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## **"Brown Flight": Secondary Movement among Mexican Immigrants**

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**“BROWN FLIGHT”:  
SECONDARY SETTLEMENT AMONG  
MEXICAN IMMIGRANTS\***

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## **“Brown Flight”:**

### **Secondary Settlement among Mexican Immigrants**

#### Abstract

*The past ten years have seen the continued growth of the Mexican origin population in the United States. This growth has been accompanied by the movement of immigrants away from their traditional settlement locations in the Southwest. Using data collected in a small community in Northeastern Oklahoma I explore factors that motivate the movement of Mexican immigrants to nontraditional locations. I find these movements are motivated by a search for a higher quality of life. In effect this movement represents a form of “Brown flight” away from urban centers to rural locations. In areas such as these, respondents find many of the amenities typically associated with suburban life including tranquil neighborhoods, abundant employment opportunities, quality housing, and a low crime rate. All these factors contribute to make rural America an attractive alternative to urban settlement.*

## **“Brown Flight”:**

### **Secondary Settlement among Mexican Immigrants**

Over the last decade remarkable growth has occurred in the Latino population of the United States. Between 1990 and 2000, we have seen an increase in the Latino population of 57.8 percent, a change which translates to close to 13 million people (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003). Furthermore, in 2000 the foreign-born population of the United States reached over 31 million people (U.S. Department of State, 2002). This number in turn represents approximately 11.1 percent of the total population, up from 7.9 percent in 1990 and is the highest proportion of foreign born residents since 1930 (Schmidley, 2001; U.S. Department of State, 2002). In 2001, 1,064,318 immigrants were admitted into the United States, the highest number of entrants admitted since 1991 when the number swelled to over 1.8 million as a result of the Immigration Reform Control Act (IRCA) provision that granted amnesty to many previously undocumented residents of the United States (U.S. Department of Justice, 1999). Of those granted amnesty, Mexican migrants accounted for the single greatest number of entrants into the country. The number of immigrants in 2002 was 1,063,732 (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2002).

Undocumented migrants have also maintained a steady presence in the United States. In 2000 it was estimated that as many as 7 million undocumented immigrants made their homes in the United States (U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, 2003). Of those, it is believed that approximately 4.8 million are from Mexico making that country the leading source of undocumented (U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, 2003).

The most common destinations for all documented immigrants are the states of California, New York, Florida, Texas, and New Jersey. These states received almost 70% of all immigrants to the United States (Department of Justice, 1999; Schmidley, 2001). Latinos in general, and Mexicans and Mexican Americans specifically, have traditionally settled in nine, mostly Southwestern states (Marger, 1996). The tendency to live among fellow countrymen is especially notable for Mexicans and Mexican Americans of whom approximately 85 percent live in Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas (Bean, Stephan, and Optiz, 1984; Marger, 1996). Almost 80 percent of Mexican origin residents are estimated to live in California and Texas alone. Undocumented migrants have tended to settle in California, Texas, New York, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, and Arizona (U.S. Department of Justice, 2001; U.S. Department of Justice, 2002).

The continued growth of the Latino population in the United States is not of any great surprise or novelty however, an interesting change has begun to take place in where immigrants choose to settle. Recent research has suggested Mexican immigrants may be moving away from traditional destinations opting instead for areas not usually associated with Mexican or Mexican American populations (Broadway, 1995; Gouveia and Stull, 1995; Grey, 1995; Griffith, 1995a; Griffith, 1995b; Saenz, 1996; Hernandez-Leon and Zuniga, 2000; Rochin, 2000; Gouveia and Saenz, 2000; Gouveia and Juska, 2002, and Baker and Hotek, 2003). Movement to areas such as these is remarkable because while these areas are experiencing the fastest growth rates of Latinos in the country, (Gouveia and Saenz, 2000; Kandel and Cromartie, 2004) they are not areas that they have not historically experienced much Mexican migration. Furthermore, the influx of migrants to

areas with traditionally homogeneous populations will undoubtedly cause shifts in the social dynamics of these areas (Blank, 2001).

While the growth of the population and the settlement patterns can be readily observed, a review of these findings still leaves the question as to why migrants would choose to bypass traditional settlement locations for these new areas that are lacking the social support systems typically assumed to exist in more traditional locations. Answers to these questions may lie in the search for a higher quality of life than is available for Mexican migrants in traditional locations.

### **URBAN FLIGHT**

Movement out of the central city to suburbs by Whites has been part of American culture since the end of World War II. The motivation for this movement has been a frequent source of debate. Frey (1979) conducted one of the earliest studies on racial and nonracial causes of white flight. In this study, Frey hypothesizes that White movement to the suburbs is attributable to the deteriorating economy and social environment of the central city rather than the race of White residents' new neighbors. While his findings ultimately suggest that race remains an important variable affecting suburbanization, it is primarily as a proxy for other feelings and stereotypes. He finds evidence that fiscal disparities between cities and suburbs and the movement of jobs out of the inner city are also important.

Similarly, Harris (1999) found that race is not what matters in selecting places to live or deciding to move. Instead, Harris suggests that race is used as a proxy for other factors. He argues that when people select a neighborhood, racial preferences represent a desire to avoid areas of crime and neighborhood deterioration. Harris' findings indicate

that neighbors' income, employment status, and educational attainment are of greatest importance.

Still, other research highlights the role of race in residential preferences suggesting race remains an important factor in decisions to leave integrated or integrating neighborhoods (Emerson, Yancey, and Chai, 2001). Furthermore, Bobo and Zabransky, (1996) found that hostile attitudes toward members of a different group affect people's desires to live among other people. Similarly, Krysan (2002a) notes that Whites flee urban areas because of stereotypes and negative perceptions of minorities on issues such as crime, drugs, or property upkeep. It follows then, because Whites perceive African Americans to be criminal, Whites avoid living in integrated neighborhoods because they view them as more dangerous and less desirable (St. John and Heald-Moore, 1995; St. John and Heald-Moore, 1996; Krysan, 2002b).

More generally, research on residential mobility shows that various factors affect decisions to move. Some research indicates stage in life cycle dictates mobility with age, home ownership, and length of residence being negatively related to residential mobility (Barrett, Oropesa, and Kanan, 1994). In studying factors that influence movement out of distressed neighborhoods, South and Crowder (1997a) also found that age was inversely related to movement and while children impede movement in a general manner, the authors suggest it is reasonable to assume that when movement does occur it is from poor areas to non-poor areas (an idea substantiated by South and Crowder, 1997b). South and Crowder suggest that any differences in racial and ethnic rates of movement can be attributed to variations in socioeconomic status and life cycle characteristics. Alba and Logan (1991) show that family, socioeconomic status, and household income are

positively associated with suburban movement. While the authors find that being married or being in a family with children increased the likelihood of suburban residence, their effects were smaller for Blacks, Mexicans, and Puerto Ricans. Interestingly, despite structural impediments, such as poor employment options and high housing costs, Latino movement to the suburbs continues.

Massey and Denton (1988) find that suburbanization rates of Hispanics, while lower than those of Whites and Asians, are higher than those of Blacks. They demonstrate that upwardly mobile members of a group move to suburban locations in an attempt to find areas with “greater prestige, more amenities, safer streets, better schools and higher home values (p. 613).” In related research, the authors find that the suburbanization rates of Hispanics were positively related to socioeconomic status and percent of the population that is native born and negatively related to rates of immigration to the area from Mexico (Massey and Denton, 1987).

### **RELOCATION COSTS**

One key stumbling block to relocation in general and immigrant relocation specifically, is the high cost associated with securing affordable housing. Recent research shows that many households are struggling to find suitable housing at an affordable cost (Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University, 2003). This is a concern that is especially great for those in the lowest income groups. In a study of attitudes toward homeownership, Barnes and Jaret (2003) found that racial and ethnic minorities in general and Mexicans and Mexican Americans specifically are as optimistic about the prospects of homeownership as Whites, however, their desire to purchase a home is stultified by the lack of affordable housing available to them. A study conducted



by the National Low Income Housing Coalition (2003) on the housing wage found that residents living in the five states with the highest Mexican and Mexican-American populations and working fulltime had to earn between a high of \$21.18, in California, and a low of \$11.14, in New Mexico, in order to afford a two-bedroom unit at the area's Fair Market rent rate. When Mexicans or Mexican Americans are able to relocate to suburban locations it is typically to communities of lower standing than those to which Whites relocate (Logan and Alba, 1995). As Houseman (1981) notes these communities often are more like central cities in terms of resources, amenities, and quality of life available to residents than suburbs. In similar research Alba and associates (1999) conclude that the decreased likelihood of suburban residence of Mexicans is due primarily to a lack of economic opportunity. Given the high cost of affordable housing the search for a higher quality of life inevitably must take on a different look.

If the suburbs surrounding American cities are not accessible to Mexican immigrants, perhaps these individuals are choosing to improve their quality of life by relocating to rural settings in nontraditional locations. These are attractive locations to immigrants because in these new settings immigrants are able to attain a standard of life not possible in other areas with higher costs of living.

### **RESEARCH DESIGN**

This research considers how a search for a higher quality of life may be at the root of migrant decisions to move away from traditional areas and settle in nontraditional locations. The main purpose of this article is to discover whether or not migrants to nontraditional locations have made movement decisions based on issues of quality of life. Furthermore, I look at which quality of life issues are of greatest relevance to those who

choose to relocate. To address these questions I look at research conducted in El Tree, Oklahoma in the Summer of 2002<sup>1</sup>.

According to two long-time residents of El Tree Melvin Brown and Juana Maradona Veron, the first influx of Mexican immigrants to the area can be traced to the construction of a power plant south of El Tree in the late 1970s. Prior to that the local oil refinery occasionally employed Mexican laborers but only as temporary employees who returned home after their employment was terminated. After the construction project was completed however, many of the immigrant laborers remained in the community. A second wave of immigrants came in the early 1990s when a meat processing plant opened in the community. It provided employment for those workers who remained after the power plant was completed as well as bringing in contracted Mexican workers to the community. Thus the entrance of immigrants to El Tree has been the product of two threshold events from which an extensive and effective immigrant network has emerged.

The community of El Tree is a good site for this research for several key reasons. First, El Tree is an attractive destination for immigrants. It boasts an abundance of low-skill and entry-level jobs including a meat packing plant that relies heavily on immigrant labor and has actively recruited Latino, especially Mexican, workers from other regions. In addition, the neighboring agricultural communities and local informal labor market sector provide unregulated work opportunities for undocumented workers. Second, El Tree is also a community tolerant of immigrant workers and their families going so far as to provide bilingual teachers in local schools. Third, El Tree is an interesting location for research because it is a community that has experienced significant growth in its Latino population over the past decade. Between 1990 and 2000 the Latino population grew by

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<sup>1</sup> The names of all locations and research participants have been changed and replaced with pseudonyms.

more than 100 percent going from 509 to 1,149 residents while the Mexican population has increased from 385 to 873 residents (US Census Bureau, 2000). In many ways El Tree is like many rural communities in America's heartland which have seen their Latino populations grow at record rates (Gouveia and Saenz, 2000; Kandel and Cromartie, 2004)

### **Instrument and Interviews**

I conducted interviews using a semi-structured interview design. The questionnaire consisted of three parts. In the first section, I examined the demographic characteristics of the respondents. In the next section I looked at the work history of respondents. I endeavored to record all the jobs that respondents held in the United States, as well as the specific cities where respondents had lived and worked. In this section, I also explored how respondents were able to find the jobs they had held. The final part of the questionnaire is the most relevant to the research at hand. It addressed quality of life issues. Respondents discussed why they came to the United States, generally, and El Tree, specifically, as well why they chose to stay or go back to Mexico and how they arrive at these decisions.

Of the fifty total interviews, only one was conducted in English while the remainder were completed in Spanish. The interviews lasted between twenty and ninety minutes. Interviews were very informal in order to maintain an easy and comfortable discourse with research participants. I made no effort to ask questions in any specific order, preferring instead to let the interview take a conversational tone and leaving specific issues to emerge in a natural manner.

### **Research Participants**

For this project I looked for research participants who were Mexican immigrant workers. After establishing several initial contacts I was able to use these subjects to recruit additional research participants. Using both purposive and snowball sampling techniques was particularly useful in this project since the population being studied did not allow for the creation of an effective and comprehensive sampling frame from which to draw research subjects (Henry, 1990). In addition, the combination of techniques was beneficial in that I was able to observe community members from common social networks who had arrived in El Tree at different times, thus ensuring different experiences and roles among people from the same social network. It is worth noting Melvin Brown, my El Tree contact, was instrumental in recruiting the first set of research subjects. It was from these initial contacts that all other respondents followed.

[Table 1 about here]

Table 1 shows descriptive characteristics of the sample. One particular area of note is respondents' state of origin. Interestingly, more than half of respondents (29) are from the Mexican states that border Texas: Chihuahua, Coahuila, and Tamaulipas. Nine respondents also came from the Mexican state of Durango that is directly to the south of Chihuahua. This stands in contrast to the findings of Massey and associates (1987) who found that most immigration to the United States from Mexico originates from states in western Mexico. Among research participants for this study, only six originated from that geographic region. While this is an interesting finding, it is worth noting that given the size of the sample studied this finding should be interpreted with caution. The remaining three respondents were from states in central Mexico.

## **RESULTS**

Of the 50-immigrant research participants, 35 had indicated they had lived somewhere in the United States beside El Tree. For these respondents, and many others who had fled Mexico's big cities, the community represented an attempt to lead a new kind of life. They strive for a life absent of many of the difficulties associated with living in an urban center. In El Tree these people found a peaceful and tranquil life with jobs and affordable housing, a relatively crime free community ideal for raising a family, and an area with a virtually nonexistent and Immigration and Naturalization Service presences.

### **Peace and Tranquility**

As a town of only 26,000 inhabitants, El Tree has few of the pressures associated with living in a large city. Residents repeatedly indicated that they were attracted to the slow pace of life in El Tree. For these individuals, the quiet nature of the city was one of the most attractive aspects of living in the area. Jesusita Marquez-Torrado, 24, restaurant worker, noted: "What I like about this place is that it is very peaceful." This pace of life is something that some had not experienced before yet was very attractive to them. Javier Aguirre, 52, meat packing plant employee, remarked, "I like it because it is a very peaceful town. It is a town that compared to other places that are faster paced is a tranquil place ...In Denver life is very fast". This slower and more casual style of life, however, was much more in line with the way they presently want to live.

"California seemed so crowded and full of people. I am more of an easy-going person. I like the peace and quite...life there is too fast. Life there is not peaceful like it is here. It is very calm and peaceful here. "

Francisco De Anda, 44, unemployed recent arrival to El Tree

Unimpressed by life in urban centers, residents of El Tree appreciated the different benefits associated with small town life. Dulio Davino, a 36 year-old painter, recalling his life in Northern California remarked: “Too many people, too much traffic. You are always going back and forth. To go to work you have to spend an hour or two on the road.” Life in El Tree provided individuals with a different way of leading their lives. A way that for many was better than the lives they previously led. Reflecting on his life in Texas, Hugo Sanchez, a 26 year-old truck maintenance worker, explained, “I like this little town. Laredo is a big city and I don’t like it...I can’t find myself in the city.”

While for many in this small community life is undoubtedly different than it might be in other areas of the country, residents do not see it as a negative. Rather, they embrace the difference and appreciate the small, close-knit community. This is particularly the case in regard to employment.

### **Employment Opportunities**

Another attractive aspect of El Tree for residents was the availability of work in comparison to other areas in the country. Several respondents recounted the difficulties they had in finding gainful employment at other locations. One former resident of El Paso Texas commented:

“I came because along the border there is a phenomena ...there are work shortages...I don’t mean a lack of work, there are lots of jobs...what happens is that a lot of people that are residents of the United States commute (yet live in Mexico). They come from Mexico, with their

legitimate papers, and cross daily...it causes people that have their papers in order to have difficulty finding good jobs along the border.”

Victor Gutierrez, 52, meat packing plant employee

Another respondent, Antonio De Negriz, a 47-year-old meat packing plant employee, made a similar point regarding work in border communities, “There are jobs (in Texas) but the people that have them do not give them up.”

Given the difficulty of finding work along the border, other respondents, like Gutierrez, made the move to rural Oklahoma after other options failed.

“[We came here] because he (respondent’s husband) did not have a job in El Paso. He worked in the fields but that was seasonal. He would get desperate. We went to the employment office and he was contracted.”

Pabilta Rodriguez-Alves, 48, meat packing plant employee

Another respondent, Ramona Ramirez, a 47 year-old employee of the meat packing plant noted, “I had worked here five years before and I liked the work. Since there was no work in El Paso we decided to come out here.” Employment prospects in El Tree made it an attractive destination for those unable to find work in places characterized by greater job competition.

Another advantage to El Tree is the variety of work available to community members. One respondent, a frequent visitor to the area, noted the diverse types of work available despite the size of the town.

“It is a small town but there is work, and the work that is available I like because it varies. I like variety in the work I do. One person will ask me to lay down cement and another to put a rock walkway down, plaster a

wall, paint, garden, wash cars. I like to clean the insides of houses as well.”

Braulio Luna, 42, unemployed laborer

As a result of the availability of attractive employment opportunities, community members have been able to settle in El Tree and access goods and services not readily available in other locations.

## **Housing**

Another attractive aspect to life in El Tree is the availability of inexpensive housing in the area. The National Low Income Housing Coalition (2003) found that a worker in Saint Mary County, the area in which El Tree is located, need to earn only \$7.88 an hour while working fulltime to rent a two-bedroom unit in the area. Rafael Marquez, a 22-year-old farm hand, noted the advantages of living in El Tree relative to other locations. “I like, and it benefits me, that the rents are really cheap...not like in a city like Dallas.” Renting, however, is only one option available to residents as Antonio De Negris, a 47 year-old meat packing plant employee observed. “Not only are the rents cheap there are lots of places to live...lots of different options for housing. Houses here are very cheap to buy here.”

Unlike other locations in the United States, in El Tree the possibility for homeownership is a reality despite the lack of high-wage employment. This is an advantage clearly visible to residents. Rafael Garcia, a 31 year-old mechanic, observed, “I have seen lots of Mexicans that have bought their own houses. Old ones but they fix them up. Then they bring more family members.”

The ability to own a home in the community is another element that makes El Tree an attractive place for immigrants in the area.



“I have my little house and my yard. I am comfortable here. Nobody complains because I am using too much water or too much electricity like when you pay rent. From that angle I feel really happy.”

Luis Garcia, 62, warehouse worker

The sense of permanency entailed in homeownership is one of the main draws of El Tree. Respondents recognize the advantages afforded by homeownership and are reluctant to trade in that security for a different place of residence. When asked how long he planned to live in the area one respondent noted:

“I plan on staying here for more time...we own our house here. (We will stay here) until we own a house in El Paso. That is where we want to go... so that we won't have to deal with paying rent. Bills and foods that is one thing but rent, no!”

Luis Alves, 48, meat packing plant employee

### **Crime and Violence in El Tree**

Respondents repeatedly suggested that El Tree was a safe place to live with very little crime occurring in the community. Respondents noted the relative safety of the community compared to other communities.

“El Paso is a very stressful place to live. Not here, here it is easy. You can leave your doors open and your car unlocked and nothing happens. In El Paso you can be locked in your home and still be assaulted.”

Beto Aspe, 51, meat packing plant employee

When asked what she liked about the community one respondent offered,

“It is a small town, there is very little crime here...my children can walk

down the street or go to the park and play. I can walk at night without worrying about being assaulted. My doors are never closed, my car is never locked and my purse and wallet are inside. I lived in New Orleans and the newspaper there looked like the phone book here. The killed, the raped, the assaulted...full of death and crime.”

Deliah Maradona-Wanchope, 51, restaurant owner

Maradona-Wanchope touches on one of the main reasons why El Tree is an attractive destination for families with children. It is a place where children can live and play in relative safety and parents are keenly aware of this fact. Maradona-Wanchope’s sister Juana Maradona-Veron, a 56 year old office worker added, “When I arrived here 30 some years ago the town was very small. It was very clean and peaceful. There is very little crime. Nobody is killing anybody. I liked the schools for my kids and everything.”

While Maradona-Veron’s observation is based on her experience more than 30 years ago it still holds true.

“Since it is a small town it is easier to raise a family. Away from drugs and everything. There are no gangs for kids to get into. There are problems everywhere, they are just less prevalent here. Less chance for a child to get into that than in a big town.”

Carlos Hermosillo, 39, construction worker

While the lack of crime and violence in the community makes it an attractive destination for many, issues such as these only begin to scratch the surface in regard to advantages to families with small children.

### **Raising a Family in El Tree**

Perhaps El Tree's most attractive feature is the perception of the community as a good place to raise children. Respondents see it as a community free of many of the negative factors associated with living in a large city.

"I have never liked big cities, which is why I left Chicago. When I lived there it was better than it is now. In that time there were no gangs or anything like that. That is what bothers people because you worry about your family. You worry that your kids will fall in with a bad crowd. Small towns are calmer, more peaceful."

Jorge Campos, 50, construction worker

For many, El Tree's greatest asset is the school system and the education it has to offer their children. Josefina Hernandez-Morales and her husband Ramon Morales reported that access to education was a prime factor in their decision to relocate to El Tree from Dallas.

"We came here because we were having trouble getting the kids registered for school in Dallas. Here at the schools it was easy and they have interpreters. The kids had only been in the United States for four months and they did not speak any English."

Ramon Morales, 28, construction worker

Morales and his wife were given information from a relative about the ease with which they could enroll their children in the local school district. Morales' wife Josefina added, "My husband's relative...she told us that the schools here did not require papers to get kids into schools. So we stayed here so we could put the kids in school."

For some, the prospect of keeping their children in school was sufficient motivation to keep them in the community.

“My daughters are comfortable. What else could I ask for? Now one thing that is important to me is to not interrupt the studies of my daughters. One right now is in the eleventh grade. I know that I have to last (in El Tree) at least until she graduates.”

Cuauhtemoc Blanco, 45, factory worker

For others, the educational system made them want to relocate their families to the United States, in general, and El Tree specifically. When asked what he liked about living in the community, Tavo Valdez, a 30-year-old seasonal roofer responded, “More than anything the schools...I would like to have my daughters use the schools here.”

### **Immigration and Naturalization Service**

While not directly a benefit of life in rural America, respondents frequently noted the benefit of living in an area free of Federal immigration agents. Several of the study respondents indicated they felt comfortable living in El Tree because it did not have an Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) or Border Patrol presence. This made it possible for community members to move about freely in the community despite lacking documents. One respondent noted the lack of INS as a key factor in his decision to move to the area. When asked why he decided to move to the area Salvador Carmona, a 22-year-old leather worker and horse outfitter, noted, “We heard that it was a place with very little immigration (INS). It was a calm place.” Another respondent remarked that the absence of INS was an important variable in enhancing the quality of his life in the area.

“I also like that there are no immigration problems like there are in bigger

cities where Immigration has a greater presence. Since there are very few of us it is difficult... they have come before but it is difficult for them to come often.”

Rafael Marquez, 22, farm hand

The carefree attitude toward immigration has also been adopted by local law enforcement agencies.

“It helps that the town is small because there are not many police here. Here the police...like they once told me...the police know that there are people here without documents from Mexico but they don’t care because they are not Immigration.”

Juana Maradona-Veron, 56, office worker

The relative isolation of the community and the lack of an INS presence have contributed further to making El Tree an attractive destination for immigrants.

El Tree offers many amenities to immigrant community residents including ample employment opportunities, and affordable housing. For those with families, the decision to migrate to and remain in El Tree was further motivated by family. Of primary importance for those families was the relative safety of the community as well as the educational opportunities available for children. These factors along with a lax Immigration and Naturalization Service presence made the community an ideal location for migrant community members.

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

The last ten years have seen continued growth in the Mexican and Mexican origin population in the United States. Whereas this group has tended to settle in certain

traditional locations recent scholarship suggests movement to nontraditional locations is becoming increasingly common. While the root of this secondary relocation remains unclear the explanation may lie in this groups search for a higher quality of life. For these people rural American presents an attractive option to those looking to flee from the difficulties associated with urban life.

Ultimately, relocation to the suburbs remains an attractive prospect for many Americans, particularly those with families and young children. Despite its allure, suburban America lies beyond the grasp of many Mexican immigrants. With the traditional Mexican immigrant locations having an average housing wage of \$15.39, as reported by National Low Income Housing Coalition (2003), the possibility of leaving the city for the suburbs and enjoying the advantages typically associated with suburban life is remote at best. Given the difficulty of achieving the suburban dream, it seems likely that the move to rural America for many constitutes a search for a higher quality life than is possible in a typical urban setting. In effect, the move to locations like El Tree signifies a form of “Brown flight” for those unable to flee to a city’s outer rings. Like their counterparts moving to the suburbs, they are attempting to leave behind the lack of options and opportunity available to inner-city residents. As Frey (1979) and Harris (1999) both suggest, movement originates from the search for a better kind of life. This movement indicates a search for peaceful locales with better employment prospects, inexpensive housing, lower crime rates, and an environment conducive to raising a family. These are traits typically associated with White suburbia not the suburban alternatives available to economically disadvantaged minorities (Houseman, 1981; Logan and Alba, 1995).

While this paper has attempted to address the motivations for secondary movement among Mexican immigrants several questions remain unanswered about the nature and consequences of this movement. Future research in this area should look at both Mexican immigrants and the communities they are moving into. From the immigrant perspective it would be beneficial to develop a greater understanding of the differences between those that choose to leave the traditional immigrant locations and those that stay behind and the influence of region of origin on migration destinations. Future research should also explore the extent to which these new locations are becoming primary destinations and how the immigrant networks in communities such as these develop and grow. From a community perspective it is important to develop an understanding of the influence which immigrant populations will have on rural locations and their residents. Communities' reactions to the influx of immigrants and their use of community resources as well as the role of immigrants in the growth of otherwise stagnant populations are topics of significant interest and importance as the Mexican and Mexican origin population of this country continues to grow.

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Table 1 Selected Characteristics of Research Participants.

Characteristic	Number	Percent <sup>a</sup>
<i>Sex</i>		
Male	35	70
Female	15	30
Total	50	100
<i>Marital Status</i>		
Married	30	60
Cohabiting	5	10
Divorced	5	10
Separated	1	2
Widowed	1	2
Single	8	16
Total	50	100
<i>Children</i>		
Yes	42	84
No	8	16
Total	50	100
<i>Occupation<sup>b</sup></i>		
Meat Processing	13	28
Construction/General Labor	11	23
Restaurant Service	9	19
Manufacturing	3	6
Auto Maintenance	2	4
Temporary Labor	1	2
Technical Support	1	2
Retired	1	2
Unemployed	6	3
Total	47	100
<i>Year First in USA</i>		
1969 or earlier	6	12
1970-1974	6	12
1975-1979	8	16
1980-1984	5	10
1985-1990	5	10
1991-1994	5	10
1995-1999	7	14
2000-2002	6	12
Don't Know/No Answer	2	4
Total	50	100
<i>Year First in El Tree<sup>b</sup></i>		
1969-1979	2	4
1980-1984	5	11
1985-1990	3	6
1991-1994	4	9
1995-1999	17	36
2000-2002	15	32
Don't Know/No Answer	1	2
Total	47	100
<i>Mean Age</i>		
39.9 years		

<sup>a</sup>May not sum to 100% due to rounding

<sup>b</sup>Includes only respondents who reported El Tree as their place of residence. Three participants indicated they lived in Wichita KS during the time of the interview.