

CULTURAL AND IDENTITY VIEWS IN TRANSNATIONAL SEASONAL WORKERS: A CASE STUDY

LAS PERCEPCIONES DE CULTURA E IDENTIDAD EN TRABAJADORES TRANSNACIONALES EN LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS: UN CASO DE ESTUDIO

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Recibido: 20-04-2022; **Aceptado:** 07-07-2022

Abstract

This case study is a follow up on a previous article and explores the adaptation strategies of a seasonal worker in Midwestern United States. The extensive literature on Latinos in the US does not analyze such transnational, growing communities in Midwestern cities. The complex definitions of identity, literacy and bilingualism added two more layers to the conflicted concepts of transnationalism and respeto to adapt to a foreign culture as defined by Farr (2006). Although the participant is recognized bilingual by himself and others, his definition of belonging to a culture does not allow him to see as neither fully Hispanic nor American. A partnership between community members would help integrate individuals in similar circumstances to an area not as demographically diverse as other North American cities.

Keywords: transnational, acculturation, h2b, esl, identity

Como citar este artículo (APA): VÁSQUEZ, J. A. (2022). LAS PERCEPCIONES DE CULTURA E IDENTIDAD EN TRABAJADORES TRANSNACIONALES EN LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS: UN CASO DE ESTUDIO. *Latitude*, 2(16), 148-164. <https://doi.org/10.55946/latitude.v2i16.201>

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Resumen

Este caso de estudio es la continuación de un artículo previamente publicado. Aquí se explora las estrategias de adaptación de un trabajador temporal en el medio oeste de los Estados Unidos. La vasta literatura sobre latinos en los Estados Unidos no tiene un análisis claro de una comunidad transnacional similar a esta en ciudades en el noroeste del país. A las ya complejas definiciones de identidad, literalidad y bilingüismo, se les explora desde los conceptos de transnacionalismo y respeto, para adaptarse a una cultura, según la definición de Farr (2006). Aunque el participante es identificado como bilingüe por sí mismo y sus pares, su definición de ser parte de una cultura no le permite verse a sí mismo ni como hispano o norteamericano. Se requiere una relación más estrecha entre los miembros de la comunidad, con el fin de ayudar a otros individuos en circunstancias similares a adaptarse a un área de los Estados Unidos que no es tan diversa en términos raciales o culturales, en comparación con otras ciudades norteamericanas.

Palabras clave: transnacional, aculturación, h2b, identidad, respeto

Introduction

This article is a follow up on a previous study (Vásquez, 2016) of a transnational community of seasonal workers in the Midwestern Region of the United States. These community members have been using the H2B visa program for several years. Most of the people mentioned in this context are Mexican Rancheros who lived in the mountains of their country and the Mexican city of Morelia, before becoming transnational, seasonal workers under H2B visas. I had the opportunity to interact with such a singular community for 3 years, when I worked as a Hispanic liaison for a landscaping company who used this seasonal program. In this article I will analyze how an ethnographic perspective could help to clarify some of their opinions, their needs and motivations to come to this country, as well as their perception of the US. I also want to study how their identities have been affected by this transnational reality.

This identity transformation is an analysis of Pedro, a transnational H2B United States visa holder and seasonal worker since 2000.

Literature Review

Most of the references I found address groups such as undocumented workers, students, and communities established permanently in American cities. I was unable to find any substantial information on Mexican Transnational workers the H2B Visa status. Consequently, it is possible to infer that more research is required on this particular area.

1.1. Transnational communities: The best of both worlds

For this paper, I will be using the definition of Transnationalism as explained by Vertovec, in Al-Ali and Koser (2002).

‘Transnationalism’ broadly refers to multiple ties and interactions linking people or institutions across the borders of nation-states. Today, myriad systems of relationship, exchange and mobility function intensively and in real time while being spread across the world. New technologies, especially involving telecommunications, serve to connect such networks. (ii)

Farr (2006) explains the multiple elements surrounding a transnational community, as she discusses how Mexican ranchero immigrants adapt to the American culture and identity in the greater Chicago area without relinquishing their identity and Hispanic roots.

It is commendable how these transnational immigrants are able to call both places, their new country and the old one, home. They do not sever ties with one place or the other. Both worlds are part of their identity and their lives.

Mexican immigrants build their transnational communities around the Mexican American Border. Due to the proximity of both countries, the permanent contact with their home country is easier than it would be for other immigrant groups in the United States. Kamphoefner et al. (1991) support this statement:

Nevertheless, the multiple connections and cross-border mobility construct a transnational community in relatively constant communication; this is quite unlike migrant communities in the past centuries that relied on letters rather on the telephone for such transnational communication, as was the case during the massive German migrations to the United States in the nineteenth Century. (60)

Mexicans are part of the diverse Latino Transnational Communities in the United States, who arrived to this country for a plethora of reasons, and whose stories must be heard, as the United States needs to adapt to the needs of these diverse groups. Nevarez and Castañeda (2019) explain

how the changes in Latino immigrant communities affect the demographics of the United States, and how changes in policy are needed to address those changes.

1.2 Who is a Ranchero?

Barragán (1990) defines Mexican Rancheros as a Mexican mobile community, who are willing to migrate to look for better opportunities for themselves and their families. This migration can be as close as the neighboring town, and as far as the United States. However, Rancheros identify themselves with their homeland and their traditions, which are basically ruled by religion, respect and tradition. It is also very important to add that, even though Rancheros are such a nomad group, their power and advancement are represented by means of owning land. Barragán says;

“The main difference is represented by land. Social hierarchies are strongly connected with lack or possession of goods, basically land. According to this, we can see three groups divided internally, as follows: landlords-ranchers, ranch administrators and middle men-farmers” (81)

Although Rancheros are mobile and tend to leave everything behind to improve their quality of life, they always hope to be able to return to their homeland and their roots at a certain point in their lives. I will discuss identity issues in the following sections.

1.3 Mexican and American identities built together

The United States is a country built on immigrants and foreign labor. From colonial times to the present day, this country has made itself stronger thanks to the efforts of diverse cultures joining together to create a new, more powerful social and cultural entity. It is interesting to notice, however, that some of these ethnic immigrant groups do not lose their heritage. On the contrary, these groups embrace their new homeland without rejecting their previous one. This is the case of the transnational communities, such as the Mexican seasonal workers. They adapt to their temporary home country, yet they remain as nationals of their homeland.

In this context, Mexican workers are usually both mobile and transnational. Barragán (1990) analyzes in detail this situation in the Mexican Rancheros. He explains how they can move out of

their territory as needed, to look for better opportunities for themselves and their families, either in larger Mexican cities or in the United States. Rancheros, however, always maintain contact with their home and their views on their identity as Mexicans. However, the constant interaction between both cultures affects their identity and how they see themselves as individuals and as a community.

Since the annexation of Texas, the Bracero program, the Maquiladoras in the border and the infamous illegal immigration issues, it is evident that both Mexico and the United States, their cultures and histories have been interrelated and will continue to be for the years to come. Due to this interdependent relationship large numbers of Mexican groups have become transnational communities whose members live, work, and always keep in contact with both countries.

Valdés (1996) explains this perception from her ethnographic perspective as she studied Mexican families from the Mexican border who immigrated to Las Fuentes, a Mexican colony in the US. These families remember and feel nostalgic about their homes, in one way or another, even those who cannot go back for any reason.

Once inside the United States, many individuals struggled to maintain contact with the part of the world that they knew and loved. For some, maintaining contact involved making trips to rural Chihuahua several times a year. They sought to share with their children some of what the village or the “Rancho” (the farm) meant to them, and they, therefore, made a special effort to have the children spend time there during the summer months. (69)

Another important element that contributes to strengthening this context is the fact that the US economy has needed foreign labor to perform physical work in fields such as agriculture, manufacturing, and service industries, among others. To fulfill this need, and as an effort to fight illegal immigration, the United States government has sponsored and created very diverse programs to fill the national gap of workers needed, such as the H2 Seasonal visas, used mainly in the agriculture and service industries. As an obvious consequence, the language, literacy, and culture of these temporary workers, as well as the permanent residents of this country who are in contact with them, and the views and opinions that both groups have of each other, are greatly affected. Hence, the changes in the culture of both countries are more visible every time.

All these references, however, are based on Mexican transnational groups who have immigrated with their whole families to this country. These experiences differ when the transnational workers travel by themselves, with no families of their own. At this point, I have yet to find any research related to this field, neither for the State of Ohio, nor for H2B seasonal workers.

1.4. Literacy issues

Some of the Rancheros I had the opportunity to interact with during my tenure at a landscaping company would define themselves as illiterate, since they either lack the reading and writing skills needed in their first or second languages, or their written production is not as quick as the average language user. Guerra (1998) however, would contest the definition of literacy, as he reminds us that the official definition of literacy is yet to be decided.

For at least the past 100 years, government officials, policymakers, theorists, researchers, and practitioners interested in the phenomenon we call literacy have struggled vainly to define it, both literally and figuratively. In a review of the literature of literacy I undertook a few years ago (Guerra, 1992) I incidentally came across more than 40 definitions of the concept. (45)

Calling Rancheros illiterate is, based on the evidence at hand, a misinterpretation.

Although their reading and writing skills are not very powerful, they are able to adapt to their environment and do some written production when they need it, mostly in their job. These skills would make these workers proficient in their field of expertise, which would make them communicative competent in their context. Specific scenarios in which individuals fill out timesheets and measurement tool forms and even broken equipment reports are activities that are known for these Rancheros in their American workplaces. At the same time, the definitions of literacy are very broad and open. The fascinating part of this issue is how these literacy practices are mostly self-taught or transmitted from one worker to the next. Training provided in these areas depends on time and financial constraints, as indicated by Farr (2006). At the same time, formal education in their mother language or in English is minimal.

2. An overview of the H2B Program and the Landscaping Industry

As defined by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) The H2 seasonal visa program is divided in 2 parts, H2A and H2B. H2A is the oldest version, and was created mainly for agricultural workers. The H2B Visa program was created in 1990 as an answer to the increasing demand of workers in the non-agricultural, service businesses and industries. It was also designed as a tool to fight illegal immigration. As of 2021, The program allows to 66,000 seasonal workers to come to the US, perform their duties and return to their home country before the expiration of their visas. Provided that there are not any legal, criminal or performance issues involved, the average H2B worker will be allowed to reapply for a new visa to return to the United States as a guest worker the following season. It is necessary to add, at this point, that H2B visas are only issued to the temporary workers, as their families are only allowed to come with them under a dependent visa for the duration of the work season, and not allowed to legally work while in the United States, as explained in the H2B Rules of the program (2022)

Any H-2B worker's spouse and unmarried children under 21 years of age may seek admission in H-4 nonimmigrant classification. Family members are not eligible for employment in the United States while in H-4 status.

As explained in the previous quote, although the restrictions on H2B Visa workers require their families to apply for a separate status, the program is vastly used by Service Industries in the U nited States. Landscaping companies are, perhaps, the larger beneficiaries of the H2B visa program. In this regard, Wisniewsky (2004) explains,

“A Lawn & Landscape survey reports that 19 percent of contractors employed H2B workers in 2003. And according to the Department of Labor, landscape industry jobs made up 42,000 of the 165,000 petitions for H2B workers in 2003 (25.45 percent), making it the No 1. Industry utilizing the program” (p. 39)

Due to various reasons such as geography, logistics and their long history with the US, Mexico is the country that provides the US with the largest number of seasonal workers to the H2B Program. There are, however, H2B users from other countries such as Guatemala and El Salvador. In an effort to solve issues of English language proficiency, American employers have

expanded their recruitment efforts to English speaking countries such as Jamaica, South Africa and even bilingual laborers from the former Soviet Union.

3. The Site

Before being absorbed by a larger corporation, Mikey's Grass was a landscaping company with over 25 years of experience in the field, and with a total of 350 field workers during peak season in 2006. Out of these 350 field workers, 250 are H2B visa holders, spread out in two states in the Midwest of the United States. Depending on factors such as the number of contracts the company obtains, the weather outside, and the size of each branch, landscaping season will usually begin in early February and will end in early December, when the grass stops growing. This company began using the H2B program in 1998, when their growth increased from two branches to four, creating an immense job demand that could not be met with US national workers in the area.

4. The Participant

Pedro Zavala is a field supervisor for one of the largest branches of Mikey's Grass. He has been working for them for almost six years. In Mexico, Pedro has the equivalent of an elementary school degree. Before coming to the US, Pedro was a Mexican Ranchero who worked in the field as a farmer, and then moved to a medium sized Mexican city, where he was a bus and taxi driver for several years. This is not his first visit to this country as, like several of his peers, he came numerous times in the early 80's as a worker for some other companies. Pedro has seven brothers, and six of them are in the US. Two of those six accompany him as part of the H2B visa program at the same branch of Mikey's Grass.

In Pedro's own words, he had a rough start with management when he first joined this company in 2000. However, meetings with other company H2B workers and English-speaking managers suggest he is now a role model for his peers and very respected by both Hispanic and American workforces, as one of the most improved, reliable and effective workers the company has. According to his supervisors, Pedro was once very ignorant of the English language and U.S. customs. He is now fully bilingual and multicultural. He began working with this company as an ordinary field worker, but moved up the ranks to Leadsman, Foreman, Branch Representative to

the corporate offices, Domestic Manager, Trainer and now Assistant recruiter and Field Supervisor in charge of several work crews and their performance. He is the second Hispanic worker in the history of the company to have achieved such a high advancement.

5. Methodology

The information that I analyzed came from artifact collection and 2 interviews with my participant, in which I took notes and used audio recording. Pedro and I discussed several topics in these conversations. This approach allowed me to gather information on the topics that Pedro considers important, giving me more candid feedback than a scripted interview. My intent was to find any recurrent patterns in Pedro's discourse that would allow me to identify some of his views on language, literacy and culture, and his motivations to keep coming back to perform his duties every year, far from his home, family, and friends. After my interviews took place, I cross referenced Pedro's answers with my informal conversations with his managers, other Hispanic Employees, and access to Pedro's employee records. My goal was to identify repetitive patterns that better explained how Pedro visualized himself as a Hispanic in a transnational community, while negotiating his personal discourse, within the larger Discourse of his environment.

I will use the term Discourse (with capital D) as defined by Gee (1999) for whom "a Discourse is a "Dance" that exists in the abstract as a coordinated pattern of words, deeds, values, beliefs, symbols, tools, objects, times and places in the here and now as a performance that is recognizable as just such a coordination" (p. 19).

I am interested in exploring Pedro's motivations and strategies to become a successful employee and model member of two Discourses: Mexican and American. Per my informal conversations with his American supervisors, and based on his yearly performance reviews, Pedro is very respected by his Mexican peers and performs as a model US citizen, completely assimilated to the culture and willing to help others to go through his same process.

I will support these facts by quoting some of Pedro's answers in our final conversation. I translated these quotes into English, since Pedro felt more confident answering the interview in our shared mother tongue. This also gave me the insider's point of view when doing the interview,

since I belong to a culture like his. This and the fact that we worked together for three years, allow me to understand most of the perceptions that he finds sometimes difficult to explain in English.

6. Analysis and findings

During our conversations, I found several elements that helped me understand Pedro's views on his position as a bridge between both Mexican and American and their discourses within his company, and his relationship with both cultures in Mexico and the US. These include respect towards his family, pride in his job as a mediator between the Mexican and American cultures, as well as the perception of himself as a neutral link, not connected to either one world or the other. In his role, he tries to be respectful and neutral with all parties involved. The concept of Respect, however, translates differently from Mexican Spanish to American English.

6.1. Respect towards family values

In her work on culturally diverse groups, Valdés (1996) explains the definition of Respeto (respect) as being a multi-layered concept, which maintains the basic rules in different contexts. For Rancheros, Respeto (respeto) can be interpreted as respect towards family values, beliefs, authority figures and traditions. In this case, I will focus on the concept of respect towards family values and traditions.

Family seems to be Pedro's main motivation to continue doing his job. However, his conception of family values might look a little different from conventional American standards. This means, to improve himself and his family, Pedro is willing to sacrifice himself to a point where he leaves behind everything he cares about, to support his family financially. This only happens, provided that his family approves (and respects) that he come to the US year after year, which is a struggle every season:

- 1 <Fíjate que es muy difícil para
- 2 convencer a los niños, más que nada
- 3 porque cuando tú te propones algo, este 4 año quiero hacer esto, tienes el apoyo de 5 tu familia,
- te sientes realizado, es como 6 una mujer, no es lo mismo pues aquí que 7 en México... una mujer
- se ve realizada
- 8 cuando sus hijos crecen, a lo mejor se

9 casan y tienen una profesión, ella se ve 10 en ellos, es un espejo, a lo mejor aquí 11 no es lo mismo, entonces, por ejemplo, 12 allá, para venir nosotros para acá es un 13 cuento, los chiquillos... a mí me dice 14 mi niña, “¿Qué vas a hacer tú allá, si 15 aquí tenemos qué comer...>

16<(hablando sobre cómo lo reclutaron) 17 les dije, ¿Sabes qué? apúntame yo voy, 18 no le pedí permiso a mi esposa ni nada 19 de eso...>

20...Y me siento bien, me siento realizado 21 como persona, y mientras ellos me 22 necesiten aquí estaré, y mi familia lo 23 permita, porque no vayas a creer... que 24 me voy a estar aquí toda la vida...>

<<You know, it’s very difficult to convince specially the kids, because when you set goals or yourself, I want to do such thing this year, you have your family’s support, you feel yourself like you achieved something, it’s like a woman, it’s not the same up here than down in Mexico... a woman feels she achieved something when her kids grow up, maybe they get married and get a career, she looks at herself on them, it’s a mirror, maybe here it’s not the same, then, for instance, there, so we can come up here it’s a whole story, the kids... the (his) girl tells me, What are you going to do there, we have food here...>

<(On how he got recruited:)... So I told them (the recruiters) you know what? Sign me in, I am coming with you. I didn’t ask for my wife’s permission or anything like that>

<So... I feel fine, I feel I am reaching my goals as a person, and provided that they (his managers) need me, I’ll be here, and if my family allows me to, because don’t fool yourself... I am not staying here all my life>

When Pedro starts talking about his family, his pitch lowers, although he emphasizes a lot of key words. He stresses the accent in words such as family, wife, girl, and support more strongly than the others when he pronounces a sentence. Also, he did not look into my eyes when we were discussing these topics. He also repeated several times that he needs his family’s approval to leave.

At the end of this segment, (lines 22 and 23) he summarizes all the ideas he has been trying to express. These yearly trips to the US are not worth the effort if his family does not support him. Most importantly, he wants to go back home to his wife and kids at the end of his career. This is very clear with the very last statement. No vayas a creer que me voy a estar aquí toda la vida (Don’t fool yourself, I am not staying here all my life.)

It is possible to see how Pedro is trying to reconcile both Discourses in his life: His role as an English-speaking employee, and his personal feelings as a Mexican Transnational worker and

a family man. It appears to be a challenge for him to live in both Discourses, as they both are very different and far from each by definition and distance.

Pedro also made clear how difficult it is to leave his home every February, at the beginning of the season. The burden of being a transnational worker without his family is very heavy, as it is clear in the following segment from our second taped conversation:

1 <Cuando me voy, voy gustoso, cuando
2 me regreso vengo triste, deja uno allá la 3 familia... pero con ganas... de echarle 4 ganas para salir adelante.>

<When I'm leaving, I'm all joy, but when I come back, I'm sad, you leave your family down there... but I also have a desire.... Desire to work real hard to reach my goals...>

In the previous segment, we can see clearly here that Pedro does not want to leave Mexico every year, much less stay for the whole season. However, he has goals for himself and his family that he cannot reach if he stays home. Pedro is willing to sacrifice his personal happiness to get to this country to work, (line 1) and has the desire to return to his family when the season is over. He knows this is the best alternative for his family, and he hopes he will be able to return home, someday permanently. (Line 4). In other words, as he embraces his role as a Transnational member of a community, he is expecting this responsibility to end at some point, where he will be able to embrace a Discourse closer to his heart than his duties.

6.2. The sponsor

Pedro seems to enjoy his job greatly. He respects his peers and feels he has earned their respect. It is possible, however, that he is not aware of the fact that his job has him assuming three roles constantly: one as a Hispanic worker, second as a supervisor, and the third one, as a mediator between both cultures. Pedro thinks that his job is a tool, but sometimes his role becomes a limitation for Americans and Hispanics who work with him, as other people rely on him rather than their own skills to perform their duties:

1 <O sea, yo básicamente le estoy
2 quitando la oportunidad a los

3 supervisores, la oportunidad de que a lo 4 mejor aprenda español, o que los
5 muchachos hablen más inglés... o sea,
6 me convierto en la conexión entre ellos.>
<What I mean is, I'm basically taking away the opportunity to the supervisors to maybe learn
Spanish, or the boys to speak more English...I mean, I become the connection between them>
7 Julián: ¿Qué opinión tienen de ti?
8 Pedro: Pues ellos, en lo personal, este... 9 me respetan mucho, porque en un
10 período corto de tiempo, no muy largo, 11 cinco años, para mí no son muchos,
12 ellos me conocieron cómo llegué yo
13 aquí, y me fui superando cada día,
14 algunos me admiran, me dicen "oye, te 15 lo has ganado a pulso...">
<Julián: What do they (American Managers) think of you?
Pedro: Well, they, from what I've seen, well, they respect me a lot, because in a very short span
of time, not very long, 5 years, I don't think that's too much, they knew me, how I was when I
first got here, and how I improved myself day after day, some of them have shown me their
admiration, they say to me "hey, you have earned this with your own effort...>

Pedro knows his job is very important inside the company. However, he thinks that sometimes people from both cultures refuse to interact with each other because his role as a contact makes things easier for everyone. (Line 2) People do not need to make an effort to try to understand each other when Pedro is present. They do not intent to understand each other's culture and values, because they do not see the need to do so. But Pedro also knows he is a very valuable employee and is aware of his role inside the company. He also knows everyone respects him for what he is: a leader that connects both worlds, Anglo and Hispanic. (Lines 13 and 16)

6.3. Identity and job ethics

There is a very strong sense of pride in Pedro as a Hispanic worker. As a landscaper, everyone sees what he is doing, and it needs to be done perfectly. However, his job sends him into a very strong struggle with his Mexican identity, and it seems like he does not even notice it. These are some of the answers he gave me when talking about his job responsibilities:

1 Julián: O sea, tú sientes que estás
 2 ayudando de pronto a tu cultura...
 3 Pedro: Yo siento que lo estoy
 4 haciendo... perfectamente, para
 5 ayudarlos mucho a ellos
 6 Julián: Ellos, ¿Quiénes?
 7 Pedro: A los hispanos
 8 Julián: Muy bien... Un momentico,
 9 Cómo así que a ellos, ¿Tú ya no te sientes hispano entonces?
 9 Pedro: Sí, yo soy hispano
 10 Julián: Entonces, por qué ellos
 11 Pedro: Porque ellos lo necesitan
 12 Julián: Muy bien
 13 Pedro: Y el americano, pues se siente 14 bien, porque en el momento en que
 15 ellos dicen “quiero que hagas esto” y se 16 hace como ellos dicen, estamos
 17 siguiendo un patrón, de control de
 18 calidad, de mantener
 19 el mismo tipo de trabajo para que todo 20 el mundo esté contento...
 <Julián: What I mean is, Are you maybe helping your culture when doing this...
 Pedro: I feel that’s what I’m doing
 ... perfectly, to help them a lot
 Julián: Them? Them who?
 Pedro: The Hispanics
 Julián: Ok. Wait a minute! What do you mean them? So, don’t you feel Hispanic anymore?
 Pedro: Yes, I am Hispanic
 Julián Then, Why them
 Pedro: (appears to be confused by my reaction) Because they need it
 Julián: Very well then...
 Pedro: And the American, well, he feels fine, because at the moment in which they a say “I want
 you to do this” and it’s done how they say, we are following pattern, of quality control, to keep
 standardized our job, so everyone is happy

We can, consequently, get two clear observations from these sentences: On one hand, Pedro sees his job as a mediator as very important inside the company culture.

On the other hand, and when performing his duties, Pedro reveals a second identity that compromises both, Hispanic and American Discourses. When referring to his peers as “them” (line 7) he is setting distance from his friends as an ethnic group. However, when he also refers to the American supervisor as “he,” (line 12) Pedro is stating that his identity does not belong to the American world either. This might also mean that, as an authority figure, Pedro tries to distance himself from both cultures. We could conclude that Pedro sees himself as a leader for both worlds, not only Mexicans or Americans within their respective discourses.

7. Potential fields of study

Although there is much more information not explored in this paper from my two meetings with Pedro, this brief analysis allowed me to see many areas in which an ethnography of communication could be useful to identify some of the issues of this transnational community:

- a. Identity issues of the seasonal workers, and how they see themselves and others in both Discourses, as Mexicans and Immigrants. This would include a more linear study, starting with the recruitment process in Mexico, until the end of the landscaping season in the United States, when they return to their home country.
- b. Methods and strategies successful transnational immigrants use to become part of the US culture, and how these strategies can be replicated to other transnational/immigrant Latino communities in the United States.
- c. How transnational immigrants negotiate their identities in both communities in which they spend their lives, and how they adapt to the US Culture.

8. Final remarks

Pedro is one of the many Hispanic legal immigrants who must pay a very high price in order to become part of the new world they have chosen. They must learn a new language, adapt to a new culture, and get used to different practices they have never seen before. In the case of the H2B seasonal workers, this price is even higher. They have to leave their loved ones behind to become laborers in a country where they are not accepted completely, yet that country needs their abilities

to keep the economy moving. H2B workers do not see themselves as Americans either, but they present cultural and emotional issues when readapting to their home country culture and returning to the United States to continue their labor.

I acknowledge that illegal immigration has a lot of negative consequences for all of those involved, but it is not logical or fair to stereotype all immigrants as outlaws, ignorant people who are breaking the law and abusing the system. That is as serious as the deficit theory, in which other ethnic groups are inferior because they are different to the dominant one.

Obviously, there are transgressors of the law; and illegal immigration is an issue in the United States. But not all the immigrants in this country are in this situation. There are thousands of seasonal workers like Pedro, who comes and goes out of the country when ordered by immigration, who follows the rules and takes pride in his job. Immigrants grateful for what the US has done for them, and who want to give their best to this country to improve themselves and their families, even while paying such a high price. Even those who enter the US against the specified rules, are sacrificing themselves, even their own personal integrity for a better future.

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