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**INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION
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FROM COSTA RICA AND EL SALVADOR**

GUY POITRAS

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Guy Poitras
San Antonio, Texas

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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND

The migration of Latin Americans to the United States has become the focus of study for an increasing number of researchers during the 1970s. The importance of Mexican migration has been stressed by many of these studies.¹ It is the basic contention of this report that there is a need to broaden the data base of Latin American migration from Mexico and a few other countries in the Caribbean and South America to the region of Central America. It is our conviction, arrived at both before and after completion of this study, that Central America is not only an important supplying region of U. S.-bound migrants but that it will continue to be so into the 1980s. Mexican migration is of course crucial to Mexico and to the United States. But migration from areas like Central America must be considered as well. The flow, composition, behavior and impact of Central American return migrants must be established and then compared with Mexico and other supplying areas within Latin America. It is the purpose of this report to begin this important task.

A. Goals

The research behind this project was designed to do several things: first, to broaden the data base on the flow, composition,

¹ The work of Cornelius, Bustamante, North and others have concentrated on Mexican migration although differences do appear in the literature as to its significance and impact. See bibliography.

behavior, and impact of return migrants from El Salvador and Costa Rica to the United States; second, to compare both national migrant groups; third, to employ national samples which would give us greater confidence in our conclusions; fourth, to describe in a preliminary way the nature of international migration from El Salvador and Costa Rica to the United States and back again so as to provide useful findings for researchers and policymakers.

This report is divided into six major segments. First, we wish to describe the demographic and personal characteristics of the return migrants from both El Salvador and Costa Rica. (Chapter Two). After analyzing their composition, we will describe the flow of these return migrants to and from the United States. (Chapter Three). Next, we will discuss their behavior in the United States (Chapter Four). Principally, we are interested in where they went, how they lived and what their work and other experiences were. The discussion of impact will focus upon their United States experience and the importance of work in the United States for their own lives and for their home countries (Chapters Five and Six). As this report unfolds, it must be kept in mind that our main goals are to describe and compare the migrants and to demonstrate their similarities and differences.

B. Methods and Sampling

The methodology and sampling require brief mention. In general, the methodology behind the study, and the questionnaire itself,

emulate similar studies on Mexican and other migrants.² This was done for several more or less obvious reasons but the major reason was that we wanted to replicate and compare. This allows us to do just this. The data base for Costa Rica and El Salvador is an extension of other studies. Also, it was important to study the migrants in their own country. Veracity and compliance were important considerations in this strategy. Moreover, we are mainly interested in return migrants and not in those who regard themselves as permanent residents of the United States. In this sense, our concern is focused on the role of international migration to the United States and its impact upon Costa Rica and El Salvador.

The sampling of return migrants is of course no easy matter. However, we were determined not to sample migrants only in certain towns, or only in rural areas or in certain regions. We succeeded in creating a national sample of return migrants for each country in the sense that we have a good cross section of respondents from the central metropolitan areas of both countries and from other towns and less urban areas.³ With this national sampling framework we selected households from segments in the Central Valley and Pacific Coast of Costa Rica and from segments in the metropolitan area and in four major cities outside San Salvador. In addition, household-generated migrants were asked to identify others in or out of their own segment. The national sampling framework therefore uses both

2 This refers to interviews conducted in the sending countries and to the kinds of questions included in the interviews. We agree with those who feel that migrants who have returned are more cooperative, considering the kind of questions to be asked.

3 The samples were developed from national household samples created by The National University of Costa Rica and by a Guatemalan research firm.

random and reputational sampling.

In all, 314 Costa Ricans and 259 Salvadoreans were interviewed. The criteria for selection were these: first, the migrant had to be about 18 years old or older; second, the migrant had to have gone to the United States at least once in the last ten years; the migrant also must have stayed a minimum of one month. The refusal rate was low. However, some interviewees, mostly Salvadoreans, declined to answer some questions about their movements and behavior in the United States. Salvadoreans as a group also tended to be without documents. The interviewers went into the field between August of 1977 and December of 1979. The situation in El Salvador was particularly tenuous. Violence, assassinations, and changes in government made it difficult, but not impossible, to extract the data. We feel that this was a major accomplishment. It certainly may make the data even more important in the near future, especially if events in El Salvador prove to be important for affecting international migration from that country. The data was analyzed at IDEPSO (National University of Costa Rica) and at Trinity University in the first few months of 1980

C. The Countries Studied

Although the data are largely descriptive, and oriented toward immediate policy concerns, the project from the beginning was motivated by a concern for demonstrating how the two sets of migrants

were similar and different, not just between each other but with other migrants reported on in other studies. We wanted to see if, and by how much, these migrants in this study were going to diverge from the Mexican model. As the report will indicate, there are important differences and similarities which cannot be overlooked by researchers or by policymakers.

The choice of El Salvador and of Costa Rica as the two countries in the study is also a matter of some interest. Some of it was logistical. Guy Poitras of Trinity University conceived, designed and acquired funding for the study. Dr. Carlos Denton and Mr. Marcos Bogan of the National University of Costa Rica had the samples and in-place resources to carry out field work in Costa Rica and El Salvador. The binational project became an alliance of respective contributions between two institutions.⁴ Costa Rica and El Salvador were selected for other reasons as well. Both had accessible national household samples which were pivotal to the whole methodology. If some representativeness in the samples was to be achieved, then these two countries were good prospects.

Costa Rica and El Salvador also offered the opportunity for comparison. (See Table I) Both are small developing Central American republics with generally similar features: limited resources, high economic growth rates, high population growth

4 Access to the survey data is shared by both institutions.

TABLE I
SELECTED DATA COMPARING COSTA RICA
AND EL SALVADOR

	<u>El Salvador</u>	<u>Costa Rica</u>
Population in millions (1978)	4.3	2.1
Population in millions (2000)	8.1	3.2
% increase (1978-2000)	86.9	53.6
1976 birth rate per 1000	40.2	29.7
1976 death rate per 1000	7.5	4.6
Rate of natural increase (%)	3.2	2.5
Doubling times in years	21.0	28.0
Population under 15 years of age in per cent (1978)	46.4	41.1
GNP per capita in \$ (1976)	490	1040
Average annual growth of GNP per capita (1960-1976)	1.8	3.4
Urban population as % of total	37.0	39.8
Students as % of all, 7-13 yrs.	78.6	100.5
Students as % of all, 14-19 yrs.	31.0	49.5
Students as % of all, 20-24 yrs.	7.0	16.5
Illiteracy as % of all those over 15 years of age	43.1	11.6
Economically active as % of total population	37.0	31.3
Agricultural and related work as % of total population economically active	46.6	36.4

Sources: InterAgency Task Force on Immigration Policy, Staff Report Washington, D. C.: Departments of Justice, Labor and State, March 1979); James Wilkie (ed.), Statistical Abstract of Latin America, Vol. 19 (Los Angeles: UCLA Latin American Center, 1978).

rates and geographical nearness to the United States. In other words, they both fit the general profile of countries exporting labor to labor consuming countries such as the United States. As Table I reveals, they have other shared traits as well as some differences. Population size and growth is greater in El Salvador than in Costa Rica. The Salvadoreans as a nation are slightly younger and less urban than the Costa Ricans. Moreover, their educational system is less universal and illiteracy is significantly higher. Most striking perhaps is the discrepancy in GNP per capita. Costa Ricans on average have more than twice the income of Salvadoreans. This is important for our comparisons later. We began with the assumption that international labor migration is not strictly a phenomenon common to exporting countries which are rural, developing, overpopulated and relatively poor. In fact, we presumed that such a phenomenon would exist in a widely diversified assortment of developing countries, including those like Costa Rica which enjoy a relatively high standard of living, democratic traditions and a modicum of hope for the future. International migration involves the movement of rural farm workers from Mexico but it also includes the movement of urban skilled and semiskilled workers from countries like Costa Rica and El Salvador.

Central America as a supplier of international migrants has been overlooked in favor of Mexico and the Caribbean basin. This study will begin to broaden and redefine the migration of Latin

Americans to the United States. Since much about migration from any of these areas is still unknown, this study offers an important but still preliminary preface to what is hoped will become an enduring interest in this subregion. There is reason to expect that this interest of policy and research will not be misplaced, Central America, and especially El Salvador and Nicaragua, have undergone major changes recently which not only have affected, but will continue to affect, the political and economic structures of their own nations and those of the region as a whole. Of the other countries in the subregion, only Costa Rica seems relatively immune from the drastic internal struggles experienced in the rest of Central America. Still, complacency about this region is surely dangerous in itself. Even if the "worse case" possibility does not materialize for these small, vulnerable states, their attempts for coping with their problems will not likely foreclose the region's role as a current and future supplier of human capital to the United States and other countries in this general area.

CHAPTER TWO

THE COMPOSITION OF THE COSTA RICAN AND SALVADOREAN RETURN MIGRANTS

Before describing the basic characteristics of the migrants, it should be made clear just how the subjects were defined. Our standards of inclusion reflected not only some concern for operational rigor. They also revealed the basic conception of the nature of North-South worker migration between Latin America and the United States. First, by conducting a survey of return migrants in their home countries, we were obviously studying migrants who, on the whole, did not intend to become permanent settlers in the United States. They certainly do differ from the traditional immigrants to the United States in that they have no overwhelming need or desire to remain there.¹ Their objective was temporary work not permanent residence. This must be kept in mind when attempting to define all migrants and immigrants and when attempting to assess the impact they have on the countries involved. Second, the legal and policy concerns of international migrants are important for the study but we did not restrict ourselves just to undocumented aliens. Instead, we wished to include all those who went to the United States regardless of their legal status or expressed intent. As it turned out, this was a wise decision because international labor migration from Costa Rica and El Salvador to the United States is more often than not accomplished with

1 Guy Poitras, Return Migration from the United States to Costa Rica and El Salvador (San Antonio: Border Research Institute, Trinity University, March 1980.)

U.S. immigration documents of one sort or another.

Most studies of Mexican migrants, especially the undocumented aliens, conclude that males dominate the profile. We did not begin with this assumption. Therefore, we did not limit ourselves just to males. Our criteria for selection did not include sex. The criteria we did employ, however, did include a minimum age (at time of interview), a minimum duration in the United States, a minimum number of trips (one at least), and a period of experience of one decade (1969-1979). The return migrants from both Costa Rica and El Salvador were therefore selected from standardized criteria and based upon certain assumptions about international migration.

A. Sex, Age, and Marital Status

The young, unattached male is often portrayed as the typical "illegal alien" who comes from a rural sending area in Mexico to work in the United States. To the extent that this may be increasingly less the case with regard to Mexico, the argument must be even more qualified for the Costa Ricans and Salvadoreans in our study. It is true that males were more likely to be return migrants than females in both groups. Still, among the Salvadoreans, females constitute a large minority. This is particularly interesting since Salvadoreans are less likely to enter the United States with papers. The Costa Ricans have a larger proportion of males than do the Salvadoreans. In this sense, they more closely resemble the sexual status of undocumented Mexicans

TABLE I

Sex, Age and Marital Status

	<u>Costa Rica</u>	<u>El Salvador</u>
<u>Sex</u>		
Male	78%	55%
Female	22	45
<u>Present Age</u>		
25 or Less	24	40
26 - 35	41	37
36 - 45	21	12
46 - 55	10	7
56 or More	4	4
<u>Marital Status</u>		
Single	31	41
Married	62	38
Consensual Union	1	10
Separated / Divorced	6	8
Widowed	0	3

who are nevertheless unlike the Costa Ricans in many other ways. Return migration, it seems clear, is not the exclusive preserve of one sex or the other, although males certainly are more involved in this phenomenon than their share of the national population alone would lead us to predict.

The age of the migrants is also of interest to us.² Young migrants tend to have different needs, and impacts, than older ones. It is also a matter of conventional wisdom that the average bracero-type worker from Mexico is quite young. The physical labor requires it and age itself may make such a process less burdensome. The Costa Ricans and Salvadoreans are likewise relatively young. However, they are older than their fellow citizens (somewhat due to sampling) and they are also older than migrants of other countries such as Mexico whose average age is in the twenties. The Costa Ricans are older than the Salvadoreans (33 years to 30 years respectively). The Salvadoreans are more likely to be in their twenties and thirties; the Costa Ricans have more in the middle thirties and even older than do the Salvadoreans. Overall, these ages are not startling departures from other studies in other countries. Still, it is also clear that the means and the interval distribution for both groups point to a somewhat more mature migrant population.

On the average the Costa Ricans who are older than the Salvadoreans are also far more likely to be married. Over three-

² This refers to current (late 1979) age of the migrants. Most were two or more years younger at the time of their migration. The average "U.S. age" of the Costa Ricans was about 27; the Salvadoreans about 26.

TABLE II

MEAN (\bar{X}) DIFFERENCES OF SELECT
CHARACTERISTICS FROM THE TWO SAMPLES

	<u>El Salvador</u>	<u>Costa Rica</u>
% male	54.8	77.7
% married	37.8	62.1
Age in years	30.8	33.3
Father's education in years	7.5	7.2
Migrant's education in years	10.1	10.8
Parent's children	4.4	6.8
Migrant's children	1.7	1.8
Places lived as a youth	1.3	1.6
Places lived as an adult	1.1	1.5
Children of migrant in school	0.9	0.7
Dependents (other than children)	0.9	0.4
% speaking English well or very well	22.4	46.8

fifths of the Costa Ricans are married but less than two-fifths of the Salvadoreans are. Still, if legally married and common law migrants are taken together, these Salvadoreans approach nearly 48 per cent of all in the sample, compared to 63 per cent for the Costa Ricans. Although the Salvadoreans are more likely to be single than the Costa Ricans, neither group of migrants is overwhelmingly single. Indeed, only about 3 per cent separates the single and married Salvadoreans. The important thing to remember then is that the marital status for both groups is mixed. This conclusion sets the return migrants from Costa Rica (and to a lesser extent El Salvador) apart from the conventional assertion about rural Mexican workers who migrate to the United States. It also more or less fits the expectations of those who have studied OTM (Other than Mexican) migration from Latin America to the United States.

B. Schooling, Family, and Mobility

The personal histories of the return migrants as youths revealed certain patterns with regard to education, family size, and internal migration. These characteristics in turn reveal differences and similarities, some of which are of possible significance for international migration. The level of education of the migrant is, of course, a summary indicator of many things about the migrant. One would expect that a fairly substantial number of years of schooling would be reflected in occupational

status and earnings. A certain amount of schooling may in fact make it highly unlikely that the migrant would accept or do menial, rural labor in the American southwest and, instead, he would gravitate toward American cities in search of work more appropriate to his educational level.

Education as measured by years of schooling differentiates the Costa Ricans from the Salvadoreans by less than one year (10.8 to 10.1). With not quite one year of schooling separating the two groups of migrants, we would therefore expect the Costa Ricans as a group to have a slight advantage derived from educational background. This difference could be significant for their general economic situation and for their work experience in the United States. Moreover, if years of schooling are placed within intervals generally indicative of primary, secondary, and post-secondary education, some interesting differences emerge from both groups of migrants.

While 20.1 per cent of the Costa Ricans completed six years or less, only one tenth of the Salvadoreans dropped out of school at this stage. This is a mildly surprising difference. On the other hand, 62.8 per cent of the Salvadoreans attended school from between seven to eleven years; 38.9 per cent of the Costa Ricans did the same. The majority of the former have secondary backgrounds. The Costa Ricans surpass the Salvadoreans in post-secondary education. Only 27 per cent of the Salvadoreans went beyond eleven years but 41.1 per cent of the Costa Ricans did. The Costa Ricans are more likely to have highly educated migrants in the sample, perhaps with skills and abilities of use to them in the United States.

The post secondary group of Costa Ricans was the largest group by year of schooling; the secondary group was the largest for the Salvadoreans. Overall then, the Salvadoreans had smaller proportions at the extreme levels of schooling and most of the migrants were in the secondary category. The Costa Ricans had more evenly distributed, but gradually increasing, proportions from the low to the high levels of education.

Not only are the Costa Rican migrants better educated overall, they also have experienced more educational mobility than have their Salvadorean counterparts. In Table III, it is apparent that the fathers of migrants with a primary education have children (the migrants) with higher levels of education in both groups. But, again, these migrants are concentrated in the secondary level for the Salvadoreans and are in the secondary but also more in the post secondary group for the Costa Ricans. Salvadorean fathers with secondary and post secondary education likewise produce migrants with educational levels at those levels. But the migrants from El Salvador are still concentrated in the secondary levels. For the Costa Ricans, the greater educational mobility is seen in the fact that fathers with both secondary and post secondary children have children (migrants) with overwhelming proportions at the post secondary level.

The migrants from both Costa Rica and El Salvador came from families of different sizes and of different migratory histories. On average, the Costa Rican migrants came from larger

families than did the Salvadoreans. There is no apparent reason for this. Moreover, the difference in means (\bar{x}) is wide enough to be intriguing and perhaps significant. There is also more mobility of the migrant's family as a child in the Costa Rican sample. The family must have changed locale and not just residences within a locale for it to be regarded as an internal migration. In both cases, there were more than one but less than two moves for the family in which the migrant grew up. The difference between the two is not very great. However, the Costa Ricans were more mobile as children, as adults and as international migrants. Without a comparative base upon which to evaluate the number of internal migrations, it is difficult to surmise what it means. Still, the Costa Rican migrants had more active histories as migrants than did the Salvadoreans.

C. Family, Dependents, and Mobility

The adult migrants are old enough to take on the obligations of family or to support, in some cases, individuals who are not their own offspring. They are also old enough to make decisions about internal as well as international migration. As with other composition variables, these, we presumed, might be important as factors affecting the decision(s) of the migrants from both Costa Rica and El Salvador for going to the United States. Family and other obligations may pressure the married migrants to consider the United States as a work place. And if these family and dependents are actually taken on the trip, the consequences for

TABLE IV

Children and Other Dependents of Migrants

<u>number of children</u>	<u>Children</u>		<u>Dependents</u>		<u>Children in School</u>	
	<u>El Salvador</u>	<u>Costa Rica</u>	<u>El Salvador</u>	<u>Costa Rica</u>	<u>El Salvador</u>	<u>Costa Rica</u>
0	32.0	34.4	57.1	77.1	55.2	57.6
1	22.4	16.2	15.8	12.1	19.7	19.1
2	19.3	19.7	15.8	7.0	15.4	15.6
3	13.1	15.6	6.9	1.9	6.6	5.1
4 or more	13.2	14.1	4.3	1.8	3.1	2.5
	<u>100.0 %</u>	<u>100.0%</u>	<u>100.0%</u>	<u>100.0%</u>	<u>100.0%</u>	<u>100.0%</u>

the United States and for the home countries are different than if the migrant is unmarried and has no family obligations. Likewise, internal migrations as an adult may give the migrant a propensity to expand the scope of the migratory experience. For all these reasons, these variables were considered to be important.

Although the Costa Rican migrants come from families larger than the Salvadoreans, they have families which are only slightly larger than the Salvadorean migrants. Of course, it must be recalled that many of the Salvadoreans are single. Both samples of migrants average less than two children. Nearly one third of both groups of migrants had no children. This of course depresses the averages for both groups as a whole. Still, the Salvadoreans were more likely to have such financial responsibilities than were the Costa Rican migrants. Almost two out of five Salvadorean migrants fully or partially supported dependents other than their own children; less than one fourth of the Costa Ricans were in the same situation. As for children attending school, more than half of the migrants from both groups had no children in school. Both samples were very much alike in this respect. Virtually one fifth of both migrant groups with any children had one child in school and the rest had two or more. This situation not only has implications for the support needed to keep these children in school but it also

has possible ramifications for American school systems if the migrants bring, or intend to bring next time, children of school age to the United States.

D. Occupational Status, Schooling, and English Ability

The composition of return migrants must include their occupational, educational and linguistic skills. If, as we assumed in the very beginning, return migrants are for the most part temporary workers in the international economy rather than permanent settlers, then the occupational and related variables of migrant composition take on a special significance. For one thing, these variables may set them apart from the general population of both countries. For another, it reveals the kind of worker who enters the streams of migration from the South to the North. Finally, the kind of worker we are studying has very important implications for impact upon the host and sending countries. Even without detailed presentation of data, our study confirmed the fact that the return migrants from both El Salvador and Costa Rica did not fit the conventional profile of the rural Mexican worker. Instead, these are urban workers with a diversity of skills and abilities.

Only 3.1% of the Salvadoreans and 3.4% of the Costa Ricans experienced one month or more of unemployment during the twelve months in their home country preceding their last trip to the United States. This indicates that unemployment was not a principal characteristic of many return migrants. Many were in

school, some were not in the job market, some had not yet begun working. Others had less lengthy unemployment periods. This distinguishes them from many Mexican workers. Unemployment and underemployment are often said to be the major push factors of migration. But unemployment does not seem to be that important in these two groups of migrants. Underemployment or depressed wages may be another matter, however. The mean (\bar{x}) earnings for the Salvadoreans per hour was \$0.95; for the Costa Ricans it was \$1.01 per hour. Again, these are means for both samples, although many did not work before going to the United States.

The current occupational status of the migrants also provides a clue as to what kind of migrant workers they are. Later, it will be treated as an impact variable. For now, the occupational categories, based upon the Costa Rican census, provide very revealing data about the return migrants themselves. The first item of note is the importance of students in both samples but especially in the Salvadorean sample. Indeed, not quite one third of the migrants returning from the United States are in school in El Salvador. The student category is relatively less substantial in the Costa Rican group. Another, and perhaps even more significant, finding is the prevalence of professional and white collar workers in both samples. If the second, third, fourth, and fifth categories can be lumped together into this broader category, it appears that not only are both the Salvadorean and Costa Rican migrants very different from the conventional profile of the Mexican worker who migrates to the United States but they have far more occupational status than their own compatriots. The migrants are not largely

TABLE V**PRESENT OCCUPATIONAL STATUS OF
SALVADOREAN AND COSTA RICAN MIGRANTS**

	<u>El Salvador (259)</u>	<u>Costa Rica (314)</u>
Student	29.3	11.5
Technical/Professional	12.7	16.2
Manager	2.7	8.0
Office	9.3	14.3
Sales	14.7	12.7
Farm Workers	4.6	3.2
Skilled Craftsmen	-	0.6
Semi-Skilled Craftsmen	7.3	13.1
Laborers	3.1	4.8
Personal Services	1.9	1.6
Unidentified	10.4	10.5
Unemployed/ Not in Labor Force	<u>3.9</u>	<u>3.5</u>
	100.0%	100.0%

made up of unskilled or unschooled workers from these two countries. Indeed, they indicate the rather high level of occupational status found in the debates over the "brain drain." Almost two-fifths of the Salvadorean migrants and slightly more than one half of the Costa Rican migrants could be said to come from professional and white collar occupational groups. Likewise as impressive, in quite another sense, is the dearth of untrained and unskilled urban or rural workers. Semi-skilled craftsmen and laborers make up just over one-tenth of the Salvadorean migrants and about eighteen per cent of the Costa Rican migrants.

These findings are important for what they imply about the nature of international labor migration from South to North. Studies from the Mexican case and elsewhere imply very strongly that international migrants are largely unskilled or semiskilled workers, at least in the developed countries. The Costa Rican and Salvadorean workers are not predominantly from this segment of the labor force in their own country, whatever their occupational status might be in the United States. Their occupational status sets them apart from the bracero type workers. It also sets them apart from those with less schooling and education. As Table VI indicates, both groups of migrants with at least seven years of schooling tend to fall into this broad category of professional and white collar workers. In the Salvadorean group, the 7-11 year category also contains many of the manual workers. Their present occupations show little under-

TABLE VI

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL BY OCCUPATIONAL STATUS OF
COSTA RICAN AND SALVADOREAN MIGRANTS

Occupation	Primary		Secondary		Post Secondary	
	ES (28)	CR (63)	ES (161)	CR (122)	ES (70)	CR (129)
Professional/Tech	0.0%	1.6%	6.2%	5.7%	32.9%	33.3%
Manager	0.0	1.6	1.9	7.4	5.7	7.8
Office Worker	0.0	4.8	9.3	17.2	11.4	19.4
Sales	21.4	15.9	16.1	16.4	10.0	7.0
Farm	3.6	4.8	1.9	0.8	0.0	0.8
Transportation	7.1	4.8	3.7	2.5	0.0	0.0
Skilled Craft.	17.9	20.6	8.1	20.5	1.4	4.7
Semiskilled Craft.	0.0	17.5	5.0	3.3	0.0	0.0
Laborers	0.0	4.8	3.1	1.6	0.0	0.0
Personal Service	0.0	6.3	1.9	7.4	0.0	2.3
Student	25.0	0.0	29.8	7.4	30.0	20.9
Unknown	25.0	17.5	13.0	9.8	8.6	3.9
TOTALS	100.0	100.2*	100.0	100.0	100.0*	100.1*

*Does not total 100.0 due to rounding.

employment in the sense that they do work less than 40 or 48 hours. The Salvadoreans average 44 hours per week; the Costa Ricans 48.8 hours a week. In their current occupations, they average \$1.70 an hour and \$2.45 an hour, respectively.

One other characteristic is important for understanding the composition of return migrants. Since the dominant culture of the United States is different from their own, and since English is the unofficial but dominant language, we wished to determine to what extent the Spanish-speaking migrants had mastered the language of the country they visited and, to a large extent, worked in. Again, there is a precedent for this kind of data on composition. North-Houston found that Eastern hemisphere and Western hemisphere (other than Mexicans) migrants tended to have some grasp of the English language. This was very generally correlated with their longer stays in the United States and their higher occupational status and earnings. Conversely, unskilled and rural workers from Mexico with little education or sophisticated skills had little command of the English language. Table VII indicates the comparative ability of the Costa Rican and the Salvadorean migrants to speak English. Asked to rate their own ability the Costa Ricans evaluated themselves as being more expert in English. Nearly half regarded their English skills quite highly. On the other hand, only slightly more than one fifth of the Salvadoreans rated themselves as highly. The Salvadoreans were more likely to claim only a functional (so-so)

TABLE VII

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE ABILITY AMONG
SALVADOREAN AND COSTA RICAN MIGRANTS**

	<u>Costa Rica</u> <u>(314)</u>	<u>El Salvador</u> <u>(259)</u>
<u>Level of English Ability</u>		
Speaks Very Well	21%	11%
Speaks Well	26	11
Speaks So-So	29	41
Speaks Poorly	17	28
No Ability	<u>7</u>	<u>9</u>
	100.0%	100.0%

knowledge of English while more than one-fourth admitted that they spoke it poorly. Although both groups of migrants claim more English proficiency than their rural and less educated counterparts in some Mexican studies, English ability tends to confirm general differences in composition between the Costa Ricans and Salvadoreans.

The composition of the return migrants from El Salvador and Costa Rica expands and qualifies our previous knowledge about return migrants from Mexico and other supplying regions in Latin America and the Caribbean rim. From this previously unexamined supplying area which sends both migrants with and without documents to the United States for a variety of reasons, a broader data base is now available. The migrants have broadly similar characteristics of composition but they also manifest differences. Both tend to be urban, male, relatively young and with some but not very great family obligations. They have some experience with internal migration. Still, the most important traits are education and occupational status. These indicate that the migrants from both samples are different from the citizens of both countries and to some extent from each other. They also reveal how they differ from the standardized image of the Mexican migrant.

Since one purpose of this study was to place the Mexican case in a broader Latin American context, these findings serve to place into sharper relief the migrants who come to the United

States from this general region. They certainly raise the possibility that there is no single international labor migrant as a generic type. It is also clear from this examination of composition that the Salvadoreans and the Costa Ricans, in their own ways, resemble to some extent the migrants portrayed in Mexican and other research. Overall though, the Salvadoreans, especially with regard to marital status, education and occupational status, are closer to the Mexican migrants than are the Costa Ricans.

CHAPTER THREE

THE FLOW OF MIGRANTS FROM COSTA RICA AND EL SALVADOR

The movement of return migrants is important for a number of reasons. The frequency, duration, mobility, legality, routes, points of entry and other factors for the trips are significant for the entire migratory experience. The Mexican studies provide some evidence about these factors of flow or movement. Rural workers going to the United States from Mexico usually make many short trips timed to the agricultural seasons. This is accomplished without documents. The migrants cross the border with the United States at certain favored places (San Ysidro, California, is one example) and proceed to one or more destinations in the United States. However, it is becoming clear that this is not the entire story. Mexicans, and other migrants from other nearby countries, may follow or diverge from this pattern. If they go to the cities of the United States to work, they may be more likely to make fewer trips of longer duration. They may even enter with some form of documentation. In any event, the flow of migrants to the United States is not just important in and of itself. It is vital to understanding the impact and the role of international return migrants who end up working.

The flow of return migrants from El Salvador and Costa Rica to the United States, for obvious reasons, is not com-

pletely analogous to the Mexican case. A long and relatively open border is all that separates a willing migrant in Mexico from a willing employer in the United States. The process by which Central Americans come to the United States is somewhat different. Distance alone makes it more costly. Mexico is not a point of origin but it may become a natural bridge to the United States. The process of going to the United States is in other ways different as well. Distance may have an effect on mobility and duration of trips. Likewise, legality of entry and point of entry may be distinctive from the Mexican profile of migrant flow.

All the migrants in this study have a fundamental trait in common: they all went to the United States at least once during the 1969-1979 period for a minimum period of time. For whatever reasons, and using whichever route or legal device, they all made a trek northward and then returned to their homeland. They were all temporary migrants. Some stayed a month; some stayed for years. But they all returned to their own country. Whatever their other differences, the migrants in the two national samples are apparently highly mobile temporary migrants whose commitment to live permanently in the United States or even in their home country is quite limited.

A. Other Migrations

One of the interesting facets of these migrants is that their experience to the United States does not seem to have

a broader scope. In other words, Salvadoreans and Costa Ricans who go to the United States do not seem inclined to go to other countries to work. Instead, they constitute a particular stream of migrants whose goal it is to go to the United States for whatever reasons. As Table I reveals, neither sample has many migrants who sought and found work in other countries. We know that there are Salvadoreans who go to Honduras and Nicaraguans who go to Costa Rica. But the migrants in this study are not in those regional migration streams. Perhaps the jobs they want are not to be found there. Perhaps they can afford a more promising but lengthy sojourn to the United States. Perhaps they have personal or other ties. Whatever the reason, the pull of the United States has no competition from other sources within the region, at least for the migrants in our samples. Since so few are involved, the occupational status of the jobs found by these migrants in countries other than the United States is not particularly revealing. The Salvadoreans tended to some extent to be in sales and trade. No occupational category stood out for the limited number of Costa Ricans who worked in other countries and also went to the United States. Of the few in both samples who worked in a country other than the United States, there was some distribution across all occupational categories.¹

¹ The occupational categories are those employed in the Costa Rican census. They are identical to those used to categorize the employment of the migrants in the United States in their own home countries.

TABLE I**MOST RECENT WORK EXPERIENCE
IN ANOTHER COUNTRY**

	<u>El Salvador</u> (259)	<u>Costa Rica</u> (314)
Guatemala	3.5%	---
Nicaragua	0.8	---
Costa Rica	2.3	---
Caribbean	---	1.0%
Panama	2.3	1.9
Honduras	---	0.3
Mexico	1.9	0.6
El Salvador	---	0.3
Other	1.2	1.9
None	88.0	93.9
	<hr/> 100.0%	<hr/> 100.0%

TABLE II

OCCUPATION OF MOST RECENT
WORK TRIP TO ANOTHER COUNTRY

	<u>El Salvador</u> (259)	<u>Costa Rica</u> (314)
Technical-Professional	1.2%	0.3%
Manager	0.4	0.3
Office/Commerce	0.4	0.3
Sales	4.6	0.6
Farm workers	0.4	0.6
Transportation workers	---	0.6
Skilled craftsmen	---	1.0
Semi-skilled craftsmen	1.2	---
Laborers	---	1.0
Personal Services	0.4	0.3
Unidentified	3.5	1.0
None	18.0	93.9
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	100.0%	100.0%

B. Reasons for U. S. Migrations

Since there seems to be very little overlap between U. S. migrants and those who go to other countries to work, the reasons given by migrants for going to the United States gain added significance. Migrants who went to the United States and to another country to work are few. Still, the migrants in our study may have gone to other countries for multiple reasons other than work. This certainly is the case in their motivation for going to the United States. In Table III we find that the intentions of the migrants for going to the United States were diverse. Still, the literature on international migration in general and the studies on Mexican migration in particular certainly prepared us for the importance of work as a reason for going to the United States. More than half in both samples, but even more (or three fifths) of the Salvadoreans, cited work as the principal reason for the most recent trip to the United States. Although work is less dominant a reason for these migrants than it is for bracero-like migrants in Mexico, it is important, since the occupational status of both migrant groups is higher than that of the Mexicans. Professionals, white collar workers and other skilled manual workers make up an important segment of the Costa Rican and even the Salvadorean migrants. Clearly, work is not the goal of just poor, unskilled and untrained workers from rural areas. Work is a motivation for

TABLE III

REASON FOR MOST RECENT TRIP TO UNITED STATES

	<u>Costa Rica</u> (314)	<u>El Salvador</u> (259)
Work	56.4%	62.5%
Visit Relatives	4.5	3.5
Vacations	14.0	19.7
Study	11.5	11.2
Scholarship	3.2	1.5
Business	1.3	0.8
Vacation & Study	1.9	---
Reside	6.1	0.8
Study English	1.3	---
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	100.0%	100.0%

migration among the urban, educated and more skilled in Costa Rica and El Salvador as well. Work was not the only motivation, however. Study, vacations or both were also cited by both Salvadoreans and Costa Ricans. Return migrants did not seem to have as a main reason for going to the United States the visiting of relatives. Although migrants in both samples had some family connections in the United States, they were not quantitatively important. Work, education, vacations were the most frequently cited. The return migrants were not inclined to cite more or less permanent residence in the United States as a principal reason. Still, the Costa Ricans were more likely to give that reason than were the Salvadoreans.

The flow of a majority in both samples was motivated by the prospects of work. This indicates that much of the return migration between these two Central American countries and the United States fits within the framework of labor from the developing countries coming together with the capital of the developed countries, in this case the United States. Moreover, going to the United States intending to work or actually ending up working was a legal option open to only a minority of both samples. While about 6 out of 10 Salvadoreans intended to work when they left home, all but one migrant actually did work. Only eight per cent could do so legally. For the Costa Ricans, more than half of the Costa Ricans intended to work while only about one

fourth were entitled under immigration law to work. However, 92.4 per cent actually did work in the United States.

The ability of the visa office of the State Department to screen out nonimmigrants intending to work is very limited and this study again confirms what has been found elsewhere: nonimmigrants, with or without visas, go to the United States intending to violate their visas by accepting employment or to enter without papers to work. Our conclusion does not lead us to any recommendation. It simply adds further evidence to this failure of policy.

C. Documented and Undocumented Migration

The failure of policy, at least as measured by its formal and ostensible goals, cannot be blamed upon any one segment of the complex federal machinery in charge of immigration policy. The question of illegal or undocumented migration has stirred a national and even international debate about the priorities, needs and realities of both sending and receiving countries. The literature on this whole subject is now so vast that it must lie outside our immediate interests here. Still, undocumented or illegal migration is crucial to any policy-oriented research on international return migration. Policy and law may not assist the understanding of the dynamics of international migration; however law and policy can affect, rather than halt, international migration and both can have a regulative and admin-

istrative role to play in the exchange of human capital in the international political economy.

The North American perspective has been to focus on Mexico as the principal, and perhaps only very important, source of illegal or undocumented work migration to the United States. The debate swirling around illegal migration has become a U.S.-Mexican issue. The data we offer here suggest that this perspective is too limited, however understandable it may be. Undocumented migration comes from Central America and elsewhere. Moreover, even if we discount the pejorative implications of undocumented migration, it is clear that entry without inspection has a relationship to other aspects of the migratory experience. However unrealistic, laws still do have consequences. International migrants cum laborers are not necessarily made up of unskilled rural workers who cannot convince visa officers to extend nonimmigrants visas. Many of the migrants in our study, and those in studies of migrants from other countries, may have documents and enter the U. S. to work, even if these documents or visas prohibit work. Both Salvadoreans and Costa Ricans entered the United States and did just exactly this.

The status at the time of entry of the Salvadorean and Costa Rican return migrants in this study reveals that not only do Salvadoreans tend to enter without inspection more

than Costa Ricans but that a majority of both samples were "legal" (in other words, used a document to gain entry to the United States). About two in every five Salvadoreans entered without documents; only three Costa Ricans did so. Therefore, about 60% of the Salvadoreans and 99 per cent of the Costa Ricans entered with some kind of documentation. (It is very likely that some of these documents were fraudulently used but we did not attempt to uncover to what extent this was the case). However, since it is clear that a vast majority of both samples actually worked in the United States, many in both samples violated visas like student and tourist visas in order to take jobs. Far more worked, even with documents, than could work under the terms of the visas they held.

The conclusion we arrive at is this: undocumented status among return migrants, especially the Salvadoreans, does exist but that documented migration is the principal way in which return migrants from both countries gain illegal access to the labor market in the United States.

D. Trips, Duration and Years

Our study was temporally defined by a span of ten years, 1969-1979. We were therefore concerned with examining the migratory (and work) experience of return migrants during a decade in which, by many accounts, migration went from relatively modest to largely unknown but substantial levels during the middle and late 1970s. We also wanted to discover the frequency of movement and its duration.

TABLE IV

STATUS OF MIGRANTS FROM EL SALVADOR AND
COSTA RICA AT TIME OF ENTRY INTO THE
UNITED STATES

<u>Status by visa</u>	<u>El Salvador</u> (259)	<u>Costa Rica</u> (314)
Immigrant	2.3%	21.0%
Student	9.7	18.8
Tourist	39.8	52.2
H-2 (temporary worker)	5.8	3.5
Border card	0.8	0.3
Commuter	---	1.3
Entry without inspection	41.7	1.0
Crew card	---	1.0
Diplomatic visa	---	1.0
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	100.0%	100.0%

In the Mexican studies, most evidence points to frequent trips on the part of each migrant for a period of time of a few months to as much as one year, on the average. We wished to compare these findings with the Salvadoreans and the Costa Ricans.

If broken down into two equal intervals, it becomes clear that return migration has increased over the ten year period. In the first five year period, 43.4 per cent of the Costa Ricans and 29.7 per cent of the Salvadoreans interviewed said that they had completed their most recent visit to the United States. But during the second half of that ten year period, 45.5 per cent of the Costa Ricans, but 67.6 per cent of the Salvadoreans said the same thing. The Salvadoreans more closely fit the common belief that international and undocumented migration to the United States has been increasingly rapid in recent years.

The average number of trips to the United States for both samples is greater than one, which is to be expected. However, the average for the Costa Ricans is more than two trips. About 70 per cent of the Salvadoreans went to the United States only once; a little more than one half of the Costa Ricans only went once. However, nearly half of the Costa Ricans went two or more times and almost one fourth went three or more times. With documents, the Costa Ricans had no reason to fear immigration authorities. They also have more resources than do the Salvadoreans. Nevertheless, the frequency of trips is lower than for

TABLE V

YEARS OF MOST RECENT VISIT TO
THE UNITED STATES

	<u>El Salvador</u> (259)	<u>Costa Rica</u> (314)
Before 1969	2.7%	11.1%
1969 - 1974	29.7	43.4
1975 - 1979	67.6	45.5
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	100.0%	100.0%

TABLE VI

NUMBER OF TIMES MIGRANTS
HAVE GONE TO THE UNITED STATES

<u>Number of Times</u>	<u>El Salvador</u> (259)	<u>Costa Rica</u> (314)
1	69.9%	52.2%
2	16.6	24.5
3 or more	14.5	24.3

MEAN (\bar{X}) DIFFERENCES OF TRIPS
BY MIGRANTS FROM BOTH SAMPLES

	<u>El Salvador</u>	<u>Costa Rica</u>
<u>I. Work Trips to a Country Other than the United States</u>		
Months stay of most recent trip	9.4	10.2
Months stay of prior trip	6.0	5.4
Times worked	1.2	1.6
<u>II. Trips to the United States</u>		
Times in United States	1.6	2.2
Months of most recent U.S. trip	18.2	25.1
Months of prior U.S. trip	18.8	17.9
Times worked in U.S.	1.2	1.7
Months of most recent work trip	17.3	25.4

the traditional, agricultural worker from Mexico. Some return migrants made prior trips to the United States. The Salvadoreans and the Costa Ricans stayed longer than the Mexican migrants in both cases. In recent and prior trips, the Salvadoreans stayed about the same average time--one and one half years. The Costa Ricans stayed a month or so less than this on the prior trip but stayed considerably longer--something over two years--on the recent trip. The duration of these visits clearly differentiate both groups of migrants from the majority of studies on the Mexican migrants. Their stays are much longer, on average and therefore have different implications for impact on all concerned.

E. Routes and Points of Entry

The flow of international migrants is partially defined by the routes or migration streams which become established over time. Routes are affected by historical, geographical and transportation factors. They may also be determined by considerations of direct or less direct access to the major points of entry. Routes of entry and points of entry are to some extent the consequence of legality at time of entry as well. The routes of entry to the United States are pretty well demarcated. Most of the Costa Rican migrants (85 per cent) and a majority of the Salvadorean migrants (55 per cent) took direct routes to various points of entry in the United States without using an intermediate country. A significant minority (about one third)

of the Salvadoreans entered through Mexico and stayed more than twelve hours in that country. As we already know, slightly more than this proportion of Salvadorean migrants entered without documents. It becomes apparent that the Salvadoreans are using Mexico as a main route of entry and that their undocumented status is a key determinant in that strategy of entry. The routes to the United States are direct, unless legality of entry is a problem. It is then that the Mexican border with the United States becomes a prime asset in gaining access to the United States, especially for the Salvadoreans.

This interpretation gains some support from analyzing the directness of the routes on the return trips. While the Costa Ricans went directly to the United States without stops, they were almost to the same extent inclined to do about the same on the return to Costa Rica. About 23 per cent stopped for more than twelve hours on the return trip, generally in Central America or Mexico. The interesting difference however is revealed in the pattern of the return route for the Salvadorean migrants. While some 45 per cent of the Salvadoreans used an intermediate country before arriving in the United States, only about 16 per cent did so on the return trip. An overwhelming portion (84 per cent) of the Salvadoreans returned directly to El Salvador without making any stops at all. Clearly, intermediate countries were a concern for arriving migrants not departing ones. While many factors may be at work in this

TABLE VII.

STOPS IN A THIRD COUNTRY
ON THE LAST TRIP TO THE UNITED STATES

	<u>El Salvador</u> (254)	<u>Costa Rica</u> (292)
None	55.4%	85.4%
Mexico	34.0	6.1
Guatemala	3.5	1.3
El Salvador	0.4	1.6
Panama	---	0.6
Central America	---	0.3
Central America-Mexico	7.7	3.5
Other	---	1.3
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	101.0%*	100.1%*

*Does not equal 100.0 due to rounding.

TABLE VIII

STOPS IN THIRD COUNTRY
RETURNING FROM UNITED STATES ON LAST TRIP

	<u>El Salvador</u> (259)	<u>Costa Rica</u> (314)
None	84.2%	77.1%
Mexico	6.6	5.4
Guatemala	6.2	2.2
Central America	3.1	13.4
El Salvador	-----	0.6
Panama	-----	0.6
Honduras	-----	0.3
Other	-----	0.3
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	100.1%*	99.9%*

*Does not equal 100.0 due to rounding.

difference of routes, the legality of entry, and its irrelevance for departure, could be quite important.

The points of entry in the United States also suggest broad similarities and some interesting differences between the two groups of migrants. Points of entry in Florida and in California are most used by both Costa Ricans and Salvadoreans. New York and New Orleans are cities outside those two states which are the entry points for some of both groups, but especially for the Costa Ricans. However, for the most part, California and Florida are the most used, and the most convenient, for migrants wishing to go to both the West Coast and the East Coast. However, we must recall that point of entry is not necessarily the destination of migrants. This is true perhaps more for the Costa Ricans who arrive in Miami but may go on to New York than it is for the Salvadoreans who arrive in the Los Angeles-San Diego area and who remain in that area or who perhaps go to other points within California. About one half of all the Costa Ricans arrive in Miami, mostly by commercial jet liner and with immigration documents. However, if all the points of entry listed for the Salvadoreans are grouped into one category for the Los Angeles-San Diego area, then it becomes apparent that about 56 per cent of the Salvadoreans arrive in that general area. In other words, many of the Salvadoreans without documents will cross the border with Mexico and make their way through the San Ysidro area until they arrive, and stop, at one of a number of locales in this general area of California. The Salvadoreans without

TABLE IX

U. S. PORT OF ENTRY FOR THE RETURN MIGRANTS

	<u>El Salvador</u>		<u>Costa Rica</u>	
	N	%	N	%
Miami-Ft. Lauderdale	46	17.8%	155	49.4%
L.A.-Pasadena-Santa Monica	92	35.5	45	14.3
San Francisco-Berkeley	8	3.1	3	1.0
San Diego-Santa Barbara	20	7.7	5	1.6
New York	15	5.8	40	12.7
New Orleans	8	3.1	28	8.9
Laredo	2	0.8	4	1.3
El Paso	3	1.2	4	1.3
San Antonio	1	0.4	1	0.3
Washington, D. C.	4	1.5	4	1.3
Tijuana	23	8.9	3	1.0
Florida	--	--	1	0.3
Portland-Oregon-Idaho	--	--	1	0.3
Arizona	--	--	3	1.0
Houston	--	--	13	4.1
Brownsville	--	--	1	0.3
San Juan-Puerto Rico	--	--	1	0.3
Mexico	--	--	1	0.3
New Mexico	--	--	1	0.3
Mexicali	1	0.4	--	--
Matamoros	1	0.4	--	--
Boston	1	0.4	--	--
Texas	12	4.6	--	--
Kansas	1	0.4	--	--
Louisiana	1	0.4	--	--
Ohio	1	0.4	--	--
California	4	1.5	--	--
Chula Vista	2	0.8	--	--
San Clemente	6	2.3	--	--
San Ysidro	4	1.5	--	--
Barstow	1	0.4	--	--
Refuses to say	2	0.8	--	--
TOTALS	259	100.1%*	314	100.0%

*Total does not equal 100% due to rounding.

documents are, in other words, using a route preferred by many Mexicans.

F. Companions

The rural Mexican worker usually travels alone to a job in the United States. He may go with other undocumented workers occasionally or even with a coyote (smuggler). But most studies on this type of Mexican worker point to the fact that he does not bring family members or relatives on these seasonal sojourns to United States labor markets. In this study, we did expect that some of the migrants from Costa Rica and El Salvador would likewise travel alone. We also expected that some would bring their families. And this is just what we discovered. The migrants in both samples were asked if they brought someone with them, went with someone else or sent for someone to join them once they had made it to the United States. In Table X, it is apparent that, generally speaking, the Salvadoreans and to a lesser extent the Costa Ricans travelled to the United States alone. About two thirds of the Salvadoreans claimed they went to the United States by themselves. On the other hand, a smaller proportion (slightly more than two out of five) Costa Ricans went to the United States alone and did not bring someone else along. Almost two-fifths of the Costa Ricans brought their spouse and children with them. Only one fifth of the Salvadoreans did the same. It was even less likely that the Salvadoreans and the Costa Ricans would go to the United States with someone else. Slightly more than two

thirds of the Salvadoreans said they did not accompany anyone else; 55 per cent of the Costa Ricans made the same claim. If they did accompany someone else, it was generally friends or relatives (in that order). Neither group was inclined to send for someone to join them. Slightly more than 10 per cent of the Costa Ricans and slightly less than that percentage of the Salvadoreans sent for someone to join them once they had become more or less established in the United States.

Companions, or cohorts, reveal something of the social and personal dimensions of return migration. But it also suggests implications for later examination about the impact of small groups of migrants rather than merely discussing each migrant as solitary sojourner. It is clear that both groups tend to be made up of migrants who go it alone. However, it is also clear that the Costa Ricans are more likely than the Salvadoreans and the "typical" rural worker from Mexico to come in a group and therefore to have a different potential impact on family structure, on the United States and on the sending country.

G. The Return Flow and The Repeater

The flow of return migrants does not end at some destination in the United States. That is simply one step or stage in the migratory experience. The departure from the United States to Costa Rica and El Salvador should be distinguished from the movement northward but it cannot be regarded as something unrelated to the return

trip. The return migrants are not permanent settlers in the United States or even in the countries of their origin. Only 2.5 per cent of the Costa Ricans and less than one per cent (0.4) of the Salvadoreans gave as their main reason for going to the United States the desire to establish permanent residence. In other words, they are temporary migrants rather than permanent immigrants to the United States. Their intention was to visit not to immigrate. Since they intended not to stay indefinitely, their return from the United States did not involve the decision about whether they would return to their home countries but instead it revolved around the question of when they would return.

The question of what prompted the decision to return at a particular time is therefore of concern to us if we wish to understand the return flow of these migrants. It apparently depends to some extent on the migrants. It depends upon certain social and legal factors in their home countries and in the United States, respectively. The principal reason for returning home cited by both the Salvadoreans and the Costa Ricans was family reasons; 33.2 per cent of the Salvadoreans and 31.5 per cent of the Costa Ricans offered this reason as a motivation for returning. They simply had a need or a wish to be reunited with families and relatives whom they left behind. The family, and the strains of separation, played a significant role in the decision to return at a certain period. Social and psychological attachments to a home contrast sharply with the economic motivation for going northward in the first place.

TABLE XI**REASON FOR RETURN HOME**

	<u>Costa Rica</u> (314)	<u>El Salvador</u> (259)
Visa Expired	12.4%	22.8%
Jobless U.S.A.	2.5	1.5
Family Reasons	31.5	33.2
Deported/Sent back	3.2	27.4
Job Here	15.6	3.1
Homesick	24.2	6.6
Other	9.9	5.4
Discrimination	0.6	---
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	100.0%	100.0%

There are other factors involved as well. While family was the frequent reason for returning for both groups of migrants, the second most frequent reason given points out a major difference in both groups. The Salvadoreans have a significant proportion of undocumented migrants in their group; the Costa Ricans have almost none. This is the key to the reason given for returning. U. S. immigration authorities deported or sent back Salvadoreans rather than Costa Ricans. Over one fourth (or 27.4 per cent) of all the Salvadoreans in the sample reported that they were sent home as deportable aliens or through proceedings of voluntary departure. Only 3.2 per cent of the Costa Ricans were sent back under similar conditions. In other words, many Salvadorean migrants did not decide when to return. That decision was made for them by U. S. immigration officials. The second most frequently given reason for the Costa Ricans was quite different. They cited homesickness (mal de patria). Almost one fourth of that sample returned because they missed their country.

Other reasons played a lesser, but still interesting, role in the decision to return home. The expiration of a visa was offered by 22.8 per cent of the Salvadoreans and by 12.4 per cent of the Costa Ricans as the principal reason for leaving the United States. When this legal reason is combined with the other (deportation), it appears that half the Salvadoreans returned to El Salvador not apparently because they really wanted to but because they had to. Compulsion was much less important for the Costa Ricans. Taken together, social

and legal reasons greatly outweighed economic ones in the decision of migrants in both groups to leave the United States. For example, the employment situation in the United States or in the home country seemed not very significant. Only 1.5 per cent of the Salvadoreans reported that they left because they did not have a job in the United States; only 2.5 per cent of the Costa Ricans left because they were unemployed in the United States. Jobs in the home countries were only modestly important for the Costa Ricans. Fifteen per cent said they were returning to take a job; very few Salvadoreans had the same motivation.

The decision to return home, just as the decision to leave, cannot be regarded as irreversible. Just as the return migrants had not intended to settle in the United States permanently, neither do they seem permanently committed to staying in their home countries. Only 23.6 per cent of the Salvadoreans, and virtually the same proportion of Costa Ricans, stated flatly that they had no current intention of going back to the United States for whatever reason. One fifth of the Salvadoreans and 15.6 per cent of the Costa Ricans thought they might return to the United States. A few in both samples were "not sure if" they would go back. On the other hand, more than one half of migrants in both groups were fairly certain they would return to the United States one day. But when? One out of two Salvadorans who said they would go back thought they would do so by the end of 1980; three out of five Costa Ricans who are going to return will do so in the same time frame.

TABLE XII

PLAN TO RETURN TO UNITED STATES

	<u>El Salvador</u> (259)	<u>Costa Rica</u> (314)
NO	23.6%	23.2%
MAYBE	20.1	15.6
YES	56.4	61.1
1979	8.9	15.6
1980	17.8	19.1
81 - 82	7.7	3.5
83 or later	2.7	1.3
not sure when	12.4	17.5
not sure if	6.9	4.1
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	100.1%*	99.9%*

*Does not total 100.0 due to rounding.

Of course, all this is conjecture. The migrants may not fulfill their expressed intentions; some may go who did not think they would and others who think they will leave again may not in fact do so. But it does seem clear that one half or more of all the return migrants consider themselves to be repeaters. Whatever their motivations or dreams of expected benefits, many of the migrants are "shuttle migrants" of one kind or another who will sooner or later find their way back to the United States. For those who do migrate again, their decision to return to the home countries from the United States is a temporary response to changing conditions which make their departure more likely.

It is conceivable of course that return migrants may be changed by their migration experience. For example, if return migrants came back to the United States and decided to stay permanently, this would not only mean something to them individually but to both the United States and the sending countries. The impact of permanent residents would, for some very obvious reasons, be different from that of return migrants. A change from temporary migrations to permanent residence would have implications for the labor markets, public services, educational systems and other aspects of the United States on the one hand and El Salvador and Costa Rica on the other. What are the chances that the return migrants would consider becoming permanent residents in the United States? No one can be sure of course, least of all the migrants themselves, but it appears that there is

little solid evidence from our study that the return migrants from Costa Rica and El Salvador want to live (and work) permanently in the United States. A clear majority of both samples said they would not consider residence in the United States on a permanent basis. Very few in either sample were doubtful about their response. They said "no" or "yes" rather than "maybe." Of the one third or so in both samples who said they would consider it, no single reason, or kind of reason, emerged. Family unification was most important to the Salvadoreans; the legal condition of existing residence status was important to the Costa Ricans who would consider living in the United States. Reasons relating to legal status were more generally cited than others but no one reason or kind of reason was dominant. Unlike their economic motivation for going to the United States as return migrants, economics was not an overwhelming consideration.

Return migration from the United States to El Salvador and Costa Rica is something we should expect of those who go to the United States for other than family or personal reasons. As they return through routes which are more direct than those used to go north, we should also expect that sooner or later many of these return migrants will retrace their steps to the north again. Permanent settlement in the home country seems to be no more the motivation for returning than it was for leaving. Of course, the migrant has more or less permanent ties in the home country and much more transitory ties to the United States. But the situation

in which they find themselves at any particular time, and what they have learned from their previous migrants, may affect their decision to return to the United States, and therefore to their own home countries, at least one more time.

H. Conclusion

The frequency, duration, legality, routes, entry and other factors of the movement northward and back home again for the Salvadorean and Costa Rican migrants define some very essential things about the flow of migrants. Not only are we in a better position to assess its meaning for policy but we are also now able to add to our knowledge about the flow of return migrants from Mexico and elsewhere. The Salvadoreans and the Costa Ricans share some broad similarities about flow. But they also manifest some obvious differences as well. Although the Salvadoreans stay far longer than the Mexicans and are more likely to be documented, they more closely resemble the standard profile of the illegal Mexican worker than does the Costa Rican. These and other aspects of flow also raise interesting questions which we hope to answer in later chapters. For example, the duration, legality and other factors of flow should lead us to expect that impact on the United States, not to mention on the home country, will be felt differentially: the longer the duration, the larger the impact.

The flow of Costa Rican and Salvadorean return migrants also permits us to confirm the view that individuals from both samples are best regarded as temporary visitors and workers and not as permanent settlers. The motivations for going to and returning

from the United States, as well as their actual behavior in the migration streams, reveal much that can be useful to those who are trying to re-evaluate immigration policy and to those who are considering the advantages and disadvantages of a foreign worker policy to deal with this phenomenon.

CHAPTER FOUR

WORKING IN THE UNITED STATES

It has been determined that solid majorities of both Costa Rican and Salvadorean migrants came to the United States with the intention of working. Even greater majorities of both groups actually did find employment. In this and the following chapters, we will examine the work experience of the two groups of migrants. For the most part, our concerns deal with occupational status or category, income, hours, and other work-related variables. We are also interested to find out how certain composition variables as well as variables dealing with entry (such as legality of entry) are related to the work experience. In the next chapter, we will make some effort to assess the impact of this work experience on the migrants and on the countries involved.

A. Work Motivation and Entry to the United States

We have shown so far that work is a strong motivation for not just the less educated and poorer Salvadoreans but for the more affluent Costa Ricans. Both come, if not in quite the same proportions, to the United States to find employment. However, even if the intention is not primarily to work, many in fact do work eventually. The reasons for this may be complex. From the beginning work may be a secondary motivation and not a primary one or work may have been accessible and easy to find once they arrive. In any event, work was performed by most of the migrants in both samples. So, in analyzing the work experiences of the migrants, we are in fact studying vir-

tually all of the migrants in both samples.

Work was proscribed legally for most of those who worked. Those migrants who entered the country on a visa or other document which allowed them to work legally in the United States were quite small in both groups but especially for the Salvadoreans. Salvadorean males tended to enter without documents at all or as tourists, neither of which legally permits working. Costa Rican males tended to enter as tourists, immigrants and students. Only immigrants have a general right to work; foreign students must receive work permits issued by immigration authorities and they are not that easy to get. Salvadorean females entered in a way highly similar to their male counterparts. Tourist and EWI were the two principal modes of entering the country. Costa Rican males likewise emulated their male counterparts, although more of the females entered as immigrants than did the males. What we have then is this: regardless of sex, two national groups of migrants enter the United States in a way which is tailored to each country and the principal means of entry for both groups legally bar working in the United States, an activity which most of both groups of migrants engaged in.

The reason for entering the United States does not always fit the legal means used to gain entry to the United States. Costa Ricans who came to work preferred the tourist visa to gain entry: the Salvadoreans who came to work came in as undocumented migrants. Even so, one fifth of the Costa Ricans who came to work did so without documents; a little more than one fourth did so on tourist visas.

TABLE I

STATUS AT ENTRY BY SEX

	Male		Female	
	<u>El Salvador</u> (259)	<u>Costa Rica</u> (314)	<u>El Salvador</u> (259)	<u>Costa Rica</u> (314)
Immigrant	2.1%	19.7%	2.6%	25.7%
Student	8.5	18.9	11.1	18.6
Tourist	38.0	52.5	41.9	51.4
H-2	7.0	4.1	4.3	1.4
Border Card	0.7	0.4	0.9	0.0
Green Card	---	1.2	---	1.4
EWI	43.7	1.2	39.3	0.0
Crew Card	---	1.2	---	0.0
Diplomatic	---	0.8	---	1.4
Totals	100.0%	100.0%	100.1%*	99.9%*

*Does not equal 100.0 due to rounding.

In other words, the law has very little to do with how it was used by the migrants to achieve work-related goals. The tourist visa was by far the most preferred document to do all kinds of things in the United States (except study). For the Costa Ricans, it was the main way to gain access to the labor market in the United States. Undocumented work migration was largely restricted to Salvadoreans who intended to work in the United States before they left El Salvador.

B. U. S. Occupations

What are the kinds of jobs that the return migrants take in the United States? What kinds of migrants take these jobs? The job categories used to classify all occupations of migrants are defined in the Costa Rican census. They consist of ten occupational classifications each of which is made up of numerous specific job descriptions. We also have a category of student. This is due to the large number of students in the samples of both countries. The first two categories, professional/technical and managerial, consist of the professions, skilled technical occupations such as medicine and science and business managers. There is also a group of sales and commerce personnel as well as the usual group of office and clerical workers found in any modern economy. The rest of the categories are made up of skilled, semiskilled and unskilled manual workers in the urban and rural sectors. Skilled craftsmen constitute an elite within this broad grouping of categories. They are better trained and better paid than the others. Semiskilled craftsmen, farmworkers,

TABLE III

MEANS OF ENTRY AND REASON FOR TRIP
COSTA RICAN MIGRANTS
(N=314)

	<u>Work</u>	<u>Visit Family</u>	<u>Vacation</u>	<u>Study</u>	<u>Scholarship</u>	<u>Reside</u>	<u>Business</u>	<u>Study English</u>
Immigrant	<u>20.9%</u>	<u>28.6%</u>	<u>6.8%</u>	<u>2.8%</u>	<u>10.0%</u>	<u>89.5%</u>	<u>50.0%</u>	<u>0.0%</u>
Student	9.0	7.1	18.2	69.4	50.0	0.0	25.0	75.0
Tourist	59.3	57.1	75.0	25.0	20.0	5.3	25.0	25.0
H-2	6.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Border Card	0.0	7.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Green Card	0.6	0.0	0.0	2.8	0.0	5.3	0.0	0.0
EWI	1.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Crew Card	1.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Diplomatic	<u>0.6</u>	<u>0.0</u>	<u>0.0</u>	<u>0.0</u>	<u>20.0</u>	<u>0.0</u>	<u>0.0</u>	<u>0.0</u>
Totals	100.0%	99.9%*	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.1%*	100.0%	100.0%

*Does not equal 100.0 due to rounding.

TABLE II

MEANS OF ENTRY AND REASON FOR TRIP
SALVADOREAN MIGRANTS
(N=259)

	<u>Work</u>	<u>Visit Family</u>	<u>Vacation</u>	<u>Study</u>	<u>Scholarship</u>	<u>Reside</u>	<u>Business</u>
Immigrant	2.5%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%
Student	2.5	0.0	0.0	72.4	0.0	0.0	25.0
Tourist	27.2	66.7	90.2	13.8	25.0	50.0	50.0
H-2	6.2	0.0	2.0	0.0	75.0	0.0	50.0
Border Card	0.6	0.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Green Card	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
EWI	61.1	22.2	5.9	13.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
Crew Card	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Diplomatic	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Totals	100.1%*	100.0%	100.1%*	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

*Does not equal 100.0 due to rounding.

laborers and those in transportation and communication make up the rest of this group. Although these general categories are the prime way of discussing occupational types, our data are also much more specifically coded to include very narrow job identification.

The most recent occupation of both sexes of both groups of migrants shows that Salvadoreans and Costa Ricans took jobs in every major job category while in the United States but that the migrants revealed different distributions across the job categories. Salvadorean males tended to do low skilled personal service work, work as day and manual laborers or work as skilled craftsmen. They were concentrated, in other words, in the manual worker occupations with varying skill levels. The Costa Rican males tended to gravitate to the skilled craftsmen category, personal services and semi-skilled craftsmen, in that order. However even at this level of manual labor, the Costa Rican males tended to be more skilled than the Salvadorean males. The Costa Rican males were more likely than the Salvadoreans to take professional/technical and managerial work in the United States. Neither group of males went very much into farm work. Again, we find confirmation of the urban and relatively skilled status of both migrant groups, especially the Costa Ricans.

The females from both groups are less likely to distribute their work experience in the United States throughout all job categories but they still reveal some interesting patterns. Females from Costa Rica and El Salvador take, first, jobs in personal service. This is especially true for the Salvadorean women, three fifths of whom took

TABLE IV

MOST RECENT U. S. OCCUPATION BY SEX

	Male		Female	
	<u>El Salvador</u>	<u>Costa Rica</u>	<u>El Salvador</u>	<u>Costa Rica</u>
Professional/ Technical	8.5%	14.3%	4.3%	11.4%
Managers	1.4	3.3	0.0	2.9
Office workers	3.5	4.9	6.8	11.4
Sales	6.3	3.7	7.7	7.1
Farmworkers	2.8	4.1	0.9	0.0
Personal services	31.0	17.2	62.4	22.9
Skilled craftsmen	16.2	24.2	12.8	15.7
Semiskilled craft.	9.2	16.4	4.3	7.1
Laborers	17.6	4.5	0.9	4.3
Transportation/ Communication	2.8	2.5	0.0	0.0
Student	0.7	4.9	0.0	17.1
Totals	100.0%	100.0%	100.1%*	99.9*

* Does not equal 100.0 due to rounding.

jobs as maids, cleaning women, and other low skilled and traditional occupations for women. Costa Rican women are far less likely to do the same: just over one fifth do so. Skilled manual occupations are also chosen by both groups of female. The most obvious difference between the two populations is the distribution of Costa Rican women in the professional/technical, office work and student categories. In other words, although the Costa Rican women share some occupations with the Salvadorean women, they, like their male counterparts, have higher occupational status in the United States than do Salvadoreans of either sex.

Later, we will see how occupational categories and status changed for the migrants as they moved from jobs in their home countries to jobs in the United States and finally jobs back in their home countries. For now, we can conclude that males have higher occupational status in the United States than females from their own country. However, Costa Ricans of either sex occupy categories which reflect higher status than do the Salvadoreans of either sex.

C. Salary, Hours and Legal Status

Having described the occupational categories of the migrants in the United States, it is of course necessary to proceed to analysis of the jobs themselves. Studies on undocumented workers in the United States elsewhere point to the importance of earnings. It is often argued that the salaries or wages of alien workers, especially those without documents, are below the minimum wage and are low due to the fact that undocumented workers take the lowest paying jobs and work

the longest of any one in these secondary labor markets. They work cheap, they work hard, they work scared. Without delving into the implications of these "facts" for its impact on labor markets, it is nevertheless pertinent to document the income, salaries and hours of migrants who enter the United States by different means and who take certain kinds of jobs while they are here.

Of these two groups, the Costa Ricans average higher wages per hour. Over a ten year period, the Costa Ricans in our sample who worked in the United States earned on the average \$4.29 an hour compared to the Salvadoreans who earned \$3.77. These figures reveal that neither group confined its employment exclusively to low paying, unskilled jobs in the rural and urban areas of the United States. Some of both groups worked at jobs which pay, on a per hour basis, as much or more than what native workers in the secondary labor market might expect to earn. The Costa Ricans, who more than the Salvadoreans are concentrated in the higher occupational categories, make more on average than the Salvadoreans in every occupational category except one. The highest mean salaries per hour for the Costa Ricans are in the categories dealing with manager, transportation, professional/technical, office work and skilled craftsmen. The relatively high wage for farm workers among the Costa Ricans came from the participation in the H-2 program for supplying specialized skills to the sugar industry. For the Salvadoreans, the higher paying job categories were professional/technical, manager, transportation, and sales/commerce.

TABLE V

SALARY PER HOUR OF U. S. RECENT JOB
BY OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY

<u>Occupational Category</u>	<u>El Salvador</u>	<u>Costa Rica</u>
Professional/technical	\$16.49	\$5.41
Manager	5.32	7.84
Office Workers	3.01	4.40
Sales/Commerce	3.85	3.70
Farm Workers	1.64	4.20
Transportation	4.23	6.18
Skilled Craftsmen	3.78	4.12
Semiskilled Craftsmen	3.26	3.89
Laborers	2.30	3.69
Personal Service	2.43	3.46
Mean for All	\$ 3.77	\$ 4.29

The salaries of both groups of migrants have varied over the ten year period. Average salaries per hour for each year may depend upon long term inflationary trends, movement into different paying occupational categories, and an assortment of other reasons. However, it does seem relatively clear that the Costa Rican average salary per hour has fluctuated throughout the ten year period but has remained relatively constant around the four dollar an hour mark while the Salvadorean average has shown a propensity to increase more linearly over the ten year period. If we exclude the year 1979 as incomplete, the Costa Ricans made two and one half times more than the Salvadoreans before 1969 but they earned only about one dollar more an hour than the Salvadoreans in 1978. The incomplete year of 1979 shows the Salvadoreans making more than the Costa Ricans. It would be interesting to see if the Salvadoreans continue this trend of average salaries above three dollars an hour which began in 1978. If it does continue, then the gap between the groups may narrow. It is not possible to tell if the incomplete year of 1979 is an aberration or the beginning of a significant trend which will lead to relatively equal average wages between the two migrant groups.

In addition to year and occupation, we wished to analyze the salaries of migrants by legality of entry. Salvadoreans tended to enter the country without documents or with a tourist visa; Costa Ricans entered with tourist visas, student visas and immigrant visas. What is the effect on hourly wages for both groups if we

TABLE VI

MEAN (\bar{x}) SALARY OF U. S. JOB BY YEAR

<u>Year</u>	<u>El Salvador</u>	<u>Costa Rica</u>
1969 & before	\$2.31	5.41
1970	1.89	5.47
1971	2.75	5.31
1972	2.86	5.22
1973	2.60	4.07
1974	3.44	3.83
1975	2.60	4.41
1976	2.96	3.91
1977	2.56	4.30
1978	3.10	4.09
1979*	4.34	3.61
Total	\$2.94	\$4.14

*Survey work was conducted in last few months of 1979. Therefore, 1979 is not a complete year.

control for status at time of entry into the United States? In Table VII we again see the higher earning power of the Costa Ricans by virtually all legal categories of entry. Those on immigrant and H-2 visas and on border cards and crew cards made the highest hourly wages among the Costa Ricans. However, the poor wages associated with undocumented workers does not hold up. Although only a very few Costa Ricans entered without documents, they averaged over five dollars an hour. The Salvadoreans did not average more than four dollars an hour in any category except H-2. Moreover, the EWI earnings per hour were more typical of what we might expect. Those Salvadoreans who entered without papers earned the least per hour (\$2.49) of any other group. However, this is obviously higher than the figures cited by some of rural bracero work in the American southwest. The Salvadoreans without documents are working in the cities at jobs in the secondary labor market which pay them relatively little by most American standards but relatively a lot by their own standards.

How long do they work for the wages they make? From what some studies have revealed, and from what some have claimed in the recent past, we should expect them to work long hours. It would be natural to predict that average hours worked would be more than forty a week. This would fit the image of the "work long, work scared" proposition. However, our data show that this is not entirely the case and in a somewhat surprising sense. The Costa Ricans, who hold down the better, high paying jobs, work more a week on average than

TABLE VII

SALARY PER HOUR OF RECENT U. S. JOB
BY LEGAL STATUS

<u>Status</u>	<u>El Salvador</u>	<u>Costa Rica</u>
Immigrant	\$3.14	\$5.21
Student	3.36	4.15
Tourist	3.14	3.86
H-2 Visa	18.29	4.66
Border Card	3.33	5.21
Green Card	----	3.22
EWI	2.49	5.04
Crew Card	----	7.40
Diplomatic Visa	----	4.70
Mean for All	\$3.77	\$4.29

TABLE VIII

HOURS PER WEEK OF MOST RECENT U. S. JOB
BY LEGAL STATUS

<u>Status</u>	<u>El Salvador</u>	<u>Costa Rica</u>
Immigrant	36.5	46.8
Student	32.1	32.5
Tourist	40.3	45.3
H-2	36.1	55.3
Border Card	37.5	48.0
Green Card	----	42.7
EWI	36.9	45.3
Crew Card	----	84.0
Diplomatic	----	21.7
Mean for all	39.0	44.1

do the Salvadoreans. They average 44.1 hours a week to 39 hours for the Salvadoreans. They work longer than the Salvadoreans, moreover, in every category of legal status. The two groups are most similar when it comes to students working. Both groups of students work about thirty-two hours a week. In the category one would expect to find some vindication for the standard thesis about pay and hours, the data for Salvadoreans who are EWI reveal that they work less than forty hours a week instead of more. They may be worked hard but they are not worked long. Apparently, many of the Salvadoreans, in whatever legal category, took parttime jobs in the secondary labor market. Only those who entered as tourists worked forty hours.

D. Conclusion

This brief chapter was intended simply to survey the occupational patterns of those migrants who worked in the United States. We were mostly concerned with occupational categories, salary, hours, legal status, sex and year of employment. From this brief examination of the job data, it appears that both the Costa Ricans and the Salvadoreans work in all job categories but work in jobs which pay at modest levels. They are not poorly paid but for the most part not highly paid either. The Costa Ricans have the better jobs generally. They are paid more than the Salvadoreans, work longer, and have higher occupational status.

The important question remains: What does this work experience mean to the migrants, the United States and their home countries?

This question we hope to provide some answers for as we examine in the next chapter the impact of the work experience on migrants, their families, their countries, employers, firms, public services and regions of the country, and tax systems.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE IMPACT OF COSTA RICAN AND SALVADOREAN MIGRANTS

The impact of undocumented foreign workers in the United States is a research and policy issue clouded in controversy and doubt. Those calling for tighter enforcement of existing immigration laws or for new legislation to stem the influx of Third World workers into the U. S. economy generally perceive the net impact of international labor migration as harmful or detrimental. This perspective does not flatly deny that the presence of illegal foreign workers may have some benefits for the U. S. economy, employers and even native workers but it does insist that, overall, the benefits are outweighed by the harmful effects. The individuals advocating this perspective on impact stress the effects of job displacement, depression of wages, the weakening of unions, the perpetuation of substandard jobs, the postponement of modernization by employers, exploitation by employers and others who prey on undocumented workers, the drain on some public services used by aliens as well as other matters. This view is contradicted by another perspective which advocates the proposition that basically the net impact of these workers is beneficial to the U. S. economy, the employers, tax collection systems, the migrants, their families and their home countries. They tend to argue that these workers take jobs American workers generally shun. They work hard, save their money, pay taxes, and generally make a productive contribution to our society. The impact is further affected by the fact that this "new" migration is temporary, or shuttle, migration

rather than the "old" migration which is permanent. These two views can be found in much of the policy and academic literature on international labor migration.

The fact of the matter is however that the assessment of impact in this area of concern is very, very problematical. Virtually all sources on the subject have been unable to be entirely convincing about something which is so scantily documented. Cornelius, North-Houstoun and others, despite their clear differences, arrive at conclusions which are supported by evidence which forces the reader to make direct and inferential conclusions about impact. There is no direct way to measure job displacement. It is also difficult to be sure that wages went down or did not go up due to the presence of alien workers, just as it is risky to argue that the jobs were the pull factor which brought the workers to the sites of employment in the United States. The difficulties about impact are therefore duly noted. We are not attempting to resolve these problems here. Instead, what our goal in this chapter demands is that we utilize the kind of data and rationale found in studies of international labor migrants from other countries to the United States and to develop some comparative bases upon which to assess the impact on the migrant, the United States and the sending country. Our data base, founded as it is upon interviews with return migrants, limits our assessment of impact in a broad, structural sense. However, the sampling and the questions we used do allow us to make some conclusions based upon findings which shed considerable light upon impacts upon em-

ployers, unions, government, the U. S. economy, the sending economies and the migrants themselves.

A. Employers and Unions

Employers are an obvious target of impact. Alien workers in their firms have an effect on profits, productivity, union relations, and many other concerns. Many studies, regardless of which broad perspective they favor, conclude that employers enjoy the beneficial effects of employing foreign workers. Our concern is twofold: Which sectors of the economy rely upon the migrant workers of our study and to what extent do large or small firms in the United States depend upon them?

In Table I we find that the sectors dealing with service, commerce, manufacturing and domestic services are the primary consumers of Costa Rican workers. Agriculture is relatively insignificant. In other words, employers in those sectors of the urban economy which produce services of some sort are dependent on the kind of skilled and semiskilled labor many of the Costa Ricans can supply. In this sense, these migrants are not in services which are marginal to the economy. Instead, they have found employment in those sectors where many American workers are also utilized.

The same table also indicates the legal status of those who work in these sectors of the United States economy. For the most part, a plurality of the workers in all but two sectors (agriculture, transportation/communication) worked on tourist cards. Manufacturing,

TABLE I

MEANS OF ENTRY BY PRINCIPAL ACTIVITY OF FIRM
COSTA RICAN MIGRANTS

	<u>Agriculture</u> (15)	<u>Service</u> (108)	<u>Manufac- turing</u> (95)	<u>Constr- uction</u> (12)	<u>Commerce</u> (27)	<u>Trans/ Comm</u> (18)	<u>Domestic</u> (12)	<u>Fishing</u> (2)
Immigrant	0.0%	22.2%	21.1%	16.7%	33.3%	44.4%	8.3%	0.0%
Student	13.3	26.9	8.4	16.7	18.5	0.0	8.3	0.0
Tourist	33.3	45.4	68.4	66.7	44.4	27.8	75.0	50.0
H-2	53.3	0.0	1.1	0.0	0.0	5.6	8.3	0.0
Border Card	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Green Card	0.0	1.9	1.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
EWI	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	3.7	5.6	0.0	0.0
Crew Card	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	11.1	0.0	50.0
Diplomatic	<u>0.0</u>	<u>1.9</u>	<u>0.0</u>	<u>0.0</u>	<u>0.0</u>	<u>5.6</u>	<u>0.0</u>	<u>0.0</u>
Totals	100.0%	100.1%*	100.1%*	100.1%*	99.9%*	100.1%*	99.9%*	100.0%

*Does not equal 100.0 due to rounding.

TABLE II

MEANS OF ENTRY BY PRINCIPAL ACTIVITY OF FIRM
SALVADOREAN MIGRANTS

	<u>Agriculture</u> (6)	<u>Service</u> (116)	<u>Manufac- turing</u> (39)	<u>Constr- uction</u> (14)	<u>Commerce</u> (17)	<u>Trans/ Comm</u> (15)	<u>Domestic</u> (47)	<u>Other</u> (4)
Immigrant	0.0%	1.7%	2.6%	0.0%	0.0%	6.7%	4.3%	0.0%
Student	16.7	9.5	10.3	0.0	29.4	6.7	6.4	0.0
Tourist	33.3	39.7	46.2	35.7	41.2	53.3	34.0	0.0
H-2	0.0	5.2	0.0	7.1	5.9	13.3	4.3	75.0
Border Card	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	5.9	0.0	0.0	0.0
EWI	<u>50.0</u>	<u>43.1</u>	<u>41.0</u>	<u>57.1</u>	<u>17.6</u>	<u>20.0</u>	<u>51.1</u>	<u>25.0</u>
Totals	100.0%	100.1%*	100.1%*	99.9%*	100.0%	100.0%	100.1%*	100.0%*

*Does not equal 100.0 due to rounding.

construction and domestic services were particularly dependent upon those Costa Ricans who worked on tourist cards. Agriculture relied more heavily upon H-2 visas; transportation/communication relied upon immigrant visas. Among the Costa Ricans, those on student visas were important to employers in the service sector; a little more than one fourth of the Costa Ricans in the service sector of the U. S. economy had student visas. No sector of the economy relied heavily upon the few Costa Rican workers who entered without documents.

The Salvadoreans tend to concentrate in certain sectors of the U. S. economy. As Table II reveals, they too shun agricultural work. They are important in the service, manufacturing and domestic service industries. Since the Salvadoreans have fewer legal rights to work in the United States than do the Costa Ricans, it comes as no surprise that firms in all the major sectors of the economy use Salvadorean workers who are either without papers (EWI) or who work in violation of their visas (tourist, student). The undocumented workers are particularly significant within agriculture (as one might predict), services, construction and domestic work. But even in manufacturing, two-fifths of the Salvadoreans are without papers. The tourist card is the other major consideration. Over half of the Salvadoreans who worked in transportation/communication held tourist cards; two fifths or more of those in manufacturing and commerce had tourist cards. Even in agriculture and in domestic work, one third of the Salvadoreans had tourist cards.

The distribution of migrants from both countries throughout the U. S. economy and their use of assorted means of access to jobs in these different economic sectors certainly should put to rest the idea that illegal workers take only unskilled jobs or that all workers from these or other countries enter without papers. The migrant workers from Costa Rica and El Salvador are distributed throughout different sectors of the economy and use documents as well as not.

The second consideration is the size of the employer's firm. The standard conclusion about Mexican rural workers is that they often work for small ranchers or farmers in the rural Southwest or that they find jobs with marginal businesses in small towns and urban centers. This is of course different from the pattern for countries like West Germany whose gastarbeiter program recruits Turks, Italians, Yugoslavs and others to work in large factories in Frankfurt and other key cities. How does this match up to the reality we are trying to describe? First of all, Table III reveals that there is a distinctive pattern which differentiates the Costa Ricans from the Salvadoreans. The latter more closely fit the standard conclusion about Mexican undocumented workers in small, or marginal business. More than half worked for firms with twenty-five employees or less. Fewer still worked for medium sized businesses and only 45 out of 258 total Salvadorean workers were employed in large firms with 100 or more workers. The Costa Rican pattern is somewhat different because it is

TABLE III

MEANS OF ENTRY AND SIZE OF FIRM

	Small 1-25		Firm Size Medium 26-100		Large 100 or more	
	CR (103)	ES (142)	CR (73)	ES (61)	CR (111)	ES (45)
Immigrant	19.4%	3.5%	17.8%	0.0%	27.0%	2.2%
Student	15.5	9.9	8.2	13.1	22.5	6.7
Tourist	58.3	35.2	60.3	44.3	44.1	40.0
H-2	1.0	6.3	11.0	1.6	1.8	6.7
Border Card	0.0	0.0	1.4	3.3	0.0	0.0
Green Card	0.0	---	1.4	---	1.8	---
EWI	1.9	45.1	0.0	37.7	0.9	44.4
Crew Card	1.9	---	0.0	---	0.9	---
Diplomatic	1.9	---	0.0	---	0.9	---
Totals	99.9%*	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	99.9%*	100.0%

*Does not equal 100.0 due to rounding.

bimodal. Costa Ricans like Salvadoreans are concentrated, but to a lesser extent, in small firms but 111 of the Costa Ricans who worked were employed in large firms. There was less of a tendency to work in medium sized firms. In other words, employers of differing sizes employ both migrants but larger as well as small employers hire Costa Ricans.

Studies of employers of aliens also imply that many are undocumented. In our study, it is apparent that a majority of both sets of migrants have documents, work for small, medium and large firms but do so in technical violation of their visas. Small firms tend to employ Costa Ricans with tourist visas and to a lesser extent those with immigrant and student visas. They also rely heavily upon undocumented (EWI) workers and to a lesser extent upon those with tourist cards. The pattern is about the same for medium size firms except that tourist card holders from Costa Rica and from El Salvador are more predominant. As for the large firms, about two-fifths of the Salvadoreans and the Costa Ricans work with tourist cards; students and particularly immigrants are important to the larger firms. The Salvadoreans who work in large firms do so without documents or with tourist cards. In other words, for the undocumented Salvadoreans, firms of all three sizes are important as employers but especially for the small and the large.

The other side of the coin is collective bargaining through a union. Labor union proponents have often claimed in the past that foreign workers displace native workers, reduce real wages, under-

mine the union and even serve as a docile labor force convenient for breaking strikes. More recent indications point to the unions' willingness to organize alien workers rather than have them be an inadvertent threat from the outside. What is the impact of the migrants in our study on union membership in the United States and elsewhere? Although we did not stress this particular concern in the survey research, it is clear from Table IV that no unions from any country have been very successful in recruiting our return migrants into their activities and organizations. This is especially true for the Salvadoreans and less true for the Costa Ricans. Thirteen per cent of the Costa Ricans and four per cent of the Salvadoreans belonged to a union in the United States. Perhaps the Costa Ricans tended to find jobs in industries and firms susceptible to union activity. In any event, the impact on union membership as a whole seems relatively unimportant.

B. Geographical Distribution in the United States

The literature on undocumented migration to the United States generally asserts that foreign workers are not evenly distributed throughout the regions, states and cities of the country. Instead, what often is claimed is that they congregate in certain states such as California or New York. The recent boat people from Cuba illustrates the difficulties local areas have in absorbing in the short run thousands of foreigners. It has also been claimed that the border area of the American southwest constitutes a kind of

TABLE IV

UNION MEMBERSHIP OF RETURN MIGRANTS

<u>Union Membership</u>	<u>El Salvador</u> (259)	<u>Costa Rica</u> (314)
Never belonged to any union	93.1%	69.7%
Belonged to a union in home country	2.3	15.0
Belonged to a union in the U. S.	4.2	13.1
Belonged to a union in both the home country and the U.S.	0.4	2.2
	<hr/> 100.0%	<hr/> 100.0%

Mexican appalachia in the sense that it is the poorest and most heavily impacted area of all.

The data presented here are only concerned with regions and states, although data are available on actual cities of destination for the Costa Rican and Salvadorean migrants. It is clear that both groups of migrants favor certain regions and states over others, therefore confirming their uneven geographical distribution throughout the country. The impact is therefore more salient in states like New York and California. The Costa Ricans are somewhat more likely to concentrate in the East Coast than are the Salvadoreans, about half of whom head for California. Few go to the Southwestern states or to Texas where Mexican bracero-type workers traditionally worked. Nor do they tend to head for the mid west or central states in any great numbers as Mexicans increasingly do in their search for skilled and semiskilled jobs in such urban centers as Chicago. In order of importance, the Salvadoreans go to California, New York, Florida and other states; the Costa Ricans go to New York, California and New Jersey and other states and regions.

The impact of these workers therefore is really concentrated in two or three areas. They are the largest states, the most industrialized and economically advanced. They are also the states which the legal immigrants from these two countries tend to prefer. The impact is urban and concentrated.

TABLE V

STATE OR REGION OF MOST RECENT
U.S. WORK EXPERIENCE

<u>State or Region</u>	<u>El Salvador</u> (259)	<u>Costa Rica</u> (314)
New England States	3.5%	6.7%
New York	19.3	19.4
New Jersey	1.9	13.4
Mid Atlantic States	1.9	3.2
Florida	8.9	8.0
Louisiana	2.7	4.1
Texas	3.5	3.8
South	----	5.7
North Central States	2.7	7.0
Southwest States	1.5	0.6
California	51.7	17.8
West Coast States	1.2	1.0
Puerto Rico	----	0.3
No Work	0.4	7.6
Ship	----	1.2
Unidentified	<u>0.8</u>	<u>----</u>
	100.0%	100.0%

C. Taxes and Public Services

We have already discussed the impact of these return migrants on U. S. immigration laws and policies. Neither group seems to have any great difficulty entering the United States with or without documents, more or less directly. The Salvadoreans are more likely to be caught up in the net that INS throws over undocumented migrants. But there are other matters important to other government agencies too. The debate in the policy literature revolves around the net impact of foreign workers upon government programs. Again, this is not easy to measure. The major findings involve the payment of direct taxes to federal and state governments and the direct use of certain facilities or services provided by government agencies. The question of public goods (highways, parks etc.) has not been adequately addressed.

In our study, we limited our inquiry to the taxes paid to the federal government, the social security system and employer-based hospitalization plans. These were the principal concerns of studies like North-Houstoun, Cornelius and others. We also wished to discover to what extent the Costa Ricans and the Salvadoreans utilized direct public services such as schools, hospitals, welfare and the like. The finding from other studies are somewhat mixed but there is some consensus that undocumented workers do pay taxes and do use some services. The disagreement comes over the net drain or surplus from these contributions and withdrawals.

On the question of taxes, Table indicates some interesting

TABLE VI

TAXES PAID IN THE UNITED STATES

	Federal Income Tax		Social Security Tax		Hospital Plan	
	ES (259)	CR (314)	ES (259)	CR (314)	ES (259)	CR (314)
Did pay	18.5%	55.7%	45.2%	69.7%	25.1%	40.4%
Did not pay	73.0	33.1	51.4	19.4	70.3	47.8
Did not answer	0.8	7.6	0.8	7.6	0.8	7.6
Don't know	7.7	3.5	2.7	3.2	3.9	4.1

differences between the Salvadoreans and the Costa Ricans. The Costa Ricans tended to pay income taxes to the federal government; the Salvadoreans did not, as a rule. The Costa Ricans also tended to pay social security taxes; 45.2% of the Salvadoreans did. Neither group tended to pay an employer hospitalization plan but on the other hand one fourth of the Salvadoreans did and two-fifths of the Costa Ricans did. The Costa Ricans overall made financial contributions to the federal government while the Salvadoreans did not. We have no data on taxes to state or local governments.

While the Salvadoreans did not pay for government in some ways, it appears from Table VII that they also did not use it. Overwhelming majorities of the Salvadoreans did not use public hospitals, welfare or unemployment insurance programs. A less overwhelming majority (three-fourths) did not use public schools. Since most came alone to the United States to work, and since most are quite young, this seems entirely understandable and tends to agree with other findings from other studies. The Costa Ricans, who tend to pay for government in some ways, do not use it very much. Still, two-fifths of them used public schools and one-fourth used public hospitals. Since they are slightly older than the Salvadoreans and were less inclined to come to the United States without family and relatives, this too is not very surprising. In both cases, it should be recalled that our data indicates tax payments to the federal government but the use of local public services. Our data does tend to support Stoddard's assertion that aliens pay taxes

TABLE VII

MIGRANT USES OF PUBLIC SERVICES IN
THE UNITED STATES

	<u>El Salvador</u> (259)	<u>Costa Rica</u> (314)
Public School		
Yes	23.9%	41.1%
No	76.1	58.9
Public Hospitals		
Yes	7.3	24.5
No	92.7	75.5
Welfare		
Yes	1.2	2.2
No	98.8	97.8
Unemployment Insurance		
Yes	1.2	7.3
No	98.8	92.7

to the federal government but consume locally funded services. However, we do not know to what extent they also make local tax payments and other contributions to offset the use they do make of local public facilities.

D. Income, Expenditures and Repatriation of Earnings

In this section of the report, we wish to present data on income, expenditures and earnings repatriated to the home countries of the migrants. We also wish to examine how the repatriated money was spent. Finally, we correlate certain variables to understand better the relationships between composition variables and length of stay in the United States on the one hand and an assortment of income variables on the other.

It is apparent from Table VII that the Costa Ricans have a larger impact from income than do the Salvadoreans. They earned and spent more than twice as much as the Salvadoreans. They also have total earnings that are more than three times the Salvadoreans. In other words, higher salaries and longer stays in occupations of relatively higher status give the Costa Ricans a greater impact than the Salvadoreans. The expenses of the work trip must also be considered. They are part of a net calculation of what the worker might expect to pay out of the earnings accrued. Again, the Costa Ricans paid much more for all expenses of the trip and of the stay than did the Salvadoreans except for the actual travel costs and except for smuggler costs. The mean total for the Salvadoreans is \$5429; that for the Costa Ricans is \$9411. Despite the greater costs overall for the Costa Ricans, it is apparent that the Salvadoreans paid

TABLE VIII

INCOME, EXPENDITURES AND REPATRIATION OF EARNINGS
OF MIGRANTS IN MEANS

	<u>El Salvador</u>	<u>Costa Rica</u>
<u>I. U.S. Income</u>		
Money earned and spent in U.S.	\$6,513	\$15,010
Total earnings less total expenses	8,250	27,335
Total earnings in U.S.	8,280	27,403
<u>II. Expenditures of work trip</u>		
Total cost of trip	\$ 483	\$ 429
Rent paid in the U.S.	1,779	3,406
Food and clothing	1,682	3,150
Other expenses	1,024	2,446
Smuggler costs (coyote)	529	-----
<u>III. Repatriated Earnings & Expenditures</u>		
Total earnings brought back	\$ 698	\$ 3,190
Total earnings sent and brought back	4,984	5,793
Per capita income	2,678	8,953
Returned earnings per capita	256	954

out more relatively in terms of their earnings than did the Costa Ricans. The Costa Ricans earned more and paid out less for expenditures on the trip in relative terms.

Both migrant groups are spenders in the American economy. They pay for rent, food and clothing and other expenses. However, if they spend relatively too much and are forced to stay longer, then they are failing to achieve their ostensible goal of making a temporary work trip to the United States in order to repatriate a sum of money. The table also indicates how important this is to them. Both the Salvadoreans and the Costa Ricans brought money back with them on their return trip and sent it back to the home country from their location in the United States. Relatively speaking, the Salvadoreans sent back much more than they brought back. The Costa Ricans also sent back more than they brought back but not to such a great extent. In other words, both groups of migrants, by whatever means, repatriated income to their respective countries but despite their earnings advantage over the Salvadoreans, the Costa Ricans reported repatriating a total mean amount which is only \$809 more than the Salvadoreans.

We also wanted to know how many people were being supported partially or fully by the repatriated income of the migrants. The "per capita income" figure was calculated by dividing the total number of dependents, including spouse, children and other dependents, into the total reported income earned in the United States. Some migrants were alone and had no or few dependents. This would

give them higher per capita incomes than someone with the same income but more dependents. Despite the fact that the Costa Ricans have more dependents as a group than do the Salvadoreans, their per capita income is more than three times as great. However, per capita income, as used in this sense, is not a net figure. In order to find out how repatriated funds were actually divided up, we calculated a returned earnings per capita figure. The means for this calculation are naturally quite a bit lower than those for the per capita income figure but they also indicate that the Costa Ricans have a mean for returned earnings per capita which is 3.7 times greater than the Salvadoreans.

In conclusion, the income and expenditures of the migrants leave us with some interesting differences. The Salvadoreans earn far less than the Costa Ricans in the United States but they also spend less in the United States and send relatively more back to the home country. The Costa Ricans make quite a bit more than the Salvadoreans. They also spend more in the United States in absolute terms and return more to the home country in absolute terms. For every \$100 earned by a Salvadorean in the United States, \$60 were repatriated. For every \$100 earned by a Costa Rican in the United States, \$21 were repatriated.

Given the income and its repatriation, how was it spent in the home country? Was it invested, or used to pay for consumer or durable goods or was it used to pay the rent or build a house or for some other purpose? These are not just important decisions

for the returning migrants. They are important for governments, economic advisors and aid agencies as they try to determine the impact of repatriated earnings on the country. Table IX offers a frequency distribution by deciles of how repatriated earnings were spent for different purposes. Most return migrants from both groups reported that they spent no repatriated earnings ("0" decile) on the major categories in the table. However, it is also clear that almost one fourth of the Salvadoreans spent all of their repatriated earnings on consumer items while 17.8 per cent of the Costa Ricans did. The effects of this consumer spending within the home country can only be hinted at. Still, it might have been for food, clothing and other necessities or for other consumable items. This may have had some inflationary effect on the economies but it is not possible to say just what the effect was. Another set of data from the table indicates that 12.0 per cent of the Salvadoreans and 14.6 per cent of the Costa Ricans were in the tenth decile for business investment. What this means is that these migrants spent all of their repatriated income on business or business-related expenditures. There is a strong belief that many return migrants go to the United States to acquire a stake by which to set up a small independent business in their home country where capital is scarce. Our data offer limited support for this.

Finally, the impact of income and earnings might be better understood if we could determine the relationship between some

TABLE IX

EXPENDITURE OF REPATRIATED EARNINGS IN HOME COUNTRIES
BY TYPE OF EXPENDITURE IN DECILES

Deciles	<u>Consumer Items</u>		<u>Durable Goods</u>		<u>Rent</u>		<u>House</u>		<u>Business</u>		<u>Other</u>	
	ES	CR	ES	CR	ES	CR	ES	CR	ES	CR	ES	CR
0	60.6%	64.3%	91.9%	85.7%	92.7%	94.9%	91.1%	86.3%	78.0%	74.2%	73.4%	87.9
1	4.6	1.3	1.2	---	0.4	---	---	0.3	---	1.0	1.5	2.1
2	3.5	3.5	1.2	---	1.2	0.3	---	---	0.8	1.6	1.1	1.0
3	2.7	2.2	1.2	1.6	1.2	1.3	0.4	1.3	0.8	0.6 ^r	3.5	0.3
4	0.4	1.3	0.4	0.6	0.8	0.6	1.9	0.6	0.8	1.0	0.8	0.3
5	2.3	7.0	0.8	4.8	0.8	1.9	---	2.9	3.9	3.2	1.5	1.6
6	1.2	0.6	---	0.3	0.4	---	---	1.6	1.5	0.3	---	---
7	1.2	---	---	0.3	---	---	0.8	---	0.4	1.3	1.5	---
8	0.4	1.0	---	0.6	0.8	---	0.8	---	0.4	1.0	0.4	---
9	---	1.0	---	1.3	---	1.0	0.4	0.6	1.5	1.2	1.2	---
10	<u>23.2</u>	<u>17.8</u>	<u>3.5</u>	<u>4.8</u>	<u>1.9</u>	<u>---</u>	<u>4.6</u>	<u>6.4</u>	<u>12.0</u>	<u>14.6</u>	<u>15.1</u>	<u>6.7</u>
	100.1%*	100.0%	100.2%*	100.0%	100.2%*	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.1%*	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

*Does not equal 100.0 due to rounding

key variables in the study. Not all the possible relationships can be explored here. However, in Table X, correlation coefficients between three independent variables (age, education and length of U. S. stay) and several income variables reveal some differences in the positive and negative relationships between the Costa Ricans and the Salvadoreans. The strong and moderately negative correlation coefficients between age in both migrant groups and several income variables are significant. For the Costa Ricans especially, there are strong negative relationships between age on the one hand and repatriation of money and goods as well as net income and per capita income on the other. In other words, the older the Costa Rican migrant, the less likely that he or she was to send back money and goods in large amounts or were to have high net income and per capita income. The young seemed to do much of the saving and accumulation from their work experience. For the Salvadoreans, these relationships were either less strong or, in one case, were moderately positive. Years of education and schooling were also correlated with these same variables. Generally, the relationships tend to be more positive, especially for the Costa Ricans. Years of education are positively correlated with value of goods repatriated, total income in the United States, net income and per capita income (some of these are not statistically significant, see table). However, the higher the educational level the less likely they were to send money back. Perhaps those with higher educations had people in Costa Rica who were not in urgent need of their remittance from the

TABLE X

PEARSON CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS FOR SELECTED VARIABLES

	Age in U. S.		Years of Education		Length of Stay	
	ES	CR	ES	CR	ES	CR
Salary per hour of most recent U.S. job	-0.30	0.05	-0.01	-0.15	-0.27	-0.55*
Money sent back on most recent stay	-0.40	-0.77	-0.10	-0.41	0.88*	0.07
Money returned as cash	0.06	0.32	-0.54*	-0.05	-0.25	-0.03
Money returned as goods	0.30	-0.82*	-0.05	0.76*	-0.03	-0.81*
Total income earned in U.S.	-0.10	-0.38	0.62	0.52	0.28	0.14
Net Income	-0.20	-0.71	0.51*	0.75	0.65*	0.68*
Per capita income	-0.29	-0.78*	0.61*	0.70	0.24	0.54*

*significant at .05 or less

United States. As for the Salvadoreans, years of education are positively and moderately correlated with net income, per capita income and total income earned in the United States. The other income variables except for repatriated income were weak, and negatively correlated with education. Higher educated Salvadorean migrants did not bring back with them large amounts of cash. Finally, the length of stay is an interesting impact consideration because the months or even years spent in the United States may have an effect upon income variables. If a migrant comes for a few months, clearly his or her impact will be minimal compared to someone who stays much longer. The Costa Ricans averaged two years in the United States; the Salvadoreans a year and one half. Again, some interesting negative correlations indicate that length of stay is unrelated or negatively related to salary per hour in the United States, money returned as cash and goods returned to home country. The latter is especially a strong negative relationship for the Costa Ricans. On the other hand, there are moderately strong, positive correlations for both groups of migrants with regard to length of stay and net income and a very strong correlation between length of stay and per capita income for the Costa Ricans. In other words, longer stays are associated with higher income impacts if not with salary per hour. The longer the migrants stay in the United States, the better chance they have to accumulate higher net incomes.

E. Occupational and Income Mobility of Migrants

The last major consideration of impact involves the mobility of the migrants. We have seen in general terms what this international labor migration means to the United States and to the home countries. We have also correlated selected variables to determine the character of certain relationships dealing with income. What is of concern here is the occupational mobility of migrants and the levels of income they experience from this mobility.

The often asserted view that migrants from developing countries go from jobs of higher status to jobs of lower status when they go to the developed countries is our starting point. We wished to determine to what extent the migrants are mobile occupationally, or to what extent they have changed occupational status as a result of their work migrations. To facilitate the analysis of major changes in occupational mobility, we grouped the ten major occupational categories used to classify all job experiences into four occupational classes--upper, middle (white collar), skilled manual and low status (not including students). It was then possible to determine how the migrants have fared over time and to see how their general occupational status has changed, if at all. As we all realize, the mobility within an occupational level is probably more frequent than it is between levels.

Table XI indicates the occupational mobility of the migrants at different stages. First, the occupation of the migrants' father reveals that the migrants came from families with relatively high occupational status compared to their country's workforce as a whole. Almost forty-five per cent of the Costa Rican fathers had professional, managerial or white collar jobs. Forty-three per cent of the Salvadorean fathers were in this upper and middle occupational status. The Salvadorean and Costa Rican fathers were also in the skilled and low skilled occupations. More than fifty-two per cent of the Costa Rican fathers were in these classes. Just under fifty per cent of the Salvadoreans were in these two classes. The young migrants of fathers from these occupational classes turn out not to equal these levels of occupational status for the most part or they are still in school. The lower occupational status is largely affected by age and the category of student which is the largest of any group. Before the migrants went to the United States to work, they were either students or had jobs in different occupational classes. Actually, it appears that, of those working before they went to the United States, the sons and daughters cum migrants tended to be proportionately better represented in the two higher occupational classes than were the fathers. About half and more than half of the Costa Ricans and the Salvadoreans respectively were in the upper and middle classes occupationally.

What happened when they worked in the United States? Some dramatic changes emerge in the occupational status of both groups

TABLE XI

OCCUPATIONAL STATUS OF BOTH GROUPS
OF MIGRANTS AND THEIR FATHERS

<u>Status</u>	<u>Father's Occupation</u>		<u>Occupation before U.S.</u>		<u>Recent U.S.</u>		<u>Present Occupation</u>	
	CR	ES	CR	ES	CR	ES	CR	ES
Upper Status	22.0%	20.5%	16.6%	10.0%	16.9%	7.3%	22.6%	15.4%
Middle Status (white collar)	22.9	22.8	15.9	13.5	10.8	12.0	28.0	23.9
Skilled Manual	17.8	21.2	16.9	8.9	24.2	16.2	15.9	10.4
Low Status	34.1	28.2	15.6	8.1	40.4	64.1	13.1	7.7
Student	----	----	31.8	53.3	7.6	0.4	11.5	29.3
Missing	3.2	7.3	3.2	6.2	----	----	8.9	13.1

of migrants. The upper status Costa Ricans hold their own but the Salvadoreans lose ground at this high occupational level. Both groups suffer some lowering of occupational status at the middle, white collar level as well. However, the skilled manual (lower middle) and the low status classes of occupation increase perceptibly, especially the latter. Likewise, students become workers in these latter two classes. In other words, young students account for much of the lowering of occupational status from the home country to the United States.

With the reservation about the role of students kept in mind, we can state that our findings do confirm the general assertion about the loss of occupational status in the United States. The mobility is generally downward. However, important as this is for its implications in the United States and the various labor markets in the American economy, it is not the whole story of impact. One of the perennial questions is the extent to which return migrants go back to the home country with new skills or occupational status which allows them to acquire higher occupational mobility and status than they had either in the home country before they left or in the labor-importing country. The table indicates that this may be the case. Although the present occupations of the Costa Ricans and the Salvadoreans are still distributed throughout each of the four major occupational classes, the Costa Ricans have relatively more in each of the classes, including the highest, than do the Salvadoreans. Again, the decisive role of the students is crucial. Only about one third

of the Costa Ricans who were students before they left for the United States returned to school, thereby putting themselves into the job market in Costa Rica. On the other hand, about half of the Salvadoreans returned to school once they arrived back in El Salvador. Fewer students went into the labor market. So although the occupational status of the return migrants increased generally, the role of the student was very important for this to happen.

Occupational status and occupational income are not unrelated. While it is often claimed that occupational mobility is downward as migrants go to work in developed countries, their incomes in the developed countries relative to what they were earning in their home countries go up. The pull of the labor market in the developed countries for these migrants is the wage differential rather than the status of the occupation within the United States economy.

The salary per hour is our standard measure of income and it is used in Table XIII in a way similar to the previous table. In addition, we have controlled for occupational status in order to determine the mean salary per hour of different occupations held at different stages. The Costa Ricans who worked in the United States experienced a fourfold increase in salary per hour over their previous salary in Costa Rica. Regardless of occupational category, all salaries per hour increased. Some occupational categories such as transportation and farm work increased nine and ten times over the salary levels in Costa Rica. The mean

TABLE XII

SALARY PER HOUR (\$) OF COSTA RICAN MIGRANTS
BY OCCUPATION AND OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY

	<u>Occupation before U.S. trip</u>	<u>Recent U.S. occupation</u>	<u>Present occupation</u>
Professional/ Technical	\$1.73	\$5.41	\$4.16
Manager	3.28	7.84	3.35
Office Worker	0.95	4.40	2.11
Sales/Commerce	1.12	3.70	2.30
Farm Work	0.42	4.20	1.30
Transportation	0.65	6.18	1.02
Skilled Craftsmen	0.61	4.12	1.98
Semiskilled Craftsmen	0.62	3.89	1.20
Laborers	0.41	3.69	1.28
Personal Services	0.40	3.46	1.94
Mean (\bar{x})	\$1.01	\$4.29	\$2.54

TABLE XIII

SALARY PER HOUR (\$) OF SALVADOREAN MIGRANTS
BY OCCUPATION AND OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY

	<u>Occupation before U.S. trip</u>	<u>Recent U.S. occupation</u>	<u>Present occupation</u>
Professional/ Technical	\$1.00	\$16.49	\$2.36
Manager	0.95	5.32	3.33
Office Worker	0.61	3.01	0.97
Sales/Commerce	2.01	3.85	2.24
Farm Work	0.34	1.64	1.12
Transportation	0.85	4.23	1.33
Skilled Craftsmen	0.57	3.78	0.89
Semiskilled Crafts.	0.41	3.26	0.57
Laborers	0.32	2.30	0.56
Personal Service	0.63	2.43	0.87
Mean	\$0.95	\$ 3.77	\$1.69

for all salaries in the United States for the Costa Ricans was \$4.29 an hour. The current occupations of the Costa Ricans after their return home reflect the expected downward trend. In each occupational category, the return migrants from Costa Rica are earning less per hour than they did in the United States, with a mean of \$2.54 an hour. Nevertheless, they are earning more an hour in their current job after their U. S. work experience than they were before they went to the United States. The question which we cannot answer definitely is to what extent was their U. S. occupation a determinant of this upward earnings trend. It is indeed possible that other factors--inflation, time sequences, changes in the migrants etc.---could have influenced these differences in earnings per hour in the home country quite apart from the U. S. experience. Still, the higher earnings in Costa Rica followed the even higher earnings in the United States. There may indeed be an impact from this work experience.

The mobility of earnings for the Salvadoreans also reflects this general pattern. The average salary per hour of the Salvadoreans in their occupation before leaving El Salvador for their work trip to the United States was \$0.95. It went to \$3.77 an hour in the United States, almost a fourfold increase, and then subsided predictably to a lower level (\$1.69) upon returning to employment in El Salvador. Although this general pattern approximates the Costa Rican, there are some interesting differences as well. First of all, the Salvadoreans averaged far less

in salary per hour than did the Costa Ricans in all occupations except one and in all jobs by location. In other words, they earned less as managers, farm workers and the like in El Salvador, in the United States and in El Salvador again. Those who worked as professionals or technicians in the United States made a very high hourly rate but this was very atypical of all occupational categories and locales. In some occupational categories, the Salvadoreans increased their earnings per hour from the job they held in El Salvador to the job they held in the United States by five, seven or even sixteen times. Overall, their increases in salaries per hour were impressive but fell somewhat short of the Costa Ricans. With their present occupations in El Salvador, the return migrants naturally accepted jobs in all occupational categories which averaged less per hour than did their jobs in the United States. In fact, a Salvadorean doing farm work in the United States, an unskilled low status job, averaged more per hour than all but three occupational categories (professional/technical, manager, sales and commerce) back in El Salvador.

Occupational and income mobility then reveal divergent trends. Occupational mobility goes down in the United States and then recovers to a level in the home country as high or higher than before. Income does just the reverse. Salary per hour increases several fold in the United States and then subsides to a level which is still higher than that for the occupational categories before the migrants went to the United States to work. In their own way and

at their own levels of magnitude, the Costa Rican and Salvadorean migrants reflect this pattern reported elsewhere.

There is no doubt that the United States work experience had an effect on earnings mobility upward. It also seems to be the case that higher salaries were traded off against lower occupational status. The impact of these earnings and of these changes in occupational status is certainly of utmost importance to the migrants themselves and to the countries involved. What we cannot provide is any exact measure of just how the United States work experience affected the subsequent occupational and income mobility of the migrants. We can say that it had some effect and the data do indicate the directions and magnitude of this mobility.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study of international migration to the United States from Costa Rica and El Salvador has been a preliminary analysis of survey data collected from return migrants. Our goals in the study have been to broaden the data base on labor migration from Latin America to the United States, to compare the composition, flow, behavior and impact of two sets of migrants, and to utilize national sampling frameworks to better define the populations of migrants for research and policy purposes. In attempting to achieve these goals, we have also arrived at substantive findings about these two groups of migrants from Central America which place them within the context of previous research. It is now apparent that the migrants from Costa Rica and El Salvador have certain characteristics, experiences and impacts which are shared by, but also different from, migrants studied in other countries.

A. Summary of Findings

What follows is a brief summary of the major findings in this report. However, specific findings are located within the body of the report and should be consulted more closely. Although these findings, both broad and specific, constitute important additions to the research and policy debate, the data base for this report has been incompletely analyzed. We expect more, and perhaps more refined, conclusions to emerge about the return migration process between these two Central American republics and the United States.

1. The Costa Rican and Salvadorean migrants are mostly urban, well-educated, youthful males. Most originate from the central metropolitan area of both countries and from smaller urban areas within both countries. They are not rural in origin or inclined to the jobs which the Mexican rural worker will seek and accept in the United States. Their educational experiences are above the national average for their age groups; many have attended college or post secondary schools. Males dominate both groups but a sizeable minority of Salvadoreans are females. Single migrants are less than half of both groups. The Costa Ricans are particularly more likely to be married than the Salvadoreans. Some have dependents to support and some have a modest record of geographical mobility preceeding their U. S. experiences.

2. Migrants in both groups, to differing degrees, have higher occupational status than Mexican migrants reported on in many studies. Very few are unskilled or untrained. Many in both samples are still students, even though their average age is in the late twenties. Even for the Salvadoreans, the occupational status and educational levels are relatively impressive. They are clearly not migrants forced to leave for reasons of persistent unemployment. Instead, their work motivations are tied to wage differentials in the United States.

3. The flow of Costa Rican and Salvadorean migrants to the United States is the first stage of a process which includes a return trip home again. Return migrants go to the United States

primarily for economic reasons; they return home for social and (especially for the Salvadoreans) legal reasons. Their stays were intended to be temporary rather than permanent, although they remain in the United States considerably longer than Mexican or agricultural workers usually do. Very few desire permanent residence in the United States so their impact on the United States is clearly different from immigrants who intend to stay permanently. Still, after their trips to the United States, more than one third of both groups were willing to consider permanent residence while before the trip very few even considered it.

4. The Costa Ricans and the Salvadoreans enter the United States directly and with documents. Of the two, the Costa Ricans are more likely to come into the United States without stopping in intermediary countries like Mexico, possessing tourist, student or immigrant visas. The Salvadoreans are somewhat more inclined to enter indirectly, using Mexico as a bridge to the United States since about two-fifths of them enter without documents and many of these cross the Mexican border heading for California.

5. As a rule, the two groups of migrants go to the United States without companions. However, the Costa Ricans are more likely to bring family members than the Salvadoreans. Some, but by no means a majority, go with someone else, usually friends. Virtually none of the migrants send for family or friends to join them once they have settled in the United States.

6. Most migrants will return to the United States. About fifteen per cent of the Costa Ricans and one fifth of the Salvadoreans might return. The return migrant is not therefore inclined to settle, or work, permanently in the United States or in the home country. Although they do not give up the allegiance to the home country and the family living there, many will probably find their way back to the United States for the same reasons which motivated them to make their last trip northward.

7. Although most of the migrants could not legally work with the documents they held or did not have in the first place, most of them did work. Tourist visas were the major legal document used by both groups to gain access to the American labor market; entry without inspection was a major means of entry for the Salvadoreans who worked.

8. The migrants from Costa Rica and El Salvador took jobs in the urban areas at both professional, white collar, skilled and unskilled occupations. The Salvadorean males and females were both inclined more than the Costa Ricans to take lower status jobs.

9. The migrants earned several times more per hour in the United States than they did in their home countries. However, the Costa Ricans earned more than the Salvadoreans. Over the years, the Salvadoreans have made the most rapid gains in salary per hour. The Costa Ricans worked longer hours and generally made and saved more money in absolute terms than did the Salvadoreans.

10. The occupational mobility of the migrants was affected by their U. S. work experience. In both groups of migrants, there was a clear tendency to take jobs in the United States which were of lower status than those jobs held in the home country. The mobility upward was resumed when the migrants returned home. Still, even in the United States, the migrants took professional, white collar and skilled manual work as well as the lower status jobs in personal service and as day laborers.

11. While occupational mobility in the United States was downward, the wages earned went up considerably. On average, both groups made roughly four times an hour what they earned in the home country. These wage rates sank back to lower levels upon returning to their home countries.

12. The net incomes and the repatriated incomes of both groups were fairly substantial but the Costa Ricans, in absolute terms, were far above the Salvadoreans in both respects. Still, the Salvadoreans saved relatively larger shares of their earnings than did the Costa Ricans. The Costa Ricans also spent more in the United States and tended to pay taxes more than did the Salvadoreans. Those who were younger tended to save and repatriate more funds. Those with higher educational levels tended to accumulate more net income and higher per capita incomes from their U. S. work experience. Especially for the Costa Ricans, the longer the stay, the more likely that they would save more and have more to distribute among families at home. The younger and less educated Sal-

vadoreans tended to send money home for people to live on; the Costa Ricans relied less on this strategy.

13. The impact of these working migrants on small employers was particularly significant, especially for the Salvadoreans. The Costa Ricans tended to work for large as well as small firms. Both groups also worked in all major sectors of the economy. They were particularly important to services, manufacturing, domestic service, and construction. They were insignificant as farm workers. The impact of these migrants on union membership was minimal.

14. As a whole, the Costa Ricans tended to pay federal income and social security taxes and the Salvadoreans did not. Neither group used local public services to any great extent but the Costa Ricans were more inclined to use public schools than anything else.

B. Conclusions

These are some of the major findings of this report. They are helpful in putting international labor migration to the United States in broader comparative perspective and they certainly may suggest to policymakers various, and perhaps conflicting, policy recommendations. It is not our task to make these recommendations. However, it is also quite clear that the composition, flow and impact of these return migrants is to some extent different from that of other kinds of migrants who received much of the attention by policy makers. Even if we have complicated the picture by suggesting that the Costa Rican and Salvadorean migrants do not fit any neat, pre-

conceived mold about undocumented migration from south to north in the Western hemisphere, this study is a needed addition and, indeed, a corrective to other studies and data bases.

Labor migration from Mexico, the Caribbean, Central America and elsewhere in Latin America promises to be an enduring process, a fixture in the agenda of U. S. foreign policy in the region and of immigration policy reform. The challenge for the American policy makers is to consider the evidence from studies like this one in the light of domestic, and to a lesser extent foreign, pressures for revising immigration law. It is clear that immigration reform is badly needed. It is not clear just what course such reform, if it occurs at all, will take. The perspective of labor migration as a threat or the perspective of it as a benefit may depend upon political and even cultural assessments of the relative net trade-offs in allowing foreign workers into the U. S. economy. However, studies like this one should make more clear the dimensions of what is being legislated. Labor migration from Costa Rica and El Salvador, like that from Mexico and elsewhere, has consequences for many different people but all of these effects are hard to measure. It has been our goal to describe more fully who these migrants are, how do they get to the United States, what do they do and what it means to them, the United States and their home countries. When we better understand all this, we will have a more informed base upon which to make decisions about who will win and who will lose from retaining our current immigration system or modifying

**it to fit changing perceptions and levels of knowledge about migrants
who come to the United States.**

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