracting, transport, money orders, etc. (see Table 9). There are farmworkers who live permanently in the town, but the people running the town are not farmworkers, they are (now) Latino businessmen and service providers. Mexican farmworkers represent a source of income to many of the residents of the town. A surplus has to be extracted from them outside the workplace, just as the Anglo and Japanese growers extract it at work, in part with the help of the farm labor contractors. This creates a social divide between farmworkers and townspeople, which is kind of a Chicano/Mexicano split, but more of a class split. Farm work has come to be seen as something

that only immigrants do, and this attitude is adopted even by the children of farmworkers.

Of course some of the services, such as health care, are provided with noble aspirations. And the clinics that Arcadio Viveros oversees are notable for hiring Latino physicians to care for farmworkers.²⁶ But it is still a business, it provides jobs to local residents, not farmworkers. However, the money, the capital to operate, is from the government. This is a pattern repeated over and over in rural California: the best and brightest rural Latinos who make it back to their communities do so to provide services in government-funded jobs. Whether because of lack of capital or inclination, the "businesses" that are started are government services for farmworkers.

Apart from such government services, even though Parlier is virtually all Latino, it does not appear to have an enclave economy. Neither the growers nor the packing house owners are Latino. A few of the small business owners are still Anglo, and recently many of the markets and gas stations have been purchased or opened by middle eastern immigrants ("hindus"). The businesses that exist are mainly those that require little capital to open, such as restaurants, small markets, auto shops, and places that cut hair.

²⁶The United Health Centers include clinics in Parlier, Huron, Orange Cove, Mendota, and Earlimart.

Table 9
Parlier Storefront Businesses

Category	Type of business	1991	1995
Personal services	Laundromat	2	2
	Beauty salons and barber shops	4	9
	Medical services	2	2
Retail Stores	Grocery stores	11	11
	Lumber/hardware	1	1
	Bakeries, meat market	2	3
	Record stores, video stores	2	5
	Clothing stores	5	4
	Jewelry stores	1	1
	Thrift stores	1	1
Eating and Drinking Est.	Restaurants	6	9
	Bars and pool halls	4	4
Vehicle-Related	Auto repair	4	6+
	Used car sales	3	4
	Auto parts stores	1	1
	Gas stations	4	6
	Car wash	0	1
Business Services	Banks	1	1
	Insurance, business services, notary, taxes	3	4
	Security guards	1	1
Manufacturing	Box manufacturing	1	1
	Insulation/wrought iron manufacturing	1	1
Agriculture-related	Flower wholesaler	1	1
	Farm supply	1	1
	Fruit packing houses	4	4
	Total	66	86
	Vacant or closed	n.a.	11 +

Source: Personal observation; there are also trucking firms, construction contractors, and any number of home-based businesses not readily apparent; these are merely the storefront businesses

VII. Housing

Parlier presents three interesting aspects to the difficult housing situation in rural California. First, there is the notable effort of the Latinos after taking political control to build more housing. Second, despite these efforts, Parlier itself has become even more of a farm labor camp as every resident has tried to turn a garage or tool shed into farm labor housing, and this development presents certain dilemmas that are becoming common in Latino rural towns. Finally, Parlier has a state farm labor camp that functions in a manner similar to camps in Stockton or Watsonville, and that presents a real alternative to the private sector.

Trujillo reported on a study in Fresno County based on 1970 census data that showed Parlier to have the worst and most overcrowded housing in the county (Trujillo 1978:152). Thus housing was already a concern at the time of the political takeover. And if there is one area that has been the focus of the local Latino politicians, it has been housing. Rather than enforcing housing code laws, it was decided to build new housing and thereby perhaps reduce the demand for the worst existing housing. The first part of this strategy has certainly been successful, with over 1,000 new housing units added in Parlier between 1970 and 1990, or 57 percent of all "official" housing in the town as of 1990 (1990 Census). And more housing is being built, making Parlier one of the fastest-growing towns in California.²⁷

A redevelopment agency was set up in the town just to build housing. Since the redevelopment agency keeps the tax increment attributable to its development efforts, they were essentially able to divert tax money that might have gone to the county into more housing. They worked with the UFW and some private housing developers, they issued bonds to finance infrastructure, and they used whatever state and federal money they could obtain, including CDBG funds, which were used for sidewalks, landscaping, sewers, and lighting.

They also set up a non-profit corporation to accept donations from developers that could be used for down payments on the homes. Then they let the home buyers work off part of their down payment by working for the city in their free time. This confronted the basic problem of buying housing where people are too poor to qualify for conventional loans. In the early 1970s, it was estimated that only 25 percent of Latino households in Parlier and only 6 percent of Latino households in West Parlier had incomes sufficient to purchase the most minimal house (cited in Trujillo 1978:152). In 1995, probably only 5 percent of households would qualify for a standard bank loan, so most would require creative financing.²⁸

The idea that new housing would compete with the farmworker housing market in Parlier has proven only marginally valid. Many of the units are occupied by the children and relatives of the local Chicanos. Most of the farmworkers one finds in the newly constructed housing are

²⁷ Interview with Arcadio Viveros, 5/19/95.

²⁸ This assumes a new home costs \$100,000 and a lending criterion that mortgage payments be less than 25 percent of net family income.

mayordomos or year-round employees of local farms. Seasonal workers have access to such housing usually only if they crowd in with *paisanos*.

In our surveys, we found remarkable variation in the monthly mortgage payments paid by local homebuyers. The "market" cost of buying one of the new homes in Parlier was about \$500-\$600 per month, while many of the families who were able to obtain subsidized loans or qualify under "farmworker" housing programs were paying less than \$200 a month--and this sometimes for a brand-new three-bedroom home. These are significant subsidies that the city leaders were able to deliver to the local citizens and contrast sharply with the rents charged to groups of farmworkers.

Crowded Seasonal Housing

The continual closure of on-farm housing in the 1970s and 1980s (Peck 1989) and the increased demand for farm labor due to the expansion of grape and tree fruit production in the area greatly increased the demand for housing in the town. In addition, as Parlier became more and more receptive to farmworkers in all parts of town, it presented a contrast to some neighboring towns such as Reedley or Kingsburg that continued to be run by Anglos and strictly to enforce the building codes and zoning laws against crowded, back-house farmworker rentals. Parlier residents report that even in Selma one is not allowed to crowd as many people into an apartment as is possible in Parlier.

But the real crowding in Parlier occurs in two types of dwellings: houses owned by farm labor contractors and back-houses of every sort scattered throughout the town. These are the means by which the local housing market absorbs the influx of seasonal farmworkers. Most of these dwellings house groups of lone male migrants, but occasionally there will be one or more families.

For example, we interviewed 10 Mixtecs from the village of Santiago Naranjas, Oaxaca, who were living in a two-room shack in a Parlier back yard. The woman who owned the front house later began to rent cots on her back patio to other men from the same village. Finally she walled in the patio and rented it to 8-10 lone males from elsewhere in Mexico. For all these people there was one shower and a toilet in the laundry room. She would sit out in the backyard with her notebook on Sunday morning and collect \$25 from each tenant. Last we knew, at peak season she was collecting about \$500 a week, or around \$10,000 in cash over the course of the year. One group of Mixtecs made the mistake of filing for California State Renter's Credit on the encouragement of a social worker and they listed the woman in the front house as their landlord. When she found out she was furious, convinced the tax authorities would descend on her, and she evicted the group.

In another case, there were a row of one-room shacks in a deep lot. We interviewed 7 men living in one of them, all from Guerrero. The shack was in terrible shape, the only furniture was cots, and the men spent most of their time sitting outside. They paid \$25 a week each, or \$700 a month.

In an example of contractor housing, we found a large group in a house owned by a contractor. In the living room were wall-to-wall cots for 14 men, most from Guerrero. The single bedroom was used by a different group of 4 people. All paid \$25 per week, for a total of almost \$2,000 a month. A similar house in another part of town had 12 men from different states of Mexico, with no furniture except cots, again paying \$25 each. In a third example, the men did not have to pay the contractor if they were not working, but he kept track and later deducted the \$14 a week rent from their pay. Each of these houses appeared like all the single-family homes on their streets, if a bit run-down.

The renting of garages, shacks, and contractor houses is beneficial to both parties, but it is extortion at the same time. The relatively poor farmworker needs to rent a place on a short-term basis, and usually this is very difficult or expensive in California (e.g. motels start at \$20 a night), but in Parlier one can rent weekly at \$15-\$30 per week. This benefit to the farmworker is tempered by the poor condition of much of the housing (including shacks, garages, and even just open pieces of ground) and the pressure of the landlord to crowd in as many renters as possible.

The crowding of these dwellings translates into a high return to the landlord. The worker suffers from the crowding, but he can't realize any of the savings from it. This is in contrast to the sort of crowding that occurs in college towns, where students will rent a house or apartment and crowd it, but pay less rent apiece in return for the crowding. The rent is fixed and the students manage their numbers. In seasonal farmworker rentals, people are charged by the head, and this is clearly exploitative of the migrants' situation.

State Migrant Camp

The state camp is its own world in Parlier. 6 months in the camp, 6 months in south Texas or Nuevo Leon is the norm. People all work hard during the 6 months they are in California, generally in the group of 6-month tree fruit harvesting jobs that occupy the middle of the job structure in local agriculture. In this sense the camp is a boon to agriculture, as it provides a subsidy to the workers that raises their incomes at the going wage and encourages them to return to a set of jobs (picking stone fruit) where experience has value.

As in other studies of these state-run camps in California (Runsten, et al. 199 ; Goldring 1990), workers from certain villages in Mexico are able effectively to take over the camps and return year after year. This possibility has been legalized through a system first instituted in 1981 in Watsonville, Parlier, and King City.²⁹ Until that year, returning workers had to wait in line for the camp to open, and places were distributed on a first-come, first-served basis.³⁰ This led, however, to long lines of cars camped out for weeks ahead of time, unsanitary living conditions, fights, and

²⁹Most of the facts presented here about the state camps result from personal communications with Manuel Castro of the California Department of Housing and Community Development.

³⁰The federally funded FMHA centers still use a first-come first-served system because of federal rules. These centers include the camps in Ripley, Westley, Patterson, Firebaugh, and Harney Lane (east of Lodi).

so forth. Therefore, the state Office of Migrant Services decided to give camp residents vouchers guaranteeing them a place the following year. This institutionalized the pattern of return migration, because now families had to return *every year* to maintain their place in the camp. In fact, workers usually return to the same housing unit every year, which they consider a seasonal home.

The typical rate of return to these camps is over 90 percent, and the Parlier camp had 95 percent of its families return in 1992. This is a rather remarkable rate of return when one considers the relatively high turnover rates in much of agriculture. A lottery is held for the few open spaces each year, and friends and relatives of the families in the camps are the usual applicants. Young married couples often live with one of their parents until they can secure a place of their own in the camp.

There are three important characteristics of the camps that make them a real alternative to housing rental in the town: their family orientation, their limited six-month season, and their subsidized rents.

There is a tendency in California agriculture away from family labor and toward the increasing use of single male migrants. The time-series data to prove this trend does not exist, but it is an impression widely shared by observers of the the farm labor scene. Possibly a result of the large numbers of available migrants, it is also the result of housing constraints. Single men are able to crowd together (as in Parlier garages) or even sleep outdoors (as in San Diego) in ways that would be unacceptable for women and children. The state camps are, however, family housing. More important, they are *seasonal* family housing, which has become extremely difficult to find in California. For example, one farm labor contractor who employs many families from south Texas and northeast Mexico (who live in the Parlier camp and pick stone fruit), said he could bring many more families, but there is no place to house them. Migrants, whether families or individuals, need seasonal housing.

Much of the effort to build "farmworker" housing in California during the past 20 years has gone into the construction of single-family homes for sale at subsidized rates to long-time farmworkers. However, many of these were resold or rented by the farmworkers to nonfarmworker families, in order to cash out the subsidy, and because of their difficulty in meeting regular mortgage payments. Parlier housing projects built as "farmworker" housing are no exception to this. There are some farmworkers living in the houses (mainly mayordomos and tractoristas), but our surveys found that there are more non-farmworkers. Much of the permanent housing that was built ultimately served the interests of neither the growers nor the farmworkers, because it was unavailable to new farmworkers as the labor force turned over. It was a reward for a certain cohort of farmworkers, but it has had little impact on the farm labor market.

The assumed justification for single-family housing, that farmworkers were settling, working longer periods of the year, and were newly able to collect Unemployment Insurance, was, as we have documented in the labor demand section, true for a relatively small proportion of the labor force. The average farmworker is employed in agriculture about six months, and migration is a

reality for most of them. Those at the bottom, such as the Mixtecs, have to continually migrate to string together a series of short-term jobs. Those in the middle may be able to work for six months in one place, but then need to migrate to somewhere cheaper to spend the winter, such as Mexico or the border, where they may or may not work during the off-season.[data here, both from survey and from NAWS]

The state camps, which are open to migrant farmworker families for only six months each year, encourage this type of back-and-forth migration. The workers in the Watsonville camp pick strawberries and return to Gomez Farías, Michoacán, during the off-season. The workers in the Stockton camps pick tree fruit and tomatoes and return to Michoacán, Yuma, Coachella, or Mexicali during the off-season. And the workers in the Parlier camp pick stone fruit and return to Doctor Coz, Las Aldamas, or Linares, Nuevo Laredo in the off-season. These are stable migration patterns, and they reproduce themselves, because children are often born and raised in Mexico, and the ability to come to work in California six months each year is a desirable job opportunity compared with other alternatives in Mexico.

Furthermore, because workers are working for a limited period, they want to work as much as possible. This is characteristic of back-and-forth migrants, but it means that the camps are a relatively dependable, and self-reproducing, supply of labor. In our surveys in the Parlier camp, we found that many adult and teenage members of the household were working, and they were working in agriculture. The Parlier camp households averaged 2.8 workers and 2.5 dependents.³¹ Of the workers, 92 percent were seasonal agricultural workers, 6 percent were mayordomos, and 2 percent worked with a packing house. If the point of the camp is to provide agricultural labor, it is a complete success. There are many rumors in Parlier about the camp residents, including that they do not work in agriculture, but it just demonstrates the division between the town and the seasonal agricultural labor force.

The camps are also subsidized, although state budget crises may threaten this arrangement. From our interviews, a typical unit in Parlier had 2.8 wage earners and rented for approximately \$27 a week in 1990. This implied a cost \$9.65 a week for a working adult in the camp, or a little over \$5.00 a week per family member. Considering that the going rate for seasonal housing in Parlier was \$25 per person per week, the camp represents a significant savings to the families. Over the course of the six months the camps are open, this subsidy saves a family anywhere from \$1,100 to \$2,700, depending on whether people would bring dependents if they had to pay market rents for them.

The advantage of this subsidy to the worker is that he captures it, because the same wages are paid to everyone, no matter where he lives. In addition, one can live alone with one's family in the state camps, while most apartments or houses have a number of families or single workers crowded together, rent includes utilities, and there is a child care center in each camp. In fact, the desirability of the camps have become so great that there are many more people in the annual

³¹This is similar to the data from Stockton, where the camp households also averaged 2.8 workers (Runsten, et al. 1992).

lottery than can be accommodated, and perhaps the subsidy is too large. Proposals by the state to raise rents are constantly opposed by CRLA, yet it clearly would be better to maintain and expand the camps, and the rent subsidy may not be as critical as the mere existence of seasonal family housing. Increased rents could be combined with other funds from farm employers to build new camps.

Conclusions on Housing Policy

The camp shows one alternative to the "free," if often illegal, housing market in Parlier. Because camp children are born and raised in Mexico as well as in the camp world, apart from California society, they can become career farmworkers, unlike children in the town, who might work on farms while they are young, but then never again. The camps thus also serve to reproduce the farm labor force in a way that settlement in the town does not. Farmworker advocates in California have often opposed the whole idea of migration, arguing that farmworkers should be settled and utilized more efficiently. For this reason most farmworker housing programs have focused on low-income homes for settled workers. This utopian notion has unfortunately not changed the structure of labor demand in the Fresno farm labor market, and as a result insignificant attention has been paid to improving the housing situation for migrant workers.

Parlier could have sought to build more 6-month subsidized labor camps, but this would not have contributed to the tax base of the town nor would it have housed the local voting constituency. In fact, one could argue that the camp may be seen as simply unfairly-subsidized competition by the housing and service providers in the town. Instead, Parlier chose to build subsidized housing for its residents and to allow those controlling the property to rent whatever they wanted to the migrant farmworkers. This has significantly increased incomes in the town (even if they are not reported in official statistics).

To improve the living conditions of the migrant workers would require other groups, such as non-profit housing agencies, to ally with agricultural organizations and the state or federal government to construct more seasonal housing. Though farmers complain that their industry should not be singled out to provide housing for workers, clearly their unwillingness to create complementary cropping patterns and to structure employment in a more even manner causes extreme seasonal labor demands that have significant social impacts. It is not unreasonable to imagine a tax on labor use in agriculture that could be used to construct more seasonal camps and thereby to set in motion more back-and-forth family migration from Mexico, which the Parlier camp so clearly exhibits, and which is a real policy alternative to the increasing lone-male migration.

VIII. Education

The "youth problem" in Parlier, as elsewhere, is about young people who are neither in school (or marginally attached) nor working. Gangs, drugs, and graffiti can all be found in Parlier. Residents we interviewed said that one is better off living next to a group of Mexican farmworkers than to a family with teenagers, because at least the farmworkers won't steal from

you.

Trujillo reports that in 1971 Parlier ranked at the bottom of the state ranking in reading and writing scores (Trujillo 1978:149). The inequitable treatment of Mexican-origin students (both Chicanos and Mexican-born youth) by the Parlier school system was an important element in the political ferment of the early 1970's. Arcadio Viveros recalls that when he graduated from Parlier High School, he was one of two students to go to "college" (community college), implying that less than 10 percent of Parlier's High School Students went on to college. As Trujillo documents, this was not simply accidental. Viveros, for example, recounts his experience in the late 1960's when, as a young college-based recruiter for the Fresno State University EOP program, he returned to talk to students about college careers. He was told he did not have sufficient credentials to advise students about careers.³²

Trujillo reports that of the cohort of 101 students who went from eighth grade to high school in 1967-68, 66 graduated -- a school completion rate of 66 percent. Efforts have been made to improve educational options but there is little objective evidence of progress. According to Parlier High School counseling staff, the graduating class of 1995 was a freshman cohort of 175 students, but only 103 students graduated in 1995 -- an implicit high school completion rate of 58 percent -- a rate comparable to the dropout rate for Latino students statewide but still well below those of most multi-ethnic communities. Thus, the overall completion rate has perhaps declined slightly over the past 25 years, but in any case it has not improved.

Trujillo's conclusion that the education system was not designed to provide equal opportunity but, rather, to fill blue-collar jobs appears to still be true in 1995. Of the half of Parlier's students who graduate, more than four-fifths (46 of the 54 who go on to post-secondary education) go to the local community college where most will be prepared for careers as technicians (if they complete an AA degree). Of the remaining eight students, three will go on to a leading university (in 1995, one to Brown, one to UC San Diego, and one to UC Berkeley).

Somewhat revealingly, the link between social status and educational expectations can be seen in the socially prominent Japanese and Armenian families, who routinely request inter-district transfers so that their children can attend school in the more multi-ethnic communities of Reedley or Sanger. Since California state policy no longer requires the concurrence of the student's district of residence (just the assent of the receiving district), the flight from a school system which is not socially designated as an institution for preparing professionals but as a system to continue in the status quo can continue unabated (although counseling staff note that some high school transferees return to Parlier because of social ties).

In summary, then, somewhere between 2 and 4 percent of Parlier's almost entirely Mexican-origin school population will have a foothold for occupational equity in a society where career advancement rests on holding at least a bachelor's degree, and increasingly an advanced degree. Another 20 percent -- the community college group -- is implicitly tracked into blue-collar

³² Interview with Arcadio Viveros, 5/19/95.

occupations. Finally, the high school graduates and high school dropouts -- making up slightly over 75 percent of the population -- are destined for low-skill jobs, in not in agriculture then in some other low-wage occupation in an urban area. If we compare the distribution of educational outcomes for the Parlier 1995 graduating class with the breakdown of employment presented in Table 5, we see that Parlier's educational system is, de facto, maintaining the status quo.

Parlier, like so many other places in the United States, raises children with high expectations but presents them with limited options. Unable to succeed in school, young people are faced with a rapidly bifurcating economy, with good jobs and low-wage jobs. The education required for the good jobs is out of their reach, they have learned that agricultural work is for immigrants, and the low-end service sector does not excite them. The urban manufacturing and blue collar jobs that previous cohorts of rural youth moved into in this century are becoming relatively more scarce, or they are occupied by separate networks of immigrants (as in Los Angeles).

The Latino political takeover of Parlier enabled them to place more Chicano and Mexicano youth into public sector jobs. The 1990 Census in Parlier reported 131 people working in education, 109 in health services, and 98 for the government. But many of these jobs require higher degrees, and anyway once these jobs are converted to Latino jobs there is only a slow process of attrition. Once again, a political change cannot by itself induce great economic change, as long as the property and capital remains in the hands of other groups.

IX. Conclusions

The Latino takeover of the town in the early 1970s led to a series of policies that favored the townspeople, i.e. the political constituency. At the time, Parlier and La Colonia had not only the worst housing in Fresno County, but La Colonia in particular had an inadequate water system, inadequate sewage system, and no refuse collection; 80 percent of the streets were unpaved; there were no curbs, gutters, sidewalks, streetlights, or parks; and neither part of town had health care services available (Trujillo 1978:153).

To improve the town for its residents, subsidized housing was built, the harrassment of the police was ended, the practice of renting back houses to farmworkers was legalized, public infrastructure was improved (sidewalks, lights, sewers, etc.), civic buildings were erected (community center, library) and townspeople were employed in public services. Parlier is more middle class, less of a slum, but it also engages in renting garages to farmworkers, unlike the Anglo-controlled towns nearby.

Though the Latinos who took political control of Parlier were relatively successful at building low-income housing, they were not successful at attracting non-agricultural business, and as a result the basic structure of the town remains unchanged. As the farm labor market has been privatized and the costs of its functioning shifted onto the workers, Parlier is an example of a town where the residents have prospered by becoming the deliverers of the services to the farmworkers and their families. Twenty-three years of Chicano control of Parlier has done

nothing to alter the basic structure of the local economy, i.e. agriculture, and in fact farm labor conditions are worse now than when the takeover occurred. The "revolt" in Parlier was a revolt of the Chicanos, who mostly were not and are not the farmworkers. It should not surprise us that, as Trujillo found, the revolt did not improve conditions for farmworkers.

Managing Migration Flows from Mexico

Attention to the central role played by extended family and village networks in Parlier is helpful when considering immigration policy options. The Clinton Administration has recently put forward one of the few innovative proposals in the past decade to manage immigration flows. These proposals link immigration law enforcement to labor law enforcement by doubling the fines for employers who knowingly hire illegal immigrants when these violations are coupled with labor law violations.³³ If such enforcement served to drive up the cost of labor it might provide incentives to cut down on the current high turnover and inefficient use of labor, which is made possible by the large pool of unauthorized workers.

However, we have serious doubts as to whether the current regulatory bureaucracy of either federal or state government could effectively implement such an initiative with any resolve. The same virtual geography which separates farm labor contractors from the mainstream of the U.S. labor market also insulates the social and economic transactions which take place in immigrant enclaves such as Parlier from the scrutiny of government entities. These latter inevitably operate in a plodding, predictable, and marginally functional fashion. Legislative and administrative decisions and actions in one sphere have limited impacts on the other.

While conservative political factions complain that the United States has "lost control of its borders," they are firmly committed to constraining the government's already-limited ability to affect the functioning of the U.S. labor market, which is the true border that migrants cross when they come to the United States. Given current political alignments, no genuine border control (i.e. government control of the low-wage immigrant labor market) is feasible, and discussion of counter-factual possibilities which, for example, characterize the debate on a possible guest worker program, represent a dysfunctional excursion into the universe of Alice-in-Wonderland.

What the differences among migration networks in Parlier suggest is that immigration control might be most successful in stemming migration flows originating in "new" network sending areas of Mexico. Cornelius and others have argued persuasively that efforts to stem migration from sending areas in Mexico that have adapted to U.S.-bound migration is likely to be ineffective.³⁴ However, it is much more likely that such efforts could be effective in migrant-sending areas that do not have such a long tradition of northward migration. Even in regions such as Oaxaca, there are villages already sold out to migration and others that are hardly affected. Rural development efforts should begin with an analysis of migration. Targeted investment by agencies such as the

³³"U.S. Moves its Crackdown on Illegal Immigrants to Workplace", *San Francisco Chronicle*, May, 1995.

³⁴See Cornelius (1990); Alarcón (1992).

North American Development Bank might, indeed, be a cost-effective strategy for managing, if not controlling, migration. This was the idea of the Asencio Commission, but their call to "invest in sending areas" was too broad and undifferentiated.

As a matter of fact, much of the emigration from the less-established rural sending areas whose migrants are now coming to Parlier -- i.e. Guerrero, Oaxaca, Colima, and Nayarit -- have historically sent migrants to urban centers in Mexico. Unfortunately, in the current economic crisis being experienced by Mexico, efforts to re-orient migration flows toward urban areas of Mexico are at best difficult. But in the next round of growth in Mexico, a more concerted effort to create "growth poles" to absorb labor in regions far from the U.S. border might be the best migration control strategy. NAFTA seems likely to direct investment towards such regional cities in northern Mexico. What a migration deterrence strategy requires is some subsidy to investment to direct more towards southern Mexico, where the principal supplies of rural labor reside.

Ironically, the excitement with which agribusiness approaches the prospect of a guestworker program would appear not even to serve the industry's chronic preoccupation with official support for constant new sources of low-cost labor. Implementation of a guestworker program that required the provision of housing would, in fact, increase the operating costs of producers who now benefit from the externalization of the costs of the labor market, particularly housing the peak season labor force of unauthorized migrants (since recent immigrants themselves pay for finding jobs, transportation, and housing).

From a rational policy perspective, efforts to control or, at least, manage migration flows from Mexico to California would benefit from distinguishing among village and social networks, looking benignly on a form of informally-sponsored migration supported by established family and village networks and prioritizing enforcement of immigration law by targeting the "merchants of labor" who play a crucial role in facilitating the process by which new migrants with little or no network resources come to work in California. The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) has floated trial balloons on this sort of enforcement strategy -- but it is not clear whether such strategies are being considered seriously. In the current political climate, it is worrisome that ineffective and Draconian solutions such as electrified fences, barbed-wire barriers, and high-tech "smoke and mirrors" may be more popular than thoughtful strategies, providing the American public appealing symbolic ritual in response to migration pressures instead of options which would be preferable -- modest, but judicious, practical proposals. The parallels with the War on Drugs are overwhelming.

From a rational policy perspective, locally-directed programs of modest cost-effective social investments (e.g. in adult education, job training, preventive health care, substance abuse prevention, housing rehabilitation) would be valuable investments to facilitate the process of integrating Mexican immigrants into the social and economic life of California. Irrational policies focusing on cost avoidance by denying immigrants access to all services is not only inequitable but, also, ineffective as a means to decrease the costs of public service programs in California. Were political leaders seriously to consider immigrant policy, it would be very difficult to ignore the abundant data that pioneering immigrants use almost no publicly-funded services but that use

of services increases in proportion to length of time in the U.S. Nevertheless, as the data on migrant networks show, extended family and village networks provide the main vehicle for integrating Mexican immigrants into life in rural California. Serious and responsible public policy debate should focus on establishing priorities for services and on assuring that services that are provided are cost-effective and responsive to the actual needs of the immigrant populations whom they might serve, rather than simply functioning as public-works programs for the U.S. born.

In any case, it may well be that the idle youth of today are the needed workers of tomorrow, particularly if immigration levels decline. Inadequate attention to the education and training of this population in towns such as Parlier is one of the most worrisome aspects of this study. Raising educational levels and creating school-to-work programs that lead to middle class jobs will be one of the great challenges of California's future, if it is to avoid falling into open class and ethnic warfare.

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APPENDIX

**Table A-1
Stone Fruit Labor Requirements**

	Freestone Peaches	Plums	Nectarines
	Person-hours per acre		
Seasonal labor: Prune	110	120	110
Thin	70	100	70
Prop	5	0	5
Harvest	145	132	145
Total Seasonal	330	352	330
Year-round labor	51	49	50
Total labor	381	401	380

Source: Mamer and Wilkie 1990

**Table A-2
Expansion in Stone Fruit Labor Demand
1976-1991, Fresno-Madera-Tulare Counties**

	Freestone Peaches	Plums	Nectarines	Total
	Person-hours			
Seasonal: Prune	849,090	1,866,360	1,182,060	3,897,510
Thin	540,330	1,555,300	752,220	2,847,850
Prop	38,595	0	53,730	92,325
Harvest	1,119,255	2,052,996	1,558,170	4,730,421
Total seasonal labor	2,547,270	5,474,656	3,546,180	11,568,106
Year-round labor	393,669	762,097	537,300	1,693,066
Total labor	2,940,939	6,236,753	4,083,480	13,261,172

Source: Mamer and Wilkie 1990; County Agricultural Commissioner Reports

Table A-3
Raisins: Person-Hours per Acre of Seasonal Labor

Task	Hours	Time period
Prune	19	Jan-Feb
Tie canes	5	Jan-Feb
Shred brush	0.3	Jan-Feb
Pick	40	Aug-Sep
Turn and Roll	10	Sep
Box and Shake	7	Sep
Total seasonal	79.3	
Year-round labor	21.6	
TOTAL	103.1	

Source: Mamer and Wilkie

Table A-4
Wine Grapes: Person-Hours per Acre of Seasonal Labor

Task	Hours	Time period
Prune	22.0	Dec-Feb
Shred brush	0.3	Feb
Remove leaves	20.0	May
Hand harvest (70%)	32.0	Aug-Sep
Total seasonal	74.3	
Year-round labor	27.1	
TOTAL	101.4	

Source: Mamer and Wilkie

Table A-5
Table Grapes: Person-Hours per Acre of Seasonal Labor

Task	Flame Seedless	Thompson Seedless (two estimates)		Time period
	Hours per acre			
Prune	12.0	22.0	32.0	Jan-Feb
Tying		5.0	7.0	Jan-Feb
Suckering	25.0			April
Girdle	2.7	3.0	14.0	May
Thin/Tipping	50.0	25.0	40.0	June
Roll Canes	42.0			July
Lifting Canes		11.0		July
Open Vines		15.0		July
Harvest	140.0	137.0	65.0	July-Sep
Total seasonal labor	271.7	218.0	151.3	
Year-round labor	37.0	29.6	30.7	
TOTAL	308.7	247.6	182.0	

Source: Mamer and Wilkie